

Alabama Archaeological Society

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Alabama was the first state to finance archaeological excavations through popular subscription and this fine work was handled through our affiliate, The Archaeological Research Association of Alabama, Inc. Since this is an on-going program... on-going (or rather coming) funds are needed to continue the work.

During June many members visited the LaGrange Bluff Shelter Excavations in Colbert County, Alabama, and saw the great amount of information that can be obtained from contributions to the Association. During July, again the members were treated to still another side of archaeological endeavors which are sponsored by the Research Association, the visit to other archaeological excavations near Selma. A non-profit, tax exempt organization, the Research Association is pleased and proud to be the administrator of your donations and to contribute to the progress of Alabama archaeology.

In addition to sponsoring excavations and surveys, the Association handles the publication of the Handbook of Alabama Archaeology and the Pebble Tool Papers. Next time you are trying to think of the right gift for a friend or relative, think of these books. Not only will you be helping a friend learn more about Alabama archaeology but the purchase of the books helps to provide more funds for publishing other books about archaeology.

It is therefore obvious that the Research Association needs your help if they are to continue to provide the necessary funds for sponsoring and promoting archaeology in our state. No donation is too small... neither are any donations too great. Every dollar helps, especially when coupled with the dollars of others. So please give serious consideration to the needs of the Research Association and to the needs of future generations of Alabamians for the knowledge of our heritage that your donations can provide.

SUMMER MEETING

The summer meeting at Dr. Roger Nance's dig was naturally a complete success and we are sorry that all our members couldn't have attended. But for those of you who missed the meeting, next month we will tell you all about the fun and educational experience you missed!!!

AUGUST 1975

WHAT'S NEW?

The first Greek historian, Herodotus (484? - 424? B. C.) set as his goal to write a history of the known world up to his own time. To gather necessary historical information for this task he traveled widely in Greece, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to researching history Herodotus studied, observed and recorded the customs, religions and other cultural aspects of the peoples in the countries to which he traveled. His writings, then, contain a wealth of ethnological as well as historical data and are therefore a fine source of information and interest for anthropological students. For example, I found it interesting to learn that our modern day "specialization" in medicine is no more unique than it is new; of the Egyptians of his day Herodotus wrote: "Medicine is practiced among them on a plan of separation; each physician treats a single disorder, and no more: thus the country is swarming with medical practitioners, some undertaking to cure diseases of the eye, others of the head; others again of the teeth, others of the intestines, and some those which are not local." Remember, this was some four hundred years B. C. (from Supplementary Reader, Classical Civilization I, Brooklyn College 1960).
(Alice M. Burns, Birmingham)

FROM THE PRESERVATION REPORT

The proposed Constitution Hall State Park in downtown Huntsville has moved closer to being a reality with the \$300,000 in state revenue sharing money allocated by Governor George C. Wallace for the project. This amount should cover the cost of site preparation and reconstruction of Constitution Hall, but an additional \$400,000 to \$700,000 will be needed to complete the project, according to James Record, Madison County Commission chairman and Alabama Historical Commission treasurer.

The park will consist of a recreation of structures present there when the Alabama Constitution was drafted at Huntsville in 1819. Delegates from the Alabama Territory convened at Constitution Hall to organize the State of Alabama. The historic two-story frame building stood on the northwest corner of Gates Avenue and Franklin Street and was removed in 1821.

Other buildings to be reconstructed include the law office of Clement Comer Clay, Huntsville lawyer, Constitutional Convention delegate, U. S. Senator and later eighth governor of Alabama; offices of the ALABAMA REPUBLICAN, one of the Territory's early newspapers; the Huntsville Library, the first in the state; and the residence of Stephen Neal, Madison County's first sheriff.

A move to acquire the half-block site was begun by the Huntsville Historical Society in 1969 when Alabama observed its Sesquicentennial. The vacant property was owned by the Housing Authority of the City of Huntsville, and through the support of private organizations and governmental bodies a plan was formulated to reconstruct the buildings that once stood on the site. In 1970 the property was purchased by the State for conversion into a state park. (Further information on Constitution Hall is contained in the June 1972 issue of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology, ordering data on back cover of the newsletter.)

HISTORIC WEEDEN SITE

Those members who attended the December meeting in Tuscaloosa and heard the fine talk by John Martz, Huntsville, on his chapter's work at the Weeden Home will be pleased to know that this historic structure received a great compliment in the February-March issue of the PRESERVATION REPORT. The Weeden House, which is being restored to its mid-1840's state by the Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association, has been termed one of the finest houses in Huntsville by architect Harvie Jones, Alabama Historical Commission member. (We are awaiting a report on these investigations, conducted by members of the Huntsville Chapter, for the benefit of those who missed the meeting.)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN 4,000 YEARS AGO!

Grime's Graves is a 93 acre slope in eastern England which is covered with patternless pockmarks, and resembles a grassy moonscape. The Anglo Saxons called these marks "graves" meaning holes or hollows. Excavations now in progress by the British Museum, reveal that for generations, miners methodically had dug out the chalk in search of flint. Through atomic dating techniques, the British Museum has found that the mining commenced here about 2,500 B.C. and reached its peak about 2,000 B.C. As we find so very often, the ancient people were much wiser than heretofor imagined. No strip-mining for them! They backfilled as they worked and knew which areas to dig for the greatest mine safety. They used rough deer antlers for the miner's picks which were covered with clay strips to protect the hands. An article in the Atlanta Constitution, February 15, 1975 by Gregory Jensen reports that the archaeologists now have 20 picks with "the only known examples of prehistoric fingerprints in Europe." Soil Sampling and pollen analysis will reveal more information about these early people. Trade routes may be traced using a computer study of the flint artifacts in an effort to determine the origin of their raw material. Over the years, hundreds of crude axes have been found at Grime's Graves. Danish experimenters have chopped down 100 trees in 4 hours with a stone age axe. It is expected that this site will require a total of five years for a large staff from the Museum to investigate. A special exhibit from this prehistoric flint mine will be at the British Museum, London, until June 29, 1975. Plans are to build a pyramid-shaped building above one of the deep mine shafts now being excavated, to house the collection from one of England's earliest industries, what the British Museum calls "a relic of Britain's first industrial revolution."

(Marjorie Gay, East Alabama Chapter)

BOOKS AVAILABLE

A Handbook on Beads by W. G. N. van der Sleen - A comprehensive study of early glass beads. Details methods of manufacture, origins and uses of all types of glass trade beads. Order # BRM 1, 158 pp. softcover \$5.00
Classification and Nomenclature of Beads and Pendants by Horace Beck. Contains hundreds of drawings of different styles and types. #BRM 2, 88 pp. \$5.00. Order from G. B. Fenstermacher, 24 Michigan Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17602.

FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLIFE

The ninth annual Festival of American Folklife will be held on the 50 acre Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, Washington, D. C. June 25-29 and July 2-6, 1975. Presenting a picture of traditional American Folk Culture, the festival is looked forward to each year by young and old alike and has become a major summertime event. There will be exhibits, demonstrations, concerts, dances, crafts and native foods in the six major areas of the festival: Old Ways in the New World; Native Americans; Working Americans; Regional Americans; Family Folklore; and Children's Area. S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution says the festival may have some lessons for the international arena. From his page, "The View From the Castle" in the May 1975 issue of SMITHSONIAN a quote is: "There is in mankind to-day a fear of the loss of identity. --- Communications, education and international economics would gradually wipe out group differences." He points out that in the areas of the world with unrest, whether the tension appears to come from political, religious or economic factors, there is an underlying search for identity. In reality, this tension arises from something far deeper, "a persistence of folk cultures and tribal or clan relations." International law and order have failed to keep our world peace. Secretary Ripley offers another solution. "Perhaps there is another way through understanding and accommodating the basic human fears of loss of identity, and the basic persistence of folkways. For these are urges so strong as to confound the planners, let alone the diplomats."

This festival of traditional American folk culture is sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. There will be additional details in the June issue of SMITHSONIAN magazine or you may get more information by calling (202) 381-6525.

(Marjorie Gay, East Alabama Chapter)

TWO GOOD ARTICLES

In Vol. XXIX, No. 2, Autumn 1973 of the Tennessee Archaeologist there appear two good articles well worth reading. The first is, "Supplemental Chronology for the Higgs Site (40LO45), With an Assessment of Terminal Archaic Living and Structure Floors" by Dr. Major C. R. McCollough. Dr. McCollough is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and he is in charge of the TVA excavations at the Normandy Reservoir on the Duck River in Tennessee. This short report contains three supplemental C-14 dates for the Higgs Site and a discussion of their value.

Also included in this issue is an article by Jack Rich and Fletcher Jolly III, entitled "A Catlinite Pendant From East Tennessee." This article concerns a pendant found in a refuse pit during salvage excavations of a Mississippian site in Roane County, Tennessee, by members of the Knoxville Chapter, TAS. The pendant is thought to have been manufactured from a fragment of the disk portion of a catlinite disk pipe. The basis for the conclusion that this artifact is evidence for trade and contact between Dallas groups in the upper Tennessee Valley and Cneota groups in the Midwest is given in this article also.

(Mrs. Marjorie Gay, East Alabama Chap)

3-MILLION-YEAR-OLD "LUCY"

The international team of scientists working in the Central Afar depression of northeast Ethiopia recently located the partial skeleton of a 3-million-year-old hominid that it claims is "the most complete early man discovery ever made in Africa."

At a press conference in Addis Ababa, Nald C. Johanson, an American anthropologist from Case Western Reserve University, and Maurice Taieb, of the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, jointly announced the unparalleled find. They presented the fossilized bones of what they believe was a small female of little more than three feet in height.

The two scientists were joint leaders of a 17-member team comprising Ethiopians, French, Germans and Americans. The pair refused deliberately to say that the skeleton belonged to the genus "homo" from which modern man descended. They are trying to avoid further controversy with Richard Leakey, son of the famous late British archaeologist Louis S. B. Leakey, who has contested their claims to earlier findings of specimens of early man in the absence of craniums.

In the interview, Johanson said that the find is called "Lucy," by the Western members of the team. The Ethiopians named her "Denkenesh", meaning "you are wonderful." Johanson said that it was either a small "homo" or a small australopithecus. The latter creature is believed to have been contemporary in time to "homo."

The American anthropologist said at the conference that "We (Leakey, himself and others) are going to have to get together and work up a definition of what "homo" really is... at the moment there is really no consensus."

He said he is going to Nairobi to show the specimen to Leakey and discuss its identification with him before returning to the United States. The pieces of the skeleton, found November 24 at Hadar by Johanson and one of his students, Thomas Gray, were scattered over a 20-square-yard area. The parts recovered include some hand, wrist and ankle bones; most of the right arm; most of the legs; a mandible with some teeth; a few skull parts; ribs; parts of the backbone and a half pelvis with a sacrum. Altogether, they represent nearly 40 per cent of a total human skeleton, according to Johanson.

The team has (during 1974) discovered parts of 10 different hominids in as many different sites. According to Taieb, whose specialty is geology, they are from five different time periods. The geological setting and the animals living with "Lucy" suggest that the environment was related to a beach of a vast lake that existed in Afar three million years ago. Leakey had visited the site just prior to "Lucy's" discovery to discuss the team's October find, but he left Afar one day before "Lucy" was discovered. The research team will return to Afar this coming September for an additional three months of digging for fossils. (The Atlanta Journal, December 26, 1974).

WHAT IS MAN?

Boyce Rensberger's article in the Atlanta Constitution (April 24, 1975) may help a little to explain some of the problems facing paleoanthropologists in trying to answer this question.

Fossil remains of early man discovered over the last two years in East Africa are causing a major upheaval in the study of human evolution by suggesting that man's origins lie more than twice as far into the past as had been supposed from earlier evidence. The latest fossils indicate that the early ancestors of modern man may not have been the only manlike creatures alive at that time. It now appears that early man coexisted with at least two and perhaps three or more other species of "near man" whose physical appearance may have been largely human but whose brains had remained apelike. These emerging views of man's evolution and the fossils upon which they are based are forcing a major rethinking of what was once considered a fairly straightforward interpretation of human origins.

One of the basic difficulties now confronting paleoanthropologists is the lack of wide agreement as to what physical traits qualify a creature to be considered human. Where, in other words, is the fine line between a creature that is "almost human" and its descendent or contemporary that is "truly man?"

All manlike creatures, whether ancestral to modern man or not, are called hominids. "True man," given the genus name homo, is considered but one branch of the hominid family tree. Some authorities regard brain size as the key variable. Others stress tooth shape and size or erect posture. Because individual fossil finds almost never include evidence for all these traits, the decision is often made on very sketchy evidence, or, increasingly these days, the decision is suspended pending further fossil discoveries.

The crucial issue that paleoanthropologists are grappling with now is an anatomist's version of the philosopher's ancient question. What is man?

TURQUOISE TRACKED BY RADIATION

Dr. German Barbottle, a nuclear chemist of Brookhaven National Lab, reports that he has determined by radiation techniques that the blue turquoise, prized by the Aztecs but never found in situ in Mexico, is identical to that of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. However, Dr. Robert Lister of the Chaco Canyon Project said that Chaco Canyon was not the original source since there are no known turquoise deposits or mines in that area. Thus, the mystery of the source is not yet solved, though it appears that the Chaco and the Aztecs did get their turquoise from the same source, wherever that was. There is abundant evidence of early trade connections between Chaco and Mesoamerican sites. (Newsletter, Albuquerque Arch. Soc., Oct. 1974).

THE BRAIN...

not only the greatest computer ever devised but the only one produced by unskilled labor. Bob Considine.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER 3,000-YEAR-OLD TOMB

While searching for the tomb of an Egyptian General Maya, an archaeological team discovered a crypt that General Horemheb, who later became Pharaoh, was preparing for himself.

The half-finished tomb found at Sakkara was never used because, as a king, Horemheb was buried in a "magnificent tomb" at Thebes. During the reign of Tutankhamun and possibly King Ay, he was a great General. Horemheb ruled during the 18th dynasty and died around 1320 B. C.

Although the tomb at Sakkara is small, it is quite impressive. The central area is enclosed by "rows of columns." Scenes from the life of Horemheb had been painted on the walls. Hieroglyphics cover stone slabs found inside the stone chapel. These hieroglyphics extoll the General. At the chapel entrance an unusual slab shows Horemheb "seated at a table" that was "laden with bread" and a priest is depicted as making an incense offering.

On a block found in the debris, Horemheb was shown as a plump, mature man. Apparently it was intended as a portrait of the General. It showed him as having "an enormous, fleshy, hooked nose."

An Egyptian-British-Dutch team is excavating the tomb under the leadership of Geoffrey Martin, of the University of London College, and Hans Schneider, curator of the Leiden Museum. (Springdale News 2/20/75).

LITTLE VICTORY

Congress has passed a bill authorizing studies of the West Fork, Sipsey and Cahaba rivers for possible inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers. (ACTION Report, #10, January 1975, The Alabama Conservancy).

ARCHAEOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

The Broward County Archaeological Society, Hollywood, Florida, has been giving slide-talks in the schools since 1960. Now, there is a Broward County Community Relations Commission, a Resource Bank, of which the archaeological society will be a part. Other places have some similar programs, but more are needed. (Editor's Note: We should encourage our chapters to go and do likewise. What better way to spread the word about archaeology to the parents, than to tell the children!)

FOLK MUSIC RECORDS

A considerable number of 12" records of folk music of various indigenous groups and regions of Mexico are now available for \$6.40 from the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico City. Each record is a deluxe portfolio with explanatory text and identification of the musical examples and these are the same records which are played in the Museum. For a list write to Sra. Irene Vazquez Valle de G., INAH-Direccion de Museos, Cordoba 45, Mex.

EDUCATIONAL PAGE

Anthropology is a young science in the United States. It is one of the most important of the sciences because it deals with man himself.

Man, *Homo sapiens*, means "man the wise." "Homo" stands for the zoological genus, and "sapiens" for the zoological species. These terms were designated by the great Swedish botanist and systematist, Karl von Linne, whose Latin name was Linnaeus. Man's superb ability to use his mind and the ability to surpass all other creatures distinguishes him as an intelligent creature.

This science of man is a body of organized knowledge called anthropology. The word is derived from two Greek words, *anthropos* meaning "man" and *logos* meaning "ordered knowledge."

A branch of cultural anthropology is archaeology, which is the science that studies cultures that no longer exist. These studies are based on uncovering remains in an excavation site by trained scientists. They reconstruct man's past cultures by the excavation of sites, caves, burials, mounds, villages and other settlements. Observable indications of these sites are surface finds, vegetation growth and strata finds of fossilized bone of man and animals.

These science fields are still relatively young. However, their growth has been continuous, receiving sudden heights of interest in the last few decades. In these ambitious fields of the social sciences, where even the terminology is extremely difficult to understand, these scientists have been called upon to invent special terms. The language is rich, often very sensitive but only very little is standardized.

Most anthropologists and archaeologists try to be precise and explicit in their use of special terminology. For example, the term "hand axe" is not used any more, because scientists know today, that they were not "axes," but were used as universal tools for many purposes. Today they are referred to as "biface" which indicates how they were made (shaped on both sides).

How can an archaeologist be sure of the age of his finds? Carbon dating is one of the most useful dating technique methods. Plants absorb carbon from the atmosphere and animals (absorb carbon) by eating plants or other animals.

The amount of C-14 in a living animal is usually known and is fairly constant. During its active life some disintegration of radioactive carbon may take place. After death, no more carbon is taken in and disintegration continues at a regular rate. Since this rate is known, it is possible to determine the time of death by determining how much radioactive carbon remains in it. It is a very accurate date, within plus or minus a certain number of years.

(Joann G. Wiegand, South Carolina)

(Editor's Note: Joann is a member of the Alabama Archaeological Society from Alabama who is now a science writer, specializing in anthropology, in South Carolina.)

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.



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 checkmarks appear in applicable blanks!

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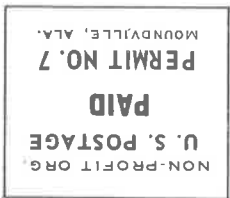


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