

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Montgomery Chapter would like to encourage anyone who has conducted archaeological field work or research this year to participate in the morning session of the Society's annual meeting in Montgomery on December 9. A projector and screen will be provided. Please submit the title of the presentation as soon as possible to Ms. Betsy Sheldon, c/o Auburn University in Montgomery; Sociology Department; Montgomery, Alabama 36109.

75-MILLION-YEAR-OLD MOSASAUR BONES DISCOVERED IN MISSISSIPPI CREEK

Mososaurs were common in Alabama, Mississippi and other southern areas some 75-80 million years ago. And two University of Alabama paleontologists say parts of one discovered near Tupelo, Miss., and brought back to the University indicate it is one of the largest yet uncovered in the southeast.

They speculate the length may have been about 30 feet.

The region was entirely under salt water at one time and mosasaurs, which were reptiles, frequented the area.

Dr. Douglas Jones, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Ernest Mancini, assistant professor of geology and geography, have brought the upper jaw portion and other parts of the Tupelo mosasaur back to the Capstone for further study.

The bones were found several weeks ago by William S. Rutland of Tupelo and his son-in-law Danny Sheffield while they walked along a creek.

The chance of finding more of the large reptile is slim. Jones explained the bones of the skull and jaw are lighter in weight than other bones and tended to float away from the rest of the mosasaur.

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Removing the bones, which were embedded in marl, a chalky clay, was a delicate, painstaking and time-consuming task.

Since the bones were in a stream, a mud dam had to be constructed so the area could be drained and the rock-hard mud scraped and chipped away to the depth of the bones.

After the excess marl had been removed, Jones and Mancini covered the top with a plaster cast. When the cast had dried, they worked the bones and clay loose, turned it over and plastered the underside.

During the entire operation, seeping water had to be sponged out of the area. Rutland, Sheffield and Elizabeth May of University Press were kept busy sponging, soaking paper and cutting burlap for the plaster casts and wrapping teeth and other bits of bone for transport.

According to Dr. Jones, "Because Mr. Rutland understood the importance of his find, we were able to remove it in its undisturbed state. He has performed a great service to this university and to paleontology as well.

(From The University of Alabama News; September 12, 1978)

THE PREHISTORIC GROUND DRAWINGS OF PERU

"The Prehistoric Ground Drawings of Peru", an article by William H. Isbell in the October 1978 issue of Scientific American, attempts to answer the three questions - "When were the drawings made? Who made them? Why did they make them?" These drawings of geometric patterns and animal/fish designs, have gained world attention by the writings of Eric Von Danikan. They are of enormous size and can really only be appreciated when viewed from the air. Isbell presents a fair supporting case for his first two questions though hardly the iron-clad position he asserts - "the first two of the questions have been answered beyond doubt". The first question and the second are based on data that is hardly separable - pottery effigies of animals, fish and birds, which are also closely represented by ground drawings, were made by the Nazca people who resided in the vicinity of the drawings from 200 B. C. to about 600 A. D. Carbon 14 dates of 525 (\pm 80) A. D. taken from wooden stakes driven into the ground at termination points of some of the drawings establish a date for the stake. This makes for a strong circumstantial case but hardly "answered beyond doubt". In attempting to present "reasonable conjectures" on answers to the third question, Isbell rambles off into a number of socio-economic analogies to support his conjecture that the enormous energy used to create the ground drawings "seemed to regulate population increases related to changes in the available energy" (population). This

may or may not be, but we are appreciative of Mr. Isbell's efforts to bring this long-known phenomenon, but largely ignored by the archaeological community, to the place of interest for which it deserves in a respectable scientific journal.

THE DISCOVERY OF A NORSE SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA

Excavations at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland - by Anne Stine Ingstad

Historians, archaeologists, and all students of the Vikings in America have been waiting for this book since the last of seven expeditions (1961-1968) concluded a widely publicized archaeological and scientific investigation of an apparent 11th century Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland.

In the present well-illustrated volume the excavation of nine house sites, four small boatsheds, a charcoal kiln, and a smithy are lucidly reported along with related pollen analysis, iron finds, charcoal, and correlated dates. Price: \$40.

ATTENTION STUDENTS!

The student prize paper competition of the Southern Anthropological Society is open to all graduate and undergraduate students. Papers should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages, including bibliography. The standard format of the AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST should be followed. Four copies (none will be returned) should be submitted along with basic biographic information about the author by December 15, 1978 to: Dr. Nina Etkin, Chairperson, SAS Student Paper Competition; Department of Anthropology; Memphis State University; Memphis, Tennessee 38152. The winner will be announced at the annual SAS business meeting on February 21, 1979, in Memphis, Tennessee. The winning paper and possibly others will be published in the SAS proceedings. The prize will consist of a collection of anthropologic books and research materials selected from major publishing houses. Remember, December 15 is the deadline.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 14th annual meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society will be in Memphis, Tennessee, February 22-24, 1979, headquarters the Sheraton Convention Center Hotel. Deadline for abstracts (not to exceed 100 words) is December 1, 1978. Abstracts for volunteered papers and symposia should be sent to: Dr. Thomas W. Collins, 1979 SAS Program Coordinator, Department of Anthropology; Memphis State University; Memphis, Tennessee 38152.

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

CHAPTER NEWS

Cullman Chapter: The Cullman Chapter's October program was given by Mr. Charles Moore of Florence, Alabama. He talked about the artifacts found on the Tennessee River; his talk was entitled "Original Indian Cultures".

Huntsville Chapter: The speaker at the October meeting of the Huntsville Chapter was Mrs. Janie Tanton, Chapter First Vice President. The speaker at the November Chapter meeting will be Dr. Jerry Gryzb of the Sociology Department at University of Alabama/Huntsville. The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room, Von Braun Civic Center.

Montgomery Chapter: The Montgomery Chapter will meet on Tuesday, November 7, in the Sociology Department at Auburn University in Montgomery at 7:30 p.m. The October meeting entailed a presentation of the film "The First Americans".

Muscle Shoals Chapter: The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its October meeting on the 9th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. The Cotaco Creek was the "Point of the Month" for study. Mr. Al Beinlich of Sheffield led the study about the Cotaco Creek point. The program was given by Mr. Charles Moore of Florence, who spoke on "Regional Indian History".

BOOKS

THE BIBLE AND ARCHAEOLOGY - by J. A. Thompson (lecturer in Old Testament studies, Baptist Theological College, New South Wales, Australia). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., \$5.95. Good text book.

THE GENTLE PEOPLE, A PORTRAIT OF THE AMISH - by James A. Warner (photographs) and Donald M. Denlinger (text). Denlinger, living among the Amish, has a rare insight into their daily lives. Warner, from apparent drudgery, has captured the contentment, companionship, and happiness of these "gentle people". Published by the Mill Bridge Museum, Soudersburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in cooperation with Grossman Publishers, Inc., 125a East 19th Street, New York City. \$20.00. A beautiful book.

HORSES: THE STORY OF THE HORSE FAMILY IN THE MODERN WORLD AND THROUGH 60 MILLION YEARS OF HISTORY - by George Gaylord Simpson, Oxford University Press, 1951.

THE AZTECS, MAYA AND THEIR PREDECESSORS - by Muriel Porter Weaver, Seminar Press, 1972.

100 GREAT MASTERPIECES OF THE MEXICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY - by Ignacio Bernal, Harry N. Abrams, 1969.

WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS - by John Reynolds. One-hundred-ninety-six pages, black-and-white isometric drawings and detail photographs, a Glossary and a Bibliography which is mostly English. Mills are a link with the past which go far beyond the Industrial Revolution. Excavations in northern Iran have revealed milling goes back at least 5,000 years before the Christian era. Praeger Publishers, Inc., 111 4th Avenue, New York, New York 10003.

LIVING WATER - by Ernest Braun and David Cavagnard - 183 pages, 112 photographs by Braun with the photographic data for each. This is a thoughtful and constructive plea for conservation showing the importance of water to all life. A quote, "Man is only one of the many families of living things, no more deserving or important than any of the others except in his own eyes." Galahad Books, New York City, \$17.50.

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

PUBLICATIONS

The Preservation Report of the Alabama Historical Commission, July/August 1978, has several important publications. Here are some:

MOUNDVILLE, An Introduction to the Archaeology of a Mississippian Chiefdom - by Dr. John A. Walthall. This publication on the ancient mound builders who lived nearly 800 years ago is about the Mississippian Indians that inhabited the banks of the Black Warrior River at what is now Moundville. Forty-seven pages, 37 illustrations from the Alabama Museum of Natural History. P. O. Box 5897, University, Alabama 35486. \$2.75.

EOS, Newsletter of the Alabama Museum of Natural History. This new tabloid-sized newsletter named from the Greek word meaning dawn is published bi-monthly and should prove interesting to anyone with an interest in archaeology and natural history. Contact the Alabama Museum of Natural History, P. O. Box 5897, University, Alabama 35486 for subscription information.

ALABAMA'S TAPESTRY OF HISTORIC PLACES - published by the Alabama Historical Commission. This illustrated county-by-county listing of Alabama's historic sites and landmarks is an invaluable inventory. Two hundred and ten pages, \$5.00 from the Alabama Historical Commission, 725 Monroe Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36130.

TRAVELS OF WILLIAM BARTRAM - by William Bartram. Bartram's journal of his travels in the Southeast and Alabama was first published in 1794. The paperback edition published by Dover Publications, Inc., is a reprint of a 1928 edition. Telling the naturalist's fascinating story, it is available or can be ordered from local bookstores. 414 pages. \$4.50.

JEFFERSON DAVIS - by Herman S. Frey. The second printing of the story of the President of the Confederate States of America contains many Alabama references and expanded information. Hard-bound. From Frey Enterprises, 605 Merit Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37203. \$6.95 plus \$.50 postage.

COLOR HUNTSVILLE - by Nancy Van Valkenburgh, illustrated by Freeda Brockway Darnell. A coloring book designed for elementary school students, portraying a concise history of Huntsville from Indians to the Space Age. Some of the proceeds will go toward restoration of the Steamboat Gothic House in Huntsville. From Mrs. Richard Van Valkenburgh, 104 Williams Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama 35801. 30 pages. \$2.95.

Marjorie Gay
Standing Rock

TENNESSEE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

A meeting of the Tennessee Archaeological Society was held in Columbia, Tennessee, on October 21. Several excellent papers were presented, including one by our own Carey Oakley. Carey presented a summary of the very interesting work being done on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. He said that in addition to the surface surveys, in order to satisfy the Environmental Impact Statement, they are now actively surveying the Waterway itself for historic, as well as archaeological, sites. These surveys are being accomplished with the aid of a magnetometer to locate large submerged metallic masses. A number of steamboats have been located in this way; the archives are now being searched for additional information on these wrecks. The feasibility of raising some of these steamboats is also being investigated.

ANNUAL WINTER MEETING

The annual winter meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society will be held on Saturday, December 9, in Montgomery, Alabama. The meeting will be at the State Capital Holiday Inn, 924 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104. Telephone 205-265-0741. Motel reservations should be made as soon as possible for those wishing to stay overnight since December is always a busy month for conventions in Montgomery. A single room at the Holiday Inn is \$19.00 and a double is \$25.00.

The following is a tentative agenda:

8:00- 9:30	Registration
8:30- 9:30	Board of Directors Meeting
9:30-10:00	Welcome to Montgomery
10:00-12:00	Morning Program Session
12:00- 1:00	Lunch (at the Holiday Inn)
1:15- 1:45	General Session Business Meeting (Installation of Officers)
1:45- 3:00	"Creek and Pre-Creek" Symposium
3:00- 3:30	Break
3:30- 5:00	"Creek and Pre-Creek" Symposium
5:00	Adjourn
7:00	Party (at the Holiday Inn)

Please fill out the following pre-registration form today and mail with remittance to Dr. Craig Sheldon, Auburn University in Montgomery, Sociology Department, Montgomery, Alabama 36109. December 1 is the deadline for the pre-registration of the noon meal as the Holiday Inn must have an advance count in order to prepare the meal.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

- () Yes, I plan to attend the Winter Meeting and have lunch at the Holiday Inn. I have enclosed \$8.00 per person.
- () Yes, I plan to attend the Winter Meeting, but do not count me in for the noon meal. I have enclosed \$3.00 per person for registration only.
- () Yes, I plan to attend the party at the Holiday Inn Saturday night.

