

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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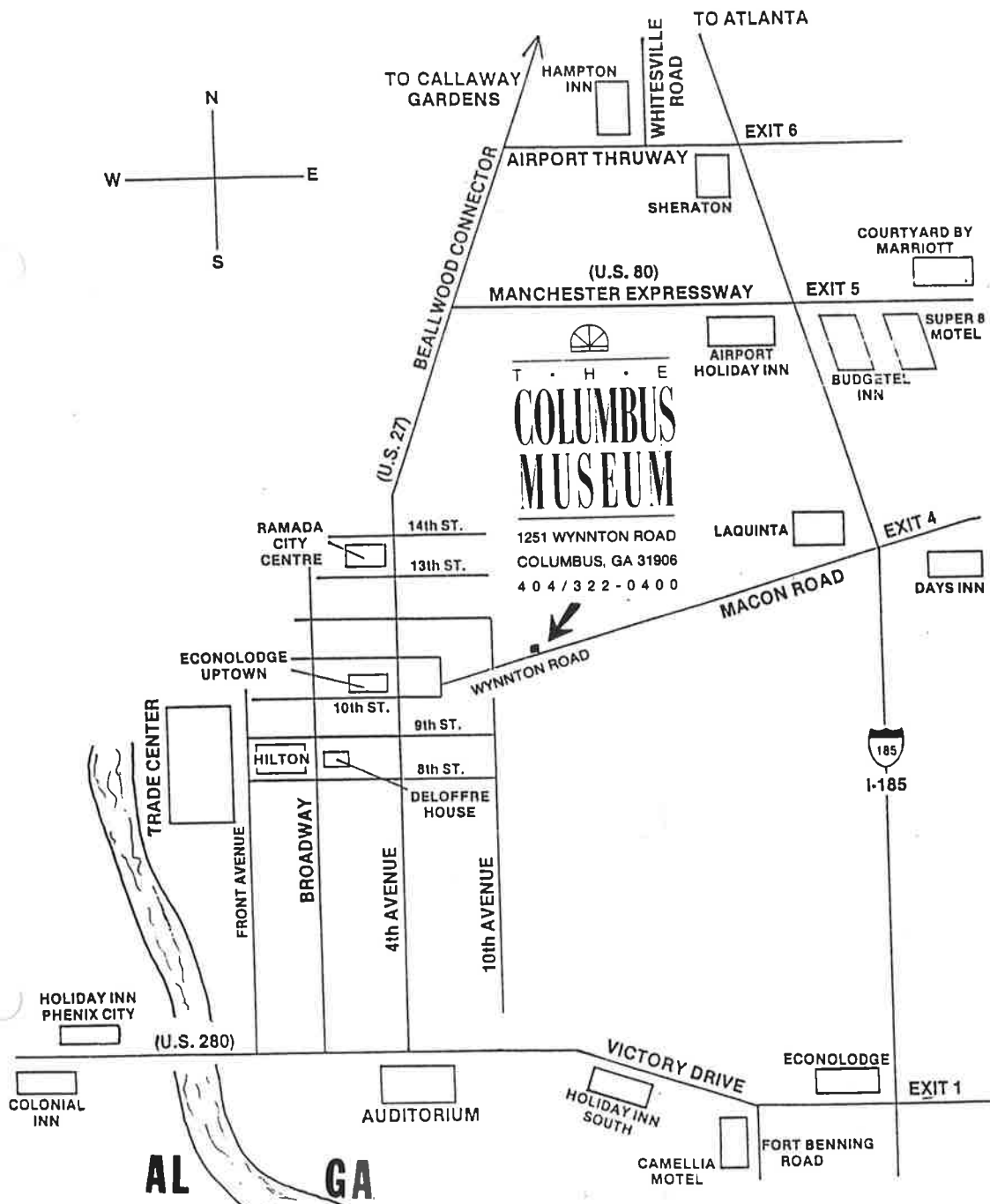
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WINTER MEETING

The combined meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society and the Society for Georgia Archaeology will be October 27-28 at the Columbus Museum, Columbus, Georgia. The meeting will convene at 9 a.m. on the 27th. See map below for directions.



October 1990

1991 NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
OF THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The guest speaker for the September meeting was Archie Phillips, a nationally renowned outdoorsman and professional taxidermist. Archie is also an amateur archaeologist with a vast collection of artifacts.

The speaker for the October meeting will be Eugene Futato; his topic will be a Mississippian house site. The Birmingham Chapter meets the second Thursday of every month from September to May.

Bobby Hawkins

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter met on September 25 to hear Ned Jenkins talk about Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson. At the October chapter meeting, Linda Derry will speak on Cahaba; in November, Dr. Harry Holstein will be the guest speaker; he will speak on "The Search for the Village of 16th Century Coosa in Cherokee County, Alabama".

The Huntsville Chapter meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Public Library. The public is welcome.

Dorothy Luke

MUSEUM OPENS ALABAMA INDIAN RESOURCE CENTER

The Alabama State Museum of Natural History announces the opening of the Alabama Indian Resource Center, administered by the Museum's Division of Archaeology at Mound State Monument. The official opening will take place with the opening of the second annual Moundville Native American Festival, October 8-14, 1990. Special invitations have gone out to school groups all over the state to attend this celebration of Alabama's Native Americans.

"With the increasing interest in cultural history, an improvement in methods of archaeology, and a growing awareness of how Alabama's first inhabitants lived, we at the Alabama State Museum of Natural History plan to offer the young people of this state and their teachers an educational center where they can learn first-hand about our earliest Alabamians", announced Dr. Douglas E. Jones, Museum Director.

According to Dr. Jones, Dr. Joy D. Baklanoff, folklorist for the Museum, will serve as Director for this center.

Frances Tucker
Moundville

FORT MITCHELL DESIGNATED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

On June 21, the National Park Service designated the site of Fort Mitchell in Russell County, Alabama as a National Historic Landmark. The Fort Mitchell site is owned by the Russell County Commission.

The original Fort Mitchell was constructed by the Georgia Militia in 1813 as a defense against the Creek Indians and supply depot for operations against them. In 1825 the U.S. Army rebuilt the abandoned fort and occupied it continuously until 1840. During this time, LaFayette and Francis Scott Key visited the fort. Fort Mitchell was the site of an Indian Trading House (1817-1820) and was the residence of the Indian agent John Crowell from 1821-1836.

Historic Chattahoochee
Commission/Eufaula

ARTIFACT FOUND

NOTE: The following letter is extracted and edited from the original from Mr. Crews.

Enclosed is a photograph of a flawless point found in Houston County, Alabama. The site consists of mostly flint and various time frames of Indian occupancy. In the photo it is obvious that this particular point is not flint. The substance this artifact is made from seems to be crystal-clear quartz. Being found among all the flint leads me to believe it was used for trade.

I have two questions: 1) Could this be from the Clovis era? 2) Is this indeed quartz? If someone is interested in viewing any of my artifacts, or if the Society could aid my quest with references, I would appreciate it very much. Arvin Crews; Route 4, Box 197; Ozark, AL 36360; Phone 205/774-7117.



CORRECTION

In the September 1990 issue of STONES & BONES, Jim Lee of Huntsville offered a "good selection of Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) Bulletins and annual reports for sale". Mr. Lee's phone number was listed incorrectly; the correct number is 205/881-0527.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOLARLY MISTAKES AND SCHOLARLY CONCEALMENT

Scholars try very hard to avoid mistakes. But in the end, they inevitably make them. On the other hand, not all mistakes are inevitable. Some result from shoddy scholarship.

It is sometimes argued that too much pressure on the scholars who have publication rights to the hundreds of unpublished Dead Sea Scroll fragments will also result in error. This argument was recently made by Professor Eugene Ulrich of Notre Dame University in an interview in the "Jerusalem Post". The pace of publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been too fast, Ulrich contends, rather than too slow.

Although scholars should - and must - take the necessary time to be careful, this is plainly not the reason for the long delay in Dead Sea Scroll publication. This delay is simply the result of scholars taking on more assignments than they could reasonably complete in a lifetime and refusing to publish until they have written extensive commentaries on the texts. In the meantime, they refuse to let scholars generally see the unpublished texts. That is the worst sin.

Regardless of how scholarly errors occur, they do indeed mislead. Scholars who rely on other scholars' work - and they inevitably do - must be careful to keep up with the literature to know when errors are identified, so as not to incorporate inaccuracies into their own work. And students will inevitably read older works without realizing that they are outdated and inaccurate. There is no easy solution.

There is, however, another kind of scholarly error - one that results from scholarly concealment. And that brings me to the case of MMT. The concealment of MMT has misled a generation of scholars struggling to understand the origins of the people who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls and the nature and sources of their beliefs.

MMT is a still-unpublished text of only about 120 lines, yet everyone agrees that it will revolutionize Qumran studies, as Dead Sea Scroll studies are called by scholars. Since the discovery of this vast library, scholars have puzzled over who the people were who wrote the scrolls. Were they really Essenes, as most scholars have concluded? What were their origins, what were their beliefs, what were the sources of their beliefs? A

whole generation of scholars has been laboring to answer these questions. Literally hundreds of articles have been written on these questions - and all without the benefit, it turns out, of a critical document that was readily available. A whole generation of scholars was working in the dark - unnecessarily!

MMT was found in the now-famous Cave 4 of the Wadi Qumran, which contained fragments of over 500 different texts. MMT, however, is unique among Qumran texts in that it is in the form of a letter. More than 35 years ago, when eight scholars divvied up the contents of Cave 4 among themselves for publication, MMT was assigned to Professor John Strugnell of Harvard, now the chief editor of the scroll publication team.

When Strugnell began to appreciate the unusual importance of MMT is unknown. In any event, he kept it under wraps for more than 25 years. No one else knew of its existence. Meanwhile, Qumran scholars all over the world - dependent on the small coterie who controlled access to the unpublished texts - labored with the published texts to pierce the veil that shrouded the origins, doctrines and identification of the Qumran sectarians.

In the early 1980's, Strugnell began talking about MMT. In 1984 he delivered a scholarly paper on it at a conference of Qumran scholars - without of course releasing the text itself. One might have thought that after a quarter-century's failure to alert the scholarly community to this unusually significant text, Strugnell would have promptly transcribed, translated and published these mere 120 lines. Not so. Especially because of its significance, Strugnell wanted to control research on this documents for as long as possible.

At this point, the reader may well ask how we know that MMT is so significant. One source, of course, is Strugnell himself, who often speaks of it at scholarly conferences. Almost tauntingly, he has called it "one of the most important documents from Qumran".

Another scholar, Stephen Goranson, tells us that MMT "presents historians with an opportunity to reconsider the origin and interaction of various Jewish sectarian groups (including Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes)". Strugnell has left the impression that his work is completed, but it may still be a year or more before it is actually published. In the meantime, the world of scholarship waits.

(From an article by Hershel Shanks in "Biblical Archaeology Review", September/October 1990)

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NOVGOROD

Novgorod, or "New Town", was founded in the early ninth century, which makes it one of the oldest Russian cities, although its very name suggests that it was preceded by an even more ancient "Old Town". From the

beginning Novgorod was the center of a vast territory settled by a variety of ethnic groups, including Slavs, Krivichi and Urgo-Finnish tribes. By the close of the ninth century Novgorod had merged with Kiev and enthroned a single prince, who moved his capital to the banks of the Dnieper.

Medieval Novgorod has not been lost. Excavations begun there in 1929 under Artemii Vladimirovich Artsikhovskiy of Moscow M. V. Lomonosov State University have brought to light more than 130,000 artifacts in a remarkable state of preservation, including one of the great archaeological finds of the 20th century: 700 birch-bark manuscripts that, by giving an intimate view of daily cares, bring the city to life in a way that the standard textbook history is unable to do.

Because of the abundance of old wooden structures, one can accurately date the Novgorod finds by the dendrochronological, or tree-ring, method. These favorable conditions have resulted in a treasure trove of artifacts: tools, household utensils and vessels, the fighting gear of both a foot soldier and a mounted warrior, parts of ships and their block-and-tackle mechanisms, jewelry, furniture and ornate wood carvings. Even clothes, leather slippers and musical instruments have been preserved in such a state that one would think with a little repair they could be worn or played. The sheer quantity of leather and wood objects is itself an important corrective to common perceptions. How misleading are museum exhibits that feature objects of metal, stone and glass, when 90 percent of household objects in medieval times were made of wood!

(From an article by Valentin L. Yanin in "Scientific American", February 1990)

PROJECTILE POINT SERIES

These books are a reformatting of poster charts by Dr. Don W. Dragoo. New drawings of points have been substituted in some cases, an index has been added to each book, and there are introductions by Dr. Dragoo, all of which are being published for the first time. Each book is accompanied by a half-size (17 x 11 inches) poster as a reference.

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