Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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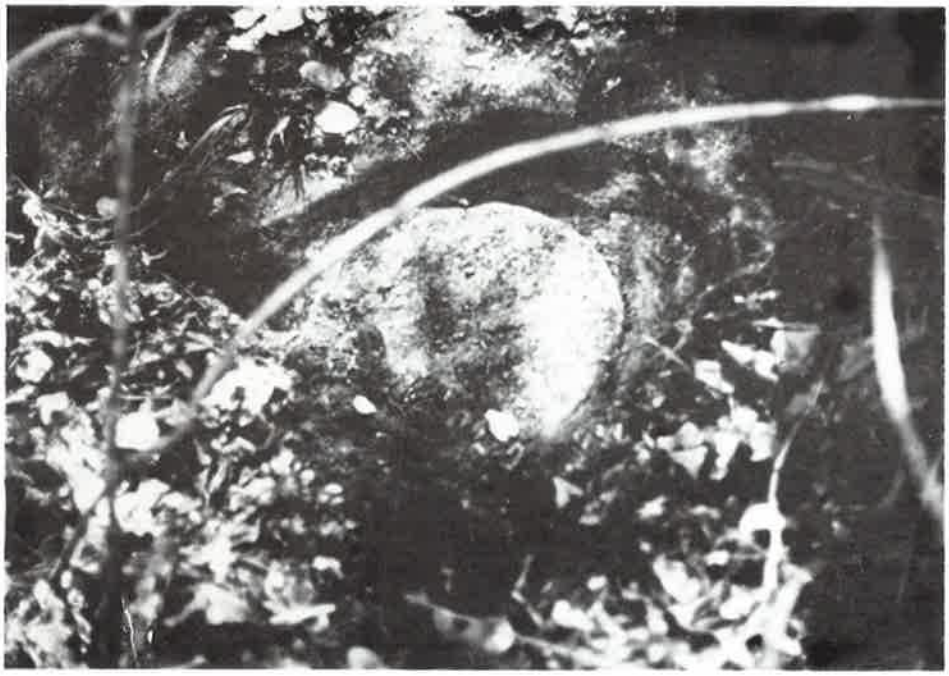
MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Volume 28 Number 2

## SANDSTONE QUARRY REVISITED



The sandstone quarry in Lamar County reported in Volume 14, No. 2, December 1968, JAAS, was revisited in November 1985. When first investigated in 1968, the area was wooded, with no disturbance except for some previous timber cutting. In about 1975 the site was again visited, to find that the ridge immediately behind the site from the creek had been strip mined and mostly leveled. Concerned that the site may have been covered with spoil from the mine, we were considerably relieved to find that the timber had been clear cut and heavy equipment had worked very close, but the quarry was still intact. The purpose of this visit was to give archaeologists from The University of Alabama an opportunity to see the site. Two or three pebble drills were found on the surface that had been disturbed.

February 1986

Bill Schroeder
Jim Knight
Charles Hubbert
Carey Oakley

Jim Knight
Richard Wright
Vin Steponaitis
Carey Oakley
Melody Pope
Richard Krause

Richard Wright
Jim Knight
Vin Steponaitis
Richard Krause
Bill Schroeder

Photos by
Amos Wright

In November 1985, Dr. Vincas Steponaitis, Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Binghamton, who is a specialist on southeastern archaeology, expressed an interest in visiting the site while in Birmingham for the annual SEAC meeting. He hoped to obtain a sample from the quarry and make a chemical analysis for comparison to sun disks from Moundville in the collections of various museums in New York.

Accordingly, Dr. Steponaitis, accompanied by one of his graduate students, Melody Pope; Carey Oakley; Dr. Richard Krause; Dr. Jim Knight; Charles Hubbert; Bill Schroeder; Richard Wright and Amos Wright; met in Guin for the purpose of revisiting the site.

Since it had been ten years earlier that the site had been visited, we were not sure what conditions we might find or if the site was still intact. Where the strip mining operation occurred, we found pine trees about three inches in diameter and a large lake make for the purpose of reducing runoff - but with little effect, since we found the creek heavily silted. The undergrowth around the site was making a comeback, with hardwoods two to three inches in diameter. Again we found the site intact, although heavily covered in humus, roots and leaves. Some of the features were easily uncovered, and Dr. Steponaitis obtained his sample. We also found a pebble drill in the humus. Only Richard and Amos Wright had previously visited the site. After observations were made and considerable discussion took place, no conclusions were reached as to what the quarry product was used for. It is hoped that in the near future this site can be professionally investigated. This still appears to be the only sandstone quarry reported in Alabama, and is even more unique because of the adjacent conical holes.

The Editors

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Birmingham Chapter

The Birmingham Chapter met on January 10th at the Red Mountain Museum. Caleb Curren, who is with the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Development Office, gave an excellent presentation entitled "De Soto's Path". Curren is currently involved in research related to De Soto's path through Alabama. After his presentation, he commented that historians and archaeologists from Florida and Alabama will be working together to identify the route taken by De Soto and his men through these two states, and that funds have been provided for this joint effort.

Copies of Caleb Curren's book THE PROTOHISTORIC PERIOD IN CENTRAL ALABAMA were available for purchase at the meeting and can be obtained from the Alabama Historical Commission for $7 each.

The next chapter meeting will be February 13 at 7 p.m., with Mary-Eliza and Charles Moore as speakers. Their topic will be "Archaeology of the Southwest".

Annette Weeks Otts

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter finally has a new meeting place, thanks to the efforts of Secretary/Treasurer Nancy Rohr: the United Way office at 26 Traylor Island. We have been offered the use of the United Way conference room for a year.

The chapter met on January 21 for a joint program given by Houston Wright and Rick Walling. Houston spoke on the Early Archaic period; Rick tied in with Houston's talk with a discussion on current local excavations being conducted by The University of Alabama.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For more information on chapter meetings or other activities, please call Program Chairman Houston Wright at 881-2485.

Dorothy Luke

## BOOK REVIEW

THE RIDDLE OF THE DINOSAUR - by John N. Wilford. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1986. Seven color lithographs, 34 black-and-white illustrations, 304 pages. $22.95.

Wilford is a journalist for the New York Times and won a 1984 Pulitzer price as a space and science writer. He spends the first nine chapters on the history of paleontology and the "fossil hunters" worldwide. He goes to great lengths to bring the reader up to the present time with the great fossil (dinosaur) discoveries and the people involved in those discoveries. He then proceeds to outline recent (since 1960) discoveries and discusses the "cold-blooded" versus the "warm-blooded" argument that continues.

Sixty-five million years ago, some catastrophe occurred wherein almost half of the genera (animal, vegetable, marine and terrestrial - large and small) living throughout the world disappeared. Included were the dinosaurs, although many species had already died off. Wilford discusses the various theories put forth that caused their disappearance.

Recent discoveries bring the conclusion that extinction occurred as a result of some extraterrestrial activity which has also occurred in cyclic patterns for the past 250 million years.

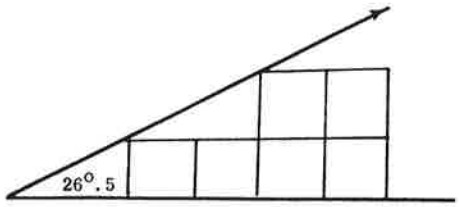
The book is well written, easy reading and seems to be the most complete outline of dinosaur history, up-to-date conclusions and theories available.

The Editors

## GREAT PYRAMID ENTRANCE TUNNEL NOT ASTRONOMICALLY ALIGNED

Early in the 19th century, astronomer John Herschel speculated that the ancient Egyptians had constructed the Great Pyramid so that the downwardly slanting entrance would be aligned precisely with the pole star, Thuban (Alpha Draconis), when the star was at its lowest culmination. Over 70 years ago, Percival Lowell ran through the calculations and found that Thuban was not near the tunnel's line of sight when the pyramid was constructed (about 2800 B.C.). No one seems to have listened to Lowell, even though he was quite correct. Most books on the Great Pyramid still insist on the fancied pole star alighment.

If the entrance tunnel wasn't pointing at the pole star, what other esoteric reason did the pyramid builders have for the 26°.523 angle? (It seems that everyone expects all dimensions of the Great Pyramid to have special significance!) R. L. Walker, of the Naval Observatory, has come to the rescue. He observes that the tangent of 26°.523 is almost exactly $\frac{1}{2}$ (actually 0.4991). Although there may be some occult significance to $\frac{1}{2}$, this fraction also signals us that 26°.523 is also the angle created when two cubical blocks are laid horizontally for every one installed vertically, as in the sketch. It seems that 26°.523 is simply the natural consequence of the internal pyramid construction process. ("End of a Pyramid Myth", Sky and Telescope, 69:496, 1985.) Lowell also showed that Thuban did cross the tunnel entrance centuries before and after the accepted date of construction. Could the date of the pyramid be in error, or were the builders planning for the future? Anything is possible in Pyramidology!




(From "Science Frontiers", No. 42, November-December 1985)

The Editors

## OHIO VALLEY SYMPOSIUM

The Fourth Annual Symposium on Ohio Valley Urban and Historic Archaeology will convene at the headquarters of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 4338 Bigelow Boulevard; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Friday and Saturday, March 21-22, 1986. Dependent upon the number of papers submitted, a portion of the presentations may be scheduled as concurrent, topically organized sessions. A limited amount of display and publications sales space will be available. Those interested in submitting papers, contact Philip J. DiBiasi; Archaeological Survey; University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky 40292. Telephone: 502/588-6724.

The Editors

## MAGNETIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Uncovering what is left of ancient fortifications, villages, or other records of past civilizations can be hot, tiring and frustrating - especially if the approximate location of the archaeological site is unknown. Where, for example, on an uninhabited, 14,000-acre island covered with a dense, almost impenetrable forest, briars, and swamps would one look for the buried remains of a church? Yet that is exactly what an archaeological expedition to Santa Catalina Island, off the coast of Georgia, set out to do. The goal of the search was to excavate the "Lost Spanish Mission", Santa Catalina de Gaul, thought to be buried somewhere on the island. But instead of drilling a grid of holes over the entire island, a Texas A&M University remote-sensing team first walked the island looking for magnetic anomalies using a device called the proton precession magnetometer.

According to Ervan Garrison, head of the Texas A&M team, such a search for changes in the strength of the earth's magnetic field is done by walking due north carrying the sensor of the magnetometer, containing a can of unleaded gasoline on the end of a pole, tied by an 8-foot cord to a reverse backpack holding the magnetometer and recorder for readings.

The protons in the gasoline (or other hydrocarbon charged fluid) are polarized by applying a current to a coil in the can. Then the current is turned off, allowing the protons to precess in the direction of the earth's magnetic field. The magnetometer relates the speed of precession to the strength of the magnetic field and prints an analog contour graph showing the size and shape of the field. Differences between the intensity of the field and that of the surroundings indicate variations in the soil that may be due to buried structures. In the case of the Santa Catalina expedition, the magnetometer "went crazy", as Garrison put it, over the filled-in shaft of the well of the old mission, outlined by metal retaining straps around the circumference. The walls of the church and burial sites under the church floor were also detected.

(From "IEEE Spectrum", November 1985)

The Editors

PUZZLE # 3196 ANSWER TO POINT TYPE1

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M           - - R - E V A N S G N I R P S E T I H W E - E C T E L O T C R Y
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P                         A S O O C O T A C O C R E E K E - Y       M K B -
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| C-26 | D-R | AFTON |
| N- 7 | R | BAKERSCREEK |
| S-24 | R | BEAVERLAKE |
| P-36 | U-L | BENTONSTEMMED |
| C-24 | R | BRADLEYSPIKE |
| O-34 | L | CAMPCREEK |
| T-27 | R | CANDYCREEK |
| O-34 | U-L | CLOVIS |
| P-17 | L | COOSA |
| P-17 | R | COTACOCREEK |
| N-29 | L | CRAWFORDCREEK |
| M-34 | U-L | CUMBERLAND |
| K- 1 | R | DALTON |
| N-31 | U-L | DECATUR |
| K-18 | U | EVA |
| M- 9 | R | EVANS |
| A-35 | D-L | FLINTCREEK |
| H-20 | R | FLINTRIVERSPIKE |
| H-20 | L | FORTANCIENT |
| O- 9 | U-L | GARY |
| B-27 | R | GREENVILLE |
| J-25 | L | GUNTERSVILLE |
| L-25 | D | JEFF |
| U-35 | L | KAYS |

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| I-12 | U-R | KIRK |
| G-15 | R | KNIGHTISLAND |
| E-17 | R | LIMESTONE |
| C-28 | D | LITTLEBEARCREEK |
| K-25 | L | LOSTLAKE |
| K-12 | L | MADISON |
| P-34 | U-L | MAPLES |
| L-24 | L | MCINTIRE |
| Q-30 | L | MCKEAN |
| R-24 | R | MONTGOMERY |
| R-24 | U | MORROWMOUNTAIN |
| I-23 | L | MOUNTAINFORK |
| K-12 | R | MUDCREEK |
| I-23 | D-R | MULBERRYCREEK |
| Q-25 | L | NOLICHUCKY |
| F-16 | R | PEDERNALIS |
| I- 5 | R | PICKWICK |
| I-33 | D-L | PINETREE |
| D-21 | R | QUAD |
| L-10 | R | REDSTONE |
| F-35 | D | RHEEMSCREEK |
| J- 4 | R | RUSSELLCAVE |
| O-12 | R | SAVANNAHRIVER |
| F-34 | D | WHEELER |
| M-24 | L | WHITESPRINGS |

Joe Parrott
Huntsville

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

| | |
|---|---|
| Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* Vol. 20-29 each issue ($2.50 to Members) | $5.00 pp |
| *Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations* (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 — *The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County, Alabama* | $4.50 pp |
| Special Publication 3 — *Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend* | $6.50 pp |
| *Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types* | $10.00 pp |
| Lively, Long, Josselyn - *Pebble Tool Paper* | $3.00 pp |
| *Investigations in Russell Cave*, published by the National Park Service | $7.50 pp |
| *Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology* (Juvenile) | $7.00 pp |

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1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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