

Alabama Archaeological Society

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Associate Editors
Bart Henson
Dorothy Luke

STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

Editor
Amos J. Wright
2602 Green Mountain Rd.
Huntsville, Alabama 35803

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

ANNUAL MEETING

AGENDA

Anniston Museum of Natural History
Anniston, Alabama

Saturday, November 19

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 8:00 a.m. | Registration
Registration Fee (Includes donuts/coffee and admission to the museum): \$2.50 - A. A. S. Members and Students
\$3.00 - General Public |
| 9:00 a.m. | Opening Address - Dr. Harry O. Holstein, Jacksonville State University |
| 9:05 a.m. | Anniston Museum and Archaeology - Mr. Michael Ray, Anniston Museum of Natural History |
| 9:10 a.m. | "Shatterzones - How Geography Shapes the Processes of the Past in Northeast Alabama" - Dr. Howard Johnson, Jacksonville State University |
| 9:50 a.m. | "Cultural Resource Management of Archaeological Resources at Fort McClellan, Alabama" - Mr. Ray Clark, Environmental Engineer, Fort McClellan |
| 10:10 a.m. | "Eight-County Archaeological Survey in Northeast Alabama - Dr. Vernon Knight, Office of Archaeological Research |
| 10:30 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 10:45 a.m. | "Intensive Survey of Portions of the Coosa River" - Mr. Tim Mistovich, Office of Archaeological Research |
| 11:05 a.m. | "Fisheries of the Tallapoosa River" - Mr. Carey Oakley and Mr. Charles Hubbert, Office of Archaeological Research |
| 11:25 a.m. | "Archaeological Investigations at the B. B. Comer Bridge Site 1Ja78, Jackson County, Alabama" - Mr. Carlos Solis, Office of Archaeological Research |

November 1983

- 11:45 a.m. Lunch and Board of Directors Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting and Election of 1983 A. A. S. Officers
- 1:30 p.m. "1983 Archaeological Activities of the Office of Archaeological Research" - Mr. Eugene Futato, Office of Archaeological Research
- 1:40 p.m. "Alabama Historical Commission Archaeological Report" - Mr. Mc Brooms, Alabama Historical Commission
- 1:50 p.m. "Using Statistics To Study Ridge-Top Sites in Alabama" - Dr. Roger Nance, University of Alabama in Birmingham
- 2:05 p.m. "The Barnett Phase in Northwest Georgia" - Dr. David Halley, University of Georgia
- 2:35 p.m. "Archaeology of Western Georgia" - Dr. Lewis Lawson, West Georgia State College
- 3:05 p.m. "Art of the Hopewell Mound Builders" - Dr. John A. Walthall, Illinois State Department of Transportation
- 3:35 p.m. Break
- 3:45 p.m. Premiere: "Lost in Time: Alabama Indians" - Dr. Joseph O. Vogel (Consultant), Ms. Maryann Culpepper
- 5:00 p.m. Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Museum Exhibits and Prep Areas - Mr. Michael Ray, Anniston Museum of Natural History
- 5:30 p.m. Informal Happy Hour/Rap Session at Nearby Restaurant

NOTE: The Anniston Museum of Natural History is located at 4301 McClellan Boulevard, 2½ miles north of Anniston on Alabama 21, ½ mile east on McClellan Blvd. (U. S. 431).

1984 DUES

We are asking members to make a special effort to renew their membership on a timely basis. This year (1983), it has cost your Society approximately \$150 for postage and envelopes to mail back issues of the Newsletter to members who fail to renew before the cut-off date, March 1. In these cases, when a member fails to receive one or two issues of the Newsletter (or, in some cases, 10 or 12), they apparently remember that they haven't paid their dues and then send in their payment. The above costs do not include the cost of mailing back issues of the Journal, which would probably make the total cost close to \$200. Our Society could better use this money for many other more

productive things. Please - don't wait. Send in your payment now, so you don't forget it, and save our Society this needless cost.

The Editors

WHO'S NEXT?

Based on recent news accounts, North Alabama has had its share of Indian grave digging. The first concerned graves found under a house in Limestone County. An Athens State College faculty member got into the act and with others assisting, he dug three graves which he promptly proclaimed as being Chickasaw and that they were killed in a battle with the Choctaw. This all took place on private property.

The second incident in the local news was the "finding" by a collector of a skeleton eroding out of the Tennessee River. He called the Limestone County Sheriff's office and deputies dug part of the burial and sent bones to the state pathology lab in Huntsville (although everyone seemed to think it was Indian). This brings up an interesting question which may not be covered by the Federal Antiquities Act - can (will) TVA prosecute the deputies for illegal digging of Indian graves on Federal land?

We don't usually rerun news media accounts due mostly to their unreliability; however, we felt these incidents warranted an exception.

The Editors

CHAPTER NEWS

Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Chapter met on September 29, 1983 at Jacksonville State University. Larry Smith of Jacksonville showed slides and spoke of his experiences with the University of Alabama archaeologists as they excavated several rockshelters on Sand Mountain in the early 1960's.

Elections were held. New chapter officers are:

President: Dr. Philip E. Koerper - Jacksonville
Vice President: W. E. (Eddie) Hardy - Weaver
Secretary: Mary Johnson - Jacksonville

The next chapter meeting will be October 27 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 305, Brewer Hall, on the JSU Campus. Ms. Theresa Kisor of the Piedmont Historical Society will discuss historical preservation in Piedmont and also the society's efforts to preserve the town's early railroad station. New members are cordially invited to attend this meeting.

On November 19, the chapter will attend the A. A. S. winter meeting at the Anniston Museum of Natural History. A Christmas Party is being planned for December.

Cullman Chapter

The chapter met at Shelter 15 at Sportsman Lake on Monday, September 26, for a "show-and-tell" meeting. On October 17, Carey Oakley, director of the Office of Archaeological Research at Moundville, spoke on the Cedar Creek Watershed project and on archaeology in general. Carey has spoken several times to the Cullman Chapter.

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room, Von Braun Civic Center. For more information call Program Chairman Roy Blair, Jr., at 534-9663.

The Chapter met October 18 to hear Ms. Patricia Ryan speak on Historic Preservation. Ms. Ryan has a degree in history from The University of Alabama and works for the Planning Commission of the City of Huntsville (and is the daughter of Truman Ryan, long-time A. A. S. member). Ms. Ryan is the editor of Cease Not to Think of Me - the Steele Family Letters.

Tuscaloosa Chapter

The September chapter meeting was held at Smith Museum at The University of Alabama. Mr. John Hall was the guest speaker. Mr. Hall spoke and showed slides on three previous summer digs sponsored by the Museum utilizing high school students.

The Chapter's October meeting was held at the Tuscaloosa Library. Mr. Richard Walling from the Office of Archaeological Research in Moundville spoke on seven counties in the Coosa River Basin area of Alabama. He also went over the new computerized site forms.

The next meeting will be held at the town library on November 7 at 7:00 p.m. The guest speaker will be Ms. Jeanie Allen of The University of Alabama.

Four of the Tuscaloosa Chapter members are participating in a dig at Mound State Park (Moundville). Ms. Allen, the November chapter speaker, is in charge of this project.

EXHIBITS OF INTEREST IN NORTHERN ALABAMA

Huntsville Museum of Art (through November 20): Two outstanding exhibits are on display. "The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: A New Look at the Work of Edward Curtis" is a fascinating glimpse into the past, comprising dozens of photographs - mostly of Indians - from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The point of the exhibit is not so much the pictures themselves, fascinating though they are, but how the photographer

manipulated his subjects to show what he wanted the viewer to see. "Non-Indian" items in the photographs (suspenders, umbrellas - even wagons and cars) were often "removed" from Curtis' pictures with a retouching stylus. In at least one instance, something was added to a picture - drawn in on the negative - to make the photograph more "Indian" looking. The exhibit dispels the notion that the camera never lies and makes one wonder how many "historically accurate" photographs have actually been retouched or the subject matter "improved upon"!

The other exhibit is William Christenberry's "Southern Views". More photographs; this time, of old buildings in small towns in Alabama: Sprott, Havana, etc. Mr. Christenberry has photographed buildings again and again over a period of some 12 years. Some are shown to have deteriorated appreciably over the course of time; others have been refurbished and have taken a new lease on life. For several of the structures, Mr. Christenberry has made an detailed scale model, capturing the building at one stage of its decline or rebirth.

The Museum of Art (located in the Von Braun Civic Center) is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Mondays). No admission charge.

Constitution Hall Park, Huntsville (through November 6): Traditional Pottery of Alabama. Over 70 pieces of folk pottery representing the important forms, glazes, regional characteristics and family traditions of Alabama pottery. The four major groupings of functional forms - jugs, jars, churns and pitchers - are displayed in the Theatre Gallery. Gallery and Park (in the block south of the Courthouse Square) are open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tours begin on the hour. Admission charge.

Stevenson: The old depot has been made into a regional museum, with exhibits covering a little of everything. Indian artifacts, railroading and telegraphy, genealogy, farming implements, Post Office memorabilia, etc. The tracks are still in use, and an occasional passing train reminds visitors of the depot's original purpose. No admission charge.

The Editors

WELL DONE!

We would like to commend the Program Committee for their fine job in preparing for the Annual Meeting. They have arranged an excellent program and have had advance information on the meeting in the August, September, October and November issues of the Stones & Bones. We appreciate their efforts and can't help comparing our Committee's performance with that of some other organizations, which also go to the trouble of setting up an outstanding meeting but don't get the program information out in time for their membership and other interested people to make plans to attend. It is most frustrating to learn on Friday afternoon that a meeting one would have liked to attend will start early Saturday morning 50 to 100 miles away!

The Editors

"AN INTERESTING LETTER"

Barton, Ala., May 22d, 1895

Dear Old Reliable: -

Along the bluffs on the Tennessee river, north of Barton, are numerous caves in the rock, that in some places are fifty, sixty and sometimes one hundred feet high. These caves are the tombs of some extinct race, be they Indians, cliff dwellers, or what, I am unable to say. I think they are Indian graves or tombs. It is a little troublesome to find them, so nicely is the masonry fitted together; then the gatherings of moss and lichens that have grown over the surface for ages gives the wall an appearance of a solid wall of rock formed by nature, while upon close inspection you can find the lines between the large stones that have been fitted in and on one another with remarkable exactness and nicety. Some half dozen have been entered by the use of crowbars, drills and sledge-hammers, and we generally found a large flat stone lying flat upon the rich black dirt and muscle shells, showing that the soil had been brought from the riverside, or perhaps from the bottom of the river itself. Now with hoes, spades, and even with our hands, we remove the dirt, excavating under the large stone (which is generally too large to be removed) and down about eighteen to twenty-four inches we find the remains of a human being, an entire skeleton, disarticulated of course, but all the bones to complete the frame. Now just about the head and shoulders of each of these skeletons we found some beautiful designs in pottery, no two however alike. There is, or was a short time ago, a remarkably beautiful little pot, or kettle, the most perfectly turned and symmetrically formed little vessel I ever saw in this neighborhood, having two lips or eyes on the sides for the pot hooks seemingly for the purpose of taking it off of the fire. There is also here an earthen ware bottle, exact in shape like the "water-bottles" that appear on restaurant and hotel dining tables of the present day. This specimen is perfect in shape. Near the head of our subject disinterred, we found a large round bowl, embossed with raised figures, dots, diamonds and squares, and containing a lump of something that looked like meal and parched corn mixed together. This lump was the size of a man's fist and was in a state of semipetrification and scaled and crumbled away on pressure of the fingers. This pretty bowl was unfortunately broken in its extraction. In some cases the bones of these people were fast decaying. The specimens of pottery were all in a perfect state of preservation. Now Mr. Editor I am very much interested in these people and their history. Who were they? How long have they been entombed here? Are they extinct? I have only one conjecture. The bowl containing the lump suggests to me that they were Indians, for tradition tells us that they used to place food in the graves of departed loved ones, to sustain them on their supposed journey to the "happy hunting grounds." But please let's hear from you Mr. Editor and other readers of the Old Reliable, all they know about these people and their tombs. What implements or machinery did they have for handling those immense stones or closing the mouth of each of those caves? Some of the rock used and put up twenty and thirty feet would weigh from five hundred to two and three thousands. If you, sir, or any one interested will write me or come, I'll show them the tombs and one large one that has never been entered. The masonry is thirty feet long and at least twenty feet from

roof of cave to the floor and behind it are, I believe, some mysteries, relics and valuables that I would like to examine. Who will go with me?

(From the North Alabamian, May 24, 1895)

Charles Moore
Florence

GLASS BLADES: A CUT ABOVE THE REST

Blades made from volcanic glass not only cut costs, but also out-cut conventional blades used in surgery, says anthropologist Payson Sheets of the University of Colorado in Boulder. While excavating obsidian glass blades 12 years ago in El Salvador, Sheets decided to investigate the blades' cutting properties. First he learned to manufacture the blades using the fracturing process used by the and Mayas 2,500 years ago. Then, using an electron microscope, he compared the cutting edges of the obsidian to those of modern disposable steel scalpels and razor blades, and to diamond scalpels, the sharpest surgical tools available. He found that the glass blades were sharper than either steel blade, and incidentally, that the razor-blade edges were finer than the steel scalpel edges. The obsidian blades turned out to be two to three times sharper than diamond scalpel blades, but the real advantage is the cost, Sheets says. Obsidian blades would cost about \$10 apiece, compared to \$1,000 to \$3,000 per diamond scalpel. Commercial production is years away, but tests are in the works: Boulder eye surgeon Firmon Hardenbergh has used the glass blades in removing cataracts, and finds them more precise than either conventional or diamond scalpels.

(From Science News - August 6, 1983)

The Editors

FORT MITCHELL

A Russell County campaign to preserve the site of historic Fort Mitchell is finally paying off. Recently, Russell officials were notified that they are getting a second grant to develop a park at Fort Mitchell to complement the VA cemetery. The Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources announced that it has approved a \$50,000 land and water conservation fund grant. The county will match it with \$20,000 and in-kind contributions of \$30,000. The money will be used to build picnic tables, a gravel road and parking lot, walking trails and a playground. Taken together, the grants will assure the development of a Fort Mitchell park. In addition, Russell County has applied for a \$300,000 community development block grant to finance further work at the park. This money, if approved, would make possible an observation tower and actual reconstruction of the old fort itself.

(From Chattahoochee Tracings - Vol. 11, 1983)

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 13-18, each issue	\$1.00 pp
Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)	\$5.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint,	\$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

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO: **ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

SEND CHECKS TO: **MR. EUGENE FUTATO, Office of Archaeological Research**
1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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The coupon below may be used EITHER to APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP in the Society, or for the PAYMENT OF ANNUAL DUES. Please be sure that your name and address are CLEARLY entered, and that appropriate boxes are checked.

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Mr. Amos J. Wright
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