

THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

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THE BIRMINGHAM INQUIRER

We are using the word "INQUIRER" in the above title because we are requesting you to suggest a more appropriate name. It is our hope that many names will be submitted. Too, if you did not possess an inquisitive mind you would not be a member or friend of THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

The Society is for people, both adult and junior, who are interested in ANTHROPOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGY, ETHNOLOGY, GEOLOGY, or even just plain collecting. Even an inveterate collector may, and sometimes does, become a good archaeologist, with the proper association, instruction, and fellowship.

Remember, one of the most valuable assets of our Society is the fellowship. Especially is this true when on a field trip with two or three fellow members: riding to or from the site; walking down long cotton or corn rows; sharing a lunch with the bunch in the shade of a large maple, oak, or sycamore tree down by the creek bank; digging a trench in the pasture surrounded by a hundred inquisitive (there's that word again) cows; or even prowling under an oldtime water mill to see if the cogs in the wheels are wood or iron. (They were wood, believe it or not, and not too far from Birmingham.)

In any of these places a fellow is liable to "let his hair down" a bit. Then is when the fellowship begins. Even if you don't find any artifacts, the trip has been worthwhile. Any artifacts that you discover are pure profit.

You must find the Society meetings interesting, or you would not come to them. Chances are that your friends will find them equally interesting. Bring them to the next one.

The retiring President, Jim Wilkinson, is to be congratulated on the meeting at the Art Museum, January 12, when the Society, through him, and in connection with Mr. Roy Howard's "Archaic Smile", presented Prof. Lewis Larsen, of Etowah, Georgia, to an audience of one hundred sixty six (166) people. Jim ended a successful year of splendid endeavor in a "blaze of glory" as it were. Jim has set a pattern for future Presidents.

Britt Thompson has accepted the torch and the challenge, and if his initial actions are a barometer, everyone in the Society will soon be as busy as the proverbial cat on a hot tin roof. We venture to predict that 1956 will be a most successful year. Past Presidents may well be proud of the seed that they have sown. Now is a time of cultivation.

Recently two young lawyers, Sam SHANNON, and Ed COVERLY, both of whom are interested in Scouting as well as Archaeology, joined our Society. We heartily welcome them and feel sure they will be valuable additions to our already increasing number. Again, welcome friends.

New Delhi, India, reports that at the site of Salihundam, a recent excavation reveals a Buddhist memorial shrine, dating back to about the Third Century A.D. A monastery flourished here from the Second Century B.C. to the Eighth Century A.D., or about one thousand years.

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Recently a cemetery five thousand years old was unearthed in Southern Israel. The skeletons were lying on their sides with knees drawn up and arms folded across the chest.

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Have you heard this one?

Just think, some of these ruins are 5,000 years old.  
Say, I'm not that dumb.  
Don't you believe they are that old?  
Of course not. It's only 1956.

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I found a wonderful myth in the old baths at Milan.  
I hope you begged her pardon and left.

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Now you tell one.

Saturday, January 14, 1956, seven members of the Society went to Decatur, Alabama, to attend the Annual Meeting of THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. The following made the trip: BRITT THOMPSON, JIM WILKINSON, BILL STEELE, DAN JOSSELYN, MATT LIVELY, RANDY GRAY, AND MARTIN HULLENDER.

The meeting was ably presided over by Dr. FRANK J. SODAY, President of the Society, and a member of ours as well. Dave de Jarnette, Curator of Moundville State Park showed slides and spoke on his work in the Tennessee Valley. This was followed by Prof. Lewis Larsen, who showed slides and talked on "Excavations at Etowah". Dr. Soday says that among other things it is the aim of the Society to form other chapters in various parts of Alabama, so that people all over the state may work in a concerted effort, bunching the shots, rather than scattering the shots, as it were. They now have two chapters -- one at Decatur, and one at Huntsville. The one at Huntsville is presided over by our old friend and fellow-member, Ed. Mahan. Mobile is expected to organize shortly. The Alabama Society hopes to report other organizations in the near future.

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The following officers of the Society will be most happy to answer any questions which you may wish to direct to them. Membership requests should be addressed to the Secretary.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY OFFICERS

This, our first monthly letter to our members and friends, would not be complete without a brief preview of our plans, aims, and hopes for 1956.

Our Meetings - 1st Friday every month, 7:30 P.M., Birmingham Public Library

Guest Speakers and Member Speakers will share each meeting if time permits.

February 3rd - Jim Wilkinson will be in charge of the program.  
(Guaranteed interesting)

March 2nd - Guest Speaker - Dr. Sidney B. Finn

Dr. Finn has been Professor of Dentistry and Head of Childrens Clinic, University of Alabama School of Dentistry, since 1950. In addition, he is Consultant to the V.A. Hospital at Tuskegee, and Director of the Dental Clinic at the School for Deaf & Blind at Talladega. He is a member of many National and State Professional, Scientific, and Honorary Societies. His educational background includes B.A. (Zoology) at Ohio State University; M.S. (Biochemistry) University of Rochester; D.M.D., Harvard.

His subject, "Role of Genetics in the Evolution of the Human Race", which will be illustrated, will touch on how human variations occur, their effect on races through inheritance, general evolutionary patterns, mutations and more. Dr. Finn is a fine speaker and we are looking forward to this meeting with great interest.

Member Speaker - Martin Hullender and Randy Gray  
Subject - "Indian Religions"

April 6th - Guest Speaker - Dr. David L. de Jarnette

Dr. de Jarnette is Alabama's ranking professional Archaeologist. He is a charter member of the Society for American Archaeology, and is active in the Eastern States Archaeological Federation. He has been Curator of the Alabama Museum of Natural History, and the American Museum of Atomic Energy at Oak Ridge. Being Archaeologist in charge of the Moundville Museum, and teaching at the University of Alabama, are his major occupations at present.

April 6th (cont.)

His subject, "The Usual and Unusual in Alabama Archaeology" will be illustrated. Dr. de Jarnette, an old friend, is always sure to enliven and enlighten our meetings.

Member Speaker - Floyd Taylor  
Subject - "Indian Foods"

There will be more about our programs next time. Sufficient now to say, our guest speakers include: A return (by popular request) of Dr. Carl Sensenig, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama; Dr. Lewis Larsen, Professor of Archaeology at University of Georgia, will tell us of "Yucatan"; Dr. Frank Soday, Vice President of Chemstrand, will discuss "Archaic Man"; Mr. Steve Wimberly, who was formerly State Archaeologist and who has a national reputation as the man who knows in the field of Southeastern Pottery, will discuss "Indian Pottery in Alabama"; Dr. Joseph Volker, Dean of the University of Alabama Dental School, and Director of Dental Research, plans a briefing session on ways to determine age, sex, etc., on some of our local burial finds. In addition, we hope to have one meeting devoted exclusively to geology.

Our member speakers are volunteering in droves (of 1 or 2) to come up with a brief, tight, concise, illuminating talk on some facet of Indian Life and Times. They will do it, and do it well, for each of them has a special interest that makes them expert in their field.

#### Our Children Participation Program

Briefly this is still to be winnowed, to be shaken down to the pure grain; pure grain of interest, that is. Saturday, 28 January, we plan a field trip to some nearby site. Leave from the corner of Oxmoor Road and Route 31, at approximately 9:00 A.M., with member's children, a Sunday School class or two, some Explorer Scouts, and others, and jest plain collect some site bare.

On the 25th of February, Saturday, we plan to go to Moundville and Dr. Dave de Jarnette has promised to teach proper collecting and classifying methods, as well as show the lads and lassies around. The January trip is strictly a "bring your own lunch". The February trip will require about a \$ 1.25 for food and admittance to the Museum.

If either or both of these adventures pan gold, our plans will embrace an attempt each month for some like affair. The response of willing adult males to drive the children about the country has been genuinely gratifying. (There is no rule against parents or non-parents joining the crew).

#### Future Projects

First, we hope for the inclusion in our news-letter of papers, stories, and news. None of these are acquired by osmosis and a letter to the Secretary will be welcome - if it's full of that indefinable something that interests man in men and their ways.

Second, good firm plans are hard to make without the weighing of many ideas and means. The good firm plans we refer to are those to help Alabama have a Museum. Any suggestions are welcome and it is hoped some member will volunteer to be idea receiver, investigator of costs and ways and means. Better to volunteer than to be volunteered.

"The best cure for a sluggish mind is to disturb its routine."

-Danforth