

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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NOT NECESSARILY "PREVAILING"

In our August newsletter we ran an extract from the National Park Service news release on their DeSoto Trail study. This release stated that the DeSoto route studied by the Park Service was the "current prevailing view." We received a letter from Caleb Curren - Director of Archaeology for the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission - taking us to task for not presenting the other side of this issue. Caleb is correct: there are a sizable number of archaeologists and historians who disagree with the National Park Service. Their position is that much more work and study are needed and that marking a DeSoto trail is premature. Also, that the Park Service study provides little or no evidence to back up their claim to the "prevailing view." We are glad to present the other side of this controversy.

BRITT THOMPSON

Brittain Thompson, past President of the Alabama Archaeological Society, died September 28, 1990 in Birmingham. Britt, as he was known to all his friends, was a charter member of the A.A.S. and ardent supporter of archaeology throughout Alabama. He served several terms as President of the A.A.S. in its earlier years, and as a director the remaining years. He was instrumental in creating the Archaeological Research Association of Alabama, an adjunct to the A.A.S., for fund raising and contracting for scholarly work on specific archaeological research problems - particularly the search for evidence of "early man" in the caves and bluff shelters of North Alabama.

Britt is remembered by the Society members who were privileged to know him personally as a person of integrity, purpose, dedication, and moderation - a true leader in guiding the state's developing archaeological awareness.

November 1990

SENATE BILL 1980
To Provide for the Repatriation of Native American
Group or Cultural Patrimony

This bill has been introduced by Senator Inouye of Hawaii and has a title of high tone, but a close look should make museums, archaeologists and anthropologists have sleepless nights. This bill is unworkable and will only result in animosity, litigation and bureaucratic bungling. Native Americans seemingly are claiming descendency from every prehistoric skeleton unearthed, regardless of the age. This bill provides:

1. It applies to any person or government entity. including universities that receive Federal funds. This includes just about everyone - grant money, loans, educational funds, Federal employees and retirees, Social Security recipients and about 90 percent of Americans.
2. Anyone having a collection of artifacts must inventory it and by June 30, 1992, notify the affected tribe.
3. At the request of almost any Indian group, the artifacts must be returned to the Indian group.
4. A committee is to be established consisting of seven members - four to be Native Americans. They are to monitor and supervise the program - including arbitration of disputes. They are to be paid about \$85,000 each as salary, plus travel expenses, etc.
5. The Secretary of the Interior is to furnish office space and staff help as needed. The Committee decides how long it will take to do its job - some time in the future making a final report to the Secretary.
6. Grants of money may be made to Indian groups for the purpose of helping them to implement this program.
7. Federal permits issued to archaeologists in the past do not protect the artifacts recovered. Indian groups can reclaim these collections. They are not considered "archaeological resources."
8. No graves, sacred or funerary objects can be disturbed without consent of the affected tribe.

This is a classic example of the incompetence and ignorance of Congress. They go and meddle in all sorts of things that should be well left alone. This bill will just about put out of business those museums, universities and individuals that study prehistoric remains in the U.S. It's obviously an emotional response by Senator Inouye to some perceived transgression. It's also a patronage bill that, like most legislation, wastes the taxpayers' money.

As you can see from the tone of this editorial - I'm mad as hell!

The Editor

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

Our October meeting was held on the 11th. Guest speaker was Eugene Futato from The University of Alabama (Moundville). Eugene made a slide-illustrated presentation on the excavation of a Mississippian house site.

Bobby Hawkins

Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Archaeology Club held its first meeting after the summer break on September 27, 1990.

The new Club officers were announced. They are as follows: President, Dr. Phillip E. Koerper; 1st Vice President, Don Frazier; 2nd Vice President, Wyatt Amos; Secretary, Brigitte Cole; and Treasurer, Deb Slaney.

Dr. Phillip Koerper then announced information about the joint Georgia/Alabama meeting to be held in Columbus, Georgia on October 27. Parents' Day at Jacksonville State University will be on September 29, and Dr. Harry Holstein will have an archaeological display on the Quad. Wyatt Amos and Mr. Mullendore will have on display some of their artifacts for everyone to view. The Club now has a complete record of their meetings and events, starting with 1984 and ending with spring 1990.

Guest speakers were Dr. Harry Holstein, who gave a slide presentation on "the Search for Coosa"; and Chris Hill, who presented a slide show on the "Blue Hole" dig from the previous two years of excavation.

Everyone was treated to snacks and beverages, and a good time was had by all.

The Coosa Valley Chapter meets on the last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. on the second floor in Martin Hall on the campus of Jacksonville State University.

Brigitte Cole

Huntsville Chapter

Linda Derry and Julie Lyons presented the Huntsville Chapter October program, a slide talk on Cahaba, the old capital of Alabama. Ms. Derry and Ms. Lyons are archaeologists working with the Old Cahawba Preservation Project. Their presentation dispelled some of the myths that have grown up around Cahaba: the significance of the name "Cahaba", the true reason for moving the capital from Cahaba (it was not because of an 1825 flood - in fact, there was no 1825 flood), and the "fact" that - because of the (non-existent) flood, legislators had to use rowboats to reach second-story

windows in the capital building - not true! Ms. Derry and Ms. Lyons also discussed on-going activities at Cahaba - state acquisition of land, clean-up and stabilization projects, and invited our members to attend the Old Cahawba Festival, which will be held May 11, 1991.

The November chapter program will be presented by Dr. Harry Holstein of Jacksonville State University. His topic will be the Search for 16th Century Coosa. Elections for 1991 officers will also be held at the November meeting.

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

Dorothy Luke

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its first meeting after the summer recess on October 8 at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Twenty-five members and guests attended.

Charles Moore presented a color slide narration entitled "An Overview to Southwestern Archaeology." He showed slides from Lubbock, Texas; Mesa Verde; Monument Valley; Batatakin; Taos and Navaho reservation sites. Dr. Ovis Engelstead will bring the chapter a program on November 12 about Alaskan Indians and Eskimos.

Charles Moore

A.A.S. ANNUAL MEETING

The Alabama Archaeological Society and the Society for Georgia Archaeology held a joint meeting in Columbus, Georgia, on Saturday, October 27. Thanks to the efforts of David Chase, Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society; Phillip Koerper, Alabama Archaeological Society; and Frank Snell, Director of the Columbus Museum, the meeting was a success. Papers presented covered a broad range of topics and time periods; from Paleo-Indian to historic man, and from Native American studies to 18th century silk farming. The final paper, "Understanding and Preserving Documentary Evidence", recommended methods for handling and storing old documents and maps without causing damage to these fragile artifacts.

Elections were held for A.A.S. officers for 1991; the slate of officers was presented in the October STONES & BONES.

We would like to thank all those responsible for organizing this year's state meeting and field trip.

HOPIS CLOSE CEREMONIES TO NON-INDIANS

The oldest aboriginal religious ceremony in the North American continent is closed to non-Indians because of some of their acts, Hopi religious leaders said. They listed the following reasons for not allowing non-Indians into the religious ceremonies:

- Continued disrespect shown by non-Indians
- Flagrant violations of conduct during religious ceremonies

(From an article by a Navajo Hopi Observer in "The Lakota Times"; September 18, 1990)

EFFORT TO REGAIN IDOLS

There is a secret shrine on a sage-covered hill in the heart of the Zuni Reservation where Indians exercise a radically new concept of their property rights every time it rains or snows; every time the sun bears down with the heat of the day.

Inside the little red stone building sit 38 rare wooden statues of Zuni war gods, two to three feet high, austere and cylindrical, with rounded heads and stark, sharp faces. All belonged to museums and private collections, some for more than a century, until the Zunis launched a quiet, careful campaign to win them back.

The shrine has no roof except for a tangle of barbed wire and steel rods meant to keep out men but not the elements. The war gods, once dutifully protected by curators, have been deliberately exposed to the weather by Zuni priests so they will decay into dust.

This is a rare story of American Indians' getting back what was taken from them, and it may presage broad changes in the ways that Indian artifacts are bought and sold, in how they are studied and exhibited. By force of persuasion, the Zunis won the right to have their war gods treated according to the tenets of their religion rather than the norms of Western culture.

"Taking Zuni war gods out of climate-controlled museum cases and setting them out in the rain is a terrible thing to do if you consider them art works or cultural artifacts," said Edmund J. Ladd, curator of ethnology at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, "but it makes sense if you consider them religious objects that do their work by disintegrating."

(From an article by Robert Suro in "The New York Times," August 13, 1990)

SKULL TREPANATION AMONG THE EARLY INDIANS
OF CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

The word "trepanation" is derived from the Greek trypanon (auger or borer). Skull trepanation in early times was independently practiced in many areas of the world, with highest concentration in Peru and adjacent Bolivia. Its practice among the South and Central American Indians appears to have been most common in ancient times and less common in the pre-Columbian and post-Columbian eras. The oldest Peruvian trepanned skull dates back to roughly 3000 BC. The reasons for trepanation in North America, as in Mexico, Central and South America, remain largely conjectural.

This study reviews the published reports of 19 perforated skulls from North America, excluding Mexico, thought to be the result of intentionally produced antemortem trepanation.

A total of 19 complete trepanations was found in the 19 skulls. The shape of the trepanation was generally circular or somewhat oblong. The size of the perforations ranged from a diameter of approximately 1 cm to slightly over 5 cm, with an average size of about 3.0 cm. A determination of age at the time of death was made for 11 of the skulls. All were estimated to be adults ranging in age from approximately 20 to more than 60 years.

The patient was believed to have survived the trepanation in 17 of the 19 cases, and death was judged to have occurred soon after the procedure in 2. In one case, extensive bony nodules and depressions were present, possibly caused to osteomyelitis. No skull fracture was noted in any specimen.

The great majority of the trepanned skulls studied in America have been found south of the United States. The largest number of skulls were located in Peru or Bolivia, and the next largest number in Mexico.

Several techniques for trapanation, including scraping, sawing, cutting, and connecting twist drill holes were used by ancient surgeons. It is believed that the procedure took from 30 minutes to 1 hour to perform. The "square opening" trepanation made by cutting four rectangular intersecting grooves and prying out the loosened piece of skull is more typical of South American trephinations. Descriptive evidence from our review of North American trepanned Indian skulls suggests that gradual scraping, possibly with a flint or obsidian stone or knife, was the technique likely used to create oblong or circular openings in which the purpose of the procedure is thought to have been ritualistic, spiritual, witchcraft, or mystical. The trepanation, probably performed by a medicine man or shaman, may have been used to cure headaches, epilepsy, insanity, or skull injuries. We have been unable to find references to antemortem skull trepanation in Northern American Indian folklore or in ethnographical reviews of these cultures.

(From an article by James L. Stone, M.D., and Monica L. Miles, B.A., in "Neurosurgery"; Vol. 26, No. 6, 1990)

PRESERVING ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

A new regulation to toughen the way Federal agencies care for collections of prehistoric and historic archaeological remains and records has been issued by the Department of the Interior.

Many Federal laws direct Federal agencies to preserve and maintain prehistoric and historic artifacts, specimens, and associated records that are excavated or removed in conjunction with their projects and programs. A General Accounting Office report in 1987 found that Federal agencies generally were doing little to ensure that the artifacts sent to curatorial facilities were accounted for and properly preserved. The regulation addresses the problems reported by the general Accounting Office by ensuring that federally owned and administered archaeological collections are deposited in museums that can provide adequate long-term curatorial services.

The curatorial regulation went into effect on October 12, 1990.

National Park Service
Washington, D.C.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS - by Wm. Jack Hranicky. \$10 plus \$2 for postage and handling.

The book contains hundreds of illustrations, terms and definitions, drawings, and map examples. It is 8½ x 11 inches, 80 pages, and references, indexed. Each chapter contains study questions, which can be used to review and better understand the material covered.

Mail orders to ASV, c/o Wm. Jack Hranicky; P.O. Box 11256; Alexandria, VA 22312.

SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

"Southeastern Archaeology" is a semi-annual journal devoted to the prehistoric and historic archaeology of the southeastern United States and neighboring regions (Vernon J. Knight, Jr., Editor).

Recent articles include: Gregory A. Waselkov, Seventeenth Century Trade in the Colonial Southeast; Richard W. Yerkes, Mississippian Craft Specialization on the American Bottom; Kenneth E. Sassaman, Glenn T. Hanson, and Tommy Charles, Raw Material Procurement and the Reduction of Hunter-Gatherer Range in the Savannah River Valley.

The official journal of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. Regular dues \$15. Send payment to: SEAC c/o David H. Dye, Department of Anthropology; Memphis State University; Memphis, TN 38152.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 20-29 each issue	(\$2.50 to Members) \$5.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (<i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i>) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue	\$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>	\$10.00 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00 pp
<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service	\$7.50 pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile)	\$7.00 pp

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