

# Alabama Archaeological Society

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## STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

### A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

First, let me apologize for the lateness of the January Newsletter - there's quite a bit involved in the transition, and we still have some things to learn in order to have a smooth operation, but we are ironing out the wrinkles and hopefully will soon have the Newsletter distribution back on schedule.

I call on each member for help in making our Newsletter interesting and meaningful, and I think this could be done by members sending us a short paragraph on such things as a new site you may have found, sites endangered, unusual artifacts found, or other items of interest pertaining to archaeology here in Alabama. I also ask every professional archaeologist in the State to send us short articles from time to time on their own and their institutions' activities. I feel that a Newsletter containing both amateur and professional input will give us the mix that is most interesting to all our readers. Our policy is to give Alabama news preference to out-of-State news.

The cut-off date for entries into a given issue will be the 15th day of the month preceding the month in question; for example, if an item is to be in the May issue, it must be received by the editor no later than the 15th of April. We are establishing this cut-off because our goal is to develop a schedule where we can drop the Newsletter in the mail around the first of each month.

Some items not date-oriented may be slipped to a later issue due to space limitations. Items submitted may be edited and/or abstracted in order to save space, but the principal points will still be made. Also, any item not accepted for publication will be returned with an explanation of why it was not used.

We have had a high-quality Newsletter in the past, and this editorial staff will do its utmost to retain that quality and at the same time expand and improve where possible. We will give credit to those submitting items by placing their names at the end of their articles. All those published without names will be by the editors.

### 1977 - Eighteenth Annual Dig Fund

Without a word of warning and no advance publicity whatsoever, your Research Association has been the recipient of two donations to our archaeological excavations for 1977 from the following most appreciated State Society

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members - Harry E. Douglas, Birmingham, his 7th contribution; and James B. Whitehead, Mentone, his 12th contribution. Further information as to the detailed work your Association will attempt to finance this coming summer will be included in a later issue, but in the meantime, please continue to send your contributions to the address on the inside back page.

Milt Harris

#### NOTICE

The Tennessee Anthropological Association will hold its 2nd annual meeting at the UT Space Institute, Tullahoma, Tennessee, on March 5-6. An interesting program is planned so plan to attend.

#### CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Muscle Shoals Chapter held its December meeting at Western Sizzlin. Officers for 1977 were installed, and Lawrence Alexander gave the program on Copena Burial Mounds and presented slides of a Cedar Creek site.

Noccalula Archaeological Society met on December 2 at Western Sizzlin where they had their annual Christmas dinner. New officers for 1977 were installed: President, Richard E. Battles. Vice President - Leon Young. Treasurer - Juanita Battles. Secretary - Mrs. Thomas Clontz. The Society meets the first Thursday of each month at Gadsden Convention Hall.

Huntsville Chapter's January meeting was cancelled because of weather conditions. Mike Moquin, who was to have been the speaker, is now scheduled to give the program at the March meeting.

Birmingham Anthropological Society met January 5 at Red Mountain Museum, where Tom Hutto presented a slide program on Central Mexico to a large turnout.

Muscle Shoals Chapter held its January 1977 meeting at the Indian Mound Museum, where Tom Hutto of Birmingham gave an interesting presentation on Mayan ruins of Mexico.

#### SHIPWRECK SITES FOUND BY MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

Sunken Spanish galleons loaded with the wealth of the New World have been targets of fortune hunters for decades. Some of the inquisitive search has been for a different kind of wealth - information. That kind of search was undertaken recently by the Underwater Archaeological Research Section of the Texas Antiquities Committee.

For detailed exploration purposes two sections of the south Texas coast were selected for a proton magnetometer survey, one 10 miles in length at the Mansfield Cut and the other a 15-mile strip near the mouth of the Rio Grande at Paso Brazos Santiago. The Mansfield Cut segment was of interest since the Texas Antiquities Committee has recently excavated one of three Spanish vessels known to have been wrecked in that area in 1554.

The survey was designed to locate the third vessel of the fleet and other wrecks in the area, the probable existence of which had been indicated by artifacts found on the beaches of Padre Island.

The survey strategy called for a two-phase program: First, an intensive "searchmode survey" to completely and evenly cover the target areas and pinpoint all wreck sites within those areas. Secondly, it was planned, with whatever time remained, to carry out "in-site delineation surveys" on as many of the most promising sites as possible.

These magnetometer survey phases were to be followed by a period of site testing to identify and date whatever wrecks were located, and then perform major excavations at one or more of these sites. The in-site delineation survey of a particular wreck is designed to cover the site with closely spaced tracks to produce a highly detailed magnetic contour map which will help guide excavations.

The magnetometer utilized on this survey was a Varian V-85 proton magnetometer with a marine sensor.

The sensor was streamed 30 m behind the survey vessel, a 34-foot all-aluminum crew boat, and about two feet below the surface of the water.

The data acquired on this survey went through three stages of automated processing and analysis. Analysis of the anomaly distribution plots prepared in the field indicated 121 significant clusters of anomalies.

Analysis of the magnetic data is not yet complete, but it is already clear that through the use of the coordinate system each anomaly can be identified and catalogued along with its location. Returning to the anomalies for site testing is a simple matter of calculating either an angle from each of two shore reference stations or an angle and a distance from one shore station.

(By J. Barto Arnold and Carl J. Clausen, Underwater Archeological Research Section, Texas Antiquities Committee - Sea Technology, August 1976.)

#### What's Happening at Ft. Toulouse

In a matter of weeks visitors at Fort Toulouse will view reconstructed bastion palisade walls and log curtain walls of the 1751 French fort. This will end the first of four archaeological phases proposed for Fort Toulouse.

During these cold, rainy days lab work continues on the thousands of American (Jackson), French and Indian artifacts. All collection of which is now located on site. This work will result in an analysis of the cultural material to be included in the Phase I report to the National Park Service and in an artifact classification publication that will be available for sale at a later date.

Archaeological excavations will begin in the dry moat surrounding the fort as soon as it dries out this spring. Reconstruction of the moat walls will hopefully commence by July 1977. The logs have been ordered, and it is just a matter of completing the archaeology which greatly depends upon the weather.

I am happy to add that construction has taken place recently in our temporary lab also. New drafting and mapping facilities have been added as well as better lighting, more storage area, and additional artifact analysis tables. Equipment to be added soon will include an electrolysis unit, ultrasonic cleaner, and various other tools and devices for the cleaning and preservation of metal

artifacts, and a photostereomicroscope. This equipment is being purchased with funds provided by the Junior League.

Fort Toulouse also has some new personnel. Leninters and Jim Parker have recently joined the staff. Both were previously employed by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Len is from Illinois and will be in charge of the mapping and drafting needs of the site as well as the osteology. Jim, a native of Alabama who also worked for the State of Virginia on a historic site, will head up the field and lab operations conducted at Fort Toulouse.

Mack Brooms

#### BOOK REVIEWS

ON THE TRAIL OF THE FEATHERED SERPENT, by Gene Savoy. Bobbs Pub., c. 1974, price \$10. An archaeologist sails the ancient sea route that linked the Incan and Aztec civilizations. The author noted the similarity of Incan and Aztec designs on both pottery and architectural buildings. Also, he mentions that both civilizations worshipped a god which was almost the same. Namely, the Peruvian god Viracocha and the Mexican god Quetzalcoatl.

There are numerous explanations on how and why the boat was built of reeds. How the boat sailed, where, and the numerous misfortunes encountered are all related. Finally the landing in Panama convinces Savoy that ancient men did sail from Peru to Mexico. Well illustrated with photos, maps and drawings.

WILLIAM FOXELL ALBRIGHT, 20th Century Genius, by Leona G. Running and David N. Freedman. Morgan Press, New York, c. 1975, price \$15. This long book of 447 pages was written by two of Albright's former students. They probably had an enormous amount of material to work with and this may have caused the length of this book. For those interested in Biblical archaeology there are no maps to identify sites excavated by Albright. Neither are there any photographs to illustrate with the exception of Albright's photo taken in 1960.

No doubt Albright was indeed a most interesting and fascinating genius, but a better book about him remains to be written.

Margaret Perryman Smith

#### BOOKS

A new book, ONCE UPON A TIME, A HISTORY OF THE ELY CHAPEL COMMUNITY OF CHATHAM COUNTY 1832-1976, by David H. Hall, is now available. The book is the result of five years research and contains 450 pages of historical and genealogical information about the community. It's available at \$15 soft-bound or \$20 hard-bound plus \$.50 postage. A redrawn 1832 survey map of Lee County containing the locations of the Creek reservations is also available in a limited edition of 750 copies (size 20" x 34") at \$125. Both available from David H. Hall, 1327 Loftin Dr., Auburn, Alabama 36830.

## REVISIT TO A SANDSTONE QUARRY IN LAMAR CO., ALABAMA

In 1967 a site reported to be Indian among local residents was brought to the attention of Amos Wright who visited the site and later made two subsequent visits accompanied by Bart Henson. The site is a quarry on a sandstone outcropping in Lamar County, only about two miles from the Buttahatchee River. The site consists of many chiseled depressions about 14" in diameter and some still having a "stump" raised about 1/2 to one inch from the bottom. The circular piece that was struck off would be two to three inches thick. They may have been used for manufacturing sun disks as they are too shallow for utilitarian bowls. For those interested, the site was reported in Vol. 14, #2, 1968, of the JAA.

The site was recently endangered by strip mining for coal which was stripping the ridge immediately adjacent to the site. Wright revisited the site on January 16, 1977, and found the site intact but somewhat "bruised". Mountains of raw dirt were deposited within 1/8 of a mile; timber had been cut in the surrounding area leaving brush and tree limbs littering the area; and logging roads cutting troughs in the landscape - one within about 50 feet of the sandstone outcropping. It was a dismal and depressing visit and such a contrast to the previous visit where a wooded ridge lay to the northeast; wooded area covering the site and gentle slope down to the creek; and nature's quiet and tranquility prevailed. This site is unique to Alabama and perhaps the southeast, since there have been no known reports on other sandstone quarries. However, it too will probably meet the fate of many other sites that are endangered by the mechanical monsters of "progress".

## THEORY OF CORN ORIGIN

The origin of domesticated corn has been for years a puzzle for botanist and anthropologist. If the ears of cultivated corn are left unharvested, it cannot seed itself since the kernels will not scatter and grow. They remain wrapped in the tight husk and eventually lose their vitality. However, no wild corn that could seed itself had ever been found.

When in 1954 Richard S. MacNeish, of the National Museum of Canada, started his work on corn origin, a well-established theory held that wild corn had never existed. It was thought that the first cultivated corn was a hybrid between corn-like grasses that still grow wild in Mexico and neighboring countries. This explanation was shaken when fossil grains of corn pollen were found in test wells bored deep under Mexico City. They came from mud laid down 80,000 years ago, which is long before the earliest human immigrants could have arrived in the New World, so there must have been wild corn at one time. But how did it turn into cultivated corn that can propagate itself only with the aid of man?

MacNeish and his colleagues found the answer to the corn puzzle in the valley of Tehuacan, southeast of Mexico City. There a series of dry caves offered deep, stratified layers of human debris. In the layers that dated from about 5000 B. C.,

they found tiny cobs of corn that were almost certainly wild. They were less than an inch long and their kernels, smaller than a pea, had apparently been surrounded by a thin husk that opened at maturity. It is thought that as the thin husk opened, the kernels were allowed to fall to the ground and reproduce like the seeds of other grasses.

For more than a thousand years the people who occupied the cave of Tehuacan gathered wild corn only, but larger cobs were found in the debris dating after 3400 B. C. Two or three inches long and much thicker than the wild type, they were surely the result of selection and cultivation. In later strata they were still larger and showed signs of hybridization with closely related corn-like grasses. This crossing added vigor (as hybridization of corn still does) and gave the cobs the appearance, if not the size, of modern corn. After 3000 B. C., the cultivated corn of Tehuacan was productive enough to support a considerable population dependent largely on agriculture.

But what happened to wild corn? MacNeish and Harvard botanist Paul C. Mangelsdorf produced a likely answer to this puzzle also. They think the wild plants were never very common and that they grew naturally in just those places, mostly near streams, that the first farmers chose for their cultivated fields. Wild corn that was not displaced this way was subjected to hybridization by wind-blown pollen from the ever-increasing stands of domesticated corn. Through this hybridization the wild plants produced tightly wrapped ears with thicker husks like cultivated corn. Since these plants could not disperse their seeds, they had no progeny. Only in places remote from cultivation could wild corn continue to reproduce itself. As agriculture spread and these strongholds fell, wild corn became extinct. (Abstracted from "Great Ages of Man, Ancient America", 1967, Time, Inc.)

Charles Moore

#### A MAMMOTH BUTCHERING SITE IN WYOMING

An article by C. C. Frison, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Wyoming, in SCIENCE, November 12, 1976, reveals some interesting aspects about the Colby site in northern Wyoming. The site has largely eroded away, but remains of at least six mammoths have been excavated and give a good idea of events that took place at the site. The site is located just east of the Bighorn River in an arid area with little vegetation. The mammoth remains were found at the bottom of an arroyo now filled with alluvium. The position of the bones presents evidence that they were deliberately stacked. Cultural activity is indicated by the presence of several artifacts - a worked bone shaped into a scraping tool; a granite pebble broken to shape a chopping edge may have been a butchering tool; however, the most convincing evidence was a complete fluted projectile point lying directly under what is probably the first bone placed in the pile. The projectile point is "indicated by slight matching concavities on both blade edges at the distal end to

provide an elongated, needle-sharp point which, as demonstrated in experiments with replicas of similar projectiles used on bison, improves the quality of penetration. Experiments also demonstrate that sharp points such as this rarely survive more than one use. The blade edges show grinding for about half their length and there is evidence of grinding around the entire base." Three other projectile points were found in the 1975 excavation but only one was similar to that described above, and they were somewhat different typologically from Clovis points. The conclusion reached by the author was that this was a butchering site, but the methods used are unknown.

### SMALLPOX

It is believed that the Spanish introduced smallpox to the New World in 1520. This disease killed tens of thousands of the eastern Indians - in some cases virtually wiping out many tribes. Three and one-half million may have died in Mexico shortly after its introduction. (From October 1976 Scientific American, "The Eradication of Smallpox", by Donald A. Henderson.

### A SIGNIFICANT SITE IN SOUTH ALABAMA

Preliminary excavations were conducted this past summer on what turned out to be an extremely significant site in South Alabama. The site was located on a small, swampy tributary of the Pea River. Deep test squares revealed that the site was inhabited from the Archaic through the Early Mississippian Period with sparse occasional occupation possibly occurring throughout the duration of the Mississippian and Historic Periods. The site includes about 15 acres and is relatively undisturbed. Habitational zones extend to a depth of 110 centimeters beneath the surface and include a pre-ceramic zone followed by an Early Woodland zone containing fiber tempered ceramics. Sand/mica tempered sherds were discovered along with sand tempered check stamped and simple stamped sherds above the fiber tempered pottery. The remainder of the Woodland occupation of the site was represented by sand tempered plain and complicated stamped ceramics. The complicated stamped sherds are unlike any known variety of this type of design in the area and therefore are considered significant in themselves.

A very important transitional Woodland-Mississippian Period occupation also occurred on the site. Evidence of contact between the established Woodland culture and a Mississippian group whose ceramics were similar to that of the Ft. Walton culture has been established. Later occupation of the site is represented by only a few sherds of Late Mississippian and Historic Indian ceramics which suggest that the site was abandoned during the Mississippian period and utilized later as an occasional camp site.

Several burials, fire hearths, and trash pits were excavated during the investigation and lab work is currently being conducted on these features. Carbon-14 dates will hopefully be available in the near future from this material. An extensive excavation of the site has been recommended and hopefully, work will begin

in early spring. It is felt that an analysis of this site will provide significant data pertaining to the prehistory of this archaeologically unexplored section of Alabama. Evidence suggests that a very early Lamar component is represented here, and further excavations may well shed new light on the development of Mississippian and protohistoric cultures in the Southeast.

Black Brooms

#### MEETINGS

The 54th Annual Meeting of the Alabama Academy of Science will be held at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, on April 7-9, 1977. Members of the Academy planning to present a paper should send their title to the respective section vice president before the deadline of January 20, 1977. Vice president of Section XI, Anthropology, is Avery C. Church, Sociology-Anthropology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama 36688. A Call for Papers containing all pertinent information has been sent out to members. If you wish to join the Academy, write to Secretary Kenneth Ottis, Department of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn, Alabama 36830. Members of the Alabama Archaeological Society should be active members of the Alabama Academy of Science.

The Georgia Academy of Science will also hold its Annual Meeting in April, the 29-30, 1977, at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. The deadline for abstracts of papers is January 17, 1977. The Anthropology Section was organized in 1973. The Section Chairman is Dr. Betty Smith, Kennesaw Junior College, Marietta, Georgia 30061. For membership in the Academy of our neighboring state, write to Secretary Robert M. Lampton, West Georgia College, Carrollton, Georgia 30017.

Marjorie Gay

#### ALL THE WAY FROM OREGON

We received a letter from W. W. Woodley of Prarie City, Oregon, outlining an interesting trip through the upper Missouri River country. He visited old Ft. Lincoln, where Custer prepared his troops for their trip to the Little Big Horn River in Montana; the site of a 1650-1750 Mandan village where the small mounds still existed from the fallen-in Mandan houses, which were earth lodges; and the Colorado State Museum, where he says "The artifacts that are on display here are the best collection that I have ever seen."

W. W. Woodley