

# Alabama Archaeological Society

NADB DOC # - 4,056,876

## Associate Editors

Bart Henson  
Dorothy Luke

## STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

## Editor

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

Volume 30

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Number 3

### PROPERTY RIGHTS OVER THE PAST?

..."Stored in the vast and orderly shelving of Harvard U."s Peabody Museum are some Indian artifacts it acquired 60 years ago from an archaeological expedition in Utah. And (Ken Kohler, curator of the new, state-funded Fremont Park Museum in Utah) wants them back. This tussle over a moccasin, some pots, and basket fragments raises the perennial question: Who owns the past? The question of repatriation is not a new one in the museum world. Greece has been trying to get back the Elgin marbles from the British Museum, with no success. Now repatriation is becoming an issue in the Southwest, which, as it becomes more populated, is developing a regional cultural pride. As one museum official put it, it's the "sagebrush rebellion" of archaeology. Native Americans are also seeking to get back sacred items and skeletal remains from Eastern museums, which found them decades ago.... One argument in repatriation controversies concerns who will get to see the artifacts. (At) the Peabody, a research museum on the Harvard campus, it's researchers: Last year, 1,200 people sat in small study rooms and looked at items brought to them by staff members. At Fremont Park, alongside Interstate 70, the main travel route between the Midwest and the Los Angeles area, it's tourists. In the few weeks the Fremont museum has been open, at least that many visitors, including busloads of Europeans, have seen its exhibits, says Kohler. (However, curator David Hurst Thomas - American Museum of Natural History, New York - counters) "If the large Eastern establishments had not taken action when they did, the collections would have ended up in the hands of private collectors".

(Article by Catherine Foster in "Christian Science Monitor", 13 October 1987 - quoted in "Current Contents", 1987.)

The Editors

### 3 LABORATORIES CHOSEN TO TEST SHROUD OF TURIN

Three laboratories have been chosen by the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Turin to test fragments of the shroud of Turin in an effort to determine its age.

March 1988

The shroud is a 14-foot length of fabric that some believe was used to wrap the body of the dead Christ. Showing that the shroud is about 2,000 years old would support the view that it could have been used to cover a crucifixion victim but would not establish the victim's identity, according to Dr. Paul Damon of the University of Arizona.

(From an article by Walter Sullivan in "The New York Times", January 16, 1988).

The Editors

#### CORRECTION

The address listed in a recent issue of the Stones & Bones for the Florida Anthropological Society was incorrect. The correct address for this group is:

Membership Secretary, FAS  
308 - 6th Street, NE  
Largo, Florida 34640

The Editors

#### TODAY'S ANCIENT MAYA

The Highlands of Chiapas rise sharp and isolate above the tropics. At night, the stars shine close and cold, and at dawn fog surrounds the sacred mountains and steep cornfields. As the sun rises, the volcanic peaks loom above the clouds like islands dreaming of the sea. Within each mountain dwells an Earthlord, the mythical being who directs the clouds, the rain, and the riches of the earth.

Just below the summit of Moss Mountain, the most sacred mountain of the Highlands, three cross shrines mark the entrance to three small caves. Crosses are gateways to the Earthlord's subterranean domain. Every May, shamans and religious officials arrive with fireworks and music to celebrate the beginning of the rainy season. After cleaning the shrines, giving the wooden crosses a new bloom of flowers, and offering prayers, songs, and shots of sugarcane rum to the Earthlord and to the saints in heaven, the celebrants climb the last few yards to the summit to visit the television repeating station there and to have a drink with the technicians. After all, both shamans and technicians are in the business of maintaining culture. Each, of course, is secretly certain that the other is a fool, but both enjoy this yearly meeting on high.

The Maya are familiar with television, cars, radios, airplanes, and other wonders of Western civilization, which they use, as do most of us, without fully understanding. We, unfortunately, are almost completely ignorant of Maya civilization, one of the most remarkable cultures of the Americas. The Maya were writing books in a phonetic script fifteen hundred years before Columbus discovered the New World. The corn, beans, and squash that we eat were first cultivated by the Maya and their neighbors. Basic mathematical concepts such as zero and place numbers were being used in Maya astronomical calculations of eclipse cycles while the West was still stumbling along with Roman numerals. Two thousand years ago, Maya craftsmen were building pyramids and palaces without metal tools. Between the cities, through impenetrable swamps and jungles, they laid out long white roads that served as platforms for royal processions. Yet the Maya never tamed beasts of burden, and they used the wheel only for toys. The Maya created the most advanced civilization in the New World with a technology that was neolithic.

Although many scholarly studies seem to treat Maya civilization as one of history's closed chapters, the Maya did not vanish. Almost one million Maya-speaking people live in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, and another three million live in Yucatan, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Despite the fact that they are familiar with the machines and lifestyles of modern civilization, or perhaps because they do know the alternatives, the people of the Chiapas Highlands are extremely conservative. The food they eat, the way it is prepared, the stories, myths, and dreams they tell while dipping a tortilla into a bowl of beans, the festivals they celebrate each season of the year are all parts of a tradition that the Maya say God gave to them "at the beginning of the world". Although Maya men may work and travel throughout Chiapas, the Highlands are their cultural home.

Across the mountains lies a quiltwork of communities, each slightly different from its close neighbors. There are four distinct Maya languages spoken in the Highlands. Each of these language groups is further divided into communities, some 50 in the Highlands alone, whose members speak a particular dialect of the language, wear a distinct style of dress, worship a special patron saint, and consider all members of the community as relatives.

Each community has its own government and courts, in which local judges try all cases except those concerning crimes of murder. The church, government buildings, and market occupy the community center. Few people have homes there. The houses in the center provide temporary quarters for the civil and religious officials, who give a year's service to the community. Most people live in small hamlets scattered throughout the surrounding hills. During markets and festivals, they crowd the center to trade, celebrate, and meet with friends. More than a political and religious entity, a Maya community is like an immense extended family.

Women weave most of the clothing for their families. They add a striped pattern or a few designs to their husbands' shirts and belts. The large rectangular blouses, called huipiles, that Highland women wear are warm and beautiful and bear elaborate geometric designs that describe the Maya cosmos.

In the heart of the Highlands is the colonial city of San Cristobal de Las Casas. San Cristobal was settled almost a hundred years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. Spanish conquistadors built this provincial capital in 1524, after smashing the ancient Maya strongholds on the upper ridges.

San Cristobal lies at the center of a jagged ring of mountains. Streams meander across the green valley, disappear into limestone caves, and flow 40 miles underground to spill dark waters into the Grijalva River, a mile below. In the morning, fog hugs and valley floor. When the sun breaks through, the mist rises and the temperature climbs from near freezing to a sultry 80 degrees, plummeting again at twilight. Each afternoon during the rainy season, the clouds pile up against the peaks at the western end of the valley until a boiling gray sky cracks and flashes with torrential rains. Suddenly the sky clears and the last rays of sun streak through mountain gaps. A few stray clouds sink back into the ground. Lightning from distant storms silhouettes the mountains, which frame the stars, moving close and forever.

Leaving behind the past and building a future has created its own difficulties. Some of San Cristobal's quiet charm has been buried under concrete along with the less appealing aspects of the city. Walking down the street, loud with the sounds of traffic and radios, both Maya and Ladinos have arrived in the 20th century, with all its problems and progress.

(From an article by Walter F. Morris, Jr.; reprinted from the book LIVING MAYA", 1987)

The Editors

#### BOOK REVIEW

A CREEK SOURCE BOOK, Edited by William C. Sturtevant, 1987. Garland Publishing Co., 136 Madison Avenue; New York, New York 10016.

This book, containing several hundred pages, is a compilation of many of the classic writings on the Creek Indians. The contents are:

1. Creek and Pre-Creek - by Charles H. Fairbanks
2. Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians - by William Bartram

3. A Historical Narration of the Genealogy, Traditions, and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Tribe of Indians - by George Stiggins
4. Excavations at Horseshoe Bend - by Charles H. Fairbanks
5. Laws of the Creek Nation - by Antonio J. Waring
6. Towns and Villages of the Creek Confederacy - by Albert S. Gatschet
7. Notes on the Creek Indians - by J. N. B. Hewitt
8. Dialects of the Muskogee Language - by Mary R. Haas
9. Tonal Accent in Creek - by Mary R. Haas
10. The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town - by Frank G. Speck
11. Ceremonial Songs of the Creek and Yuchi Indians - by Frank G. Speck
12. Three Creek Baskets - by Frederic H. Douglas
13. Modern Square Grounds of the Creek Indians - by John R. Swanton
14. Creek Inter-Town Relations - by Mary R. Haas
15. Report on the History and Contemporary State of Aspects of Creek Social Organization and Government - by Morris E. Opler
16. Notes on Social and Economic Conditions Among the Creek Indians in Alabama in 1941 - by Frank G. Speck
17. The Road to Disappearance: Creek Indians Surviving in Alabama - by Frank G. Speck
18. The Emergence of Contemporary Eastern Creek Identity - by J. Anthony Paredes
19. The Folk Culture of the Eastern Creek Indians - by J. Anthony Paredes
20. Back from Disappearance: The Alabama Creek Indian Community - by J. Anthony Paredes
21. Kinship and Descent in the Ethnic Reassertion of the Eastern Creek Indians - by J. Anthony Paredes

Many of these writings are scarce and difficult to locate. This book brings together a sizeable compilation of anthropological writings on the Creek Indians.

The Editors

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Chapter held its monthly meeting on January 28, 1988 at Brewer Hall on the Jacksonville State University Campus. The meeting was called to order by 2nd Vice President George Gerdes, who turned the meeting over to Dr. Harry O. Holstein, who introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Carey Oakley, from the Office of Archaeological Research. Mr. Oakley gave the chapter a most interesting and informative presentation on the recent investigation in the North Alabama Bridgeport Woodland Mortuary Site in Lauderdale County.

After Mr. Oakley's presentation, Dr. Holstein adjourned the meeting and invited everyone to join the chapter members at his house for the annual January "Christmas" Party. The party was a success, with good conversation.

The Coosa Valley Chapter meets on the last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at Brewer Hall, Jacksonville State University.

Brigitte Cole

### Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the public library on St. Clair Avenue. The public is welcome.

The speaker at the January 26 meeting was Mr. Elfred Lee, Archaeological Illustrator and Head of the Art Department at Oakwood College in Huntsville. Mr. Lee has been working with Turkish and other officials since 1969 on the search for Noah's Ark. He was official photographer and illustrator on the 1969 expedition to Mount Ararat. Mr. Lee presented a slide show and talk on the Ark expedition and on various archaeological sites in England, Egypt and Israel.

Dorothy Luke

### Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its December meeting on the 11th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Twenty-four members and guests attended. Houston Wright of Huntsville gave an interesting program on early man and his settlement patterns in North America.

The January meeting took place on the 11th, with 12 members and guests attending. Col. Bill Koob of Charleston, S.C. presented an overview of Indian history in South Carolina. Col. Koob devotes much of his time as a volunteer,

working with the Indian lithic displays in the Charleston Museum. Last year he was awarded the South Carolina "Archaeologist of the Year" award. He is a former resident of Florence and was very active in the Muscle Shoals Chapter.

The February meeting was held on the 8th, with 15 members and guests attending. Boyce Driskel and his son Nathan presented a slide narration on archaeology in Southern Egypt. Boyce has made three visits to the Middle-Nile Valley and brought the Chapter a very interesting program about that region.

Charles Moore

#### MUSEUM OPENING

The State History Museum at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery will reopen on March 5, 1988. Alabama Archaeological Society members will be especially interested in the new exhibit, "Stilled Voices, Forgotten Ways: the Creek Indians and their Ancestors", just installed in the Peter A. Brannon Gallery. This comprehensive exhibit highlights the collections donated to the state by the Montgomery-based Alabama Anthropological Society between 1910 and 1953. Other new features at the museum include a renovated 19th century gallery and a new children's gallery. Governor Hunt is scheduled to officiate at the opening ceremony at 10:00 a.m., and special events are planned throughout the day.

Gregory A. Waselkov, Ph.D.  
Auburn

#### RUSSELL CAVE INDIAN DAY

Indian Day will be on April 16, 1988 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Russell Cave National Monument in Bridgeport, Alabama. Planned activities include artifact identification, stone pipe carving, storytelling, flint-chipping, pottery making, herbal plants and programs on the archaeology of the Bridgeport dig last summer. Also planned are hide tanning, the most popular demonstration last year, basketmaking, and prehistoric house building. A program on Southeastern Indian beadwork is also planned.

The Director of the state archaeological laboratory, Carey Oakley, will identify artifacts for those who have items that they wish to know more about. He will also present a program on preservation of archaeological sites and historic places. Jim Knight, archaeologist at the Bridgeport site, will present programs on the archaeology found in Bridgeport. Dr. Knight presented a program last August on this important site, as excavations came to a close. This program will reveal the results of study on the artifacts. The popular flintknapping demonstrators Stuart Daw and Van King will make spearpoints and arrowpoints again this year. Van and his wife Melissa will also show stone pipe carving and other stoneworking techniques.

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
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell	\$2.00 pp
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

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO: **ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

SEND CHECKS TO: **MR. EUGENE FUTATO, Office of Archaeological Research**

1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

## MEMBERSHIP

The coupon below may be used EITHER to APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP in the Society, or for the PAYMENT OF ANNUAL DUES. Please be sure that your name and address are CLEARLY entered, and that appropriate boxes are checked.

TO: **THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, for**

☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP    ☐ PAYMENT OF ANNUAL DUES    ☐ REPORTING OF NEW ADDRESS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:

**MRS. BETTYE T. HENSON**  
**SECRETARY AND TREASURER**  
 7608 Teal Drive, S.W.  
 Huntsville, Alabama 35802

**(Residents of Foreign Countries, including Canada & Mexico \$2.00 additional for Regular, Associate or Institutional Membership, \$20.00 additional for Individual Life and \$25.00 additional for Joint Life Membership)**

- |  |          |  |         |
|--|----------|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Individual) .....   | \$180.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining (Individual) .....               | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Life (husband & wife) .....                                 | \$250.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining (husband & wife) .....           | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual (Individual) .....   | \$9.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual (Institutional) .....                | \$13.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual, Family (husband, wife<br>and children under age 18) ..... | \$12.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> *Steven B. Wimberley Scholarship Fund ..... | \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (Students under age 18) .....                           | \$7.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> *Edward C. Mahan Research Fund .....        | \$_____ |

**\* Contributions are Tax Deductible**

## *Alabama Archaeological Society*

Mr. Amos J. Wright  
 2602 Green Mountain Road SE  
 Huntsville, Alabama 35803



Non Profit Org.  
**U. S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
 PERMIT NO. 197  
 HUNTSVILLE, ALA.