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Alabama Archaeological Society

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES ACT OF 1979

The Department of Interior is soliciting comments on the proposed implementing of regulations by that department and several others that will affect Federally-owned land in Alabama (i.e., TVA, Corps of Engineers, Interior, etc.). These rules will be uniform for all agencies. Written comments should be sent, no later than March 20, 1981, to: Director, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service; CODE; W512; Department of Interior; 440 G Street, N. W.; Washington, D. C. 20243.

The proposed rules were published in the Federal Register, Vol. 46 #12, January 19, 1981. Copies of the Register are usually available at major university libraries and government agencies, or write to your congressman for a copy. As we pointed out in earlier issues of this newsletter, the Act and the above-mentioned rules will make illegal all surface collecting for Indian artifacts on U. S. Government lands.

The Editors

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The Birmingham Chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at the Red Mountain Museum. Call Tom Hutto for further information at 956-1895.

Cullman Chapter

The program at the Cullman Chapter February meeting was given by Mr. Carey Oakley, head of the Office of Archaeological Research at Moundville. His talk was on the latest field investigations conducted by the University of Alabama.

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East Alabama Chapter

This chapter meets on the first Thursday of each month in Room 2169, Haley Center, Auburn University, at 7:30 p.m. For information call Mrs. Baker Dean, Jr. at 745-2494. Speaker for the February meeting was Dr. Dan Womochel, Assistant Professor, Geology Department, Auburn University; who presented a program on "Early Man in Africa". Speaker for the March meeting will be Dr. Walter Greenleaf; Professor, Department of Horticulture; Auburn University, who will give a program on "Origin and Evolution of Cultivated Tobacco and Indian Corn".

Huntsville Chapter

The Harper's Ferry Historical Assn. film "Legacy of a Legend", concerning Hernando de Soto's travels in the southeast in the 16th century, was shown at the February meeting. Chapter member A. J. Wright added some "footnotes" to the film, including a bibliography for those interested in pursuing the subject in more depth; and theories as to the whereabouts of some of the towns mentioned in contemporary accounts of the expedition.

PRE-CLOVIS MAN: SAMPLING THE EVIDENCE

The probable, the possible and the provable aren't all the same where the earliest inhabitants of North America are concerned.

No serious archaeologist argues about the origins of the first human inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere or about how they arrived. These paleo-Indians strode - or drifted - in, from what is now Siberia across the Bering Strait, over a land bridge that joined the Old World to the New during the last great ice age.

Not much of this is in question. But one big question remains: When did they come; how early were early humans in the New World? Since the early days of the 20th century, New World archaeologists have been debating the issue - often heatedly. The heat of the debate doesn't surprise Dennis Stanford, director of paleo-Indian archaeology at the Smithsonian Institution. "People digging at the roots of America's ancestry tend to be highly messianic", he explains. "They've invested time, money, thought and often reputation. Sure they want their labors and finds to prove significant. Sometimes they're not very careful about interpreting their results."

The debate about humankind's dawning in the New World is far from settled. But in recent years highly trained archaeologists have begun to accumulate impressive bits of evidence that suggest migrations at a time much farther back than might have been accepted only a few years ago. Some human occupancy as much as 20,000 or

25,000 years ago is beginning to look, if not feasible, at least arguable. Dates much older than that, however, while postulated, still strike more heat than light from among the disputants.

The pivotal point of the debate is on the order of 12,000 years ago - or 12,000 BP, for "before the present", in the parlance of the professionals. That represents the earliest totally accepted date for human appearance in the New World. It takes the form of a special kind of artifact: a man-made tool, a projectile point with a highly distinctive shape, a manufactured weapon for killing mammoths and other big game. The points are bifacially fluted; longitudinal flakes have been chipped from the base on both sides to form grooves. With fluting, the point could be attached to a wooden shaft for use as a spear or dart. These fluted points have been found at sites ranging from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast of North America and from Alaska to central Mexico. In the sites where carbon 14 dating is unequivocal, all the projectile points have been found to date within a very narrow window of time - 11,500 to 11,000 BP.

But were the bearers of the Clovis Culture the first inhabitants of the New World? Or were there earlier bands of migrant-hunters whose groping cultural evalution ultimately gave rise to the technologically-advanced Clovis? That question is at the heart of the peopling of America debate.

That the Clovis people were the very first Americans is a position promulgated by Paul S. Martin of the University of Arizona. He has introduced the "overkill theory" to support his arguments. Martin contends that the Clovis people, already skilled big-game hunters, swept into the Americas from Alaska in a single, rapid migration about 12,000 years ago.

Other New World archaeologists contest the overkill hypothesis. In their view dramatic changes in climate and vegetation, in the wake of a significant glacial retreat, were the agents of extinction. More to the point, a number of these investigators are convinced that humans trod the soil of the New World far in advance of Clovis' distinctive appearance. Says Richard S. MacNeish, director of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology: "There can be little doubt that man was here well before 12,000 years ago, as we have have about 30 sites with more than 2,000 recognizable artifacts and with more than 60 radiocarbon determinations before 10,000 B.C.E. (before the Common Era)." How much earlier than 12,000 years ago? MacNeish suggests that humans "may have first crossed the Bering Strait land bridge into the Western Hemisphere between 40,000 and 100,000 years ago."

One of the most prominent figures in the controversy over New World habitation is anthropologist and geoscientist Vance Haynes, also of the University of Arizona. To Haynes, a self-styled "archaeological conservative" who has been stalking Clovis for more than two decades, has been delegated the ad hoc role of both arbiter and devil's advocate in the assessing and validating of evidence presumptive of prehistoric migrations into the New World.

Some of the key pieces of evidence of the existence of a pre-Llano (another term for pre-Clovis) people include:

- Pikimachay Cave in highland Peru, where MacNeish has uncovered artifacts he insists date back as much as 21,000 to 25,000 years. "My excavations of Pikimachay Cave have proved to me that pre-10,000 B.C.E. and pre-20,000 B.C.E. remains of man do exist", he says unequivocally.
- All told, says MacNeish, almost 300 "indisputable" artifacts were unearthed in association with more than 800 bones of sloths and other extinct Ice Age mammals. Perhaps the best evidence was turned up at the upper level, dated at 14,150 BP, which was found to contain 133 artifacts, including stone projectile points and scrapers. Many of the recovered artifacts are very crude, says MacNeish, and a far cry from the sophistication of Clovis, suggesting that they were the tools of unspecialized hunters and gatherers.
- Valsequillo Basin; Puebla, Mexico; where in the early 1960s investigators stumbled upon a trove of extinct-animal bones as well as some crude stone artifacts along a dry river bed. Subsequent stratum-by-stratum excavation turned up an ever-receding chronology of hunters slaughtering Ice Age animals. At about 30 meters down, at a level dated by Carbon-14 at 22,000 years, archaeologist Cynthia Irwin Williams found evidence of a mastodon dismemberment by ancient butchers.
- Tlapacoya, Valley of Mexico, near Valsequillo, where Mexican investigators Jose Lorenzo and Lorena Mirambell found bones in association with a shallow depression containing charcoal that yielded a carbon-14 date of 24,000 BP (give or take 4,000 years) and presumed to be the remains of an ancient hearth. Moreover, the investigators uncovered some obsidian artifacts, including a curved blade found buried under a large tree trunk, that gave the same 24,000 BP date.
- DelMar in southern California. A group of 11 human skeletons has been found along the California coast and dated by Jeffrey Bada of the University of California at San Diego, using a technique called amino acid racemization.

The oldest date determined on a skull found at DelMar gave a racemization number of 48,000 BP. Two other samples - dated at 23,000 and 17,150 BP - have been confirmed by radiocarbon dating.

- Meadowcroft Rockshelter, Pennsylvania. On a sandstone outcrop 65 kilometers southwest of Pittsburgh, James M. Adovasio of the University of Pittsburgh has unearthed an assemblage of unifacial tools associated with radiocarbon ages of 13,250; 14,850 and 15,120 years. One especially significant find was a bifacial projectile point "like a fluted point except that it has no fluting" that dates earlier than the Clovis point and may be ancestral to it.
- The Selby and Dutton sites in eastern Colorado. 1975 pond-dredging crews on farms near Wray, Colorado, unearthed two Pleistocene fossil sites. Alerted to the discovery, a Smithsonian Institution archaeological team that happened to be working nearby raced to the scene. In subsequent (and as yet far from complete) excavations, under the direction of Dennis Stanford, the team initially discovered fluted projectile points and other manifestations of Clovis. Digging deeper, they found evidence of the presence of earlier cultures that included what are called bone expediency tools. These are manufactured by producing a spiral fracture in bone and using the sharp edges for butchering or hide-working. Bone flakes, presumably the waste or debitage from tool production; and bone, apparently processed for the removal of marrow; were also The tools, made from the bones of Ice Age horse, bison, mammoth and camel, were found in "chronologically secure" layers extending back a possible 20,000 years. What makes the site especially exciting, according to Robert L. Humphrey, is that it "reveals the only evidence to date of an archaeological culture stratigraphically in situ below a level containing Clovis fluted points and other manifestations of the Llano Complex."
- Old Crow Basin, Yukon Territory, where in 1966 was discovered a caribou leg bone that had clearly been worked by human hands to produce a tool called a flesher a back-scratcher-like implement used to scrape animal hides. William Irving of the University of Toronto and Richard Morlan of the National Museum of Man, in Ottawa, who now direct major archaeological research projects in the basin, established a carbon-14 date for the flesher of 27,000 BP. Since then, other worked-bone specimens have been found and dated as far back as 41,000 years.

What says Clovis specialist to all this? "Tantalizing but not foolproof... I am a skeptic. I remain a skeptic. I have yet to see unequivocal evidence of pre-Clovis. Each (site) has some kind of uncertainty connected with it." On his list of "uncertainties", Haynes includes:

- Skepticism about radiocarbon dates. Samples may become contaminated by groundwater, he says, and throw the true carbon-14 date off accordingly. Case in point: the Meadowcroft site. It is possible, he says, that rainwater could have brought in dissolved carbon from nearby coal deposits, thus disturbing the precision of the radiocarbon date.
- Suspicion about amino acid racemization. In a thorough review of this dating technique, David von Endt, a research chemist at the Smithsonian Institution, writing in a monograph on pre-Llano cultures published in 1979 by the Anthropological Society of Washington, D. C., concludes: "I view no projected amino acid date as reliable." Reason: The rate of turnover from L- to D-form amino acids depends on a mix of complicated factors that have yet to be fully reckoned into the racemization clock.
- Uncertain primary or cultural context. "The primary requirement", says Haynes, "is... an assemblage of artifacts that are clearly the work of man. Next, this evidence must lie in situ within undisturbed geological deposits.... Lastly, the minimum age of the site must be demonstrable by primary association with fossils of known age or with material suitable for reliable isotropic dating. These requirements have now been met repeatedly for the late paleo-Indian period (Clovis) but they have not yet been met repeatedly for earlier periods.
- Artifact versus geofact, or when is a tool a tool? Haynes talks about a "bandwagon effect, where some archaeologists see artifacts everywhere they look." In many cases, he says, the artifacts are nothing more than geofacts or ecofacts, pseudotools produced by agents other than human. "I think if we were to dig anywhere there are Pleistocene, coarse-grained sediments or bones," says Haynes, "[we] would find something that could be interpreted as artifact."
- Absence of stone artifacts. Thus far Old Crow and the Selby/Dutton sites (at strata below Clovis) have yielded only bone artifacts. No stone tools are in evidence and, according to Haynes, "you can't produce flake scars by hitting bone against bone". Further, there's little to support the validity of an allbone culture. If there were stone tools at Dutton or Old Crow, where are they?

Needless to say, Haynes' arguments breed counterarguments among those convinced of a significant pre-Llano presence. Old Crow archaeologist William Irving, for example, suggests that stone tools may not be all that essential to the support of human life. In fact, he contends, bones that could have performed all the necessary tasks of hunting, piercing, butchering, skinning and perforating have been recovered from deposits at Old Crow and elsewhere. Two years ago, Dennis Stanford gave a dramatic demonstration

of bone's versatility. Using only bone tools, Stanford showed how it was possible to butcher and process the remains of an elephant, operating on one that had died of natural causes at a Boston zoo.

As for the artifact versus geofact issue, Stanford readily concedes that archaeologists may be led astray by wishful thinking - "seeing what they want to see". But, he points out, with bone, for instance, there are criteria to help the investigator with a trained eye to distinguish between tool and pseudo-tool. For example: With tools, only the ends - the working parts - tend to become polished and worn. This discriminatory polishing doesn't often happen in nature, unless only the ends have been gnawed. But then there would generally be tooth marks to help make the distinction.

When Haynes, eminently known for his "insistence on methodological exactitude", drops his devil's-advocate mask, he readily professes a belief in a human presence that may far antedate Clovis, a presence he believes will become demonstrable and unquestionable in time. In fact, he now seems near-convinced about the validity of MacNeish's Pikimachay Cave finds - specifically those from the 14,150 BP level. The Valsequillo deposits, dating from 9,000 to 21,000 years ago, also enthrall him (although the picture there remains clouded by another kind of uncertainty: unsubstantiated charges that workmen may have deliberately planted some of the would-be artifacts).

But far from quashing the debate, the strong indications of a pre-Llano presence have introduced a major new wrinkle to the controversy, having to do with the origins of the Clovis Culture. Is it, as Martin, Vance Haynes and others contend, an import by a technologically-advanced people who brought their Upper Paleolithic wisdom with them from Siberia? Or is it, as MacNeish, Stanford and other pre-Llano advocates maintain, a homegrown product - an evolutionary outgrowth of already-in-place, pre-Clovis cultures?

Haynes offers up this scenario: During the peak of the most recent glacial epoch - anywhere from 14,000 to 20,000 years ago, he says - a large portion of the earth's ocean water was stored in Northern Hemisphere ice sheets, causing the sea level to drop by scores of meters. What emerged was the 1,600-kilometer-wide Bering land platform, which made Alaska as much a part of the Asian continent as the North American and which allowed for easy migration from Old World to New.

The bridge, however, was not a thoroughfare from the Old world to the whole of the New; two great icecaps - the Cordilleran on the west and the Laurentide on the east - covered much of Canada and much of the United States. Joining as they did at the foot of the Canadian Rockies, the giant glaciers created an ice barrier, a wall to southerly migration.

The hunters remained mired in an Alaskan cul-de-sac until about 12,000 years ago, when a period of marked glacial retreat opened a north-south corridor between the two icecaps. The progenitors of Clovis, confined until then in central Alaska, swept south in pursuit of the mammoth and other quarry. Once through, they dispersed rapidly across all of North America and into Mexico. All Clovis dates bear this out; from east to west, north to south, the Clovis artifacts fall within that 11,000-11,500 BP slot. Nor did expansion - or technological innovation - cease. For the Clovis point gave rise to an even sleeker, more advanced projectile point, dubbed the Folsom point, after Folsom, New Mexico, where a specimen was first uncovered in association with the skeletons of extinct bison. Similar fishtail stone points have been found as far as the southernmost tip of South America - Fell's Cave in Tierra del Fuego - and dated at about 10,000 BP.

Proponents of the idea of a substantial pre-Llano presence take issue with these speculations. For one, they assail the proposition that megafauna extermination stemmed directly from an in-More to blame, they say, were drastic changes in vasion of Clovis. climate. With deglaciation, the desert moved north, wiping out huge areas of grassland once used for foraging. They cite the work of Russell Graham of the Illinois State Museum who, having recently completed a comprehensive examination of Pleistocene fauna, concludes: "Man's pernicious effect on the modern environment is not necessarily indicative of his impact on ancient environments.... Undoubtedly man's predation had an effect on the megafauna, but climatic changes are the best explanation for Pleistocene extinction". Opponents of "overkill" also wonder how it is that one of the most heavily hunted of the species, a variety of bison, is still with us, while hundreds of other animal species that Clovis and Folsom did not hunt perished. Says Dennis Stanford: "Throughout life's entire history animals have gone extinct - in most cases without any help from man".

Pre-Llano proponents also have trouble accepting the presumption of Clovis' lightning-like sweep through the hemisphere. Says Stanford: "I find it impossible to accept this idea of rapid migration. Primitive cultures tend to be conservative, hunters who explore, retreat, explore, retreat. As they move from environment to environment, they must learn to adapt, and that doesn't happen overnight." MacNeish has similar reservations: "A group of primitive people traveling into completely unknown territory would have frequently taken the wrong direction, and the group would have always been saddled with household equipment and baggage, babies, pregnant women and hobbling elders".

MacNeish proposes yet another sort of paleo-Indian-advance theory - small-group filtering or, more colloquially, the "hurryup-and-wait" process: A band of migrants might be especially adapted for subsistence in broad ecological zones, he says, "and within these zones they would be able to move rapidly, but movement from one zone to the other would require that they build up a whole new subsistence complex; that would take considerable time. The hypothesis that Clovis and Folsom moved through dozens of radically different environmental zones from the Bering Strait to Tierra del Fuego in a thousand years thus seems unreasonable."

But if paleo-Indians did indeed poke their way into the Americas long before the emergence of the Clovis Culture, who were these migrants and how did they get here, considering that a severe ice age was upon the land? Stanford: "Soviet archaeologists have found evidence that man inhabited Siberia certainly 35,000 years ago and perhaps as early as 70,000 years ago. The discovery of early occupations of Siberia greatly increases the time available for man to come across the Bering land bridge."

Moreover, he says, there is now reason to believe that the ice-free corridor from Alaska to North America was open for movement south for much longer periods than previously supposed. "In fact," says Stanford, "it may have been closed for only a short time during the whole [Ice Age] period. So it would have been possible for early hunters... to have entered North America long before 12,000 years ago and to have moved southward, continuing to exploit grassland environments." Further, he says, there is now even a slim possibility that an "alternative route" to the interior corridor may have been available - an ocean-side roadway that trailed down the emerged Pacific coast.

Haynes has strong objections to this idea of a coastal route. "Even if there were such a route between the glacial ice and the ocean", he says, "it would have been an incredibly treacherous environment to negotiatiate. Under the prevailing circumstances it's hard to imagine people moving down the coast even in boats."

Conspicuously absent from the Old World tool kit, however, is the centerpiece of the Clovis Culture: the fluted projectile point. This absence is probably the key piece of evidence against those who propose an Old World origin and rapid dispersal for Clovis. Haynes, in response, explains that the development of fluted, bifacial projectile points could have taken place in Alaska or along the ice-free corridor between 14,000 and 12,000 years ago. But if so, goes the counterargument, why is there no good evidence of Clovis points in this initial New World dwelling place as is the case elsewhere in the hemisphere?

The fact is, a few fluted points have been found in the Far North in recent years. However, one Alaskan find, said to date from the post-Clovis period, about 9,000 years ago, is held up as evidence that Clovis developed out of an already-extant American paleo-Indian culture, and that this new technology traveled not from north to south but from south to north, representing a cultural backwash. But two other fluted points, from the Putu site in the Brooks Range, have been related to a charcoal date of 11,500 years ago. "If this date is valid", says Haynes, "it makes at least two Alaskan fluted points as old as the oldest fluted points from interior North America.

On balance, then: The evidence, if not altogether conclusive, certainly strongly suggests that the New World was visited and settled by migrant hunting bands from the Old World in the shadowy recesses of time back far beyond 12,000 years ago. But it remains to be determined whether the Llano Complex developed from a local, as-yet-undiscovered, indigenous progenitor or whether it originated in the Old World and spread by way of rapid dispersal. At the moment, both positions seem equally defensible. Perhaps the wisest counsel for now is for New World archaeologists to wait and see - to postpone final judgment until new, clarifying evidence comes to light. In Haynes' words: "I think that if pre-Clovis man was really here, good evidence will be found. The important thing is not to rush into it... What we are actually looking for is what really happened, not what we think happened."

(From an article by Ben Patrusky in the September/October 1980 MOSAIC)

The Editors

NEW MEMBERS

Archaeology Club (Inst.)	Northview High School 3307 Highway 431 North Dothan, Alabama 36303
Curry, Ms. Beverly S. (I)	101 Claymont Circle Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35404
Gibson, Mr. & Mrs. John W. (F)	P. O. Box 488 Troy, Alabama 36081
Mistovich, Mr. Timothy S. (I)	8 Mound State Monument Moundville, Alabama 35474
Mitchell, Mr. Douglas R. (I)	2005 East 100 South Lebanon, Indiana 46052
Sweat, Mr. & Mrs. Ronald (F)	Route One, Box 196-C Childersburg, Alabama 35044
Yankee Book Peddler, Inc. (Inst.)	

REPORT ON PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR A HANDBOOK OF ALABAMA CERAMICS

The Journal Editor has written 14 professional archaeologists particularly knowledgeable of Alabama ceramics, outlining a proposed reference volume of aboriginal ceramics from Alabama. Eleven persons have responded, all enthusiastically. Everyone is willing to donate their time and effort, but some individuals might need help with such expenses as Xeroxing or photography.

The proposed volume consists of two parts. The first part would be a series of six to eight regional papers. These papers would discuss the aboriginal ceramics in each area detailing the local assemblages, the associated trade types, dating, and other topics. The second part of the volume will be a standardized set of descriptions of the pottery types. The volume would include a glossary, bibliography, illustrations and maps. The estimated development time for the book is two years - perhaps three - before it is actually printed.

The proposed next steps are as follows. First, initiate the writing of the regional papers and the glossary. At the same time begin compilation of a list of Alabama pottery types and references for description. When the regional papers and the glossary are complete, they should be circulated to all authors for comment and discussion. At this time a proposed format for the type descriptions should be circulated. Once all authors have had an opportunity to review this material, the hard part starts. It will be necessary to reach agreement on standardization of type names, the glossary, and the format for the type descriptions. This will probably require a meeting of most or all involved parties. This may best be done in conjunction with one of the State society meetings or a meeting of the Council of Alabama Archaeologists.

A pottery handbook as outlined here will be a basic reference for southeastern archaeology for many years, as the point type book has been. It will, however, be a major undertaking in terms of time and expense. The volume will be thick and the many necessary illustrations will increase the printing cost. Additional sources of funds such as donations should be considered. These might particularly help the production costs prior to actual publication.

Eugene Futato Moundville

PUBL	ICATIO	NS AVAILABLE	4
Available issues of Journal of Alabama Archaeolo Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)	gy Vol. 13-	18	\$1.00 pp
Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations (Jour Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint)	nal of Alaba	ma Archaeology)	
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell			\$2.00 pp
Special Publication 2 — The Archaeological Se Durant Bend, Dallas County, Alabama	quence at		\$4.50 pp
Special Publication 3 — Archaeological Investig	ations at H	orseshoe Bend	\$6.50pp
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Alabama Archaeological Society

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