

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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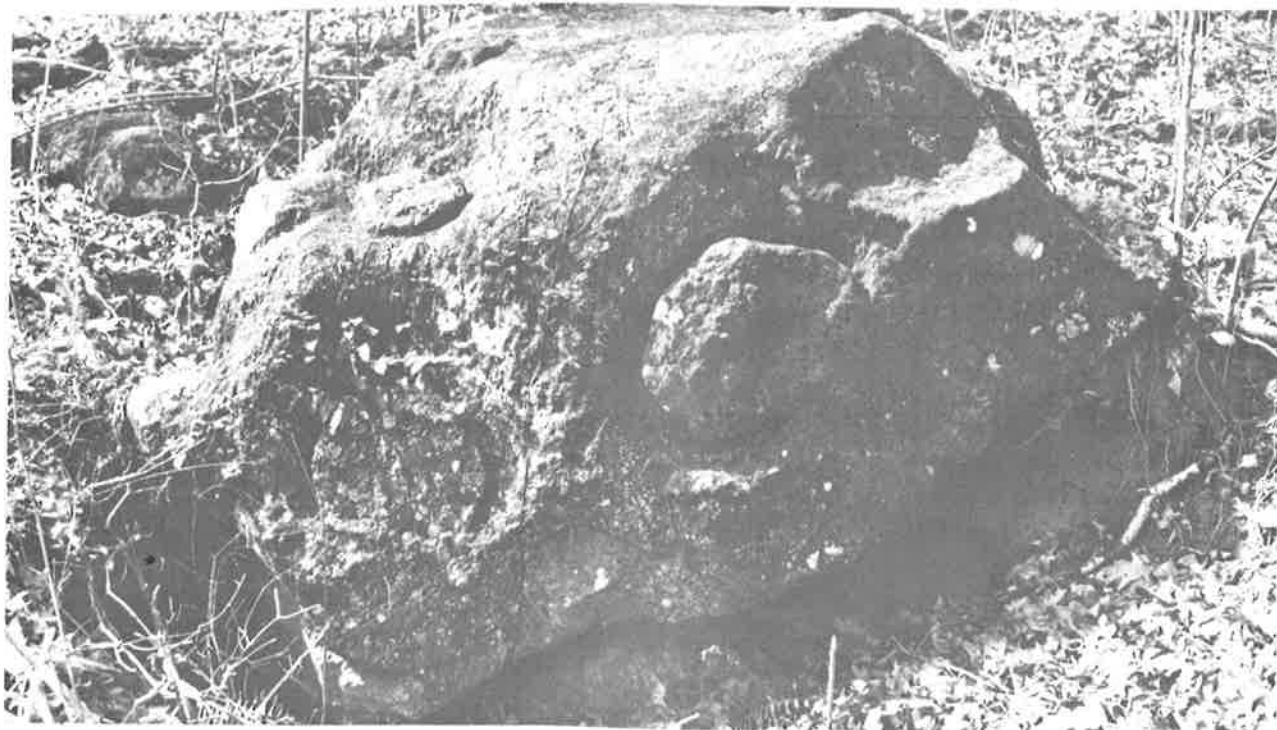
MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

GEORGIA TAKES STEPS TO PRESERVE VALUABLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Located in south DeKalb County below the South River and extending to the Clayton County line exists an area of largely undeveloped land with geological and archaeological sites of great value. Known as Soapstone Ridge, this area is one of the largest and best preserved aboriginal steatite quarries in the Southeastern United States. One of the ridge's greatest assets, however, is its key location in South Atlanta.

The ridge shows definite signs of use by the aboriginal Indians in the late Archaic period from 3000 B. C. - 1500 B. C. There is extensive evidence of both above-ground quarrying on exposed boulders and sub-surface quarrying for uneroded material. These early aborigines used the stone for making pots and bowls as well as spear throwing weights for their weapons.

Four prime archaeological sites have already been discovered on the ridge. There are reports of new sites which have just been uncovered due to the increasing interest in the ridge. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which Soapstone was used during other periods of Southern prehistory.



STEATITE QUARRY - DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA

The soft, foliated dark green rock underlying the ridge forms a sudsy matter when wet, thus leading the local residents to call the area Soapstone Ridge. The ridge is broken throughout by small faults and shear zones lined with schistose material, making it evident that very substantial deformation, and perhaps considerable movement, took place during or after emplacement. Intense folding is common; frequently recumbent and stretched into faults. Bulk chemical analyses of the rock average slightly over 45% silica, resulting in a classification as basic, and almost ultrabasic. The relatively rugged topography, unstable soil condition with frequent landslides on artificial slopes, and the prevalence of hard rock boulders throughout the soil zone have permitted relatively little major development of Soapstone Ridge. Satellite photography shows clearly how the City of Atlanta has grown up around this geologic obstacle.

Soapstone Ridge is surrounded by development. Land values are rising, and the pressure of DeKalb County's rapid population growth is ever increasing. At present, over 65% of the ridge is owned by speculators and developers. The land has been scarred and abused on several occasions by inappropriate development, but the bulk of the ridge remains in its natural state.

Increasing interest in the ridge's value to the Atlanta community is now being realized by several of the private citizens and Atlanta area environmentalists. Public controversy over the ridge centers around the rezoning of the land and the poor development practices of the land developers.

Georgia State University, according to Dr. Roy S. Dickens, Jr., Professor of Anthropology at GSU in Atlanta, is one of the organizations working for the site's preservation because "Soapstone Ridge is an important landmark of Prehistoric Georgia, and it should be preserved for future generations. If steps are not taken soon for its protection, it certainly will be lost to encroaching bulldozers."

(Photograph and text were abstracted from information prepared by Georgia State University and furnished by archaeologist Elizabeth Sheldon, Department of Sociology, Auburn University at Montgomery, Montgomery, Alabama 36117.)

THE JONES BLUFF LAKE REPORT

A valuable report on the Cultural Resources Inventory of the Jones Bluff Lake, Alabama River, Alabama, authored by Carey B. Oakley and G. Michael Watson, has recently become available. This is Report of Investigations No. 4, Office of Archaeological Research, University of Alabama. It has IX plus 587 pages and includes 70 illustrations and 16 tables.

In addition to the authors cited, the Historical Background Section was authored by three contributing authors who conducted archival research to supplement the archaeological field record. George E. Lankford, III, wrote the "Ethnohistorical Research Concerning the Alabama River Valley"; Kit C. Carter, III, wrote "An Historical Look at the Upper Alabama River Valley"; and Amos J. Wright, Jr., wrote the "Summary of Historic Indian Towns and Their Inhabitants".

The Jones Bluff Lock and Dam is located on the Alabama River at river mile 245.4. From that point the reservoir extends in an easterly course for approximately 134 kilometers. Due to the unusual logistics and topography, and the desire to fully evaluate all cultural resources (archaeological, historical and architectural), a method of exploration practiced by the Indians and first settlers of the area was used. An approach by road was often not feasible, suitable accommodations were seldom in close proximity, and as areas on both sides of the river were to be surveyed, work was carried on from a 22-foot pontoon boat equipped with minimal living accommodations for a crew of four.

Terrain was examined by a series of small test pits, numbering approximately 8,000, and over 50% of the sites recorded were located by these shovel test pits. The study of lithic material was made difficult by the extensive use of quartzite cobbles as raw materials but was accomplished by use of existing classification systems. Ceramic materials, both aboriginal and historical, were likewise classified according to established systems.

According to the report the cultural resources contained on the U. S. Corps of Engineers property have the potential to provide a complete overview of man's adaptation to this section of the Alabama River Valley, with the exception of Paleo-Indian occupation, which was not identified by the survey.

A grand total of 220 historic and prehistoric cultural resources were recorded. As expected, lithics were the most abundant, with a total of 75 categories established. The second most plentiful aboriginal cultural material was ceramics, with a total of 27 types catalogued. Historic artifacts recovered during the Jones Bluff Survey were grouped into categories of Glass, Ceramics, Iron, and Miscellaneous.

This report, with its site-by-site analysis of the entire 134-kilometer region, is commendable for its thoroughness and detail. With the extensive bibliography and supporting documentation, and the contributions by other researchers, this document is perhaps the outstanding archaeological reference for the area.

To make portions of this information generally available, the reprinting of some sections has been authorized. Lankford's contribution was carried in the June 1978 issue of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology, and Wright's report will appear in the December 1978 issue of the Journal.

The work was done in cooperation with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, in partial fulfillment of Contract Number DACW01-76-C-0121. For price and availability information, write: National Technical Information Service; U. S. Department of Commerce; 5285 Fort Royal Road; Springfield, Virginia 22161.

CHAPTER NEWS

Cullman Chapter - The first Chapter meeting of the year was on January 15 at the Colonel Cullman Home, and the guest speaker was Charles Hubbert. His program was based on his experiences while working on the Tallapoosa River during the 1977 season. The program also included valuable information on fish weirs.

East Alabama Chapter - On January 10, most of the Chapter members, and a large group of guests, traveled with Dr. Ralph Strength as he visited the ancient cities of Pachacamac, Cuzco and Machu Picchu. The slides, which he made last summer, showed the breath-taking beauty of the country, the tremendous size of the rock constructions and some of the archaeological excavations. A nominating committee was appointed: Ralph Strength, Dru McGowen and John Cottier, to prepare a slate of officers for 1979. At the meeting on Wednesday, February 14, in Thach Auditorium at 7:30, the election of Chapter officers will be held. The program will be a talk on the Burial Urn Culture of Central Alabama by John W. Cottier.

Huntsville Chapter - The speaker at the January meeting was Bart Henson, who brought the Chapter up to date on the results of his Indian rock art study in Alabama. Through slides, Bart illustrated examples of rock art found in adjacent states, comparing them with examples found in Alabama. The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room at the north end of the Von Braun Civic Center.

Muscle Shoals Chapter - The January meeting was held at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence, with 25 members and guests present on a frigid night. Bart Henson of the Huntsville Chapter presented a slide narration on pictographs and petroglyphs in the Tennessee Valley area. The point of the month program continued with the Copena point featured. John Adams and Charles Moore led the discussion and passed around examples.

NEW MEMBERS

Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Tribal Chairman	Route Three, Box 243-A; Atmore, Alabama 36502
Dean, Mr. & Mrs. A. Baker, Jr. (F)	F. O. Box 508; Opelika, Alabama 36801
Dees, Mr. & Mrs. Fred H. (JS)	Star Route B, Box 647; Atmore, Alabama 36502
Edwards, Mr. Jimmy F. (I)	1637 Winston Drive; Florence, Alabama 35630
USDI Conservation Records Interagency Archeological Service	1895 Phoenix Blvd.; Atlanta, Georgia 30349
Jones, Mr. & Mrs. W. F. (F)	Route Four, Box 507; North- port, Alabama 35476
Kittle, Mr. Paul D. (I)	720 Meridian Street; Florence, Alabama 35630
Morast, Mr. Frank Jr. (I)	1510 Dinglewood; Columbus, Georgia 31906
Padgett, Mr. Thomas J. (I)	Southern Station Box 9226; University of Southern Mississippi; Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401
Fage, Mr. Arthur E., Jr. (I)	2821 Marti Lane; Montgomery, Alabama 36116
Fower, Miss Sherry L. (A)	3930 Matterhorn Street; Mont- gomery, Alabama 36116
Rathbun, Mr. & Mrs. Fred C. (F)	4672 S-Fountain Circle; Littleton, Colorado 80123
Richardson, Mr. Charles A. (I)	Route Seven, Box 59; Jasper, Alabama 35501
Walker, Mr. Robert W. (I)	1834 Jackson Road; Florence, Alabama 35630
Watters, Mr. Barry (I)	Route Three; Rogersville, Alabama 35652
Weeks, Mr. J. D. (I)	1617 Magnolia Street; Garden- dale, Alabama 35071

AHC GRANTS OVER \$1 MILLION

The Alabama Historical Commission made more than \$1 million in grants-in-aid to historic preservation projects in Alabama this year. The fiscal year 1978 grants are funding preservation planning and survey projects as well as aiding in the acquisition, preservation and restoration of properties recorded on the National Register of Historic Places.

(From PRESERVATION REPORT, Vol. VII, Number 11, September-October 1978)

HISTORICAL NOTE

An entry in the minutes of the Georgia Council at their periodic meeting at Savannah dated 12 December 1754 says a lot in a few words. The discussion was on a recent visit the Creek headsmen had made to Mobile for a conference with the French governor and their general alarm that the Creeks may go over to the French interests.

"The Board could not but be somewhat alarmed at the contents of the aforesaid letter, as it confirm'd, what they had before repeatedly been informed of, especially as the Province is now in a defenseless state, having neither cannon, small arms, ammunition, fortifications, troops, nor even any Indian presents...."

(From Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. 7)

PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

THE SEARCH FOR LOST AMERICA - by S. M. Trento, 1978, 284 pp., \$10.95.

Many enigmatic and long-ignored stone structures lie hidden in the forests and perched on desolate hilltops in the Eastern U. S. Trento has investigated and described many of these standing stones, stone chambers, tunnels, caves, inscriptions, and other strange artifacts. (An appendix lists hundreds of such sites!) The chief value of the book is in the field reports, drawings, and photos; and the evidence is overwhelming. Trento takes issue with most professional archeologists in that he believes some of these stone structures are evidence of pre-Columbian contacts rather than Colonial root-cellars and other recent constructions. These sites have fuelled a marvelous controversy between Establishment Archeologists and "radicals" such as Trento, Barry Fell, and others. Available from William R. Corliss; The Sourcebook Project; P. O. Box 107; Glen Arm, Maryland 21057.

ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL

Arizona State University Department of Anthropology Archeological Field School in the Caribbean - will be held July 9-August 6, 1979, on St. Kitts, West Indies. Offers training in the recovery, analysis and interpretation of archeological remains and artifacts, the preparation of museum displays and didactic exhibits, and in archeological survey and test excavation in the pivotal island culture area connecting the two American continents. Write to Christopher Toodwin; Department of Anthropology; Arizona State University; Tempe, Arizona 85281.

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATIONS

Interagency Archeological Services Atlanta is seeking qualified small businesses and minority-owned businesses to conduct various cultural resources investigations including survey and evaluation of archeological, historical, and architectural sites and properties, site testing, and data recovery excavations. Interested firms are invited to submit their qualifications and direct inquiries to the following address. There is no time limit to this notice. Interagency Archeological Services - Atlanta Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service; 1895 Phoenix Blvd.; Atlanta, Georgia 30349.

(From Commerce Business Daily, Issue No. FSA-7234; December 29, 1978)

NOTE

Twelve of the 129 Indian artifacts stolen from the Kolomoki Museum in March 1974 have been located in Miami, Florida, at the home of 42-year-old James Shafer, II, a noted bottle collector and amateur archaeologist. Shafer says he traded some antique bottles for the clay pots which were excavated from burial/temple mounds 30 years ago by Dr. William Sears, now at Florida Atlantic University. Early County Sheriff Cree Thompson hopes to continue the search and recover the other artifacts, which were stolen by breaking open the museum's back door.

(From the Valley News Digest, Vol. 7, No. 1, of the Historic Chattahoochee Commission.)

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

MEETINGS

The 14th Annual Meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, February 22-24, 1979. The convention headquarters will be the Sheraton Convention Center Hotel.

The Alabama Academy of Science will meet at the University of North Alabama, Florence, on March 29-31. The Section Chairman of Anthropology is Dr. Robert Fornaro, Sociology/Anthropology; University of South Alabama; Mobile, Alabama 36688.

The Georgia Academy of Science will meet at Augusta College, Augusta, Georgia, on April 20-21, 1979. The Section Chairman of Anthropology; Georgia State University; Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

The Society for Georgia Archaeology will meet in Baldwin Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, on April 27 and 28, 1979.

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THE USS MONITOR?

A master plan produced by the North Carolina Department of Archives on what to do with the sunken Civil War ironclad USS Monitor was discussed in October by 30 persons meeting at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. The plan informally suggests four possible options ranging from raising the vessel to leaving it on the bottom in 220 feet of water off Cape Hatteras, with some management of research on the wreck involving less extreme alternatives. The wreck lies in a marine sanctuary that is under the purview of the Office of Coastal Zone Management of NCAA. North Carolina, with a clear vested interest in the wreck, took the initiative in developing the plan.

(From Sea Technology, December 1978)

AWARD PRESENTED

Mr. T. J. "Joe" Feddy, a native of Loachapoka, has been presented the first Peter Alexander Brannon Memorial Award for his compilation of the letters of Col. John Crowell of Fort Mitchell, Indian Agent, Alabama's only Territorial delegate and Alabama's first Congressman; and for his compilation of news accounts of the Creek Wars.

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

JOURNAL OF ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGY

According to Journal Editor Eugene Futato, the December 1978 issue of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology is in the mail, and all AAS members should receive their copy soon.