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HOW NOT TO DO IT

The following extract from the Guntersville Advertiser-Gleam, January 31, 1987, is a good example of people unknowingly destroying history through unsupervised digging on archaeological sites. We report this hoping to illustrate "how not to do it". Always contact an archaeologist when something of this nature is discovered.

"About 75 bones from a human skeleton were found on the side of Lewis Mountain in what was an Indian work pit many years ago. One of the leg bones had an arrowhead imbedded in it. There doesn't seem any question that the skeleton is that of an Indian. It was found under about 18 inches of dirt.

"It was under a rock overhang on the side of a bluff, near the top. Such overhangs are favorite places for people to dig for Indian artifacts, and a good many arrowheads, grind rocks and pieces of pottery had been found in this one. But apparently nobody had dug at this particular spot until now."

Two young teenagers were digging for artifacts when they came to the bones. Another teenager had been digging with them until he left a few minutes earlier.

The arrowhead was a good find, well made and not broken, and one of the young men pulled it out of the bone to put in his collection. The other two young men took the bones to the first boy's home. Family members called the sheriff's office. Investigators went there and examined the bones. With an arrowhead in one of them, they said, it might have been a case of murder, but after all these years they didn't see any point in trying to do an investigation.

The property owner says "they are going to put the bones back in the ground and not allow any more digging there unless some qualified archaeologist wants to search the site. If people keep on digging', he said, 'they might destroy something that could be important to science'."

We wish to thank Mary Mahan for contributing the above article.

THE TREES FELL - AND SO DID THE PEOPLE

New archaeological findings suggest that, far from living in perfect harmony with nature, prehistoric civilizations dealt major and sometimes fatal blows to their natural surroundings. Many investigators now question the notion that environmental problems began only with the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century.

Those who study the leavings of vanished civilizations, traditionally have seen their subjects in a much different light. "In archaeology, there has been a real undercurrent that prehistoric man was an ecological hero who could walk through the forest without snapping a twig", says Julio Betancourt, a geoscientist with the U.S. Geological Survey. He has assembled evidence from remains of the pueblo-dwelling Anasazi Indians in the U.S. Southwest that matches up with finds in Hawaii, the South Pacific and other parts of the world to tell a very different story: Long before the appearance of industrial civilization, prehistoric societies were leveling forests, exterminating entire plant and animal species and exhausting farmland. The destruction they wrought sometimes destroyed them in turn.

The mysterious disappearance of the Anasazi may be a dramatic case in point. In what are now New Mexico and Arizona, the Anasazi built an elaborate complex of roads, irrigation channels and, most notably, giant pueblos built of stone and masonry, some five stories high with 800 rooms or more. All were abruptly abandoned around A.D. 1200. Until now, the majority of archaeologists have believed that the reason, as documented by tree rings, was a prolonged drought.

But by using an electron microscope to analyze the logs of pueblos at Chaco Canyon, a major Anasazi site in New Mexico, Betancourt and his colleagues are chronicling a tale that suggests the Anasazi perpetrated their own fate. Over two centuries or so, the Anasazi systematically deforested the canyon until they had to travel 50 miles or more to gather wood for fuel and the hundreds of logs used as beams in their dwellings. They first harvested stands of ponderosa pine about 25 miles away. But around A.D. 1030, they switched to an unidentified wood that archaeologists for many years simply called Species X. Betancourt's electron micrographs revealed Species X to be spruce and Douglas fir, which grow only at the tops of the distant mountains that surround the canyon. The logs bear none of the scars that mark timber that has been dragged or rolled, and this suggests that the beams, averaging 600 pounds apiece, were carried into the canyon by hand.

"Archaeologists have a tendency to interpret any change in the archaeological record as a climatic change", Betancourt says. This so-called environmental-determinism theory, which holds that climate dictates culture, is being eroded by the new findings.

(From an article by Stephen Budiansky in "U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT", February 9, 1987).

NEW MEMBERS

<u>Name</u>	TYPE	Address
Beane, Larry and TaMara	F	822 Brummel Avenue, Bridgeport, AL 35740
Brock, Ms. Sheryl	I	112-D Village Lane, Madison, AL 35758
Bull, Mrs. Ghelma H.	I	2013 Lookout Street, Gadsden, AL 35901
Dillon, Mrs. Imogene F.	I	3457 Bittmore Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36109
Emory University	Inst.	Robert Woodruff Library, Order Department-Serials Atlanta, GA 30322
Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Don F.	F	3306 Oakdale Drive, Opelika, AL 36801
Galloway, Mr. Timothy	I	301 Roanoke Circle, Columbus, MS 39701
Hathaway, Mr. David	I	1903 Helmsdale Circle SE, Huntsville, AL 35803
Hodges, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin	F	6805 Jones Valley Drive SE, Huntsville, AL 35802
Hall, Mr. Robert L.	I	4601 - 45th Street East, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405
Saidla, Mr. Robert L.	I	12004 Willow Circle SE, Huntsville, AL 35803
Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. Willia	am I	12311 Bell Road SE, Huntsville, AL 35803
Schroder, Mr. Bill	I	13023 Maebeth Drive SE, Huntsville, AL 35803
Stowe, Mr. and Mrs. Read	F	Archaeology Lab, University of South Alabama Mobile, AL 36688
Styer, Mr. Kenneth F.	I	One Mound State Monument, Moundville, AL 35474

NEW LIFE MEMBERSHIP

We welcome our newest Individual Life Membership:

Mr. Louis Wayne Bell 501 - 27th Avenue Phenix City, AL 36867

ARROWPOINTS!

We wish to thank Mc Brooms for sending us one of the volumes of Arrowpoints that we listed as needing for our Archives. The list of "needs" was in the April issue of Stones & Bones.

Amos Wright Chairman Archives Committee

BOOK REVIEWS

PREHISTORIC MOUND BUILDERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY - Edited by James B. Stoltman, Putman Museum, 1717 West 12th St., Davenport, Iowa 52804. \$4.95 plus \$2 postage. Paperback. 39 pages. 8 x 10 (oversize). 1986.

This book contains the papers presented at a symposium, "Trading with the Mound Builders: Prehistoric Peoples of the Mississippi Valley", in November 1985 at the Putman Museum. The papers are:

- 1. The Moundbuilders of the Central Mississippi Valley by Dan F. Morse.
- 2. Middle Mississippian Societies of the American Bottom and the Central Illinois Valley by Thomas E. Emerson.
- 3. Prehistoric Woodland Peoples in the Upper Mississippi Valley by William Green.
- 4. The Appearance of the Mississippian Cultural Tradition in the Upper Mississippi Valley by James B. Stoltman.
- 5. The Mississippian Tradition and Iowa's Prehistoric Peoples by Joseph A. Tiffany.

This paperback contains several maps and photos. The material is presented in a brief, concise and succinct manner, outlining the latest thinking on the Mississippi Mound Builders.

The Editors

THE PLUNDERED PAST - by Karl E. Meyer - Atheneum, New York, 1973. 353 pages, photos.

Editor's Note: For the past several months, we have been running a series of articles on vandalism and destruction of archaeological sites. In this connection, we think it worthwhile to take a new look at an old book: one reviewed in the October 1978 Stones & Bones.

Tomb robbing, says Mr. Karl Meyer, journalist and amateur archaeologist, is "assuredly the second-oldest profession, practiced as widely, if not always as profitably, as the first".

This fascinating book gives details of art and artifact thefts old (the Eglin Marbles) and new (Hindu temples plundered under cover of the war in Bangladesh). Mr. Meyer says that "more than any other single element, the increase in art prices has been responsible for the wholesale theft, mutilation and destruction of art everywhere in the world". In chapters entitled "After Cortes", "Sailing from Byzantium", "See Italy Quickly", "The Sherd Trade", and "Whose Past?" (which contains the section "The Devouring Bulldozer"), Mr. Meyer gives countless examples of unscrupulous collectors' greed leading to increased illegal trafficking in art and artifacts, and resulting loss and destruction.

Appendices list looted sites, major art thefts, several resolutions by U.S. museums on guidelines for collecting art and antiquities, a treaty between the U.S. and Mexico which deals with "recovery and return of stolen archaeological, historical and cultural properties", a law controlling importation of pre-Columbian objects, and so on.

A "partial list" of those who "contributed information to this book" includes Hester A. Davis, Charles R. McGimsey and our own David L. DeJarnette.

The Editors

ROMAN LONDON - by Peter Marsden. Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1980. \$19.95. Photographs, drawings, maps.

Many modern-day visitors to London, we are sure, "do the sights" - Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, etc. They tour the museums and theaters, restaurants and shops, oblivious to the fact that beneath their feet lie the remains of ancient Londinium, founded about AD 50 as a "carefully planned civil trading settlement of Roman merchants".

This is not a very new book, but it is a very interesting one. It traces the discovery and preservation of ancient Roman sites within the boundaries of modern greater London and gives the author's theories on the structure and growth of Londinium. Most of the earlier discoveries were made by chance - when excavating for a building site, for instance. In fact, given that there was no central archaeological research unit working on Roman London until the early 70's, it is remarkable that so many sites had been found.

German bombing raids during World War II destroyed a third of the City of London (the financial district); this "provided a unique opportunity to discover the history and plan of Roman London". From the excavations in the cleared bomb sites after the war, and from the research performed by the newly centralized study teams over 20 years later, a clearer picture of the layout and population of Roman London has gradually emerged. ROMAN LONDON leaves the reader with hope for the future of urban archaeology, and a challenge for its author's successors to "test our conclusions and, where possible, to check our evidence".

CHAPTER NEWS

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the United Way office on Traylor Island.

Speaker at the April 21 meeting was chapter member Bart Henson. Bart's topic was rock art - petroglyphs and pictographs - at several Western sites and on the East Coast of the U.S. Bart used slides to illustrate his talk; he also had on display photographs and plaster casts from several sites, and examples of recent literature on the subject.

RAMESSES II

Members of the Huntsville Chapter visited Memphis April 18 to see the Ramesses the Great Exhibition, on loan from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Seventy objects, ranging from a 47-ton statue to tiny containers for kohl, are on display at the exhibition, which will run until August. The exhibit is a must for those interested in Egyptian art and history; advance reservations are recommended.

A side trip to Chucalissa afforded chapter members an opportunity to tour the museum and grounds, and watch a brief slide presentation on the site. After a picnic lunch at Chucalissa, the group moved on to Mud Island for a tour of the excellent small museum, reached from the river bank by monorail. The museum's theme is the Mississippi River — the people who have lived along it from Paleo to modern times. Particularly noteworthy were the various levels of the museum, with displays depicting different time periods and events, from early transportation along the river, through the Civil War, Mississippi riverboat gamblers and entertainers, on to jazz and blues musicians. A scale model of the Mississippi River, with water levels (computerized) corresponding to the actual level of the river, ties the theme park together. Mud Island warrants a visit in its own right; we wished we had had more time to spend here.

Our thanks to Nancy Rohr of the Huntsville Chapter, who organized the trip and saw to all the details involved.

The Editors

SUMMER MEETING

Carey Oakley has informed us that the summer meeting will be at the Hightower site near Sylacauga on June 27 (Saturday). More information will follow. Also Carey has projects going this summer near Muscle Shoals and Old

Cahaba, at which members will be welcome. Make your plans now to attend the meeting at Hightower, and be prepared to get your hands dirty. The Hightower site has vast potential as work there in the past two years has established it as a Spanish early contact site (probably De Luna in 1560).

The Editors

SECRETS OF OLD AIR

Analysis of centuries-old air inside a chamber in front of the Great Pyramid of Cheops at Giza, Egypt, may give scientists some insight into how Earth's atmosphere has changed since the chamber was sealed more than 4,600 years ago.

Farouk El-Baz, a space scientist and geologist, is heading the research project; an international team of researchers will bore a hole through the chamber's limestone walls and employ a device similar to the camera used to photograph the surface of Mars to document the ancient chamber's interior. Then researchers will collect air samples for analysis in bottles originally developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for testing the atmosphere of other planets.

The researcher believes that the chamber's air may help reveal whether the atmosphere is warming or cooling and how much carbon dioxide and carbon monixide have been added to it by the burning of fossil fuels.

(From "INSIGHT", July 28, 1986)

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