Alabama Archaeological Society

Stones & Bones

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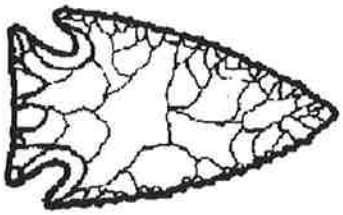

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Call For Papers!!!

This year's theme for the **AAS Winter Meeting** is **Recent Research in Alabama**. The meeting will be held on **December 14** at the **University of Alabama's Hall Center Auditorium**. Papers should be between 20-25 minutes long and student papers are encouraged. Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the meeting should contact Steven Meridith at 205-664-2739 or they may submit their titles to the Troy State University Archaeological Research Center, 40 Eldridge Hall, Troy AL 36082, telephone 334-670-3638/ Fax 334-670-3706.

What's Happening Around The State

University of Alabama

In the summer of 1996, The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Services continued excavations at Dust Cave (1LU496) located along Coffee Slough near Florence, Alabama. Previous excavations of a 2m by 12m test trench at Dust Cave revealed deep stratified archaeological deposits in excess of four meters dating from Late Paleoindian through Middle Archaic times. Because of complex natural and cultural factors, stratigraphy exhibiting thin layers of ashes and charcoal interbedded with red and brown clayey silts is well preserved. Preservation of these stratified deposits, along with the integrity of the site matrix and the quality and quantity of organic remains (i.e., floral and faunal remains), suggests that Dust Cave is unprecedented as a resource in Late Pleistocene to Mid Holocene archaeology of the (Benton) component at the site. A series of radiocarbon dates obtained from the site date this component from 5900 B.P. to 5200 B.P. Eight 1m by 1m units were excavated within the main entrance chamber adjacent to the existing 2m by 12m trench. These excavations produced a variety of artifacts, including diagnostic projectile points (i.e., Benton and Buzzard Roost Creek), bifaces, scrapers, bone tools, and a large volume of debitage. Numerous features were also encountered during the excavations, including rock lined hearths, ash pits, and small shell filled pits. Many of these features contained an abundance of charred floral and faunal remains.

In addition to the excavations, the field school students were involved with independent

research projects. These projects addressed a variety of topics, including a micromorphological analysis of sediments to compare and contrast two similar looking, thin red layers found in the deposits at Dust Cave (*Red Clay Lenses at Dust Cave,* Lara Homsey, Shippensburg University), a comparison of morphological and micromorphological changes in contact materials from experimental replicas of hearths and possible earth ovens at Dust Cave (*Hearth and Earth Oven Experiment,* Angela Davis, University of Alabama), the potential of incidental post-depositional alteration of bone in archaeological sites (*Thermal Alteration in Bone,* Erin Pritchard,University of Tennessee), the examination and comparison of stone tool marks on bone resulting from different processing tasks (*Stone Tool Butchering Experiment,* Chris Paddock, Shippensburg University), an experimental study comparing manufacturing damage to use damage on chipped stone tools (*Manufacturing Damage Versus Use Wear on Stone Tools,* Carey League, Livingston College), and a study comparing the speed and efficiency of water screening with and without the introduction of compressed air (*Flotation Compressor Testing at Dust Cave,* Sue Carroll, University of Michigan). The results of the student projects can be viewed at the Dust Cave Webpage (http://attila.atg.ua.edu/atg/dustcave/97/class96).

In July and August of 1996, The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Services conducted intensive archaeological testing of a corridor along the east margin of Site 1LU342; a large, multicomponent site located along the northern shore of the Tennessee River near Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama. The impetus for this testing program was to determine the presence of any important archaeological resources in the corridor in advance of a planned outfall line across the site. Although no midden was encountered in this area of the site, a thin, intact occupational layer consisting of lithic debitage, cores, hammerstones, and a few chipped stone tools (including Late Archaic projectile points) was found to be present. Two pit features were also encountered during the testing program, including one hearth and one cache of hammerstones. The hearth produced a radiocarbon date of 4800 + or - 140 B.P., a date compatible with the Late Archaic projectile points. Based on the findings of the testing program, this portion of Site 1Lu342 appears to represent an ephemeral Late Archaic occupation associated with lithic resource procurement and chipped stone tool manufacturing along the Tennessee River.

During June and July of 1996, a crew from the University of Alabama's Office of Archaeological Services conducted Phase II excavations at sites 1AU246, 1Au247, and 1Au248 to the west of Prattville in Autauga County. Excavations at 1Au246 revealed a Middle to Late Woodland village. Artifacts recovered at 1Au248 suggest it to be a multi-component campsite with Early to Late Woodland habitation. Artifacts recovered at 1Au247 are representative of Late Archaic and Middle Woodland campsites. The disturbed nature of sites 1Au246 and 1Au127 suggest that they are not NRHP eligible, while the discovery of an intact subsurface feature at 1Au248 suggests that further investigation is required on this site.

Joseph T. Betterton III

(*Information provided by Eugene Futato*)

University of South Alabama

Between May 20 and August 9, 1996, staff and students from the University of South Alabama's Center for Archaeological Studies excavated site 1MB189, in downtown Mobile on Government Street, between Royal and Water Streets, the location of the proposed Exploreum Museum and Omnimax Theater. Some important structures are known to have once occupied this spot, including an 1840's cotton warehouse, an 1850's City Market, and most recently a Mobile City Police building, constructed in the 1950's.

Several areas within this site were excavated under the joint direction of George Shorter and Bonnie Gums. The ca. 1850 Matt Sloan building, which is to be renovated, had several excavation units inside. The first was a large area in

the northeast corner, approximately 8x3.5 meters, which contained mostly building rubble, bricks and roof slates from demolition of the cotton warehouse. A deep test, 31/2 meters below the present-day floor, revealed the presence of water-logged Spanish colonial deposits. The Sloan Building is being renovated, so those deeply buried deposits will be preserved in place.

Excavation Block I, near Royal Street, covered an area 18x11.5 meters. Brick rubble deposited during the 1950's demolition of mid-19th-century brick structures was removed by backhoe. A total of 127 features were excavated. Most of the features dated to the mid-19th century and were associated with the brick buildings that once stood there. Underneath the brick building remains were numerous wall trenches, posts, pits, and midden features dating to the British and Spanish colonial periods (1763-1813). A portion of a structure or palisade was identified by wall trenches and posts. Several pits contained carbonized corn and historic aboriginal ceramics and two pits contained tar or pitch probably relating to ship building and repair activities.

Block II, on the east side near Water Street, measured 14x12 meters. Brick rubble was also removed in this area by backhoe. At the base of Level 4, sawed timbers laid end to end covered most of the excavation floor. These timbers are thought to have been fraising (short pointed logs placed around a fortification to repel attackers) salvaged from Fort Conde'/Charlotte during its demolition in the 1920's and used to fill in the marshes that once existed here along the bank of the Mobile River. Testing below this level was limited, as were the artifacts recovered. Fourteen features of mostly early 19th century origin were identified, including a pavement made from broken mill-stones. In addition, a 50 meter long trench was dug parallel to Government Street in order to study the soil profile between the bluff and the river marsh. The deepest excavated zones of the buried marsh contained numerous wood and leather artifacts that were preserved in the anaerobic conditions present below the modern-day water table.

Lab analysis is still continuing to more precisely date features and determine statigraphic relationships. A report will be available to the public next year on the results of this project, which was funded by the Alabama Historical Commission, the Exploreum, and the City of Mobile.

Panamerican Consultants, Inc.

Recently Russell M. Weisman of Panamerican Consultants, Inc., completed a Phase I survey report of 1,350 acres in Compartments Z-2 and Z-3 at Fort Benning Military Reservation, Russell County, Alabama. This report was submitted to the National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, and was funded by the Envirionmental Management Division, Department of the Army, U.S. Infantry Center, Fort Benning, Georgia. The Survey resulted in the description of 50 previously unrecorded archaeological sites and 17 isolated finds; six previously recorded recorded sites were revisited. This survey focused on the connection of specific historically described Lower Creek towns (including Yuhi, Osochi, Okumulgee, Hitchiti, and Apalachicola) with particular locations or archaeological sites. Historic figures (Tomochichi, Tonohowi, and the Apalachicola Prince ("Boston") were linked to specific locations in the Chattahoochee River Valley. A method for demonstrating the final nineteenth-century locations of Lower Creek communities using census and deed records is illustrated in this report. Archaeological survey combined with historic research allowed the author to suggest the probable location of trail sites connecting Lower Creek towns and villages. In addtion to research focusing on Lower Creek sites, this report clarifies the ownership and development of the Oswichee/Wright's Plantation in the nineteenth century.

Under contract with the Alabama Department of Transportation, Dan Pratt is currently completing Historic American Engineering Record documentations of the Central of Georgia Railroad's Bellwood Bridge (Geneva County), the Julia Strudwick Tutwiler Memorial Bridge (near

Gainsville), the Washington Bryan Crumpton Memorial Bridge (near Butler), the Willaim Rufus King Memorial Bridge (near Demopolis), and the Braxton Bragg Comer Memorial Bridge (near Scottsboro). Measurements and photographs of the Taylor-Cook House (near Sylacauga) have been completed and are being drafted for the Historic American Building Survey by Panamerican Consultants, Inc.'s architectural historian, Kelly Nolte. Phase II architectural surveys have begun for four domestic structures and other mine structures in Blossburg, and for the Republic-Pratt Coal Mine #1, both within the proposed Corridor X ROW in Jefferson County.

In September 1996, Terry Lolley of Panamerican Consultants, Inc. performed a Phase II archaeological investigation at site 1JE460, a small lithic production/use site, within Section 37 of a proposed highway corridor in Jefferson County, Alabama. This area is among those scheduled to be impacted by the construction of the Alabama Department of Transportation's Corridor X highway. The purpose of the investigation was to determine the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility status for site 1JE460 and to mitigate any adverse impacts to the site. Previous Phase I testing of the site recovered only four non-diagnostic lithic artifacts. Upon excavation of five 1x1 meter units and the recovery of only one artifact during the Phase II testing, it was determined that the site did not meet any of the criteria leading to NRHP eligibility. The location of the site on a landform prone to erosion, and recent disturbances related to powerline activities contributed to the depletion of the topsoil.

On September 3 through September 5, 1996, Panamerican Consultants, Inc. performed a cultural resource inventory of lands to be impacted at the Pine Hollow Landfill, in northern Russell County. The field crew consisted of Greg Hendryx and Paul McNullen. During the course of the survey, an aboriginal site was detected (Site 1RU356). This site measured 62m (E-W) by 38m (N-S), and contained intact subsurface deposits. Eleven shovel tests were excavated within the site boundaries, including eight positive tests and three negative tests. The artifact assemablage consisted of 27 artifacts, including grit-tempered sherds (n=9), grit-tempered sherds with mica incluslons (n=7), mica-tempered sherds (n=2), sand-tempered sherds (n=3), quartzite flakes (n=4), and chert flakes (n=2) .

No conclusively diagnostic artifacts were reported. However, the sherd tempering is indicative of a Late Mississippian and/or Historic Aboriginal occupation. The Historic Aboriginal town of Coweta is located approximately three miles east of this site, thus one research issue should include exploring the possibility of relating the two sites. Additionally, Site 1RU356 has potential to yield features. The site is considered potentially eligible and Phase II testing or avoidance were the recommended actions. (*Information provided by Tim Mistovich)*

In the Alabama Archaeological Society's Past

In the October 1976 issue, *Stones & Bones* editors discussed a project that began in May of that year. The project, funded by The University of Alabama, the Alabama Historical Commission and the Archaeological Research Association of Alabama, was unprecedented in the studies of Paleo Indians in Alabama. Caleb Curren served as Principle Investigator for this project and research was focused on an area largely unexplored at that time, the lower portion of the state. This research project encompassed a full year of study and was unique because there were very few restrictions placed upon it. The research was not bound by geographical boundaries. In fact, archaeologists were given the freedom to roam the fields, forests and rivers for any pertinent information. Late Pleistocene wood, fossils and pollen were examined, as well as the deposits in which they once rested. Scuba gear was even employed in this search. A photo of a Mastadon skull donated to the Unversity of Alabama was included. This

particular skull was found ten years earlier in the Coastal Plain region and gave archaeologists some of their first clues to the existence of well preserved Pleistocene animals in this area.

Donations!!!

Only a handful of AAS members have donated to the Public Education Grant fund, the Edward C. Mahan Archaeological Research Fund and the Steven B. Wimberly Scholarship Fund this year. **We are not even close to meeting our goal of $500.00 for each fund**. Many of our memebers complain that the AAS does not do enough for archaeology. Well, this is an opportunity for members to **get involved** so that **we can do more!** If we are not able to meet our goal this year, there will not be any grants available for 1997! **We urge members to send in their donations as soon as possible! ! It really will make a difference!!**

Chapter News

Cullman County Chapter

Our last Meeting was Thursday night, October 17, 1996 at 7:00 PM in the Cullman County Library which is located across the street from the Cullman Post Office, and south of the Cullman City Hall. We held our first meeting after the summer break in September with only four members and one visitor in attendance. Our "point" of the month was the Lecroy. At our October 17, 1996 meeting Howard King gave a program on the "Duck River Cache", one of the most fantastic discoveries in southeastern archaeology.

East Alabama Chapter

This chapter met on Tuesday, October 9, 1996, with 24 members attending. Dr. Jack Bergstresser, Department of Anthropology, University of Alabama-Birmingham, presented a program on industrial archaeology, focusing his presentation on the Brierfield blast furnace in Bibb County, Alabama. It supplied pig iron and rolled iron for the production of cannons and guns at Selma during the Confederate wasr effort. Brierfield iron also was used in construction of the ironclad "Tennessee". Archaeological evidence has been used to determine the technology employed in producing iron during this early period.

New Members

Milton L. Brown
P.O. Box 8011
Mobile, AL 36689

Greg Hendryx
924 26th Avenue East
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

Charles Galen
P.O. Box 2230
Orange Beach, AL 36561

The Calendar

Nov 7-9 Annual SEAC Meeting : Held at the Sheraton Civic Center in Birmingham. Papers begin at 8 a.m. on Thursday and run through Saturday.

Nov 15-17 Native American Inter-Tribal Pow-Wow: Barbour County Farm Center, Highway 239 Clayton, AL. Native American dance, arts and crafts, storytelling, food and more. Friday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. (CST). Admission charge. For further information, contact the Barbour County Farm Center at 334-775-1115.

Dec 14 Alabama Archaeological Society Winter Meeting: Will be held at the University of Alabama Birmingham Hall Center Auditorium. Papers begin at 8 a.m. and run until 5 p.m.

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