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Alabama Archaeological Society

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

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QUARTZ ARROWHEAD IS THOUGHT RARE FIND

Florence - UPI. A transparent quartz spear point found by a Colbert County collector may be the largest Indian artifact of its kind ever found in the Southeastern United States.

Thurmond Patrick, an unemployed heavy-equipment mechanic, says he has kept the spear point in a safe deposit box in a bank since he learned it might be worth a tidy sum.

The resident of Cherokee in northwest Alabama said he had no idea what he actually had in his possession until another artifact collector had such a fit over it. Patrick said he was awed when the collector increased her offer for the spear head from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and then said "You don't know what you have, do you?"

Later, a local jeweler identified the stone found more than a week ago as rock crystal. "I've shown it to several collectors and they all say it's the largest crystal point they have ever seen", Patrick said.

The Indian relic is about three inches long and has a shoulder span of about one and a half inches. "It shook a lot of people up", said Patrick. He said he has been collecting arrowheads about five years and has filled a large showcase with them.

Patrick said he sometimes goes out looking for ancient arrowheads three or four days a week, often accompanied by his wife, Virginia, and their 10-year-old twins, Randy Lee and Sandy Dee. "That day, just my son and I were out", Patrick said. We were in a field that had just been cleared, down river and a short distance from the stream. When I first picked it up, I thought it was a piece of glass."

Patrick said other collectors have offered some rather startling speculations about the value of the artifact, but other experts have been more conservative. Charles E. Moore, project officer for Indian Mound Museum in Florence, and J. Hollie Allen, an artifact collector and member of the University of North Alabama staff, said they don't question the artifact's authenticity.

"I feel sure it's an Indian artifact", Moore said. I don't think modern man would go to the trouble to carve a crystal like that".

($\underline{\text{NOTE}}$: This article was picked up from the wire service by several papers in the state and is printed here for clarification for the following letters.)

The Editors

Editor Times Daily Box 797 Florence, Alabama 35631

Dear Editor:

I am writing in reference to the enclosed UPI article originating at your paper and concerning a quartz spear point found near Florence. I am a professional archaeologist with over ten years of experience in the Tennessee Valley of Alabama and was interviewed by phone by one of your reporters with regard to this artifact.

The following is a summary of the information I provided. From the telephone description, the artifact sounded like a Late Archaic spear point or knife dating most likely to 2,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C. or so. Quartz crystal specimens are unusual in northwest Alabama because they had to be traded in from a considerable distance. In areas such as east central Alabama, however, this material occurs naturally and artifacts of this type are relatively common. For example, I have participated in research where several such specimens were found and a number of these artifacts are included in the archaeological collections of The University of Alabama. The value of the artifact was never discussed but is probably less than one percent of the figure cited in the article.

I was quite surprised to see that none of this information appeared in the UPI article, though I do recognize that the article may have been changed by the paper that printed it. It appears to me, however, that this article, as printed, is a deliberate sensationalism of the facts surrounding this find. Such irresponsibility can do nothing but encourage the vandalism of archaeological sites by treasure hunters. I consider this a classic example of yellow journalism.

Sincerely,

Eugene Futato, Staff Archaeologist Office of Archaeological Research The University of Alabama Editor Times Daily Box 797 Florence, Alabama 35631

Dear Editor:

Recently I read with amazement an article printed in your newspaper entitled "Quartz Arrowhead Is Thought Rare Find." While the discovery of a clear quartz projectile point or knife is a rare find in northwest Alabama, they are relatively common in east central Alabama as the origin of the material is the Piedmont Region of the state.

The amazing part of the article was the discussion regarding the artifact's monetary value. To professional archaeologists and serious amateurs, artifacts have no monetary value; only scientific value. In addition, there are both state and federal laws that prohibit the sale of artifacts. Even in the world of relic collectors that buy and sell, very few projectile points bring, at best, 1/100 the amount that was quoted in the article.

The unfortunate thing about the article was the effect it could have on the public. Not one word was mentioned about the scientific value of the projectile point. Readers, especially young ones, are presented with a view that our heritage is for sale to the highest bidder for his or her own personal gain. I feel very strongly that it is the responsibility of the media to educate the public. The protection of our cultural resources, of our heritage, needs all the help it can get. The most sensible and effective way to ensure preservation is through an educated public.

I would like to take this opportunity as President of the Alabama Archaeological Society and Archaeologist for the Alabama Historical Commission to say that professional archaeologists and serious amateurs encourage artifact collectors such as Mr. Patrick to record their findings (the location of sites and the type of artifacts found on them) with the State site file at the Office of Archaeological Research, University of Alabama, at Mound State Park in Mound-ville, Alabama. The addition of such data contributes greatly to our knowledge of Alabama's prehistory.

Alabama's archaeological community welcomes all the allies we can enlist to help us save what precious little archaeological resources we have left. What we don't need is hundreds of misinformed citizens destroying scientifically valuable archaeological sites under the false hope that they will strike it rich.

Thank you very much for your time in this matter. Please contact me if I can ever be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

McDonald Brooms

NOTE: We fully agree with Brooms and Futato that the news article fails to give a balanced viewpoint and appears that the writer was only interested in highlighting the alleged value of the artifact - which in our opinion has little or no value (monetary, that is).

The Editors

TUSCALOOSA CHAPTER

Plans on reactivating the Tuscaloosa Chapter are progressing, and there is a lot of interest and enthusiasm. The chapter will meet in the Tuscaloosa Public Library. For the state members in this area who are interested in joining or helping in the organization and wish further information, please call Mr. and/or Mrs. Antonio Ferrell, 752-6196, or Mr. Bill Adkinson, 345-4758.

A.A.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Dr. Richard Krause was appointed by Governor Fob James to replace David L. DeJarnette as the Alabama Archaeological Society's representative to the Alabama Historical Commission. Mr. DeJarnette had served three years of his six-year term.

Mc Brooms Montgomery

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The March 10 meeting of the Birmingham Archaeological Society will feature Dr. Vernon Knight and Mr. Paul McLaughlin, who will present a program on European Trade Beads. On April 14 Mr. Carter Hutchins will speak on "The Archaeology of Colonial Virginia". For further information call Dr. Charles Ochs at 967-8848 or Dr. Roger Nance at 879-0619.

Cullman Chapter

The Cullman County Archaeological Society meets every third Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at the Courthouse. The last meeting was outstanding, with DeWitt Coleman giving a talk and showing artifacts found on the sites associated with the Tennessee River drainage area. February program: Last year Van King gave a program on flint knapping. Get ready again, because Van is back! He'll be here with flint, flaking tools, etc. - all you'll need to try your hand, and techniques of making arrowheads.

ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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(Residents of Foreign Countries Memberships are \$2.00 extra).

NOTE: Membership in the Alabama Archaeological Society entitles a member to receive 12 issues of the monthly newsletter "Stones and Bones"; plus 2 issues of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology. Also, the Society has two annual meetings – summer and winter – for the benefit of its members.



^{*} Husband and Wife

RETURN ADDRESS

ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. Bettye T. Henson, Secretary-Treasurer 7608 Teal Drive S.W. Huntsville, Alabama 35802

Third Fold

East Alabama Chapter

Dr. Jude Robinson donated to Auburn University his collection of lithic material, which was unclassified, following a lifetime of collecting. During the December meeting, the East Alabama Chapter worked on sorting and classifying this lithic material. There was no meeting in January; in February Caroline Dean presented a slide-illustrated program on Russell Cave. In March Dr. John Cottier will give a program on the Maya. For more information on Chapter meetings, call Caroline Dean (Mrs. Baker Dean) at 745-2494, or write her at P. O. Box 508; Opelika, Alabama 36801.

Huntsville Chapter

Houston Wright was the speaker at the February chapter meeting; his topic was "Paleolithic Weather and Chronology". Chapter President Larry Warren led the point-of-the-month discussion: a comparison between the Quad and Beaver Lake points.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room, Von Braun Civic Center. The next meeting will be March 21, when Charles and Mary-Eliza Moore will give a slide presentation on the Anasazi culture. For more information call Program Chairman Roy Blair, Jr., at 534-9663.

Several members of the Huntsville Chapter attended a symposium on Tennessee Valley History on February 22 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Cosponsored by the UAH Department of History and the Committee for the Humanities in Alabama, this one-day session covered prehistory; historic Indian populations; European settlement, including antebellum politics; the development of the Valley as a major industrial area with the creation of the TVA; and finally its entry into the space era 25 years ago, the contributions of NASA and Redstone Arsenal. This symposium was part of the "Alabama History and Heritage Festival", which began in mid-February with tours of Constitution Hall and talks on the contribution of the black community in Alabama and will conclude with the presentation of programs on the "Impact of Technological Industies on North Alabama" to civic groups throughout the area.

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its February meeting on the 14th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Michael Shipper led a discussion of the point of the month, which was the Little Bear Creek. Charles Moore presented a slide narration on historic and contemporary Indian life in the southwest. The next meeting will be held on March 14 at 7:15 p.m. at the Museum.



1982 Annual Meeting
Speakers: Mr. Ned Jenkins,
Dr. John Cottier, Dr. Dan
Womochel, Mr. Eugene
Futato, Dr. Harry Holstein,
Mr. Cary Oakley, Mr. David
Chase, Mr. Charles Hubbert,
Dr. Craig Sheldon, Dr.
Richard Krause, and Dr.
Roger Nance (not shown).

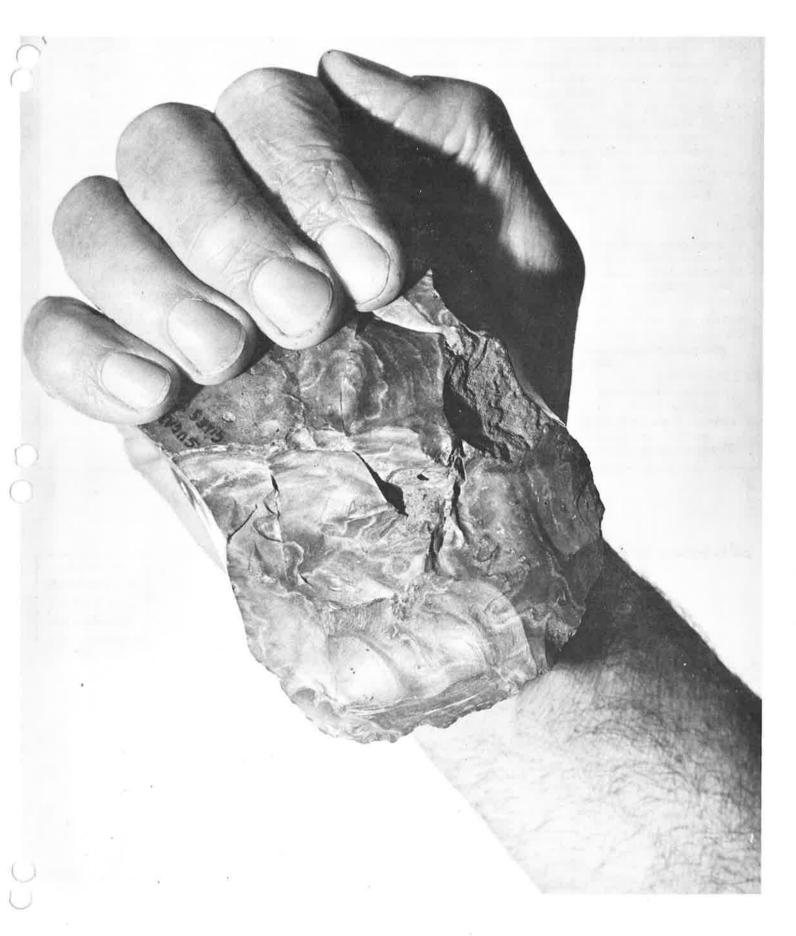
Photo by O. D. Hartley



Charles and Mary-Eliza Moore of Florence receive the 1982 Award for Outstanding Society Members. Presentation made by Marjorie Gay of Standing Rock.

Photo by O. D. Hartley

Mr. Ed Mahan of Guntersville, Alabama, submitted the photograph, shown on page 7, of a large flint hand ax recovered on Sugar Creek, about 20 years ago. This example is characteristic of the material and workmanship of large tools found in the Sugar Creek drainage area of Alabama and Tennessee.



STONES & BONES 7 March 1983

PUBLICATIONS	SAVAILABLE	
Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 13-18 Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)		
Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations (Journal of Alabama Arch	naeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint	\$5.00 pp
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell	£0-8	\$2.00 pp
Special Publication 2 — The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bel	nd, 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		\$7.35 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - Pebble Tool Paper		* *
Investigations in Russell Cave, published by the National Park Service	ce	\$5.00 pp
Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology (Juvenile)		\$7.00 pp
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Annual (Individual)	Annual (Institutional)	\$13.00
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and children under age 18 \$12.00	*Contribution	
Associate (Students under age 22)		

Alabama Archaeological Society

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