

# *Alabama Archaeological Society*

## STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

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CHAPTER NEWS

BIRMINGHAM, Red Mountain Museum Complex, 1st Wed., 7:30pm, Tom Hutto 595-7106. The Birmingham Chapter will resume its monthly meetings on September 2, 1976; program to be announced.  
CULLMAN, City Hall, 3rd Mon., 7:30pm, Eulis King, 734-4548. Howard King gave the August 16th program on his summer excavations near the Tennessee-Tombigbee River in Mississippi.  
EAST ALABAMA, Comer Hall Aud., Auburn, 2nd Wed., 7:30pm, Dru McGowan, 821-2595.  
HUNTSVILLE, Fellowship Center, Senior Citizens Bldg., 3rd Tues., 7pm, Cindy Sims, 536-2939  
The July 20th meeting featured Dorothy Luke who presented a program on Central American Archaeological Sites.  
MORGAN-LIMESTONE, Decatur City Hall, 4th Thurs., 7pm, Rodger Schaefer, 353-5828.  
MUSCLE SHOALS, Indian Mound Museum, 2nd Mon., 7pm, Gerald Hester 764-2249. Approximately 25 people attended the August 9th meeting during which Charles Moore gave a talk on the Society's Summer Meeting and Amos Wright, of the Huntsville Chapter, presented a program on Indian Quarries.  
TUSCALOOSA, Ferguson Center, 2nd Tues., 7:30pm, Eugene Futato 345-8724.

NEW MEMBERS

Benjamin I. Coblentz, Box 66, Moundville, Alabama 35474  
James D. Elrod, Route 5, Box 4-A, Chatsworth, Georgia 30705  
Steven B. Grenga, P.O. Box 702, Newnan, Georgia 30263  
U. S. Forest Service, 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Room 820, Atlanta, Georgia 30309 (Institutional)  
Stanley B. Ash, 3005 Bates Pike, SE, Cleveland, Tennessee 37311  
Mr. and Mrs. Manning Warren, III, 1318 South 31st Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35205 (Family)  
Mr. and Mrs. Franklin W. Meredith, 3217 Ridgely Court, Birmingham, Alabama 35243 (Family)

### SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL DIG FUND REPORT

August has been our best month this year in total money collected toward our goal for the 1976 Dig Fund Drive. The following three being our highly prized business donors:

LIBERTY NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, Birmingham, their SIXTEENTH CONSECUTIVE and this year even more generous than ever.

SOUTHERN LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY, Birmingham, their FIFTEENTH CONSECUTIVE fine addition toward helping us cover our expenses.

ANONYMOUS BUSINESS DONOR #2, stays on our list for the THIRTEENTH CONSECUTIVE year.

Now we proudly boast of a \$797.65 total from 22 donations, and are feeling certain that this will be greatly increased during the next month.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the October issue will contain a report on the work accomplished to date which is being prepared for us by Cailup Curren.

### ANNUAL WINTER MEETING

A tentative date of November 20, 1976 has been set for the Winter Meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society, to be held in Cullman, Alabama. Our hosts, the Cullman Chapter, are finalizing the plans for the meeting, and a full report will appear in future issues of the newsletter.

We hope that everyone will mark their calendars now, and make their plans to attend the meeting.

### SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

The 1976 meeting of the SEAC will be held November 4 - 6 at the Ramada Inn Downtown in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

We are all very pleased that this meeting will be held in Alabama this year and we know that many of our members from around the state will be interested in attending.

On November 4th the Conference on Historic Site Archaeology will hold its 17th Annual Conference in conjunction with SEAC. Deadline to send titles for papers to be presented is September 1, sent to Stanley South, CHSA, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

This is the third year the SEAC has been held rather close for Alabama members, 1974 was in Atlanta, 1975 in Gainesville, Florida, and now "at home" in Tuscaloosa. I urge all of our Society members to attend at least one day, if not the entire session.

As soon as the preliminary program is received by the newsletter office, it will be printed in the Stones & Bones so you can plan to attend the specific papers of special interest to you.

Don't miss this unique opportunity not only to learn about the recent research being conducted in the Southeast, but also to meet some of the archaeologists from other states.

(Marjorie Gay, East Alabama Chapter)

SEPTEMBER 1976

## ISLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

Much of Dauphin Island's history lies buried beneath hundred's of years' wind-blown sand and torrential rainfalls. A group of University of South Alabama students under the watchful eye of USA archaeologist Read Stowe are working to reveal and preserve some of that history and, at the same time, perfect their education. (in archaeological methods). One of the five most important historic archaeological sites in Alabama, Port Dauphin on Massacre Island, or Isle Dauphine, as Bienville later renamed it, was founded in 1699 and became, with Fort Louis at Twenty-seven Mile Bluff, the capital of the entire Louisiana Territory, a huge area stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada.

Dauphin Island has had a turbulent history, complete with pirate attacks, devastating hurricanes and bouts of disease. It was held in turn by France, Great Britain, Spain and, finally, the United States. Stowe, who has been excavating the Port Dauphin site with USA students for almost five years, says it offers an excellent opportunity for students to make "a permanent contribution while polishing their education. Southern Alabama is an excellent area for archaeological research because it is rich in historically significant sites like Port Dauphin, most of which have never been studied. There is no substitute for learning through doing; it is every bit as important as work in the classroom. N. Read Stowe continued, "The Field School in Archaeology combines both of these areas, and students are graded on the basis of their performance in the field as well as on tests."

In addition to gaining firsthand knowledge of proper archaeological procedures, the students also soon become aware that there is more hard work than glamour in an archaeologist's career. Searching among the roots of towering pine and oak trees, the students, dust-covered and begrimed in the hot summer weather, work on their hands and knees with trowels, brushes and shovels. All artifacts uncovered belong to the State of Alabama and are carefully recorded by location in a grid system. After being photographed they are cleaned and, when necessary, protected by preservatives.

Wise enough not to expect buried treasure, the students nevertheless are thrilled as they unearth Dutch pipe fragments, pieces of charred wood and pottery shards. "It is still a very exciting feeling," one said, "a good find doesn't have to be a gold mine if you realize that it may be a valuable indicator in locating a major structure."

Though some historical records are still in existence in European archives, much of the early history of the area is incomplete, and the location of numerous reference points remains inconclusive. It is in supplementing this record, before it is destroyed by encroaching civilization or thoughtless individuals that the students hope to make a lasting contribution.

"Unfortunately," Stowe said, "many people have the misconception that every archaeological site hides buried wealth. Artifacts of monetary value are extremely rare, and in searching for them the average person destroys much of the knowledge that could have been interpreted by the trained observer. Port Dauphin was a frontier outpost, not a wealthy colony. A valuable artifact to us is one that better defines the historical or architectural influences of the times."

(Taken from the Mobile Press Register, Sunday, August 15, 1976, pages 10 and 11 D)

## ASSOCIATION CITED BY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Alabama Environmental Quality Association has been named a recipient of the 1976 Award of Merit from the Alabama Historical Commission, according the AHC Executive Director W. Warner Floyd. The organization was singled out by AHC for having made "a general and important contribution to Alabama's program of preserving its rich heritage and environment," and specifically for "compiling and publishing important and interesting historic data relating to the Travels of William Bartram." (From ENVIRONEWS, Vol. 4, No. 6, July 1976).



### THE HOLLY OAK PENDANT

An artifact found by Dr. H. T. Cresson and W. L. deSuralt in the peat bogs near Holly Oak, Delaware in 1864 is still controversial due to the circumstances under which it was recovered. As with similar artifacts found in the 19th century, this one has two reports as to where it was found - one, in the peat bog - two, in the peat after it had been spread on a field for fertilizer. The exact location is not known. The artifact is a fossil whelk shell incised with the image of a woolly mammoth and having two holes in a position suggesting a pendant. Cresson continued to search the area from 1864 until his death in 1894. He found many artifacts including logs with evidence of cutting, stone knives, hammerstones, bone splinters, potsherds, stone axes, celts, various chips, shell beads, a mastodon tooth, human teeth, bone implements and other artifacts. The material eventually found its way into the Peabody and Smithsonian museums.

Authorities at the time and for many years thereafter, rejected the Holly Oak Pendant, as it became known; however, Clifford Evans at the Smithsonian has closely reexamined the pendant and has reached the conclusion that the incisions show the same stages of weathering as the shell surface itself. Authors Dr. John C. Kraft, University of Delaware, and Mr. Ronald A. Thomas, Head of Archaeology for the State of Delaware, have reexamined the whole case, with the results published in SCIENCE, May 1976. Core tests performed in the area reveal alluvial silts and organic debris over 40,000 years old. It is believed the silts are associated with Cresson's "peat." The authors suggest five possibilities, 1) it may be extremely old and deposited with the silts more than 40,000 years ago, 2) the carving may be of Paleo or Early Archaic Indian times, 3) it may have been found in sediments only 2500 years old (the authors admit this is not very tenable), 4) it may have been remotely possible that it was moved and deposited by later Indians, or 5) it may have been fabricated and dropped by Cresson or other persons unknown. Anyway, it makes an interesting story - as with many artifacts found during that period.

(Amos Wright, Huntsville, Alabama)

### BOOK REQUEST

The Journal office has recently received a request for Volumes 1 through 5 and Volume 6, No. 1, from the University of Texas at Austin. Since these volumes are out of print, we informed Mr. Hugh Chisholm, Librarian in Collection Development, that we would be glad to advertize to our membership for these volumes in an upcoming issue of the newsletter if he wished. The following letter has been received from Mr. Chisholm. "...After discussing this with the bibliographer in this area it has been decided to let you go ahead with this plan. It is hoped that complete runs can be located, but should this not be the case we can split the run up into several orders, that is, buy from several sources. It would be best if you could direct all quotes and correspondence to my attention. Your idea and fine service is most appreciated!" If any of our members should happen to have extra copies of these volumes of the Journal that they would be willing to sell to the Austin Library so that they could complete their set, please contact Mr. Chisholm at The University of Texas at Austin, The General Libraries, Austin, Texas 78712.

### HISTORIC EUFAULA

Those of you planning to visit the Eufaula area may be interested in a brochure distributed by the Eufaula Chamber of Commerce and the Eufaula Heritage Association. The brochure is for a driving tour of historic Eufaula, complete with a map of the area with the 41 different stops marked. A short explanation of each of the 41 stops is given to prepare and inform the visitor of what each stop has to offer.

### THIRD ANCIENT CIVILIZATION FOUND

Thousands of clay tablets found in Syria last September are providing dramatic new information about biblical times. A team of Italian archaeologists from Rome University unearthed the tablets and fragments of tablets 13 feet below the surface of an arid expanse of Tel Mardikh, south of Aleppo. There were 15,000 tablets in all.

Because of the tablets, ancient Syria is beginning to be recognized as a rival of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia in the history of civilization. Professor Giovanni Pettinato, 41, a language expert who has been reading the tablets, says they shed light on the history of the Jewish people.

The tablets cover a 150-year period, from 2400 to 2250 B.C. They place Ebla, a city until now only briefly mentioned in ancient Middle East inscriptions, firmly on the map as the center of a vast and civilized kingdom. For decades this kingdom dominated an area extending from the Red Sea north to what is now Turkey and east to Mesopotamia. The Ebla empire had been lost to history until the Italian team, led by Professor Paolo Matthiae, 36, dug out the tablets, many of them records from Ebla's royal palace.

David Noel Freedman, a University of Michigan biblical archaeologist who has worked with the Italians, described the importance of the tablets in these terms: "It is as if we had ignored that Rome existed and suddenly find out about it and the Roman empire." The tablets reveal an unknown language, what the Italians have called Eblaite, akin to the biblical Hebrew that was spoken more than 1,000 years later.

Among the most precious tablets is one containing a vocabulary of Eblaite and Sumeric words, including an explanation in Eblaite of how the Sumeric words are pronounced. The Sumerians, a non-Semitic people who flourished in southern Mesopotamia about 3000 B.C., are credited with developing the cuneiform system of writing. The influence of the cuneiform system is found in the writings of the great Semitic cultures that developed in the area, blending their cultures with the Sumerian culture.

Eighty per cent of the tablets are accounts of economic and commercial transactions. The others include international treaties, military reports, religious texts, descriptions of rites and sacrifices, and stories of creation and the great flood. Pettinato says that scanning photographic copies of the tablets in his Rome office has revealed the names of Abraham, Ishmael, Israel, Esau and Saul hundreds of times. A dozen times he came across the name "Daudum" - David. Finding the name David in the tablets is significant because King David is the only one carrying the name in the Bible. Until now, there had been no firm evidence that David had been used elsewhere in ancient times.

"We wondered why the Bible calls judges the rulers before the kings. Now we know that in Ebla, the leaders of the conquered cities were called judges," Pettinato says. Even the name "Hebrew" has something to do with Ebla. The tablets tell of a dynasty of six kings in Ebla. The one that spread its influence most widely is called King Ebrum or Ibrum.

The commercial accounts report that Ebla was exporting textiles, metals, marble and timber over a wide area. Among the importing points the tablets list the biblical sites of Hazor, Megiddo, Gaza and also "Urusalim" - Jerusalem. Sinai is also listed. A La Siya, the ancient name of the island of Cyprus, is listed as an export point for copper.

The third millenium is the era of the pyramids. Most historians have maintained that Egypt and the kingdoms of Mesopotamia shared the conquests and the glory of that time, alternating in control of the vast area between them. Now the Ebla tablets tell of a third power competing for domination of the many small states in Palestine and Syria. The Italian archaeologists, assisted by Afif Bahnassi, director general of Syrian antiquities, are planning more excavations. Last year they dug out only three walls of the room where

most of the tablets were stored. About 1,000 tablets were found in another room. "We dare hope we may find the royal library after having found the archives," Matthiae says. Matthiae said the tablets had been stacked vertically on wooden shelves. They vary from the size of the palm of a hand to the size of a large brick. When troops led by King Naram-Sin of Akkad, the great Mesopotamian state, conquered Ebla in 2250 B.C., they looted the palace and set it afire. The wooden shelves in the archive room burned, but the baked clay tablets were undamaged by the flames, although many broke when they fell to the floor. Then the wind started to pile dust over the ruins, sealing the precious tablets under a small hill that grew up over the centuries. "When we saw the room and the mass of tablets we had the feeling as if the librarian had locked the door and left a 5 o'clock yesterday," recounts Matthiae's wife, an archaeologist who works with her husband. "That's when we got hysterical."

The tablets are now neatly packed in 100 boxes in the Museum of Aleppo. Freedman says they are worth at least \$15 million. The Ebla tablets list the queen after the king in the power hierarchy. The king was assisted by two prince-ministers and by a council of elders. A tablet recorded an international treaty, the oldest known in history, between Ebla and the city of Assur over the establishment of a free trade area. It included a variety of commercial and legal provisions, including some for crimes...The biggest tablets have up to 3,000 lines, half on each side. Matthiae says the greatness of Ebla and its kingdom is reflected in an inscription from Mesopotamia that quotes Naram-Sin after his conquest of Ebla: "The city that had never been conquered from the time man was created."

(From the Mobile Press Register, Sunday, August 15, 1976, page 9, by Edward Magri of the Associated Press.)

#### SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

The University of Alabama in Huntsville conducted a course in "Southeastern Archaeology" in cooperation with the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa during April and May. The course instructor was Carey Oakley from Tuscaloosa. The course was offered for credit or noncredit at the election of the student, with a cost of \$90.00. The class consisted of 15 students from varying backgrounds, but all attending the course because of a personal interest in the subject offered. Several of our state society members took the course, which was conducted on weekends - four weekends, consisting of a full 8 hours or longer each Saturday and Sunday.

Two half-day field trips were made to visit a Late Archaic shell mound on the Tennessee River and a Paleo/Early Archaic site north of Huntsville. One day was spent surveying a Paleo/Early Archaic site surrounding the remnant of an old Pleistocene lake in northwest Huntsville. Four small test pits were sunk, primarily for demonstration purposes for the students.

Charles Hubbert attended the class one weekend as a visiting lecturer and made a substantial contribution in the Paleo studies.

Although the tuition seemed somewhat high - especially for the noncredit students - the course was stimulating and interesting. Consideration for similar courses to be conducted in other parts of the state would be worthwhile - as we so often say but seem to do too little about, education is the way to reach the pot hunters and convert them to amateur archaeologists.

(Amos Wright, Huntsville, Alabama)

SUPPORT YOUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION - THEY NEED YOUR HELP TO PRESERVE THE VAST AMOUNTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION BEING LOST DAILY AROUND THE STATE.

## INVESTIGATIONS

For the past two weeks, Mack Brooms and I have been investigating a doomed site (they are all doomed when you get right down to it). This is no ordinary run-of-the-mill tributary Woodland camp. It is a vast 35 to 40 acre pine covered terrace along the Walnut Creek where exposed or eroded places are sprinkled with potsherds and chips. Working in shifts (due to other demands - my teaching at AUM and Mack's contracts with the SCS) I run the crew Friday through Monday and Mack supervises Tuesday through Thursday.

Unlike the well heeled sites many have heard about where student crews of six or seven people live in a comfortable house and have a cook prepare meals, the Walnut Creek dig is more like those of olden times - two or three paid crew members, working on whatever days they can, or volunteers whenever they are available, coupled with a site remote from the hardtop road reachable only with a front wheel drive vehicle over stumps and clay roads which go out with every gully washer. Of late, gully washers are an everyday occurrence.

No complaints, however, as this site is something else. Not only large, but from the looks of things thus far, probably emerging as one of the more significant in eastern Alabama. Pottery is complicated stamped - something like Swift Creek, but lacking all of the Swift Creek (late) characteristics - folded rim, zone decorated bands above the neck, snowshoe stamps, etc. are missing. Instead, the designs are repetitious bull's eyes, apparently all over the vessel and sloppily applied with much overstamping. Some upper level sherds feature finger nail rim punctating just below the lip, in alignment with this lip. Other rims show notching, not the dowel notch across the lip like Early Swift Creek, but cut notches on the outer edge of squared lips like the Mississippian Lake Jackson types. Most of the sherds are sand tempered, again similar to Swift Creek, but some are not but rather have grit inclusions, like Lamar.

Last week we encountered what appeared to be a house floor littered with charred hickory nut fragments. A nearby pit, still unexplored when I left, seemed to be filled with charred nut hulls. Some seeds may also have been included and at least one charred animal bone was present. Post holes were recorded across the 2 meter section and, hopefully we will be able to pick up a continuation and see the house outline.

Clearly this site is not only significant, it may be a bombshell in providing some of the long needed data surrounding the enigmatic Lamar problem. Doubtless people in Georgia would be most interested in this site.

There is, however, a sad side to this tale. The site, due to be flooded by a recreational lake, has been given only a month of archaeological exploration. Shut down is scheduled for August 15, 1976. Shortage of money, people and time may spell a tragic early end for what could be one of the more significant potential digs of the year.

(Dave Chase, Montgomery, Alabama)

## NEXT MONTH

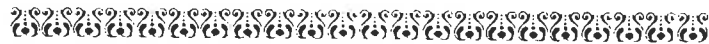
The October issue of STONES & BONES will carry a special article on the survey presently being conducted on the Pleistocene by Cailup B. Curren, Jr. of the University of Alabama, and sponsored by the Archaeological Research Association, the Alabama Historical Commission and the University of Alabama. We are sure that all who have contributed to the Research Association for this work, as well as those who intend to send in their checks this month, will be greatly interested in the survey's progress.



## THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Following are the objectives stated in our Constitution, slightly modified for emphasis: To promote informed interest in the study of Archaeology in Alabama and neighboring States; to encourage careful scientific archaeological research in such ways as surface scouting, mapping, marking, studying and especially reporting; to promote and support professionally directed excavations and discourage unsupervised "digging"; to promote the conservation of archaeological sites and to favor the passage of laws prescribing such; to oppose the sale of antiquities, and the manufacture and sale of fraudulent artifacts; to encourage and develop a better understanding of archaeology through providing Newsletters, Journals, Chapter and State meetings, helpful associates and good fellowship; to serve as a bond between individual archaeologists in the State, both non-professional and professional; and perhaps most importantly, to give everyone the opportunity to "do something about archaeology" through the accomplishment and enjoyment of these high aims.

The Society needs and welcomes as members, all persons whose ideals are in accord with the objectives set forth above. Active members receive the JOURNAL OF ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGY, devoted to articles on the archaeology of Alabama and nearby States, and also receive the STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER, published monthly, containing news of members and their activities, also State, national and worldwide events of archaeological importance.



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# *Alabama Archaeological Society*

C/O MR. & MRS. JERRY J. NIELSEN  
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