

Alabama Archaeological Society

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

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FIRST ALERT - WINTER MEETING

Our annual winter meeting will be held on December 7, 1985 in the Florence area of Northwest Alabama. The guest speaker for this year will be Gregory Perino of the Gilcrease Museum, who will discuss mortuary patterns of the Eastern United States. At this time I am soliciting mini-papers of 15 to 20 minutes in length, concerned with similar mortuary topics. Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you would like to present a paper at this meeting.

Carey B. Oakley
Program Chairman
Moundville

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The following is the tentative schedule of the Birmingham Archaeological Society for 1985-86.

September 12 - Charles Hubbert (University of Alabama), "Settlement Patterns of North Alabama".

October 12 - Ned Jenkins (Ft. Toulouse), "Ft. Toulouse and Ft. Jackson".

November 14 - Jim Knight (University of Alabama), "Creek Village of Tookabatchie".

December 12 - Gordon Bell (Red Mountain Museum), "The Sloths".

January 9 - Caleb "Sonny" Curren (Camden), "DeSoto's Path".

February 13 - Charles and Mary-Eliza Moore (Florence), "Archaeology of the Southwest".

March 13 - Roger Nance (University of Alabama/Birmingham), "Guatemala".

September 1985

April 10 - Mike O'Connor (University of Alabama/Birmingham), "The Iroquis".

May 8 - A. B. Hooper (Albertville), "Pebble Tools".

Note: All meetings are free to the public; annual dues are \$5 per person or family. Meetings will be held the second Thursday of each month at the Red Mountain Museum Auditorium, 7:00 p.m. Coffee and cookies will be served, along with "show and tell" of artifacts, etc., with the regular meeting beginning at 7:30. For further information call Annette Otts - President - at 674-0920 or 323-8800.

Annette Otts
Birmingham

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The speaker at the August meeting was chapter member Larry Warren. Larry's topic was the chronology of the Dalton projectile point in the Tennessee Valley and surrounding areas. Following his presentation, Larry led a group discussion on this subject.

Howard King of Cullman will be the speaker at the next Huntsville Chapter meeting. Howard will speak on the Clovis point. For more information on Huntsville Chapter programs and activities, call Program Chairman Ellis Whitt at 883-9065.

Dorothy Luke
Huntsville

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

I am making a survey of corner tang scrapers. I would appreciate having the following information from readers who have such artifacts, as follows:

1. Sketch of shape
2. Whether biface or uniface
3. Approximate location of find
4. Number in collection

I am particularly interested in uniface types. A postcard will do. Information from any source will be appreciated. Perhaps the information will give data for a future article in the newsletter.

Thanks very much to those who will take the time to help. So far as I know, there is no recent published data on these interesting and rare tools.

Elbert Adams
517 Karnes Street
Ft. Worth, Texas 76111

BOOK REVIEW

"A Field Guide to Prehistoric Life" - by David Lambert, 1985, 256 pages, 500 illustrations, maps and charts. Available from Facts on File, 460 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016 for \$17.95 (hardbound).

The Guide provides the amateur fossil collector with a very complete and comprehensive means of understanding the earth's fossilized past. In hundreds of clearly drawn two-color illustrations, it makes it possible for readers of all ages to follow the evolution of organic life from the depths of the oceans to the shifting land masses of the earth's surface. The book also provides explanations of all the periods and epochs into which fossil life is divided. It is an excellent all-around book for persons interested in learning, and having a reference to, the basics of fossils.

The Editors

"LOST IN TIME"

"Lost in Time: Early Alabama Indians", a one-hour docu-drama about the inhabitants of Alabama from the time of the crossing of the Bering Straits to the arrival of Spanish Conquistadores in 1540 A.D., will be broadcast nationally on PBS-TV September 24.

"Lost in Time" traces the developmental process of human societies in Alabama from the earliest times through the recent modern era, capped by the development of the Mississippian Culture.

S. D. Yana Davis
Birmingham

INDIAN CALENDAR STICK

The 1828 portrait shows Winnebago Indian Chief Tshi-zun-hau-kau in full regalia: an ax in his left hand, a pendant around his neck, and a wooden stick bearing strange marks in his right hand. That long-forgotten stick, says anthropologist Alexander Marshack, represents an ancient, unrecognized system of Indian astronomical observation.

The calendar stick, as it is called, is about 53 inches long and has four faces. Vertical marks are etched into it at regular intervals; above them are small crescents and dots.

Marshack's analysis indicates the stick is a record of the lunar year. Other marks appear to have been used to bring the lunar year in phase with the solar year. Still others seem to indicate the time of various rituals. Marshack has located at least five such calendar sticks from three different tribes.

The Indian custom of naming months for annual phenomena - such as the "planting moon" or the "moon of the first rains" - is well known, says Marshack, as are their astronomical observations. "But this stick", he says, "is the first indication that they recorded the structure of the whole year, day by day, by watching the sky".

And it's likely, he says, that this tradition came from Asia with the Indians' ancestors and led to such devices as the well-known solstice markers. Neolithic tribes in Siberia, for instance, also tracked the lunar month and named the months after various activities. Says University of Maryland astronomer John Carlson: "It may indicate a cultural continuity across two continents, a living tradition 10,000 years old".

(From "Science", March 1985)

The Editors

AMERICAN INDIAN MEDICINE

The image of the medicine man, as portrayed by the media, tends to concentrate on Shamanistic practices, with a primitive savage dressed in buffalo skins dancing around a totem pole. Whilst ritual played an important part in Indian curing procedures, there was also an extensive use of rational therapy, mainly in the form of indigenous botanical drugs.

Medicine men dressed in a costume of animal skins, and carried a medicine bundle containing charms and herbs, hollow bones for sucking, primitive syringes and an instrument to ward off evil spirits, such as a gourd rattle or a drum. Most medicine men performed rituals, which varied from region to region and from tribe to tribe. Generally, after questioning the patient about his illness, the medicine man would shake his gourd rattle and chant aloud the remedy required, as proclaimed to him by various animal spirits. He would then concoct the appropriate remedy with herbs and water, some of which the patient would drink and some of which he would take into his own mouth to spit onto the area concerned, which was then tightly bound. The medicine man would return twice daily for rituals of chants and vigorous sucking of the ailing area. With the latter method an object would eventually be retrieved which was believed to be the cause of the problem - such as an eagle's claw. The patient would then bathe, the medicine man would accept his gifts from the grateful relatives, and then depart.

Botanical remedies were the mainstay of treatment used by the Indians. Over 200 different species of plants were used and although in retrospect many were worthless, a surprising number were effective and several occur in the American pharmacopoeia today. The Indians applied the homeopathic principle of "like cures like", with red flowers for bleeding disorders, yellow flowers for jaundice and the plant snake root for snake bites. Cathartics and emetics were used extensively to rid the body of "evil spirits". Enemas were administered using an animal bladder, with either a hollow reed or an animal bone as a nozzle; and the Indians of Central Amazon were the first to use rubber in this device.

The anaesthetic properties of cocaine (derived from coca leaves) were well known to the Incas, hundreds of years before their description by Carl Koller in 1884. Another important anaesthetic agent, curare, that enables so many general anaesthetics to be performed today, was used first by the Incas as a poison for hunting. Also, quinine was first used by Indians as an antipyretic, in the form of chinchona bark extract.

The Yukon Indians recognized that the deleterious effects of scurvy could be prevented by the ingestion of spruce boughs and animal adrenals, both of which are very rich sources of Vitamin C. Captain Cook may have been aware of this, because on his long voyages at the end of the 18th century he took spruce boughs with him, from which was fermented a type of beer. Endemic goiter was not uncommon, and certain Indian tribes recognized that fish and sea products, both rich sources of iodine, could be used to prevent "big neck". Diabetes occurred rarely, and interestingly British Columbian Indians used a hot root bark infusion of Devil's Club for prevention and treatment of this condition. Subsequently, experiments performed on rabbits which were given this substance orally showed that it decreased blood sugar substantially without toxic effects. This so impressed Dr. Frederick Banting, the discoverer of insulin, that he experimented on many of the Indian treatments in an attempt to learn the secrets of their reputed cure.

However, many of the Indian therapies appear so bizarre that it is difficult to believe that they were effective; for example, the use of tobacco smoke blown into aching ears, and the application of capsicum juice to sore eyes. Similarly, the application by Mexican Indians of dog excrement to burns can hardly have been beneficial. One of the more intriguing treatments was for epilepsy used by the South American Indians, who induced a state of temporary paralysis produced by a shock from the electric eel.

There are many reports in the literature of Indians performing simple surgical procedures. They were very skilled in the treatment of fractures and dislocations, immobilizing fractures with wood or the elastic ribs of the cactus plant. A variety of material was used for suturing. In North America, human hair, deer tendon and vegetable fibers were favored, whilst in the south the Indians devised an intriguing way of closing wounds, using leaf-cutting ants: the wound edges were opposed and held in position by the claws of the ants, whose heads were then twisted off, rather like a primitive auto-suture. Wounds were irrigated with boiling water using a type of syringe fashioned from an animal bladder and suitable quill, and postoperatively were drained using twisted cloth wicks.

Each tribe had its favorite method of arresting hemorrhage. The Apaches used spiders' webs, Cherokees used buzzard feathers, and the Ojib used the pulverized heads of puffballs. Nosebleeds were treated by stuffing the nostrils with leaves. The types of operation performed were mainly suturing of lacerations and drainage of abscesses, but there were others. Certainly amputations were performed, most commonly on their captives' feet, and especially interesting are the various accounts of the use of skin grafts afterwards.

The Indians were very skilled in the field of obstetrics and gynecology, and even used the properties of certain herbs for contraceptive purposes. The Nevada Shoshone Indians used stone seed (active ingredient lithspermia), which has subsequently been shown to inhibit gonadotrophin activity on the ovary. Abortion, using herbal and physical techniques, was practiced on unmarried mothers, in cases of extreme poverty, and when the father was white. Menstruation was taboo, and a menstruating squaw was confined to a separate lodge, given a special diet, and not allowed to work. She would use a pliable piece of buffalo skin as a sanitary towel. During pregnancy, malposition was corrected by manipulation, and during labor the oxytocic properties of cotton plant roots were utilized. The method of delivery of the placenta using external pressure was used at least 100 years before it was described by Crede in the late 19th century.

Today Indians depend more on white doctors and hospitals, the service provided to them free if they are on reservations, but they still resort to their medicine men if a cure is not forthcoming. If the Indian medicine man eventually disappears, he will nevertheless have left to mankind an important store of remedies and curing methods which, however irrational his notions about them, have often proved useful to the conquerers and will stand as his enduring monument.

(From an Article by M. J. Hershman and K. M. Campion in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, Volume 78, June 1985.)

The Editors

THEY WON'T TALK TO US

Several months ago when we were running some articles on the Federal Antiquities Act enforcement on Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, we mailed Congressman Flippo, Senator Denton and Senator Heflin copies and asked for their opinions and comments to be published in the STONES & BONES. We have heard nothing from these representatives of the people. Just thought you readers should know of this response - or non-response.

The Editors

NASA, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER, STUDY PERUVIAN ANDES AREA

Satellite imaging and remote sensing technology will be used to probe the tropical Andean jungles for archaeological remains in Peru's Rio Abiseo National Park.

NASA's National Space Technology Laboratories (NSTL) in Mississippi, through its Earth Resources Laboratory, will collaborate in the project with the Anthropology Department of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The archaeological interests in the park include the ancient site of Gran Patajen, the subtropical cloud forest and the park's diverse ecology. Data from the Landsat Earth Resources satellite will be combined with information gathered by a specially-equipped aircraft from NSTL.

Sophisticated instrumentation will allow researchers to "see" through the dense vegetation to locate evidence of past settlements in the now uninhabited region. Interesting geographical features and variation in vegetation may be observed and mapped as well.

(From an Article in "NASA Activities", June 1985)

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

"Alabama and the Borderlands - from Prehistory to Statehood" - edited by R. Reid Badger and Lawrence A. Clayton.

Eleven essays by some of the most distinguished scholars working today in the fields of history and anthropology provide a "state-of-the-art" view of the archaeology and early history of Alabama. The essays range from the most recent findings related to the route and impact of Hernando de Soto's march in 1539 to provocative generalizations on Mississippian Indian cultures.

Available for \$27.50 plus \$1.00 postage from The University of Alabama Press, Box 2877, University, Alabama 35486.

"Structure and Process in Southeastern Archaeology" - edited by Roy S. Dickens, Jr. and H. Trawick Ward. Available for \$35.00 plus \$1.00 postage from The University of Alabama Press, Box 2877, University, Alabama 35486.

"McKeithen Weeden Island: The Culture of Northern Florida, A.D. 200-900" - edited by Jerald Milanich et al. Provides an overview of the Weeden Island peoples who flourished in northern Florida, southeastern Alabama, and southwestern Georgia during the period A.D. 200-900. The temporal and geographic contexts of the culture are studied along with the importance of Weeden Island for understanding the evolution of southeastern cultures, including the appearance of pre-Mississippian societies.

Available for \$44.50 from Academic Press, Promotion Department, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, Florida 32821.

The Editors

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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Special Publication 2 — <i>The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County, Alabama</i>	\$4.50 pp
Special Publication 3 — <i>Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend</i>	\$6.50 pp
<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types</i>	\$10.00 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00 pp
<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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1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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