

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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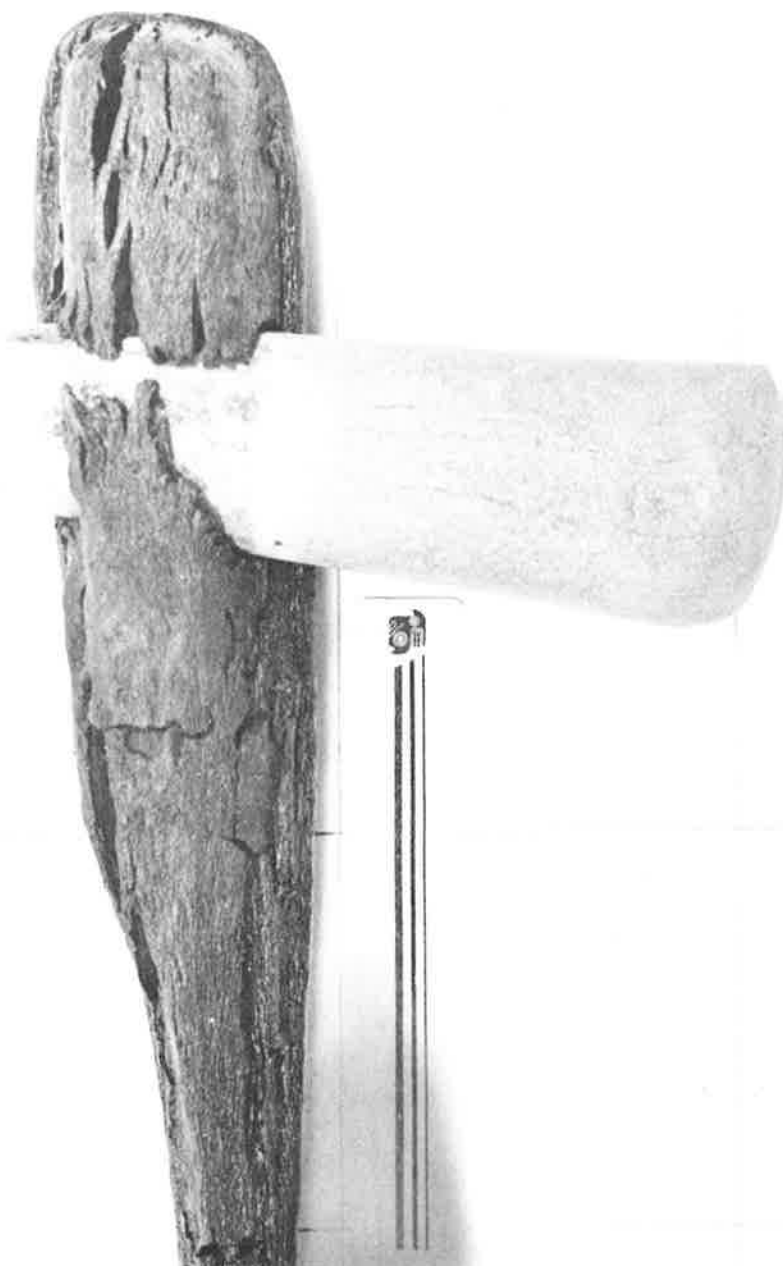
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Number 3

INDIAN AXE FOUND IN WARRIOR RIVER



March 1982

Carl Green of Brookwood and his son Timmy thought they had a whopper on the hook when they started pulling in their trotline in the Black Warrior River near Tuscaloosa.

At the end of their line, instead, was a well-preserved stone axe complete with wooden handle which University of Alabama archaeologists estimate to be at least 500 years old.

"It is the first weapon of its kind to be found in Alabama and was probably used by Mississippian Indians who lived near the site along the Warrior River"; Carey Oakley, Director of the Office of Archaeological Research located at the University's Mound State Monument at Moundville, said.

The Greens, who now live in Texas, recently brought the axe to Dr. Joseph Vogel, Director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History at the University.

"We are grateful to the Greens for their foresight in recognizing the axe as an item of historical significance", Vogel said.

"The axe was undoubtedly completely covered by river bottom mud for centuries, which accounts for the wooden handle's beautiful condition", Oakley said. "There is some deterioration of one side of the handle, probably the upper side as it lay in the water, caused by the flow of the river before the axe was totally submerged in the mud".

The axe is being kept submerged in water. The next step, according to Oakley, is to have it carbon dated, which will determine its actual age. "We may find it is much older than we think", he said.

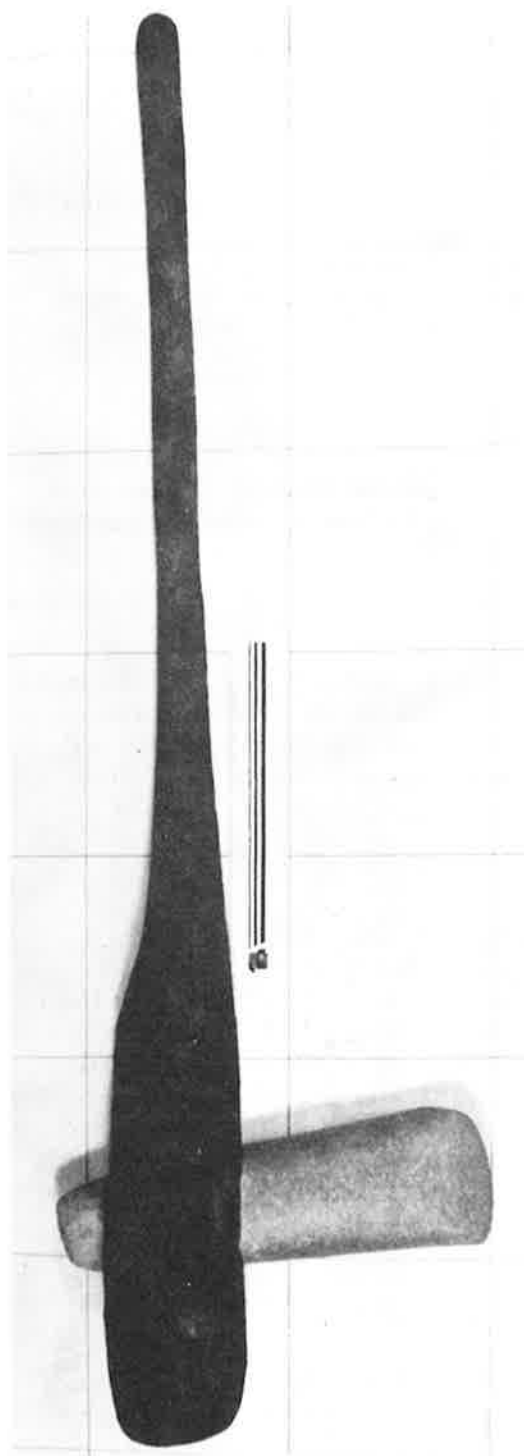
The wooden handle will then be impregnated with plastic, a process which will prevent deterioration of the wood when it is exposed to air.

"Because we didn't have funds for the carbon dating, preservation and eventual display of the axe, we asked the financial institutions of Tuscaloosa County and individuals to help us", Vogel said. "Their generous contributions allow us to save the axe for this and future generations of Alabamians".

When the carbon dating and preservation process are completed and a display case built, the axe will be exhibited in a Tuscaloosa banking institution prior to being taken to Moundville State Monument for permanent display.

Carey B. Oakley
Moundville

(Note: The Alabama Archaeological Society contributed \$200 for carbon dating of the artifact.)



(Above) Dr. Joseph Vogel (L) and Mr. Carey B. Oakley (R) examine the unique wooden handled stone axe found in Black Warrior River near Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

(Left) Reverse view of the Stone Axe.

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The Birmingham Archeological Society will present "Art of Black Africa"; a discussion by Paul A. Clifford, Curator of Duke University Museum, pre-Columbian and African art. This slide presentation and lecture will be held Thursday, March 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Birmingham Museum of Art Auditorium. For further information, call Chapter President Dr. Charles Ochs, 967-8848; or Vice President Tom Hutto, 955-1895.

Cullman Chapter

The Cullman Chapter met February 15 at the Cullman Middle School and started something new: a "projectile point study". The February discussion was on the Plevna point.

Huntsville Chapter

The speaker at the Huntsville Chapter February meeting was Dr. Richard Hoover, who spoke on "Ancient Astronomers", with emphasis on the Egyptians, early inhabitants of Britain and Middle America. The next chapter meeting will be Tuesday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m.; when professional archaeologist Roy Blair will speak on field techniques.

Muscle Shoals

The Muscle Shoals Chapter met on February 8 at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Sixteen members and guests attended the meeting. Al Beinlich led the study and discussion of the point of the month, which was the Lecroy. Charles Moore reported on the recent A. A. S. Board of Directors meeting in Birmingham and also discussed the possibility of a Society excavation project this summer. Bart Henson of Huntsville brought the chapter an interesting slide narration about the Stanfield Worley excavations plus new information and slides about his petroglyph study. Bob Morgan of Auburn University will bring the chapter the next program in March. He will report on the TVA site survey of the Seven Mile Island area.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION CONFERENCE

Brown Morton will be the keynote speaker at the 15th Annual Preservation Conference of the Alabama Historical Commission in May. Lakepoint Resort State Park at Eufala will be the scene of the May 14, 15 and 16 conference. Reservations may be made with the resort at Route 2, Box 94, Eufala; Telephone (205) 687-6676.

The Editors

SPRING 1982 PRICE LIST

ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Contents

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21(1)-June 1975

Burns and Jeter: Lithic Technology and Prehistoric Behavior Patterns in the Coosa Valley Area: A Framework for a Research Design

DeJarnette, Walthall and Wimberly: Archaeological Investigations in the Butta-hatchee River Valley, Lamar County, Alabama

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22(1)-June 1976

Choccolocco Arch. Soc.: The Cheatwood Site - 1Ca6, Calhoun County, Alabama

Curren: Prehistoric and Early Historic Occupation of the Mobile Bay and Mobile Delta Area of Alabama with an Emphasis on Subsistence

22(2)-Dec. 1976

Henson: A Southeastern Ceremonial Complex Petroglyph Site

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Knight: The Mobile Bay-Mobile River Delta Region: Archaeological Status Report

24(1)-June 1978

Chase: Uchee Creek Site 4: 1Ru58
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Curren: The Zoo Archaeology of the D'Olive Creek Site (1Ba196), Baldwin County, Alabama
Lankford: Southern Contacts in Southeastern Prehistory
Moorehead: Eels and Ethnoarchaeology

24(2)-Dec. 1978

Blitz: Moonshining and Archaeology
Jenkins: Prehistoric Chronology of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley: A Preliminary Statement
Lafferty: The Early Woodland Chronological and Cultural Affinities at Phipps Bend on the Holston River, Northeast Tennessee
Marshall: A Possible Historic Indian Pendant
Walthall and Wimberly: Mississippian Chronology in the Black Warrior Valley: Radiocarbon Dates from Bessemer and Moundville
Wright: Upper Alabama River Historic Indian Towns and Their Inhabitants

25(1)-June 1979

Atkinson: A Historic Contact Indian Settlement in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi
Ensor: Archaeological Investigations in the Upper Cahaba River Drainage - North Central Alabama

25(2)-Dec. 1979

Bense and Watson: A Swift Creek and Weeden Island "Ring Midden" in the St. Andrew Bay Drainage System on the Northwest Florida Gulf Coast
Knight: Ceramic Stratigraphy at the Singer-Moye Site, 9Su2

26(1)-June 1980

Knight: Culture Complexes of the Alabama Piedmont: An Initial Statement
Tomak, Tomak, and Reidhead: The Earlier Archaic Components at the Leonard Haag Site, Dearborn County, Indiana
Walthall: A Mississippian Pipe from Alabama

26(2)-Dec. 1980

Beinlich: Indian Profile Petroglyph
Brooms: Investigations at 1Je37: A West Jefferson Phase Site in Jefferson County, Alabama
Futato: An Overview of Wheeler Basin Prehistory
Goad: Copena Burial Practices and Social Organization
Grumet: Book Review: Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Cultural History
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Volume & No.-Date

Contents

27(1)-June 1981

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Knight and Adams: A Voyage to the Mobile and Tomeh in 1700 with Notes on the
Interior of Alabama

27(2)-Dec. 1981

Gustafson and Pigott: A Tale of Two Sites or Big Sandy Begins to Speak

Johnson and Morrow: Thermal Alteration and Fort Payne Chert

Little and Curren: Site 1Ce308: A Protohistoric Site on the Upper Coosa River
in Alabama

Special Publications and Other Publications

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SP-3 Dickens: Arch. Investigations at Horseshoe Bend Nat'l Military Park, Ala. \$6.50

Cambron and Hulse: Handbook of Alabama Archaeology - Part 1, Point Types \$7.35

DeJarnette, Kurjack and Cambron: Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations
(Reprint of JAA 8(1-2)) \$5.00

Griffin: Investigations in Russell Cave (Reprint of NPS Pubs. in Archeology 13) \$5.00

Wimberly: Exploring Prehistoric Alabama Through Archaeology \$7.00

DeJarnette (editor): Archaeological Salvage in the Walter F. George Basin of the
Chattahoochee River in Alabama (Published by the University of Alabama Press)
\$5.00 non-member/\$2.50 member

Josselyn, Lively and Long: Pebble Tool Papers \$3.00

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NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL EDITOR

A current price list of all publications available from the A. A. S. is attached to this issue of the Stones & Bones. This is the first published list since the fall of 1980, and I would like to bring several particular things to your attention.

The first item of interest is a new publication available from A. A. S. This is Christine Wimberly's Exploring Prehistoric Alabama Through Archaeology. This book is intended as a text for Grades 7-9, approximately, but it should also be an interesting and enjoyable book for many adults with a beginner's interest in archaeology. By special arrangement with the author, the A. A. S. is able to offer this publication for only \$7, a significant savings over the suggested retail price.

The next item to consider is that a number of issues of the Journal are available for the first time in several years. This is because the A. A. S. has decided to sell all reserve copies of the Journal. It is the usual practice to keep a few copies of any publication for long-term needs such as a specific future study needing the information, or for use in a possible reprint. However, all out-of-print A. A. S. publications are now available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the A. A. S. has decided to sell all reserve copies except one set in the A. A. S. archives. Quantities of these are limited; several issues have only about 10 copies left. No other stocks are known to exist. These formerly out-of-print issues are being offered at the regular price.

The last item concerns the Handbook of Alabama Archaeology, Part I: Point Types, by Cambron and Hulse. The A. A. S. has approximately a six-month supply of these on hand. Plans are being made to reprint the current edition later this year, so there is no danger of this popular book's going out of print. However, printing costs have increased like everything else since 1975, and the price will have to be increased.

So take a few minutes to review the list and see which publications interest you. There will never be a better time to buy them than right now.

Eugene Futato
Moundville

BOOK REVIEW

Digging Up Bones, the Excavation, Treatment and Study of Human Skeletal Remains", by D. R. Brothwell, Institute of Archaeology, University of London; Third Edition 1981, Cornell University Press - Ithaca, New York. Price \$14.95, paperback, 208 pages; numerous illustrations and photos.

Although this book was first published by the British Museum in 1963, it has been revised and updated for the third edition, 1981, published by Cornell University Press. The book, quite naturally, is written with a European - Old World - thrust, with occasional mention of skeletal remains from the New World; however, this does not detract from, nor make less usable, the basic principles

and analogies presented by the author. The illustrations and photos are superb in quality and quantity and are very supportive of the text, especially to the nonprofessional. For those interested in skeletal remains, how to understand and identify them, the health problems of prehistoric and early historic man, and many other fascinating facts about skeletal remains, this book is for you at a reasonable price. It is written, per the author, for the professional and nonprofessional. The profuse use of illustrations is the single most outstanding aspect of this book and would be very helpful as a reference. This book is not for everyone, but if you want to know more about skeletal archaeological remains, we recommend it.

The Editors

TENN-TOM ARCHAEOLOGY

Michigan State University, with a \$935,042 grant from the Department of Interior, is engaged in a four-year project to excavate at the three dead towns of Colbert, Barton and Vinton - all steamboat towns in northeast Mississippi of the 1830-90 vintage. The first year unearthed nearly 3/4 million artifacts which were hauled to Michigan in crates on a semi-trailer truck. Charles Cleland, one of the two principal archaeologists of the project, says the recovered artifacts belong to the Federal Government, but MSU may be designated as the repository. This being the case, the material will remain permanently in Michigan. It seems that the artifact flow is from south to north! We can't recall a case where it has been the other way around - especially for Alabama.

Around the turn of the century, Alabama (along with other southern states) was virtually looted of some of the finest artifacts ever recovered, with many or most now residing in the Heye Museum in New York. Later the Smithsonian made its contribution to the outflow of artifacts from Alabama, with Russell Cave being the latest significant example. Somehow we resent the fact that the Federal Government takes our tax dollars, gives them to a university 1,000 miles away to fund a project in Mississippi that removes "millions" of prehistoric artifacts that may never be returned - more so of historic material which we can directly relate to. Also, we think southern universities are just as well qualified to assume this type project - to repeat ourselves, we just don't like it!

The Editors

(Note: Our information on this project was gleaned from an article in Volume 29, #1, January 1982, The Central States Archaeological Journal.

ALABAMA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE MEETING

The 59th annual meeting of the Alabama Academy of Science will be held on the University of Alabama in Birmingham campus, Birmingham, March 17-19, 1982. For more information, contact Richard L. Shoemaker, (205) 934-2622, or Emory C. Hubbard, 934-3295.

The Editors

VOLUNTEER HELP!

Our good friend Rodger Schaefer of Decatur recently sent us an article from the January/February 1982 issue of the "Biblical Archaeological Review" that gave us pause for thought. Since the early 1960s, volunteers have been used with great success for archaeological work in the Mideast, especially Israel. On the Masada dig, back in 1963-65, 300 people (mostly volunteers) participated in 23 two-week work shifts. Dr. Eliezer Oren of Ben-Gurion University has made extensive use of volunteers and sums it up by saying he prefers volunteers to students or paid workers - "Volunteers know what to expect. They know what hard work is, and they're very dedicated." Youngsters (meaning students) don't understand hardship yet." About paid workers - "Workers may work, but then you're a boss, you shout and scream; with volunteers, as with students, there is a collegial relationship, replete with constant curiosity and intellectual interplay."

But the interesting question the article posed to us was how the author, Ellsworth E. Rosen (a volunteer) did some self-evaluation that applies to all of us that are volunteers or amateurs. As he carried buckets of red clay he asked himself - "Is this really fun? Or have I simply been swept up by the aura of playing scientist? Since I don't aspire to be a professional archaeologist, what am I really looking for? Am I searching for new insight into the past, or am I hoping to unearth something new about myself?" This volunteer found his answer in feeling the strong presence of Biblical personalities as he worked in the dirt, climbed the same stairs, walked through the same doors and trod the same hills. Many of us have this same feeling of the past and being a part of it and are curious as to the people that have passed before us, sometimes thousands of years ago. It is a presence that you can't quite grasp - but you keep reaching for it.

The Editors

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Catalog of Educational Programs, 1982-83 for the Kampsville Archeological Center describes the many opportunities designed for laymen who wish to participate actively in the excavation and study of important prehistoric sites at the Kampsville Archeological Center in Illinois. Some of the special programs to be offered in 1982 and 1983 include: Adult Excavation and Laboratory Sessions, Teachers Workshops, Native American Studies Programs, Lithic Technology Workshops and Cultural Ecology Workshops.

To receive a 1982-83 Catalog of Educational Programs, write to the Center for American Archeology at Northwestern; Box 1499; Evanston, Illinois 60204.

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 13-18	\$1.00 pp
Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)	\$4.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2-Reprint	\$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>	\$7.35 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00 pp
<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service	\$5.00 pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile)	\$7.00 pp

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