

PRESENTS

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THE BIRMINGHAM INQUIRER

The Society met March 2, with a goodly crowd of over forty (40), including several visitors, in attendance. In the absence of the President, Brittain Thompson, the Vice President, Floyd Taylor, presided. After a short business session, the meeting was turned over to our guest speaker, Dr. Sidney B. Finn, Professor of Dentistry at the University of Alabama, who very ably presented, along with slides, a talk covering "THE ROLE OF GENETICS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUMAN RACE". We are certain everyone learned quite a lot about evolution and heredity. Dr. Finn said that he was talking to the children, but the adults could listen, and both groups were well pleased.

After a short break, Stirling Wortham and Ed Green gave a movie travelog, with commentary, on Mexico. Mr. Wortham had so little to say that we assumed he must be a native Texan. Mr. Green's rapid fire, off the cuff, running commentary was as refreshing as a gentle breeze, and about as salty. He so aptly described the native life, "as she is lived", that you could almost taste the tamales and frijoles. Our thanks to Dr. Finn, and Messrs. Wortham and Green for a good job well done.

In Italy, archaeologists have recently found eight beautiful vases full of honey in a perfect state of preservation from the year 8000 B.C.

We recently received a most welcome letter from Dr. Carl Miller of the Smithsonian Institute. It read as follows:

"In this morning's mail I received copies of Vol. 1, Issues 1 and 2, of The Birmingham Inquirer which I found most interesting. In them I read of people I have known for quite some time: David L. de Jarnette, Steve Wimberly, and Lewis Larsen.

While TVA was working in northern Alabama I excavated quite a few sites in the Guntersville Basin. Besides this I worked on the Tombigbee River in southwestern Alabama, so I sort of feel as though I have some roots in Alabama archeology.

It looks like I will do some more work in Alabama soon. I received a grant from the National Geographic Society to partially excavate a cave in Jackson County, the dig to start about the middle of April. I am expecting great things from it.

Thanks for sending me these two issues.

Very sincerely yours,

Carl F. Miller

Archeologist"

Everyone who enjoyed, and we are sure that all who read it, did enjoy, ARCHAEOLOGY CHORIAMBIIC, in the February issue, have an added treat in store this month as we peruse the following from the facile pen (or typewriter) of Dan Josselyn:

Our history books give us the large picture, and usually omit the important little things which really decided the fates of nations. A case in point is the knight in plate armor, of whom we have heard a great deal. He was, one might say, the first tank - impervious to arrows, highly mobile on his great charger, the atom bomb of his day. But had the armored knight been as good as he sounds, the unanswerable military invention, "iron clothing" would have become a fixed institution. He should be wearing armor to this day! So what was the weakness of the knight in armor? Next time you visit the museum, note the one place where a horse-man cannot wear plate armor. Therein lies our tale of the little thing that made big history.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN ARMOR

When knight became unseated
Iron pants were ne'er completed,
It seems, upon the seat;
And thus he was defeated
As weightily retreated
And wished his pants complete.

How droll then were the olden
Days of long ago,
In age described as golden
Of love and war and woe.

While clanking knight was banking
On fleeing the attack,
The archers gave a spanking
With arrows in the back.

Avoiding seat abrasion,
Armorless and bare,
Defeated great invasion
Because they shot them there.

Archilles' heel went flashing
And arrows flew askance,
But when a knight went dashing
His heel was in his pants!

Dan Josselyn

This is the first of a series, of which we hope there will be several, of sketches about notable Indian women. This is a much neglected facet of Indian life. This series is by our Vice President, Floyd Taylor.

SOME NOTABLE INDIAN FACTS

The first Indian woman, north of Mexico, that has been brought to our attention was the daughter of the Chief Ucita, that chief at, or near, whose village de Soto first landed in Florida. But her story began twelve years before.

De Narvaez was the first Spaniard to be commissioned to conquer and colonize the southern part of the U.S., known to the Spaniards as Florida. He landed near Tampa Bay, April 1528. A few days later he started north overland with his army and sent his ships and their crews back to Cuba. Among those sent back was one Juan Ortez, a nobleman of Seville. The wife of de Narvaez wanted a last word with husband and sent a crew of thirty men back to Florida, who arrived in the vicinity of the Chief Ucita. Ortez was captured, one Spaniard was killed and the rest returned to Cuba. Ortez was taken to the Chief Ucita, who ordered him bound to stakes and burned. As the fire was about to be lighted, a daughter of the chief entreated that his life might be spared, saying that, though one Spaniard could do no good, certainly he could do no harm, and that it would be an honor to have one as a captive. His life was spared and for three years was well treated. At the end of that time he was again ordered to be put to death. The chief's daughter again saved his life. She warned Ortez to flee to the Chief Mococo, an enemy of her father's, whom she knew would treat him well, and even went with Ortez a part of the way in the night to put him on the right trail.

Ortez stayed with the Chief Mococo until de Soto landed in Florida in 1539, at which time he joined the de Soto Expedition.

FOSSIL EVIDENCE SHAKES THEORY

Dr. Johannes Hurzeler, a Swiss scientist, says a human-like jawbone found embedded in a shiny black chunk of coal may mean that modern man is much more ancient than previously suspected.

Darwin's theory that man and the apes descended from a comparatively recent common ancestor may also be upset.

Dr. Johannes Hurzeler says the jawbone and other fossil remains found in Tuscany, Italy, in 1872 are from 10,000,000-year-old human-like creatures. Until now they have been considered the remains of mountain apes.

If modern man had an ancestor very similar to him living 10,000,000 years ago, he himself may have existed in his present form much earlier than scientists have heretofore believed, Hurzeler contends.

Hurzeler, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the natural history museum in Basle, Switzerland, discussed the fossils at a news conference in New York, 9 March.

Darwin's Theory - The first known true humans--the Java and Peking men--existed several hundred thousand years ago. They and the modern apes, according to the Darwinian theory of evolution, descended from ape-like creatures found on earth about 10,000,000 years ago.

But Dr. Hurzeler says the twenty six (26) fossil fragments indicate, instead, that man and the apes branched apart 20,000,000 to 30,000,000 years ago from an ancestor that was neither man nor ape.

The fragments show, he said, that the Tuscan man had the short face of a man instead of the ape's protruding jaw; nearly vertical front teeth instead of protruding ape teeth; the human round chin; and other features more nearly human than ape.

Dr. Hurzeler said he plans to return to Italy to look for more fossils similar to the old Tuscan find.

He explained his find to a group of scholars in New York. One of them, Dr. Helmut De Terra of Columbia University, said the group was impressed.

De Terra said if human evolution, separate from the apes, was as far advanced 10,000,000 years ago as the find indicates, then it is necessary to take another look at "the meaning of evolution in the case of man."

You're a sap.
What?
You're a sap, sap-sap. You know, what comes out of trees.
Oh, monkeys like you.

Pop, how soon will I be old enough to do as I please?
I don't know. Nobody has ever lived that long yet.

These mummies are thousands of years old.
Yeah? Where are the poppies?

We are deeply indebted to the contributors this month. Why not try your luck next month? We believe you could come up with something worthwhile.

MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY OFFICERS

President - - - - -	Brittain Thompson	3609 Montrose Road	TR 1-0698
Vice President - - - -	Floyd R. Taylor	2331 33rd Avenue North	3-1792
Secretary & Treasurer -	Martin F. Hullender	202 18th Way SW	58-8900

Meetings: First Friday every month, 7:30 P.M., Birmingham Public Library, unless otherwise announced.

April 6th: Guest Speaker - Dr. David L. De Jarnette

Subject: "Alabama Archaeology"

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.

Member Speakers - Martin Hullender and Randolph Grey

Subject: "Indian Religions"

May 4th: Guest Speaker - Dr. Carl Sensenig, Professor of Anatomy
University of Alabama

Subject: "Story of Evolution"

Dr. Sensenig received his BS in Biology from University of Iowa, and his PHD in Anatomy at the University of Michigan. He is a member of The American Association of Anatomists, and The American Association of Physical Anthropology.

Member Speaker - Floyd Taylor

June 1st: Guest Speaker - Dr. Lewis Larsen, Professor of Archaeology,
University of Georgia

Member Speaker - Mr. Sam Shannon, Jr.

Subject: "Indian Law"

It is the hope of the Society to persuade Dr. Carl F. Miller, Archaeologist for the Smithsonian Institute, to give us a resume of his work in Jackson County at either a regular or special meeting if at all possible.

Dr. Harry Wheeler and Mr. E. S. Ginnane were elected life members at our last meeting. The election was only the formal expression of the unanimous warm regard the Society holds for these two strong pillars of our group.

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6 OUR CHILDREN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Saturday, March 31st, will be the day Dr. Wheeler opens the door of his school to our junior members. His geological collection is outstanding and we believe the afternoon will be enjoyed by all. We plan to meet at 1:45 P.M. at the corner of Route 31 and Oxmoor Road, same place as the Moundville trip. Mrs. Arthur Wuehrmann is in charge. Her phone number is TR 1-2130.

Later in April, another trip to a site is planned. This will be a picnic affair and transportation may be required. Those who can help by filling their cars with children are guaranteed a happy day. Call either Mr. Simon Jones, TR 1-2654, or Mr. Brittain Thompson, TR 1-0698, if you feel the urge to share your time. Mr. James Wilkinson will be in charge of the program from at least aiming all concerned in the right direction.

A centrally located library is desired for the books belonging to our Society. Messrs. Shannon and Connerly have offered their law offices for this purpose. The books would be available Monday through Saturday, and if required, nights and Sundays.

All members who have Society books in their possession are requested to bring them to the next meeting they attend for cataloging and inclusion (brief) in the library files. Any books which members own and wish to share will be welcome also.

The Birmingham Art Museum has a new collection of Indian Artifacts in the area allocated to Archeology.

Messrs. Daole, Wilkinson, Hallender, and Thompson were very ably assisted Saturday last by Guard Thomas S. Quigley during the placing of new artifacts in the cases. His cooperation was most welcome and appreciated.

An exhibit of George Catlin's 1796-1872 paintings of Indians has been on loan from the Smithsonian Institute at the Art Museum. One all of us are familiar with is "Osceola" the Seminole Warrior. We suggest our members try to wander into the Art Museum each time they are in town. Even the old things on exhibit can show us something new each time we pause and view.

Enclosed with our newsletter is our 1956 Year Book, believed to be the first issued by the society.

Several members have shared in the idea but our warm appreciation and gratitude is extended to Mr. Sumner A. Davis who conceived it's format, set the type and printed the book, take a bow, fellow member.

"Attention makes the genius; all learning, fancy, science and skill depend upon it."

-- Willmott

Guests are always welcome!