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Alabama Archaeological Society

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CALIFORNIA SKELETONS NOT SO OLD AFTER ALL

About a decade ago, considerable controversy erupted when some obviously old human skeletons were dated at 37,000, 44,000 and even 70,000 BP by a new dating technique called Aspartic Acid Racemization (AAR). Conventional radioactive dating had put all of these skeletons at well under 10,000 BP and, consequently, well within bounds of the Bering Strait migration hypothesis. The early AAR dates were thus at odds with curre 5 archeological thinking and, in addition, very encouraging to those who believed that humans occupied North America long before 10,000 BP. Feffrey L. Bada, a proponent of AAR dating, now states that the controversial AAR dates were based on calibration skeletons which had been erroneously dated by radioactive methods. It seems that AAR dating requires an accurately dated reference skeleton. With the reference skeleton dates now known to be incorrect, Bada had to recalibrate his AAR dating scheme. The reference skeletons were redated using a more accurate radioactive technique. All of the incredible ancient skeletons have now been redated by AAR methods using the revised reference skeletons. The 37,000 BP date now becomes a reasonable 5100 \pm 2000 BP figure. The AAR dating crisis seems to be over. All anomalies have been expunged. (Bada, Jeffrey L.; "Aspartic Acid Racemization Ages of California Paleoindian Skeletons, American Antiquity, 50:645, 1985.)

(Quoted from Science Frontiers, No. 41, Sep-Oct 85; Published by the Sourcebook Project, P. O. Box 107, Glen Arm, MD 21057.)

Please keep the above information in mind while reading the next article.

Editors

AX HEAD FIND COULD EXPAND FARM HISTORY

An archaeologist in New Guinea announced yesterday the discovery of stone ax heads that could indicate man began farming thousands of years earlier than previously believed.

Associate Professor Les Groube, a New Zealander working in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Papua, New Guinea, said the ax heads were found on the northern New Guinea coast, near Lae. Tests at Australian National University in Canberra indicate the tools are at least 38,000 years old.

(Ax Head Find Could Expand Farm History, Continued)

The axes—known technically as banded axes from the grooving caused by cane binding—are too heavy to have been used as hunting tools, Groube said.

"They are of a kind which archaeologists have found modern primitive people using elsewhere for plowing and gardening," he said.

Most sources indicate humans began farming only about 10,000 years ago. The stone ax heads present a much different picture.

"The most obvious issue is the function of these tools," Groube said. "What was man doing in New Guinea with stone tools of this size at this early date?"

The cliffs where the axes were discovered are one of the few coral locations in the world that have survived above the ocean surface. This is because the cliffs are being pushed by two major plates of the Earth's crust forcing the coast up about 13 feet every 1,000 years.

The banded axes were found in creek beds running through the limestone soil and interbanded with volcanic ash—ideal for accurate dating.

('Birmingham Post-Herald', June 20, 1985)

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The September meeting of the Birmingham Chapter was held on Thursday, September 12th, at 7:00 p.m. Members and guests were so eager to attend that someone inadvertently set off the burglar alarm at the Red Mountain Museum auditorium. Needless to say, our first meeting for the fall started off with a bang!

Mr. Charles Hubbert, an archaeologist with the University of Alabama who is currently stationed at Redstone Arsenal, presented a program on "Settlement Patterns of North Alabama."

Mr. Hubbert has several publications to his credit and has done extensive research and field work, not only in the Tennessee Valley, but in other areas of Alabama. He conducted excavations at the LaGrange Shelter in Alabama and has done extensive research on fish weirs located in the Tallapoosa River.

Eloise Clark

REMINDER

The AAS's Annual Winter Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 7, 1985, in Florence. The guest speaker for this year will be Gregory Perino of the Gilcrease Museum. Mark your calendars!!!

MISSISSIPPI ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS



Mississippi Archaeology is published twice yearly and contains contributions from professionals and amateurs; the editorial goal over the past few years has been to make Mississippi Archaeology the journal of record for archaeology in Mississippi, and we solicit summary reports of excavations to be published more fully elsewhere, we well as the usual essay-length reports and shorter notices on excavations and surveys.

Mississippi Archaeological Association Newsletter appears six times yearly, and it is the MAA's mode of communication with its members about archaeological activities and concerns in the state as well as membership matters of the Association.

In 1984 the Association will be publishing its first monograph, a selection of articles and reports from the now out-of-print publications of the Association from its founding to the institution of the present format of its publications. The monograph, entitled Anthology of Mississippi Archaeology, 1966-1979, will be published by the end of the year. It may be purchased for \$15.00; purchasers in Mississippi should add a sales tax of \$.90. Make checks payable to Mississippi Archaeological Association and mail them to:

Mississippi Archaeological Association Attn: Patricia Galloway P.O. Box 571 Jackson, MS 39205

Membership in the Mississippi Archaeological Association includes subscription to both periodical publications and any monographs that may be published by the Association on an irregular basis. The dues schedule is shown below, and memberships are for the calendar year. Futher information may be obtained from the Secretary-treasurer at the address given.

Individual Annual\$ 10.00	
Family Annual\$ 12.00	
Student Annual (non-voting)\$ 6.00	
Institutional (libraries, schools, etc.)\$ 12.00	
Individual Life (one-time payment)\$100.00	
Pair Life (husband and wife)\$150.00	
Contributing or Supporting Annual\$ 15.00 o	r more
Sustaining or Benefactor, Annual\$100.00 o	

(From Archaeological Services, P. O. Box 386, Bethlehem, CT 06751)

NEW MEMBERS

Name	<u>Type</u>	Address	<u>Zip</u>
Baker, Winston and Linda	(F) 601—	lth Avenue North, Alexandria, AL	35010
Brandon, Ms. Katharine C.	(S) Genera	al Delivery, Highlands, NC	28741
Cates, Ms. Marsha B.	(I) P. O.	Box 633, Weaver, AL	36277
Dodson, Mr.& Mrs. Rodney	(F) Route	Three-Box 134-B, Ozark, AL	35010
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Bettye Henson, Secretary

SOCIETY NON-PROFIT STATUS

The Society frequently receives inquiries regarding specific situations relating to its non-profit, tax exempt status. The following explanations should serve to answer most questions which may arise.

The Society must file with the IRS each year a detailed accounting of all income and all expenditures. In order to maintain its tax exempt status, all expenditures must be for IRS approved non-profit purposes as explained in the Society's tax exempt charter. Improper use of funds is a violation of the law, making the Officers and Directors liable. Funds are expended only at the direction of the Board of Directors, for purposes approved by the Directors—in keeping with its charter.

Specific examples of "money processing" and expenditures which would be improper include the following:

- (1) The Society cannot accept a cash donation designation for a specific university as a scholarship for a particular individual, although that individual is studying archaeology.
- (2) The Society cannot accept contributions designated solely for pro-

(Society Non-Profit Status, Continued)

(3) The Society's IRS tax number cannot be used by chapter affiliates or kindred organizations to avoid tax on interest which may have occurred on their organization's funds. Only funds for which the Board of Directors is fully accountable can appear on the Society's books.

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Florida Archaeology by Jerald T. Milanich and Charles H. Fairbanks, traces the evolution of the Florida aborigines from 10,000 B.C. to the 1750's and recounts the archaeology of the Florida Seminole Indians. (1980; \$19.95)

Ceramics, Chronology, and Community Patterns: An Archaeological Study at Moundville by Vincas P. Steponaitis, offers a detailed study of ceramics at Moundville (located on the Black Warrior River in west-central Alabama), one of the best known and most intensively studied prehistoric sites in North America. In addressing matters of culture history, the study presents a detailed and well-documented Mississippean chronology—one of the very few in existence. (1982; \$47.50)

(The above publications were announced by Academic Press and for more information, contact: Patty Branton, Academic Press, Promotion Department, Orlando, FL 32887 (305-345-2751).)

Archaeology of the Central Mississippi Valley, by Dan F. Morse and Phyllis A. Morse. x, 345 pages, 40 black and white photographs, 57 text figures, 6 tables, 17 maps, bibliographies, Academic Press, Inc., New York 1983; \$39.50.

This book is the seventh in the series "New World Archaeological Record," published by Academic Press under the editorship of James B. Griffin. The series is designed to provide professional and lay readers with up-to-date and authoritative overviews of the archaeology of selected regions of North America.

Following a description of the environment of the Central Mississippi Valley and a history of prior archaeological work, the Morses present a through period-by-period cultural history of the area from Palaeoindian through historic times. Although their format is regional, they do a good job of working into their discussions issues that are important to all New World archaeologists. The book ends rather abruptly, however, and would have benefited from a summary statement and a comment on future research directions.

Several special research interests, such as Dan Morse's work on Dalton settlement-subsistence systems and the work of both authors on Mississippian adaptations, are covered in an especially thorough and insightful manner. The volume is well edited and illustrated, and it contains a valuable list of references after each chapter.

(Quoted from "Book Briefs" by Roy S. Dickens, Jr., Research Laboratories of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; "Archaeology, Jan-Feb 85.)

Charles H. Fairbanks Memorial Issue, Florida Journal of Anthropology, Special Publication No. 4. (\$10.00 is the special pre-publication price until November 1, 1985 then the price will be \$15.00) Part of the proceeds will go to the Charles Fairbanks Scholarship Fund. Contents: 15 papers, 200 + pages, photographs, perfect binding. Please add \$1.00 postage and handling for the first copy and \$.50 for each additional copy to be mailed. Please send your check or money order to FASA, c/o Dept. of Anthropology, 1350 GPA, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

(University of Florida Publication Announcement)

ARTICLES

Much has been written about Clovis-like, Folsom-like, Hardaway-like and many other Paleo-Indian projectile points from both East and West. Very little, however, has been written or published concerning the Cumberland fluted point and this is indeed strange. It was named for the Cumberland River in Kentucky and Tennessee, the major concentration of this projectile point type. The Cumberland River is also the geographic center of its range in the four cardinal directions.

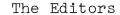
The classic Cumberland fluted point is the rarest, the most beautifully shaped, containing the most unique traits and exhibiting the most sophisticated manufacturing techniques of any projectile point in the whole world. It is geographically the most easily traced and readily recognized Paleo-Indian projectile point in North America. is due to the distinctive lithic materials from which it was made and the unique traits exhibited by the morphology of the point itself. In spite of all that has been mentioned here, the Cumberland point has never been Carbon 14 dated and very little has been published concerning it. We have very little idea how old it is or its chronological placement in order of age. We do not know whether it is older or younger than the Clovis fluted point, which also remains without a Carbon 14 date in the southeastern states. The only dates for the classic Cumberland fluted points are guessdates. Cambron and Hulse, 1983; puts it this way, "A Paleo-Indian association, sometime before 10,000 years ago, is suggested." How long must we wait for intensive studies and Carbon 14 dates on this unique Paleo-Indian projectile point? Perhaps sites being currently destroyed may contain the answers we seek and time may be running out for more information concerning this rare and beautiful example of the flintknapper's art.

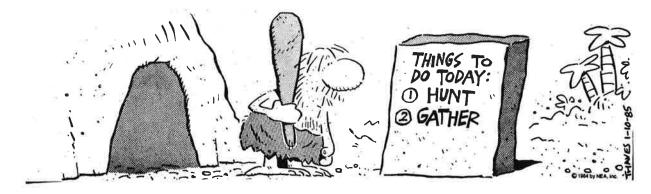
(Quoted from the article, "Cumberland Fluted Projectile Points From Kentucky and Tennessee", by Rodney M. Peck and Floyd Painter. The Chesopiean, A Journal of North American Archaeology, Volume 23, No. 3, Summer 1985)

Not even death brought racial equality to those buried near the tobacco farm in Stratford, VA: the very skeletons of antebellum masters and slaves are as different as homespun and silk. Those of the whites contain high concentrations of lead from the pewter dishes that held their meals and the pipes that carried their water; the slaves' bones, in contrast, have one-fifth as much lead because the blacks used wooden utensils and dipped their water from wells. And therein lies a trail being followed by a new breed of archeological sleuth. By measuring lead concentration in skeletons, Dr. Arthur Aufderheide of the University of Minnesota can identify the one man in a white cemetery who was probably an impoverished indentured servant, too poor to afford pewter and piped water. Aufderheide has even begun to trace the slow upward climb of emancipated blacks by the rising level of lead in their skeletons, an exercise almost as impressive as recontructing a complete dinosaur from one tooth crown.

Chemistry may do more for archeology than anything since the Rosetta stone. More and more archeologist and anthropologists are packing spectrometers along with their chisels, using chemical techniques both to find artifacts in the field and to analyze them back in the lab. "Archeological chemistry has come into its own in the last 10 years," says George Rapp of the University of Minnesota. "It adds a new dimension to our study of the past." Chemical contaminants in copper, for instance, give clues to its source, disclosing ancient trade routes. Rare metals found in skeletons show how sex roles changed with agriculture. Proteins in the remains of long-extinct mammals reveal how species are related. While many of the techniques are expensive, they can turn a mute pile of rubble into a historical record as voluble as Herodotus.

(Quoted from the article, "History With Chemistry," by Sharon Begley with John Carey; Science Section of "Newsweek", May 2, 1983)





(From the Huntsville Times)

PUBLICATIONS		
Available issues of Journal of Alabama Archaeology Vol. 20-29 each	issue	(\$2.50 to Members) \$5.00 pp
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