

Stones & Bones

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The Newsletter of the Alabama Archaeological Society

President's Letter

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that another year is almost over, and I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as AAS President for 2013. It has been a wonderful experience, and I have enjoyed meeting and corresponding with so many of you this year!

The Alabama Archaeological Society has had another successful year. Following an excellent Winter Meeting in Mobile, in May we were fortunate to once again be invited by the Black Belt Museum to be part of Community Day at Fort Tombecke. In June, we held a well-attended Summer Meeting at Oakville Indian Mounds near Danville, Alabama. Over the summer, the AAS was also invited by Wiregrass Archaeology to take part in investigations at a prehistoric archaeological site at Bay Minette. Many of our Southwestern Chapter members were fortunate to be able to take part in these exciting excavations. In addition, our regional chapters in Auburn, Coosa Valley, Cullman, Florence, Huntsville, Jacksonville State, Mobile, Muscle Shoals, and Troy hosted monthly lectures and field trips to sites, as well as activities associated with International Archaeology Day. It has been a great year for the AAS, and we are in the planning stages for another great year in 2014!

I am pleased to announce that the Troy Chapter will be hosting the 59th Annual Winter Meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society on February 8, 2014 at Landmark Park in Dothan, Alabama. A formal call for papers has just been sent out, and if you would like to present findings on recent archaeological research in the state of Alabama, please contact me. Although the formal agenda for the meeting has not been set, it will include one of our largest fundraisers, the annual Silent Book Auction – please consider donating your archaeology and/or history books and journals to help support the outreach activities of the AAS. Also, please continue to check our website, as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages, for the Winter Meeting program and

potential tours, as the agenda for the meeting is finalized.

Recently, I have answered several inquiries regarding the publication of the *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*, the Society's flagship journal. Currently, we are two years behind on publication. As many of you already know, the Journal was significantly delayed due to the unexpected and extended illness of our former editor. In 2013, our new editorial staff, under the direction of Dr. Ashley Dumas, has been working hard to get the *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* back on track. I am pleased to announce that the 2011 double issue is almost ready for formatting and publication. Society members whose dues were current in 2011 will receive a copy of this journal issue as soon as it is published. For our new members, I would like to ask that you continue to be patient with us as we work to get the journal up-to-date.

Thank you all for your continued support and membership in the Alabama Archaeological Society. I will look forward to seeing you all at the Winter Meeting in Dothan!

Eric Sipes, AAS President



Early Newspaper Accounts of Archaeological Sites and Remains in Alabama, Part II

By Donald B. Ball

Editor's note: This is the second part in a compilation of early references to prehistoric antiquities in Alabama from old newspapers. Says Dr. Ian Brown of the University of Alabama: "Newspapers and the like remain a little tapped source in archaeological and ethnohistorical studies." These accounts not only provide additional archaeological data, but they give us a taste of past attitudes toward Alabama's antiquities and native peoples.

Anonymous

1887 A Curious Figure. *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, Wednesday, December 21, 1887, pg. 6, col. 4. Fort Worth, Texas.

A CURIOUS FIGURE. A Prehistoric Image Turned Up by a Plow in Alabama Pittsburg Times.

An object of interest to the general public and one that claims the attention of archaeologists in particular is exhibited by Cain & Verner, corner Fifth avenue and Market street [city not specified but presumably Montgomery, Alabama]. The exact purpose the thing shown was designed to serve can only be explained by those versed in antiquity. A human head upon a bird-like body with a fantail, carved in stone, describes the appearance of a work that bears all the evidence of prehistoric origin. The face is purely Egyptian. Across the head is cast something resembling an amice [a liturgical vestment consisting of an oblong piece of white linen worn around the neck and shoulders], placed in such a manner as to reveal the entire forehead. The image is formed in such a manner as to be fairly balanced upon a base tapering from the middle of the body. The base is round and hollowed [to] a depth of about two inches, tapering in cone like form. A raised rim on the top or upper part of the body, hollowed in like manner and of the same dimensions as the hollow in the base, intersects a hole drilled at right angles with that bored through the upper part of the body.

The figure is 12 inches long and 9¾ inches high. Its weight is twenty-one pounds. The figure is perfect of its kind. There is a small fracture in the tail and a cut in the lower left

cheek. The proportions of the face are well preserved. The carving, though rude, is bold, and the effect produced striking considering the simplicity of the design. The material seems to be granite.

The manner in which it came into their possession is curious. Some time ago a citizen of Alabama informed the firm that his brother, A. Berkstressor, a farmer residing near Montgomery, Ala., while plowing, had turned up a strange image that was regarded as an Egyptian idol. Mr. Cain made further inquiry concerning the matter, and having satisfied himself with the statements made by the farmer had been verified by the people of Montgomery, secured the figure. All who have examined it express the opinion that it is undoubtedly prehistoric. It is said there is but one other figure similar to it, and that is in the Smithsonian Institute [sic].

Anonymous

1890 Untitled note on excavation of giants near Anniston, Alabama. *Fair Play*, Saturday, November 15, 1890, pg. 2, col. 1. Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.

The bones of some prehistoric giants have been unearthed near Anniston. Ala. One of the thigh bones was sixty two inches long, and the skulls averaged thirty four inches in circumference.

Anonymous

1895 Prehistoric Race. *Daily Public Ledger*, Monday, June 10, 1895, pg. 2, col. 4. Maysville, Kentucky.

PREHISTORIC RACE. Numerous Evidences of Its Existence Were Discovered in a Cave Near Barton, Ala.

Montgomery, Ala., June 10 – Recently a band of hunters found evidences of man's handiwork in the perpendicular stone bluffs on the side of the Tennessee river [sic] near Barton, Ala. They procured tools and removed a huge

square stone, which was found to block the entrance to an artificial cave hewn out of the solid rock of the bluff. In the cave were numerous crumbling human skeletons, vases and vessels, quaintly and uniquely carved, and differing from these found in the Indian mounds hereabouts. From the positions of the skeletons about them, it is believed that the cave was a prehistoric burial place. The relics will be submitted to archaeologists, and the investigation of the bluffs will be prosecuted further.

Anonymous

1900 Indian Skeleton Found. *The Evening Times*, Monday, November 12, 1900, pg. 2, cols. 5-6. Washington, D.C.

INDIAN SKELETON FOUND. Prehistoric Specimen Dug Out of an Alabama Mound.

Florence, Ala., Nov. 12. – Fred Green, a lumberman, while excavating an Indian mound on Seven-Mile Island a few miles below this city, unearthed a skeleton of a prehistoric Indian which would have been a valuable acquisition to the Smithsonian Institution if it had been properly handled.

The forehead of the skeleton had a band of copper and two large mica rings were found beside the skull. An earthen kettle which was a foot and a half in diameter was found resting over the skeleton while the remains of a number of smaller kettles were found in the grave.

Mr. Green presented D. H. Bacon of this city a number of the relics taken from the grave, which were sent to Prof. Henry C. Mercer of the University of Pennsylvania who has traveled extensively and made a study of ethnology and the prehistoric races. Some years ago Prof. Mercer was sent to explore the Tennessee Valley for relics of the now extinct Mound Builders but was taken ill at Chattanooga and was compelled to return to

his home.

Prof. Mercer made the following report on the specimens sent him: "The copper links, like those found in the Ohio Valley, likewise the mica (doubtless from North Carolina) as found with the human bones, refer to case burials doubtless by Mound Building Indians, and not geologically ancient. I wish some day to finish my explorations in the Tennessee Valley."

This section of North Alabama is rich in relics and Indian mounds. Besides the mound on Seven-Mile Island, which is referred to, the mound at the levee in this city is one the largest in the country, and is very much shaped like the Moundsville, W. Va., mound but not so large. Some miles below this city a large mound is surrounded by a circle of smaller mounds, indicating that the race were sun worshipers, and they may have been connected with the sun worshipers of New Mexico and Arizona.

Anonymous

1917 Seek Gold in Old Mounds. *The Tensas Gazette*, Friday, October 26, 1917, pg. 10, col. 3. St. Joseph, Louisiana.

SEEK GOLD IN OLD MOUNDS

Fortune Seekers Likely to Level the Indian Mounds Near Decatur, Alabama.

Decatur, Ala. – Indian mounds in this section will probably be leveled by fortune seekers. An Indian doctor recently told how a party of Indians from the Indian Nation in Oklahoma had come into the Tennessee valley and removed a quantity of gold from one of the mounds.

Every year, during the late summer, there are rumors of Indians mysteriously visiting the hunting grounds of the Cherokees for the purpose of recovering gold. The gold, it is said, was dug from the mount-

ains of North Alabama and North Georgia and when the Cherokees were moved to the West they buried their gold, fearing their white conquerors would take it from them.



Identification of Historical Stone and Masonry Landscapes on Alabama Army National Guard Land

By Heather R. Puckett, PhD, RPA

The Alabama Army National Guard (AL ARNG) recently met, along with members of the National Guard from neighboring states (Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee), with Federally-recognized Native American Tribes (Tribes) which hold ancestral ties to lands in the southeastern United States for an annual consultation meeting. Among the topics discussed were the multiple stone features found on AL ARNG training lands in Calhoun County. Panamerican Consultants, Inc., has been investigating several of these features on behalf of the AL ARNG since 2011.

The AL ARNG's in-house personnel – Dr. Heather Puckett, Ms. Rebecca Ridley, Mr. Andrew Scruggs, and Ms. Lori Ann Ray – also have been reviewing archaeological information regarding these features in combination with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

Using 2-foot digital elevation model (DEM) derived from LiDAR flown in 2012 by the Calhoun County Engineering Department, Rebecca has been able to produce a hillshade analysis of a portion of the AL ARNG's property to help facilitate this review. As can be imagined, this hillshade data has created a “kid in a candy shop” effect for all of us, with possibilities of identifying all kinds of historical land use. Current efforts, however, are focusing on identifying features that are most likely attributed to historical land use such as terracing associated with erosion control or agricultural/farming purposes; mining; and military related activities. From there, features that are inconclusive will be further investigated in coordination with the Tribes as potential ceremonial or sacred sites.

In a semi-unrelated project, the AL

ARNG also is examining stone masonry on its federal lands. Portions of Fort McClellan transferred to the AL ARNG following the 1995-1999 BRAC include stone bridges, culverts, and curbing that may relate to Work Progress Administration (WPA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and German Prisoner of War (POW) construction activities. Archival research supports association with all three of these groups between the 1930s and 1940s, and that some of these activities included landscaping, erosion control, farming assistance, and clearing of lands. As a result, an association with stone features on the AL ARNG training lands may be attributed to these groups as well.



Poverty Point Jasper Bead Found in Upper Wheeler Reservoir

By Ben Hoksbergen

A cylindrical red jasper bead was recently collected from the shoreline of Wheeler Reservoir during routine monitoring for illicit artifact collecting at site 1Ma26 on Redstone Arsenal in Madison County.

Site 1Ma26 is located on the current bank of the Tennessee River and includes the most substantial Gulf Formational component on Redstone Arsenal. Over a hundred Gulf Formational sherds have been collected at this site since 2005. Around 77 percent of the Gulf Formational sherds are sand-tempered Alexander ceramics, overwhelmingly dominated by Alexander Incised varieties, but also including O'Neal Plain, Alexander Pinched, and Alexander Punctated types. The remaining 33 percent are fiber-tempered Wheeler ceramics, with Wheeler Dentate Stamped occurring at around twice the numbers as Wheeler Plain. This site also yields the highest number of Early Woodland Watts Bar ceramics on Redstone Arsenal in numbers comparable to the Wheeler ceramics.

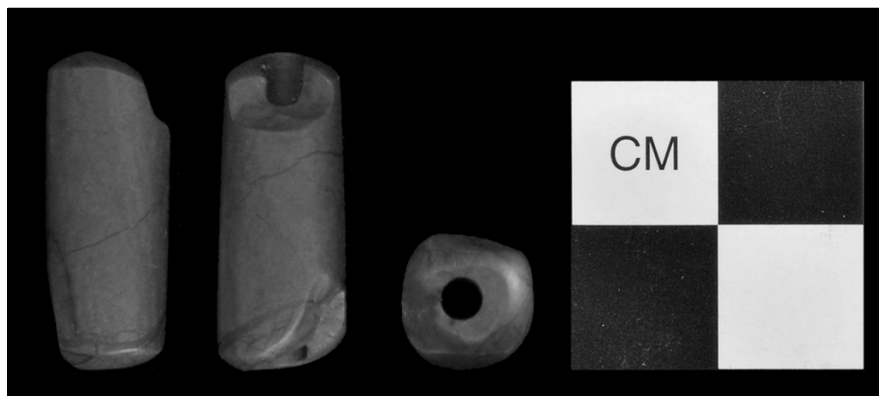
Salvage excavations of exposed features on the site in 2012 sampled a shell midden between 120 and 160 cm below the current surface of the riverbank. The midden did not yield any ceramics, but did yield a radiocarbon date of 2930±30 BP (1130 cal.

BC) (Trudeau et al. 2013) which may date the Gulf Formational component, although a steatite bowl sherd was found in the stratum directly above the midden suggesting that the midden is associated with a pre-ceramic component. Nonetheless, intact Gulf Formational deposits probably still exist on the site, and based on the similarity between this bead and those commonly found at contemporary Poverty Point culture sites, was probably the origin of the jasper bead.

The bead is made from a moderate red (5R 4/6) jasper with blackish red (5R 2/2) streaks made up of what appear to be mineral-filled micro-cracks. The bead is roughly cylindrical with a rounded-square cross section and convex ends. It measures 21.4 mm long, and the diameter ranges from 7.9 to 9.3 mm. The morphology of the bead suggests that it was manufactured by first flaking the jasper into a quatrefacial blank, similar to blanks found in the Middle Archaic Keenan Cache from Mississippi (Connaway 1981). Since it still retains somewhat flat sides, the bead was probably not turned on a primitive lathe (a process suggested by some - eg. Brookes 2004 - for the manufacture of similar beads), but was probably simply ground and polished. A 2.4 mm-diameter, perfectly cylindrical hole is drilled down the center. This hole was probably drilled after the blank was flaked but before the blank was polished since chip scars originating from the hole and probably resulting from the drilling process bear evidence of having been polished.

Similar beads have been documented on sites ranging from the Gulf Coast of Alabama to Arkansas, but the largest concentration is in Mississippi and Louisiana. While the jasper lapidary tradition appears to have had its roots in the Middle Archaic and may have been partially incorporated into the Benton Interaction Sphere (Brookes 2004), cylindrical and zoomorphic jasper beads are most commonly associated with the Late Archaic Poverty Point culture (Webb 1971).

The nearest recorded Poverty Point style beads were found eroding from an exposed burial on Seven Mile Island in the Pickwick Reservoir nearly 120 km downriver from 1Ma26. There were 32 beads recovered from the burial and the shoreline adjacent to it, including two zoomorphic beads and several spherical and cylindrical specimens (Jolly 1971). One of the cylindrical beads illustrated in the original report of this find is nearly identical to the one found on 1Ma26.



Red jasper bead from Site 1Ma26 on Redstone Arsenal

The Seven Mile Island burial was thought to be associated with an adjacent "Late Archaic/Early Woodland" shell midden (Jolly 1971). Likewise, the bead from 1Ma26 is thought to be associated with the Gulf Formational/Early Woodland component there. While jasper beads have been manufactured since the late Middle Archaic, only four Middle Archaic points have been recovered from 1Ma26, as opposed to at least 67 Flint Creek points – the type most commonly associated with Alexander ceramics, and 46 Wade and Cotaco Creek points, which are commonly associated with Wheeler ceramics.

It has long been known that the Poverty Point exchange network extended into the Tennessee Valley. Tennessee Valley chert types including Fort Payne and Knox have been identified in the lithic assemblage from Poverty Point (Carr and Stewart 2004), and sporadic Wheeler and Alexander sherds have been found throughout all phases of mound construction at Poverty Point (Gibson 2001). The Tennessee Valley was also probably the conduit for many of the steatite vessels imported to Poverty Point, and even a few sandstone vessel fragments that probably originated from vessels manufactured in north Alabama have been found at the Poverty Point site (Gibson 2001).

Certainly, along with physical commodities, Late Archaic and Gulf Formational groups must also have exchanged information. This might be manifested at Redstone Arsenal by a pair of features at the Williams Spring Site (1Ma1167). These features were both found on the floodplain of Indian Creek and consisted of small cylindrical pits filled with irregular fist-sized lumps of fired clay. Carbonized nutshell from one of these features (#11) yielded an AMS date of 3900±30 BP (2470-2290 cal. BC), a date comparable to that from the midden at 1Ma26. While in no way formalized

like the famous fired-clay Poverty Point objects of the lower Mississippi Valley, these lumps of clay probably functioned in the same way as a substitute for alluvial cobbles for secondary heating of food. Perhaps this was a trick learned by local hunter-gatherers from another group from far away where geological conditions had hidden any suitable rock under dozens of meters of river delta silt.

While beautifully-colored polished beads may have been attractive objects of desire that helped fuel inter-group exchange and marked individuals as participants in the exchange network, the information that traded hands between the groups surely provided the greatest benefit for survival and served to perpetuate relationships among far-flung populations.

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A New Volume on Southeastern Zooarchaeology

A new volume entitled *Trends and Traditions in Southeastern Zooarchaeology*, edited by Tanya M. Peres and published in the *Florida Museum of Natural History: Ripley P. Bullen Series*, is due to be published in February, 2014. As the title implies, the volume will contain chapters dedicated to various aspects of Southeastern zooarchaeology, from subsistence patterns of Confederate soldiers at the Florence (South Carolina) Stockade, to various uses of native shells (adornment, food, implement, and symbolic) among different cultures in different areas of the Southeast, to domestic dog burials in Jackson County, Alabama, to patterns of food procurement and concomitant economic status in antebellum upland Kentucky. The volume is currently in the final stage of review.

For those interested, visit the following web page to find out when the volume will be available:
<http://upf.com/seriesresult.asp?ser=bullen>

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Chapter News

News from the Coosa Valley Chapter

by Robyn Smith: The Coosa Valley Chapter/Jacksonville State University did not hold any meetings during the summer session of classes. Dr. Harry Holstein, several Jacksonville State University students, and members of the Archaeological Club did participate in the Spring Archaeological Dig at Bain's Gap, near Fort McClellan. The Dig ran from May 1 - 30, Monday through Thursday. It was a learning experience for students and new volunteers. The students learned the proper way to lay out sections for excavating, the necessity of sifting for artifacts, how to dig in the hard Alabama clay, and the proper way to document each day's activities and finds. The group found pottery shards, arrowheads, a large pit, and remnants of a wall and posts around a village located at Bain's Gap. The event ended with a Memorial Day Cook-out at Dr. Holstein's home.

The Chapter held its September 26, 2013 meeting at Martin Hall, Jacksonville State University Campus. Several members and guest attended, including all the volunteers who had worked on the Bain's Gap Archaeological Dig during May, 2013. Dr. Phillip Koerper, Chapter President, opened the meeting at 7:00PM. There was a short business meeting, then several announcements about future activities.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Dr. Harry Holstein who presented a slide show of the Bain's Gap Archaeological Dig and other locations that he had visited this past summer. Dr. Koerper informed the members that Dr. Holstein had received an award from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Longleaf Reserve during their 10th Anniversary Celebration this past summer honoring his assistance and work with the organization.

Our next chapter meeting will be October 24, 2013. If anyone has any questions or is interested in attending these meetings and needs additional information, please email JSU_Archaeology_Club-subscribe@yahoo.com. You may also visit our group at http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/JSU_Archaeology_Club/.



Dr. Harry Holstein outlines the day's activities at Bain's Gap



Dr. Holstein presents a slide show on the Bain's Gap excavation to the September meeting of the Coosa Chapter



Jacksonville State University students and volunteers hard at work at the Bain's Gap dig

News from the Cullman Chapter by Robbie Camp: The Cullman Chapter met Thursday, October 17th to the pleasure of a presentation on Marine Shell Rattlesnake Gorgets by Mark Crawford, a graduate student at Middle Tennessee State. Mark has a keen interest in the iconographic designs accompanying the rattlesnake design and the frequency of similar finds at numerous sites in the Southeast. It was a good program including a Power Point presentation of distribution charts and photos of some of the finest known examples to exist. We appreciate Mark driving down to share it with us.

The Cullman chapter met again Thursday, November 21st at the Cullman County Health Department. Eugene Futato, Deputy Director of the Office of Archaeological Research and Curator of Archaeological Collections for the University of Alabama Museums, presented an outstanding program on the Alabama Paleo Point Survey that he has spent many years gathering and documenting information for. After discussing the proper method of completing the official survey form, Eugene presented a Power Point presentation on the county by county totals and distribution patterns of paleo points and lithic materials.

We appreciate his efforts in compiling the survey and for driving to Cullman to share this project with our chapter. Our chapter will not meet in December but will resume on the 16th of January, 2014.

News from the Huntsville Chapter by Ben Hoksbergen: The International Archaeology Day event in Huntsville on October 19 was very successful by all counts! Over 200 people of all ages attended, and a good time was had by all. Thanks to all the participants that helped make it happen!

The Huntsville Chapter took a hiatus in October to recover from International Archaeology Day, but met again on Tuesday, November 26 for a presentation by Mark Norton of the Tennessee Division of Archaeology who discussed some of the premier Paleoindian sites in Tennessee and his experiences at the Paleoamerican Odyssey Conference that was held in October in Santa Fe including a comparison of the Paleoindian assemblages that were on display in the artifact room there.

Flotation has been completed on feature fill from the Tim Baker Site which underwent salvage excavation by Chapter volunteers in the fall of 2011. A radiocarbon sample from one of the features containing Long Branch Fabric Marked and Watts Bar ceramics along with Wade points has been submitted for AMS analysis. Sorting of the flotation samples is underway, and chapter meetings this spring will include sorting and analysis of the rest of the samples.



Huntsville Chapter member Mitch Sohn mans the AAS table at the Huntsville International Archaeology Day event

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DUES

Type	U.S.	Foreign
Annual Associate (under 18 years of age)	\$15.00	\$20.00
Annual Individual	\$25.00	\$30.00
Annual Family	\$30.00	\$35.00
Annual Institutional	\$50.00	\$55.00
Annual Sustaining Individual	\$35.00	\$40.00
Annual Sustaining Joint	\$40.00	\$45.00
Life Individual	\$500.00	\$600.00
Life Joint	\$600.00	\$700.00

AAS Research Grant

The AAS will grant an award of \$500 this year to a deserving archaeological research project. Grant proposals must be submitted to the Archaeological Resources Chairman by October 1st. The Board of Directors will vote on the proposals and announce the winner at the Winter Meeting. Minimum criteria for the grant are: 1) the project director/grant administrator must be a member of the AAS; 2) the project must be located in Alabama; 3) the project director or his or her representative will be required to present a paper on the archaeological project at the Winter Meeting; 4) the project director or other personnel working on the project must submit a written report for publication in the Journal of Alabama Archaeology within twelve months of receiving the grant.

Public Education Grant

The AAS will award public education grants this year in the amount of \$500. Single grant awards shall not exceed \$500. Proposals for grants must be submitted to the Chair of the Public Education Committee (see below) by October 1st. The Board will announce the grant recipient(s) at the Winter Meeting. Minimum criteria for the grants are: 1) the project director/grant administrator must be a member of the AAS; 2) the public education project must be located in the state of Alabama.

AAS Scholarships

The AAS will award up to two scholarships this year in the amount of \$250 each to undergraduate and/or graduate students attending an Alabama college or university. Scholarship nominations are to be submitted to the Archaeological Resources Committee Chair (see below) by October 1st. Each eligible student nominee must have an academic sponsor who must submit the nomination on the student's behalf. The nomination must take the form of a letter addressed to the Chair of the Archaeological Resources Committee. The letter must clearly identify both the nominee and the academic sponsor and must include pertinent contact information for both. The nomination letter must indicate the academic degree being sought and progress made to date toward that degree. The letter should include and discuss all the information necessary for the committee to evaluate the nominee. The sponsor should summarize the academic credentials and achievements of the nominee in the body of the nomination letter. The student must also be a member of the AAS.

Submit applications and questions to Hunter Johnson, Hunter@TVAREsearch.com, or Hunter Johnson, Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research, 2211 Seminole Drive, Suite 302, Huntsville, AL 35805

Additional details are available on the AAS website at:

www.alabamaarchaeology.org/aasgrants

Stones & Bones

Editor: Ben Hoksbergen; Assistant Editors: Teresa Paglione and Jason Mann

Stones & Bones is published bi-monthly at the beginning of January, March, May, July, September, and November. The deadline for submitting articles is the end of the month prior to publication. Articles, questions, and comments can be sent via email to:

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