

Alabama Archaeological Society

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CALL FOR PAPERS

All papers to be presented at the joint Winter Meeting of the Alabama and Georgia Archaeological Societies must be submitted before Saturday, September 15, 1990. The meeting will be held at Columbus Museum in Columbus, Georgia on October 27, 1990.

Papers will be 15 minutes in length - perhaps some leniency in length if few papers are submitted. Each of the three sessions will be chaired and will be divided as such: 1) Paleo-Archaic, 2) Woodland, 3) Mississippian-Historic.

Title, abstract, request for tables, equipment needs, etc., must be submitted by September 15, 1990 to Mr. Dave Chase; 1801 Summit Creek Drive; Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Phillip E. Koerper
A.A.S. Program Rep.

MINUTES OF THE SUMMER BOARD MEETING, 1990

The Board of Directors of the Alabama Archaeological Society met at the summer meeting at the Blue Hole Site near Anniston, Alabama, on Saturday, June 23, 1990. Those attending were Eugene Futato, Phil Koerper, Mary and Charles Ochs, Caroline and Baker Dean, Jackie and Gary Mullen, A. J. Wright, Harry Holstein, Mc Brooms, Ola Ann and Jim Lee, Bobby Hawkins, and a crazy horse named Big Al.

Phil Koerper, Program Chairman, reported on progress with the combined Alabama-Georgia fall meeting. It will be a two-day session the last weekend in October 1990. The first day will be presentation of papers, perhaps tours of the local mounds on the second day. There will be separate state meetings for those states to attend to their business matters. David Chase of Georgia requested two moderators from Alabama to assist with the presentations. Phil thought the arrangements promised a good meeting and expressed the hope it could be a continued event every second year, perhaps including Florida at some time.

September 1990

A. J. Wright, Archives Committee, reported that the Birmingham Public Library had agreed to house the archives collection. They would maintain the collection and not dispose of it without referring to our group to retrieve it. We would continue to bind the Journals and the Newsletters before depositing them with the Library.

The Nominating Committee reported the vacancies that appeared to be needed to be filled in the coming year. The Chairman expressed concern regarding the group's capacity to fill these spots. There was a general discussion about membership and leadership. It appeared that it would be necessary to make some different arrangements in the future, particularly about business-type matters. Perhaps central business items might have to be handled at facilities like the newly formed Indian Resource Center and the Alabama National History Society, who have available funds and manpower.

Eugene Futato, Journal Editor, reported that the latest issue of the Journal had just been mailed. The next edition was half completed. The remaining two 1988 issues would be combined in one with an article by Roger Nance. The reprint of the point type book was being prepared by the University Print Shop with a laser printer from an original copy. There would probably be a raise in the back issue prices in conjunction with the reprinting of the book. It was also mentioned that possibly the payment of dues would need to be restructured in the future to insure that costs were kept in line with current finances.

Mc Brooms gave a report for the Membership Committee. These suggestions were the results of a meeting on Friday, and the goals and objectives would be presented at the winter meeting in a more definite form. It appeared to the Committee that there was a need to target membership with young adults, generally from 24 to 50, and with students in college, high school and elementary school.

Some possibilities to attract these people included the following: perhaps a "Collector's Corner" in the "Stones & Bones", more attention could be given to attracting people to the summer and winter meetings, encourage short papers in the Journal by non-professionals (without altering the professionalism of the Journal in any way), more local field schools, question-and-answer sessions at the annual meeting. Make more effort to give presentations in local schools to coincide with 4th grade Alabama History. Brochures handed out at the time, and follow up with personal invitations to those who respond to the hand-out. Make an effort to lobby to push more attention to archaeology in the school curriculum. Perhaps present a cash award for student papers accepted in the Journal. Help with the Boy Scouts of America and the merit badge program. Make an effort to help establish affiliated chapters in the areas that already have local groups interested in archaeology, such as Dothan. Perhaps advertise in the less technical magazines like "Popular Archaeology". Have a more "vocal" annual membership drive locally.

The group commented that many of these concepts were currently available, but there was obviously a need to make better use of them. Mc reported these ideas were just beginning to take shape, and a more definite program would be presented at the winter meeting. The members of the Board thanked Phil Koerper and Harry Holstein for their work at the site and their arrangements for the summer meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Nancy Rohr - Acting Sec'y

P.J. FitzGerald Collection to be Preserved in Alabama

Philip James FitzGerald (1898-1989) was a hardworking and energetic member of the Civilian Conservation Corps who assisted in the construction of Camp Baltzell and the archaeological excavation of Moundville between 1933 and 1937. Thanks to his surviving daughter, Mrs. Phyllis Richardson of Farmers Branch, Texas, Mr. FitzGerald's personal scrapbook containing mementos of the Moundville project, and a small collection of artifacts from the site, will remain in the state.

Mrs. Richardson's only request concerning her inheritance was that both the scrapbook and artifacts be preserved in FitzGerald's home town of Anniston. In collaborative spirit, the Alabama State Museum of Natural History supported Mrs. Richardson's proposal to donate the artifacts to the Anniston Museum of Natural History so that the entire collection could remain intact.

The scrapbook contains 51 pages of photographs taken by FitzGerald as well as prints given to him by the Alabama Museum of Natural History, newspaper articles and museum brochures dating to the 1930's, letters from former Anniston Museum of Natural History Director Walter B. Jones and Charles B. Graves of the National Park Service, and 22 original negatives. Scenes include the construction of Camp Baltzell, sodding and stumping crews at work, mound and pit features, and building the museum at Mound State Park. The artifacts include two Moundville Filmed Incised vessels, skeletal material, ceramic and stone disks, bone awls, a chert projectile point and a steatite pendant blank. It is anticipated that the collection will be invaluable to those researching the history and impact of the CCC in the state of Alabama.

Deb Slaney
Anniston Museum of Natural History



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CHAPTER NEWS

Huntsville Chapter

Nancy Rohr, Secretary-Treasurer of the Huntsville Chapter, presented the September program, "Huntsville, Alabama on the Map, or Why You Can't Get Here from There". Nancy's talk combined elements of cartography, history, geography, economics, tourism, transportation and life in Huntsville.

The speaker at the September 25 meeting will be Ned Jenkins; his topic will be Fort Toulouse.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Public Library. The public is welcome.

FOR SALE

Good selection of Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) Bulletins and annual reports for sale. Contact Jim Lee, 205/882-0527, evenings, in Huntsville, Alabama.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLL MONOPOLY MUST BE BROKEN

Why won't the scholars assigned to edit the Dead Sea Scrolls allow anyone to see photographs of the unpublished manuscripts? That is the question that almost immediately arises in any discussion of the Dead Sea Scroll scandal. We have no good answer. Indeed, we don't think there is one.

Our usual answer is "You really ought to ask the scroll editors". We recently received a letter from Professor Burton Caine, of Temple University Law School, suggesting we invite chief scroll editor John Strugnell to give his views. We promptly took up the suggestion and issued the invitation to Strugnell on April 2, 1990. To date, no reply.

Most people's first thought is that the unpublished texts must contain a theological bombshell that someone - the scholars, a government, a religion - is trying to suppress. This is surely not the case. What then is the reason?

The scroll editors will never admit it, but the reason is simply the craving for power and control that motivates all monopolists - that and the fear of competition. During the past year, articles and interviews have appeared in hundreds of publications and on radio and television shows all over the world decrying the failure to release the unpublished texts. Many of the articles and interviews include statements from the recalcitrant scholars. We have culled these statements in an effort to understand what lies behind the intransigence of the scroll editors.

Most of the time, the scroll editors simply assume that the release of photographs would be terrible. No explanation needed. For example, Professor Joseph Baumgarten of Baltimore Hebrew University, when asked to release

photographs of the Damascus Documents, said this would be like sending them to the "New York Times" - as if this would be so bad.

The most insidious argument has been put forward by scroll editor Eugene Ulrich of Notre Dame University. Ulrich says the texts can't be released to other scholars because only the scroll editors themselves are competent to read the texts. If you open the texts to other scholars, they will only misread the texts and then circulate false information to the public, who will then be misinformed and misled. Once the public is misinformed, it will be difficult if not impossible to correct things. Therefore the texts must remain secret until edited by the present team of editors in order to protect the public.

According to Professor Ulrich, "The vast majority of people who will use these editions [of the Dead Sea Scrolls] - including average university professors... - are barely able to judge competently difficult readings."

Ulrich knows this sounds a bit extreme - is, in fact, an affront to hundreds of scholars who are not on the editing team - so he quickly continues, adding insult to injury, "I'm sorry if this sounds arrogant, but it's true." Chief scroll editor John Strugnell concurs. Strugnell has recently charged that no one at Tel Aviv University is qualified to edit a Dead Sea Scroll.

(From an article in "Biblical Archaeology Review", July/August 1990)

AN ICE-AGE MYSTERY

Around 12,000 years ago, according to long-held theory, a handful of fur-clad hunters crossed a now-submerged land bridge between Asia and Alaska and became the first humans to enter the New World. Ahead lay forbidding Yukon and Alberta, bounded by huge glaciers on either side.

Archaeologists have long believed that the hunters pioneered this bleak corridor in pursuit of bison, mammoth, musk ox, and caribou. Eventually they emerged on the Great Plains, grasslands teeming with an astounding variety of prey for the hunters. A human population explosion resulted, and in a matter of decades the hunters helped drive species such as mastodons, mammoths, and native camels and tapirs into extinction.

This dramatic "big game" theory of American origins has been stoutly defended by archaeologists for half a century. But is it correct?

Today, thanks to a wave of discoveries outside North America, nearly every aspect of the migration theory is under intense scrutiny. Fresh insights on the peopling of China, Japan and Siberia are redrawing the lines of debate on a much broader canvas, framed by the entire Pacific Rim. And a rash of controversial early dates from South America - a few even hinting at settlement prior to 30,000 years ago - challenges many of the assumptions of the old theory.

One of the most phenomenal of the South American discoveries is the site of Monte Verde, located in a remote, swampy flood plain, 30 miles from the Pacific, in southern Chile. Here, beside a creek, 13,000 years ago, a hunting and gathering band lived year-round in a dozen or so log-framed huts roofed with hides. Archaeologist Tom Dillehay of the University of Kentucky has uncovered the ancient living surface, complete with wood, plant, and even food remains. Such evidence is nearly always destroyed at conventional cave sites, but at Monte Verde a layer of waterlogged peat sealed the living floor almost as if it were a prehistoric Pompeii.

Astonishingly, a human footprint, a chunk of uneaten mastodon meat, even traces of herbal medicine (indicated by a concentration of 27 different plants still used by traditional healers in the Andes) were preserved under the peat. Monte Verde's inhabitants were skilled carpenters, to judge from numerous worked wood fragments carefully scorched and scraped into shape.

Dillehay's dig has won attention not only because of its uniquely preserved finds but also because of the meticulous nature of the study, involving more than 70 specialists from different fields. Monte Verde has helped convince many researchers that humans must have entered the New World as early as 15,000 to 13,000 years ago.

For more than 50 years the traditional picture has revolved around a North American big-game hunting culture that is known as Clovis because it was discovered at Clovis, New Mexico, in 1932. "The trouble with the 'big game' origins theory", declares its leading critic, Alan Bryan of the University of Alberta, "is, quite simply, it's a myth!" Not that Bryan denies the big-game connections of the Clovis spearpoints. Indeed, Clovis obviously does represent a highly successful response to the almost unlimited big-game hunting opportunities on the Great Plains.

The problem is that it was clearly a short-lived episode. All of the radiocarbon dates cluster tightly around 11,500 to 11,000 years ago. If we accept the conventional view that Clovis people really were the first Americans, it cannot explain how humans could have reached South America around 15,000 (or even 13,000) years ago. Nor does it explain why evidence for Clovis-like sites in Alaska and Siberia remains so meager.

The obvious alternative - that humans came over earlier, bringing with them a different and less specialized pre-Clovis culture - now tantalizes prehistoric archaeologists throughout the Americas.

A more serious suggestion by Ruth Gruhn of the University of Alberta supports the traditional Asia-Alaska route but challenges the traditional emphasis on big-game hunting. In her view, Asian coastal hunters could have taken advantage of a relatively warm interlude around 50,000 years ago, when temperatures in Alaska might actually have been milder than at present. Gruhn imagines that her coast dwellers worked their way around the northern coasts, fishing, hunting sea mammals, and snaring migrating wildfowl. Their adaptation to the coast meant they had little interest in the inland game herds

exploited much later by Clovis hunters. Instead, their communities would have multiplied rapidly along the coastal strip of North America until they reached Panama. Here, Gruhn supposes, the pioneers scattered in many different regions, including Chile and Brazil.

Attractive though her scenario is, the vital evidence that would confirm or disprove it now lies under the Pacific Ocean. As the climate slowly warmed toward the end of the Ice Age, huge volumes of water locked up in northern glaciers melted, refilling the ocean basins. Sea levels have risen by at least 300 feet over the past 15,000 years.

Surprisingly, no site in Alaska has yet been dated earlier than the Clovis era, around 11,500 years ago. Skeptics argue that this gap in the evidence casts doubt on the whole pre-Clovis theory.

However, a recent discovery across the Canadian border in the Yukon suggests that traces of earlier hunters may yet be found farther west. In the remote limestone foothills of the Keele Range, a well-preserved site known as Bluefish Caves has provided clear evidence of stone tools dating back at least 14,000 years. Even more remarkable is a chunk of mammoth bone, with flakes alongside it, obviously detached by a human craftsman, dating to around 25,000 years ago.

For 25 years anthropologist Christy Turner has pored over dental roots and crowns at his Arizona State University lab, building up an intricate picture of the similarities and differences between Old and New World teeth. Since the shapes of teeth change so slowly and constantly over thousands of years, the dental record offers Turner a powerful tool for probing relationships between ancient peoples.

In fact, by documenting how the tooth shapes change from one region or time period to another, Turner has arrived at stunning proof of the Asian heritage of all Native Americans: More than two dozen detailed similarities - specific features of roots or crowns - all link the dental record of northern Asia with that of the Americas. Turner's data support his estimate that the common ancestors of all New World peoples emerged in northern China around 20,000 years ago.

No solid evidence exists to suggest that humans made it to the New World before 40,000 years ago. Gruhn's theory of an earlier coastal migration is an intriguing conjecture, yet evidence from Asia implies that humans did not penetrate the far northern latitudes till much later. In fact, the windy plains of Beringia were most likely not crossed until the cold cycle of 25,000 to 15,000 years ago, when dry land linked the two continents for the last time.

(From an article by Evan Hadingham in "World Monitor", March 1990)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 20-29 each issue	(\$2.50 to Members) \$5.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue	\$5.00 pp
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<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types</i>	\$10.00 pp
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<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service	\$7.50 pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile)	\$7.00 pp

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