

Alabama Archaeological Society

Stones & Bones

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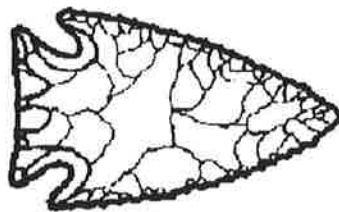
Editor:

McDonald Brooms

Associate Editors:

David Abbott

Brad Solomon



Editorial Office:

40 Eldridge Hall

Troy State University

Troy, AL 36082

☎ 334-670-3638

Fax # 334-670-3706

Cahawba Land Deal

Old Cahawba is probably Alabama's most famous ghost town. Due to the rapid abandonment of the town shortly after the Civil War, Cahawba is a relatively undisturbed archaeological time capsule of antebellum life. Although famous for its role as Alabama's first official state capital, people lived at Cahawba for over 4000 years. A large Pensacola phase village, complete with mound and moat, may have been visited by the explorer Hernando de Soto. After ten years of work at Cahawba, the Alabama Historical Commission had been able to acquire about 40 acres of this site.

Early this spring the Archaeological Conservancy doubled the protected acreage at Cahawba by acquiring 45 more acres. When this non-profit national organization learned that a modern housing development threatened to destroy the last remnants of the historic town, their governing board took immediate action. In addition to the land, they also purchased two options on another 140 acres. The first of the options, a note for \$30,000 came due July 1, 1996. Cahawba's support group, Cahawba Concern was only able to raise \$25,000 but a last minute contribution from

the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society saved the deal!

All the land in this recent acquisition lies in the northern part of the town. This was a residential area populated by mechanics, the foreign born, and slaves, particularly those that lived apart from their masters. Remaining above ground are a two decorative artesian wells, a substantial two story brick slave quarter, and the "Negro Burial Ground" (a descriptive name taken from historic maps). This slave cemetery was probably begun about 1819, and the still-apparent burial shafts indicate hundreds of interments. Several stone markers have been found, most belong to individuals born into slavery. Surprisingly, some substantial stones mark the graves of individuals that died before emancipation. An interpretive trail and brochure now allows visitors to appreciate a rare glimpse of Alabama's African American past.

A \$60,000 option on the remaining land is due in December. The Conservancy and the Cahawba Advisory Committee are actively soliciting grant funds and donations nationwide. To make a donation, or to inquire about the Archaeological Conservancy, contact Alan Gruber, Southeastern Regional Director of the Archaeological Conservancy at (404)975-4344, 5997 Cedar Crest Road, Acworth, Ga., 30101.

What's Happening Around the State

Troy State University Archaeological Research Center is currently conducting Phase II testing on 5 Woodland/Mississippian mounds in Covington, Coffee, Crenshaw, and Dale Counties.

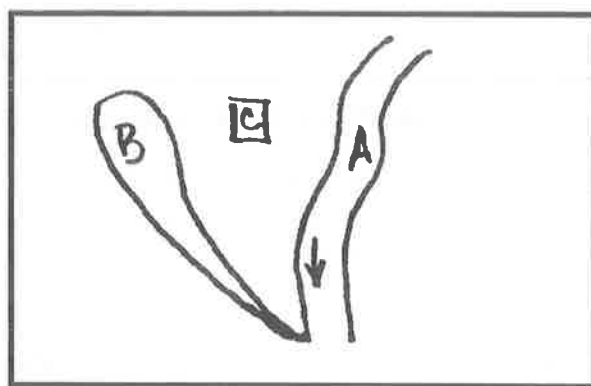
TSUARC is planning to mitigate the impact of bridge construction by the Alabama Department of Transportation on three sites in Gantt (Covington County) along the Conecuh River. Excavations will begin in August.

Antiquities of America

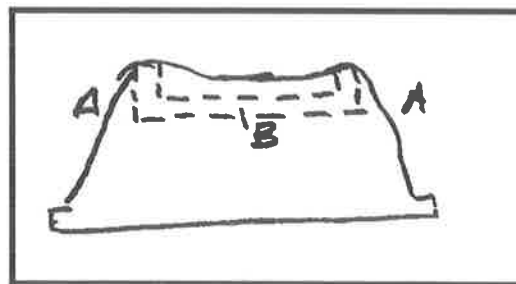
The mounds and shell banks with which this continent abounds, their ancient date, and our lack of knowledge respecting them, or their origin, has hitherto been a prolific source of speculation with the curious. Some supposing them to be the repositories of the dead, while others have come to the conclusion that they were "high places," as spoken of in the bible, upon which altars were erected to some "unknown God." However, be this as it may, we are forced to the conclusion, from the number of them, and their magnitude, many of which cover from two to three acres of land, with ditches, and embankments extending from them to some neighboring mountain, river or lake, that they were important to ancient inhabitants of our country. And, as it is evident that the race of people who raised them are now extinct, we can only come to a conclusion respecting the use of those mounds by examining their situations and contents. And I but one am somewhat surprised that people have not heretofore taken more pains to find out their use, and do away with hypothetical notions concerning them.

In order to come to some conclusion, and satisfy my own mind, I have excavated several of those mounds, and in doing so, have found that they are of two kinds, each of which answered an important purpose to the people who built them,

with the larger one as a place of defense, and the small ones for depositing the dead. It appears evident from the situation of these mounds (and shell banks in connection with them) in many places that their constructors lived in small independent villages or military stations similar to the inhabitants of Germany and Italy, during the prevalence of the feudal systems in the days of Otho I, Emperor of Germany. And that the reader may be convinced that the above is not a hasty conclusion, I will here subjoin a diagram showing the situation of a cluster of these in mounds in Jackson County, Alabama, a few miles below Belleport.



(A) the Tennessee (Tensaw River ?) and (B) a lake three miles in length. (C) is a large quadrangular mound, covering nearly a fourth of an acre at the base, and between 30 and 50 feet high, with a brick wall, made of burnt clay, round the top, three feet deep and two feet wide, and a stratum of baked earth five or six inches thick, existing from one side of the mound to the other, on a level with the bottom of the brick wall, as represented in diagram second:



A.A. Brick wall

B. Stratum of baked earth.

The loose earth that has covered this stratum of baked clay appears to have accumulated there since the mound was deserted by its primitive owners, as it does not agree in appearance with that below the baked earth.

The bricks, with which the walls are built, appear to have been moulded with straw or grass in them and afterwards burnt, as the impressions of straw or grass are quite visible in every fracture of the brick. The exact size and form of the brick was not ascertained on my examination of the mound as there was not a whole one obtained; as far as I could judge, they were about 12 inches long, 6 wide and 4 thick. This mound was evidently a place of defense from its form and situation and also from the fact of a number of flint arrow spikes being found near the mound.

There is a large pit in the earth about 150 yards below the mound (C) corresponding in size with that of the mound and is without doubt the place from which the earth was taken to raise the mound. The places marked (don't show on copy) are small mounds in which human bones are found deposited in vaults made by setting flat rocks on their edges and capping them over with the same kind, and it is worthy of notice that on ?? ?? ?? is not a mark ?? an ironstone? to be found. In these small mounds there are many fractured pieces of earthen pots to be found. ????? shell banks composed of fresh water and marine shells, both human and animal bones

Submitted by D.E. Jones

University of Alabama

Typescript of article from Columbus MS Democrat, April 13, 1839; from Sam Saye ("Coye").

Kolomoki Pots Recovered

Two pots produced by a long departed Indian tribe and stolen in 1974 from a southwest Georgia museum have been returned after they were found in Florida. The effigy pots were among 129 artifacts stolen from the museum at Kolomoki Mounds State Park. About 20 items were

recovered after the theft, but none had turned up since 1980, said Billy Adams, interpretive park ranger at the mounds. The pots were found after a University of Florida archaeologist was asked to appraise them from photographs. The archaeologist's inquiries into the vessels came to the attention of police, said Lt. Charlie Childs of the Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission. The pots were found in the possession of a St. Petersburg, Florida man who said his mother bought them along with a third vessel for \$75 nine years ago at a flea market, Childs said. Officials will need to appraise the third vessel, a simple brown sphere about the size of a cantaloupe, to determine if it is part of the Kolomoki Mounds collection. Adams said the pots are probable 400 to 1,000 years old, and experts consider them priceless.

Calendar

July 1-September 1, 1996 - The Birmingham Museum of Art will exhibit treasures from the First Emperor of China (221-210 B.C.E.) who created the country of China and built the Great Wall. On view will be 14 spectacular life-size terra cotta figures from what is considered the archaeological find of the century - the 1974 discovery of the buried army at the tomb of the First Emperor. Over 65 other priceless treasures will also be on display. Advance tickets recommended. Regular admission: Adults-\$10, Youth (6-18) \$5.

September 1, 1996 is the deadline for submitting three clean double-spaced copies to SEAC Student Paper Competition. The submitter must insure that the same version of the paper reviewed for the competition is offered for presentation at the annual meeting. A cover letter should accompany the entry, containing a representation of the student's current status in a degree program. Only one paper submitted per applicant may be considered for the award. Mail the entry to Dr. Margaret Scarry, Chair, SEAC Student Paper Competition Committee, Department of Anthropology, CB#3115 Alumni Building, University of North

Carolina-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3115. The winner of the Competition and Book Prize will be announced at the Annual Business Meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. The winner may receive the Book Prize (valued at \$2800.00 in 1995) at the Annual Meeting. The Committee reserves the prerogative to reserve the award in the event of a shortage of competitive entries.

October 5, 1996- The Fall Meeting of the Society for Georgia Archaeology will be held at the West Georgia College campus in Carrollton, Georgia in the Townsend Performing Arts Center and will begin at 9:00 AM (Eastern Standard Time).

November 6-9, 1996-Southeastern Archaeological Conference will hold its annual meeting at the Sheraton Civic Center in Birmingham, Alabama. Room rates are \$85.00 for singles, doubles, triples, and quads; phone number is (205) 324-5000; fax (205)-307-3045. For further information contact:

Ian W. Brown, Program Chair
Alabama Museum of Natural History
University of Alabama, Box 870340
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0340.

New Members

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Alexander City, AL 35010

Vic and Lana Murphy
3156 Woodbridge Drive
Birmingham, AL 35242

Mark A. Patterson
1931 Elkwood Section Road
Hazel Green, AL 35750

Chapter News

East Alabama...

Members and friends of our local chapter participated in a trip on Thursday, July 11, to Wilcox County, Alabama, to visit the archaeological excavation being sponsored by the Alabama Museum of Natural History. This is a Woodland and Mississippian site located about 8 miles north of Camden. Leading the dig were Dr. John Cottier of Auburn University and Dr. Craig Sheldon of Auburn University at Montgomery. Activities began at the site on June 16, offering an opportunity for high school students, teachers, and other interested volunteers to gain hands-on experience in excavation techniques under the guidance of professional archaeologists.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*

Vol. 20-31, each issue (two issues per volume).....	\$3.50pp
Vol. 32 & up, each issue (two issues per volume).....	\$6.00pp
<i>Stanfield- Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint.....	\$7.50pp
Special Publication 2 - <i>The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County Alabama</i>	\$6.00pp
Special Publication 3 - <i>Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend ..</i>	\$8.00pp
<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part I, Point Types</i>	\$15.00pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile).....	\$9.00pp

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