

# Alabama Archaeological Society

## Stones & Bones

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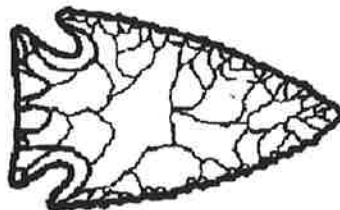
August 1997

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### What's Happening Around the State

The Office Of Archaeological Services (OAS), University Of Alabama Museums, conducted a cultural resources inventory for the Tennessee Valley Authority Shoreline Initiative (SLI) properties on Pickwick, Wheeler, Gunterville and Nickajack Reservoirs in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. The shoreline survey took place during the fall and winter of 1996-1997. Investigations of the SLI properties include: a document review; a field inspection and update of the previously recorded sites; a field survey of the SLI properties to record previously unrecorded sites and the generation of a report showing site locations, known components and potential eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The nature of the survey areas consists primarily of marginal strips of reservoir shoreline and tributary banks. A pedestrian survey of the area was conducted where feasible. While in areas of steep slope or high bluff, the property was examined from a jon boat. A total of 48 previously recorded sites was revisited with 42 sites newly recorded. In addition to the site inventory, Eugene Futato (Senior Archaeologist) will implement an overall project review which involves the analysis and

curation of lithic materials from sites previously excavated in the SLI properties. These include: the Perry Site (1 Lu25), the Mulberry Creek Site (1Ct67), the Union Hollow Site (1 Lu72), and Stanfield-Worley Bluffshelter (1Ct125). The analysis of the ceramics from the Widows Creek Site (1Ja305) by Dr. Richard Krause (University of Alabama, Anthropology Department) further contributes to the TV ASLI project.

### Shiloh Threatened

Erosion of the banks of the Tennessee River has rendered Shiloh National Military Park's Dill Branch ravine, considered the most scenic spot in the park, inaccessible by car. The battle at "Bloody Shiloh," fought April 6 and 7, 1862, resulted in some 24,000 casualties and secured the West for the Union. Possibly accelerated by construction of the dams by the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1930s, erosion has been a constant problem at the battlefield park, dedicated in 1894. A major flood in 1954 took away a third of Pittsburg Landing, held by the troops during the Confederate attack," says park superintendent Woody Harrell. "High water in 1973 brought the riverbank to within five feet of the National Cemetery wall. Now erosion has eaten under the

pavement of the Dill Branch causeway, forcing us to close the last mile and a half of the park's automobile tour route."

Of more concern to the Park Service is the threat to the Shiloh Indian Mounds National Historic Landmark. The ten-acre, palisaded Late Woodland and Mississippian site, made up of seven platform mounds and more than two dozen smaller house mounds, sits on a bluff overlooking the river just south of Dill Branch. Here erosion has destroyed the eastern end of Mound A, the largest in the group, leaving behind a 100-foot cliff. Now any period of high water can cause additional damage. Thirteen inches of rain last Memorial Day weekend caused a six-foot-wide, 4000-foot-long section of mound to slough into the river over night. "Four years ago we received \$600,000 for stabilization work in front of the National Cemetery, but we have not been able to secure funding for work on the rest of the riverbank," says Harrell. "The price tag for the recommended work could easily top 3 million dollars." In the past, Harrell adds, when it came to funding, the Shiloh mounds have often taken a back seat to the park's Civil War resources.

*Taken from Archaeology, May/June 1997*

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## Mammoth Graveyard

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Catastrophe struck about 11,300 years ago as mammoths grazed in a valley 20 miles northeast of today's Mexico City. Was it ash from a massive volcanic eruption? Or a giant mudslide that rumbled down a hillside? Whatever its form, the cataclysm wiped out at least seven of the giant beasts, some more than 11 feet tall.

Construction workers in San Miguel Tocuila began to unearth the mammoth bones last year. Now, sifting through the ancient ash and mud, archaeologist Luis Morett Alatorre and paleontologists Joaquin Arroyo Cabrales and Oscar J. Polaco have come up on a surprise: Some bones bear marks made by humans, perhaps as they fashioned tools or dug out the marrow. "We have three complete skulls and five bones that humans scraped or otherwise modified," says Morett. The site has also yielded bones of horses, camelids, deer, birds, fish, and turtles, all victims of the catastrophe.

*Taken from National Geographic, August 1997.*

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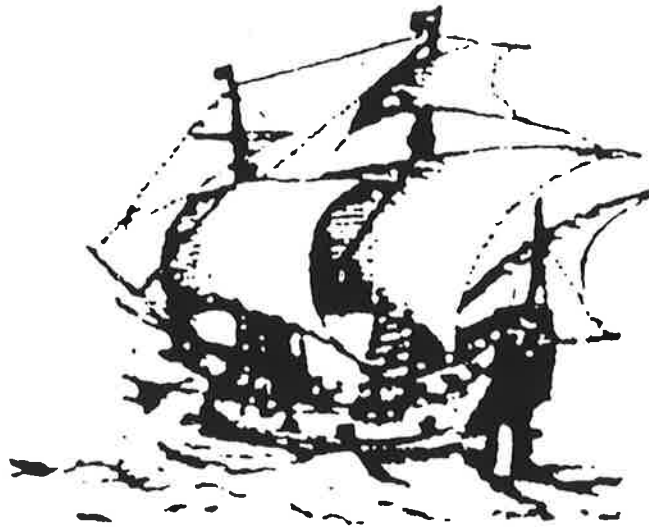
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Congress giveth land distinction as a national monument, but would it taketh some of the monument's land away? Since sponsoring legislation that created the 7,844-acre Petroglyph National

Monument in Albuquerque in 1990, Sen. Pete Domenici and Rep. Steven Schiff, both New Mexican Republicans, have been trying to clear the way for construction of a six-lane commuter road through a section of the park, rich with Indian rock carvings. Now they have introduced legislation in both houses of Congress to sever 8.5 acres of the monument so that the Paso del Norte expressway can be extended to the city's western suburbs. Traffic congestion can be relieved without encroaching on the monument, say local Pueblo Indians, preservationists, and conservationists. The National Trust and the National Parks and Conservation Association argue that the legislation would be precedent for other commuter thoroughfares in the national parks system.

*Taken from Preservation, July/August 1997.*

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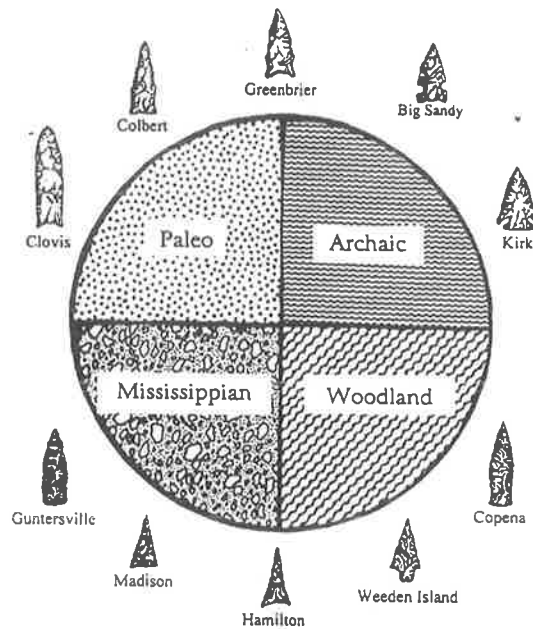
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For additional information or for copies of this brochure and registration form, please contact  
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