

# Alabama Archaeological Society

Associate Editors  
Bart Henson  
Dorothy Luke



## STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

Editor  
Amos J. Wright  
2602 Green Mountain Rd.  
Huntsville, Alabama 35803

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Volume 30

Number 4

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The A.A.S. Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, April 6, at 7 p.m. at the Western Sizzling Restaurant at the I-65/Oxmoor Road interchange in Birmingham. We would like to remind chapter presidents that they are members of the Board during their terms in office. One of the main items of discussion during the April 6 meeting will be the location of the summer and winter A.A.S. meetings.

The Editors

### SMITH BOTTOM CAVE

The Smith Bottom Cave, an important archaeological site located on Tennessee Valley Authority property near Florence, Alabama, is only one example of the many opportunities that exist for TVA to contribute to the preservation and understanding of our cultural resources in north Alabama.

In addition to materials recovered from Smith Bottom Cave in two seasons of work by our staff, this Museum has approximately 40 tons of other archaeological collections, most of which is from the Tennessee Valley. These collections resulted from extensive WPA-era excavations carried out in the Pickwick, Wheeler and Gunter Reservoirs and represent some 8,000 years of human habitation along the Tennessee River in Alabama.

More work must be done at Smith Bottom Cave, which may be the oldest known human habitation site in Alabama, and curation of the massive archaeological collections from the region must be undertaken. With adequate funding, the Tennessee Valley Authority can take the lead in supporting field investigations, curation efforts, and the development of museum displays throughout the region.

You may wish to participate in efforts to preserve Alabama's important cultural resources by contacting your elected representatives in Congress regarding the positive benefits that could result for your community should money be made available to TVA specifically for archaeological projects. We estimate that \$1 million would be sufficient to support a

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five-year program to continue important research projects such as Smith Bottom Cave, curate existing materials and develop a series of first-rate displays to be exchanged by regional museums.

Carey B. Oakley  
Moundville

#### CHAPTER NEWS

##### Cullman Chapter

Our February meeting was a good one, with 16 present and a good program by Van King on "Flint Knapping". Three new members joined our Society. The last chapter meeting was Monday night, March 21.

Eulis King

##### Huntsville Chapter

The speaker for the March 22 meeting was Dr. Harry O. Holstein. Dr. Holstein is a professional archaeologist on the faculty of Jacksonville State University. His presentation was an overview of Coosa Valley archaeology. He also touched on the Hightower Site and on current research on greenstone.

Dorothy Luke

#### CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTMENT

In the spring of 1865 Selma's Naval Ordnance Works, Army Arsenal, and Ironclad Shipyard were the South's last chance for continued resistance. Their destruction was the mission of General Wilson's Union forces. Selma's defenses were strong, and the Confederate troops were led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the man who had never lost a battle.

Visit the Battle of Selma Civil War Re-Enactment April 15, 16 and 17. See authentic Civil War camps and take a ride on the river boat "General Richard Montgomery". See troops in full Civil War uniforms and much more. For more information call 205/875-7241.

The Editors

#### THE WHEEL IN EARLY MESOAMERICA

An article in "Scientific American", February 1988, describes the invention of the wheel in Mexico by the Toltecs circa 750 A.D.

The University of Alabama professor Richard A. Diehl is given credit for exploring this wheel culture in his excavations at Tula in Mexico. Here many wheeled toy-like animal figurines were unearthed. Axle holes were made through the legs and two pairs of wheels mounted on the axles. Here is a clear understanding of the use of wheels in early America. Unfortunately, this idea seems not to have been further developed as was done in the Near East in early times.

Diehl believes these objects were used in a ritualistic manner in the homes of these people. He notes the Toltecs had no animals of the size or strength needed to apply the wheel to wagons or moving materials, and hence never developed the idea further. This promoted the idea that the wheel was useless to mankind without domesticated animals of the size and strength to pull wheeled vehicles.

The popular notion that the invention of the wheel gave birth to an advanced society in Paleo times perhaps should be changed to give credit to the domestication of animals!

James H. Rives, Sr.  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

#### INDIAN HERITAGE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Former Congressman Jack Brinkley of Columbus, Georgia has agreed to serve as organizing chairman of the Indian Heritage Memorial Association. The Association, now in the early stages of formation, will supervise the design, fund raising and construction of an Indian Heritage Memorial to be located at Fort Mitchell, Alabama. The idea for the memorial was originally conceived by Historic Chattahoochee Commission executive director Douglas Purcell of Eufaula. The Commission's Board of Directors has endorsed the project and provided \$15,000 in seed monies for design of the memorial.

The memorial would be designed to focus attention on the role Indians played in developing the Chattahoochee Valley area, which was at the center of the Creek Indian Nation. Fort Mitchell, Alabama has been proposed as the location for the memorial because of the important role that it played in the removal of the Indians to the West. It was also located near the two principal Creek Indian Nation towns and was the residence of the Creek Indian Agent. The Commission believes that the memorial can be dedicated by 1991.

For further information contact:

Douglas Clare Purcell, Executive Director  
Historic Chattahoochee Commission  
P. O. Box 33  
Eufaula, Alabama 36027

Phone 205/687-9755

### NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CONQUEST AND COLONIZATION

"Rethinking the Encounter: New Perspectives on Conquest and Colonization" will be the topic of a conference April 17-20, 1988 at the University of Florida, Gainesville. Major subjects to be covered are "The Frontiers of Europe: Modes of Colonization", "Columbian Exchanges", and "The Formation of Colonial Identity". For more information contact the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies; Michael V. Gannon, Director; 2121 Turlington Hall; University of Florida; Gainesville, Florida 32611; or phone 904/392-1503.

The Editors

### OLD BOOK RE-DISCOVERED

In the early 18th century, a Spanish officer traveled north into what is now the State of New Mexico, U.S.A., to establish a ranch south of the City of Albuquerque. Having selected the site for his rancho along the valley of the Rio Grande, he pressed into his service a number of Indians from the Isleta Pueblo to help in the construction of his adobe hacienda.

During a lull in the construction, the Spanish gentleman took some time to read from a French edition of the Cortez Expedition (published in Paris in 1692). When work resumed, he carelessly placed this book upon a partially completed three-foot-thick adobe mud wall, whereupon the book was covered over by the Indian workers by several courses of adobe bricks, and the hacienda was completed sometime about 1706-1710.

The book then was imprisoned within this wall for some 277 years, when it was re-discovered through remodeling and restoration of the building in 1982.

(From a press release from Cartographer, Ink; Albuquerque, New Mexico)

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### MAMMOTH BOOMERANG

Australian aborigines do not have a monopoly on the boomerang. True, their name for the spinning, soaring device has stuck, and they are the only people still using it for hunting and sport. But variations on the ancient weapon have been discovered on four other continents: "killing sticks" were used by peoples ranging from the Hopi of the Southwest to the Aleuts of Alaska; a gold-tipped boomerang was found in the tomb of Tutankamen.

Now a boomerang carved from a curved piece of mammoth tusk has turned up in Poland, and it appears to be the oldest one yet. Based on the age of human and animal remains found with it, the artifact is thought to be about 23,000 years old. The oldest Australian boomerangs, recovered from a swamp in South Australia, are 9,000 to 10,000 years old.

Archaeologist Pawel Valde-Nowak of the Institute of the History of Material Culture in Krakow led the team that uncovered the specimen in a cave in southern Poland. The same site also yielded the oldest human bone (a thumb bone) ever found in Poland and a great number of reindeer bones - so many that the researchers conclude that reindeer were the main prey of the people of the region.

Valde-Nowak reports in "Nature" that the crescent of mammoth tusk is about 27 inches long, two and a half inches wide at its broadest point, and slightly more than half an inch thick. It has the distinctive cross section of an airfoil, with one face convex - actually the original curved surface of the tusk - and the other side polished flat.

The discovery did not surprise Olga Soffer, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana who specializes in eastern European cultures. Hunters 23,000 years ago were experimenting with a variety of weapons that were a step beyond a rock or a spear, Soffer says. "We know that the people of this time were learning to kill without brute force, by trapping, bows and arrows, and other techniques", she explains. "The people of earlier eras had to be husky and very robust to kill big game with hand-held spears. In the later Paleolithic we see more gracile people - taller and more slender. They were very sophisticated, and if this is a boomerang, it would be yet another example of long-distance killing power".

(From "Discover", March 1988)

The Editors

#### LEARJET WILL SEARCH FOR ANCIENT ROADS

A NASA Learjet, equipped with heat-seeking detection devices, recently flew over Chaco Canyon to look for prehistoric roads radiating from the canyon's 1,000-year-old Anasazi ruins.

The results aren't complete yet, but NASA staff archaeologist Tom Sever is betting the sophisticated computer-imaging system will find roads - some of the oldest in the country - that have escaped detection through ordinary aerial photography.

Chaco Canyon holds some of the most spectacular ruins left by pre-historic Southwestern people, called the Anasazi.

The pinnacle of Anasazi society occurred in Chaco Canyon, which is believed to have been the center of social and religious activity from A.D. 950 to A.D. 1100.

Ancient roads, which some archaeologists say were built for religious reasons and not travel, extend from the canyon.

A device called a Thermal Infrared Multispectral Scanner makes an image of an object by measuring the heat it emits. The Learjet, with a thermal system mounted on it, has scanned Chaco Canyon and the area around it five times since 1981, Sever said. The last time was January 29 and was performed from about 6,000 feet.

The images will be analyzed by Sever, who works at NASA's Earth Resources Laboratories, part of the National Space Technology Laboratories Station near New Orleans.

Verification means recruiting teams of archaeologists to walk the area and match computer images with the land contours, said Bureau of Land Management archaeologist John Roney. Ground surveys are expected to be done this summer.

"The entire roadway system is a mystery. There are many explanations and hypotheses, which is what we're trying to test", Sever said. An eight-year study on Chaco roads recently completed by Roney and other archaeologists suggests the roads were built for ceremonial reasons. Roney added, however, that little is known about the roads and other architectural features.

(From an article by Julie Klein, a reporter for The Albuquerque Tribune, in the Birmingham Post-Herald; Tuesday, March 8, 1988)

The Editors

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Society for Ethnohistory will meet at The Royce Hotel; Williamsburg, Virginia; November 11-13, 1988.

Proposals for individual papers and especially organized sessions (no more than four papers and one commentary); three papers preferable) due by June 1, 1988. Send abstracts of each paper (100-200 words suitable for program), brief vitae of each participant (including affiliation, address, telephone and major publications), and preregistration fee (\$20 for members, \$30 for nonmembers) to Professor James Axtell; Department of History; College of William and Mary; Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

The Editors

### OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE MOVES TO PROTECT BURIAL GROUNDS

The law, based on legislation drafted by Senator Kelly Haney of Seminole and Representative Don Anderson of Osage County, includes several levels of protection.

One section states that "anyone who knowingly buys, sells or barter for profit human skeletal remains or associated burial furniture, previously buried within the State of Oklahoma, shall be guilty of a felony".

Other sections make it a misdemeanor for not reporting discovered burial remains and a felony for disturbing burial remains. In addition, the law directs all colleges and museums in the state to contact tribal leaders or the Indian Affairs Commission before scientific or educational use of burial remains.

Senator Haney believes that this new law will help protect an important aspect of Native American life in Oklahoma. "We have to be conscious of our forefathers' heritage", he stresses. "We must honor the sanctity of their burial sites and discourage the immoral exploitation of their remains".

(From an article in "Mistletoe Leaves", publication of the Oklahoma Historical Society; 1988 Vol. 19, No. 2)

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### PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

THE ADKINS SITE: A Paleo-Indian Habitation and Associated Stone Structure. By Richard Michael Gramly.

A detailed account of 1984-1987 excavations at a well-preserved Paleo-Indian site in Maine with fluted points and other stone tools. At this encampment stood a stone structure, perhaps a meat store, which is the oldest known rock construction in North America.

Available from: Persimmon Press; 118 Tillinghast Place; Buffalo, New York 14216. \$12.95 each plus \$1.25 postage and packing; N.Y. residents add 8% sales tax.

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### 1988 DUES

If you have not yet paid your 1988 A.A.S. membership dues, please do so now. See back cover for categories of membership and amounts of dues.

## 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> ( <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> ) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue	\$5.00 pp
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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
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<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service	\$7.50 pp
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