

THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

VOL. 1

JUNE 1956

ISSUE 6

THE BIRMINGHAM INQUIRER

Our last meeting gave us the opportunity to see how things could work in reverse. Due to general all around carelessness, no slide projector was available for use by our main speaker, so our member speaker, Mr. Sam Shannon, took over and discussed "Indian Law". He did a fine job, covering the necessary time until a slide projector was available. It's nice to know that member speakers can start a program, as well as stop one.

Our guest speaker was Professor Lewis Larsen, who gave a very interesting talk on "Yucatan" which was well illustrated. We had several guests and they, and our members, asked many questions. The meeting was enjoyed by all.

Sicily -- Archaeologists have found traces of the old Greek city of Casmene, buried for more than 2,000 years. It was mentioned in annals of the ancient Greek colonization of Sicily, then apparently abandoned. Diggers uncovered Columns of a Temple to Apollo, tombs, and traces of roads.

INDIAN LEGEND OF THE ROBIN

Once, long ago, there was a chief among the Delawares who had a son named Is-a-dill-a. He grew up different from other boys, for he was fond of peace and would not stay with the crowd that tortured prisoners and he was thought to be a coward. One day his father upbraided him for being so peaceful. Is-a-dill-a answered: "Great Chief of the Delawares, my liver is not white, nor would my blood chill like snow before the enemy, but Is-a-dill-a prefers to pick wild blossoms in the woods, and to trail the deer in the woods. The Great Spirit tells me to love them all."

The chief was about to reply angrily, when he saw a huge black bear approach them. The chief was armed as usual, with bow and arrows and a stone ax.

Is-a-dill-a, without any weapons, ordered his father to climb a tree. Instead, the chief fixed an arrow to his bow and shot. The motion of the bear's head prevented it from taking fatal effect, and the animal, with a savage growl, sprang upon the chief, who dealt it a fearful blow with his ax, but he was seized in the paws of the beast and a fierce struggle ensued. Is-a-dill-a took his father's ax and dealt blow after blow over the bear's eye until it was killed. In his death throes the bear tore Is-a-dill-a dreadfully, so that he was insensible.

The chief was the first to recover, and when he saw his son lying beside the bear's body, he bitterly reproached himself. He felt his son's heart beating and

crawled to a spring and dashed water into his son's face.

At this moment, three squaws, who had been berrying, came along. Seeing the condition of the chief and his son, they hastened to the Indian village for assistance. The chief and Is-a-dill-a were helped home and in a month were better.

Soon Is-a-dill-a expressed a wish to go to a solitary place and fast. He fasted for eleven days, and on the night of the eleventh his father said: "My son, you have fasted eleven days, longer than has ever been fasted before. Tomorrow, before the bright sun rises, I will bring you venison."

Next morning his father was at the door before the sun rose, but he stood motionless before a strange sight within the lodge.

A youth with golden wings was painting Is-a-dill-a's breast with vermilion and his body brown. Then the youth turned to a dove and Is-a-dill-a turned to a strange bird. The strange bird said: "Father, farewell. The Great Spirit, when he saw that I was dying from hunger, sent a messenger for me, and I am changed to a bird. I always will preserve my love for man, and will build and carol near his dwelling."

He then flew away, but every morning he caroled near the chief's lodge.

A good book for Spelunkers (cave go-in-to-ers, to you) Ed Mahan and others who like to explore caves is, EXPLORING AMERICAN CAVES, by Franklin Folsom. This book is sponsored by The National Speleological Society. The book goes deeply into early cave explorations, with many excursions into the romance, the tragedy and the comedy of spelunking.

The most interesting part of the book is the description of caves, a list of one hundred fifty or more that are open to the public, a glossary of caving terms, and equipment needed for this kind of hobby. Only one of the five hundred or more caves in Alabama is listed as being open to the public. This is Crystal Caverns near Trussville. There is a Spelunker Society at Huntsville, and one at Auburn. There are many caves in Alabama as yet unexplored. Here's speluck to you all who like it.

THE INDIAN WOMAN CAPTIVE, OF BOTH THE CORONADO AND DE SOTO EXPEDITION

When De Soto died on the banks of the Mississippi River, it was decided by the Spaniards and Moscoso Alvarado, who had succeeded to the leadership, to try to reach New Spain (Mexico) by going west overland. When they had gone about 300 miles into Texas from the east, they captured some Indian women, one of whom said she had been held a captive by some white people like themselves, but had managed to escape. Moscoso ordered a captain and fifteen horsemen to take the Indian woman to the place where she had been held captive. But after going ten or twelve miles, the Indian woman declared that what she said was false. (This is the story as given by "the gentleman of Elvas," who was with De Soto's Expedition).

Now about the same time in the summer of 1542, the army of Coronado was encamped on or near the Colorado River of Texas. An Indian woman captive, the property of Juan Saldibar, a soldier of Coronado, was reported by one de Castanelo, also a soldier

of Coronado and who later wrote a description of the Expedition, to have escaped from de Castanelo, and had later been picked up by some Spaniards who had entered the country from Florida, (De Soto's men).

De Castanelo stated further, that after he got back to New Spain, he heard De-Soto's men say, that the Indian woman told them that she had run away from other men like themselves, and that she had given them the names of some of the captains in Coronado's army.

In spite of the fact that this Indian woman, after telling De Soto's men she had escaped from Spaniards, she later declared that statement to be false, there seems to be some truth in her first statement. The denial was probably prompted by the fact that she was being taken back to the people from whom she had just escaped, and that captivity was probably anything but pleasant. And the fact that she knew the names of some of the captains in Coronado's army should support her first statement.

This incident reveals how close the two expeditions were to each other at one time, in regard to time and distance; that a prisoner, escaping from one, in a period of nine days or less, was picked up by the other.

Floyd F. Taylor

The kid said to Pop, "I gotta 'a' in spelling".

Pop said, "You dope, there ain't no 'a' in spelling."

FORT TOULOUSE
1714-1763

Many dialects were anciently spoken near the confluence of the Coosa and the Tallapoosa, a circumstance confirmed by Adair, a very early English adventurer, who asserted that "within six miles of the French fort there live the remains of seven different nations." This numerous Indian population, together with the penetration of enterprising English traders and emissaries from the Atlantic seaboard, prompted Bienville to recommend the construction of a fort and trading post in the heart of the powerful Creek nation. The authority was granted him in 1714 and he lost no time in embarking at Mobile in two small sailing vessels, bearing eight cannons, a supply of munitions, together with a stock of merchandise suitable for Indian trade. After a tedious and laborous journey of two and one-half months he arrived at the junction of the rivers. Exploring both streams in a canoe he reached the decision to establish his post at the Indian town of Taskigi, situated on a bluff a short distance above the junction where the two rivers again approach within five hundred yards of each other. His selection was a judicious one from both a military and a commercial viewpoint.

The fort was constructed of logs with four bastions into each of which two cannons were mounted. It seems that these cannons were intended more for protection against the English than the Indians. Marigny de Mandaville was left in command of the garrison consisting of thirty soldiers and a priest. The post was destined to become the center of French influence among the Indian tribes of the interior for nearly fifty years.

The failure of the Royal Bank of France in 1722 brought acute distress to the American colonies and especially to the far-flung outposts such as Toulouse. The garrison of the post at this time consisted of Swiss hirelings, who tormented by famine and corrupted by British influence, mutinied against the French officers. Commandant Marchand was slain, but Lieutenant Villemont and Ensign Paque escaped through a port hole and fled to the Hickory Ground, while the mutineers set out to join the English in the Carolinas. Villemont succeeded in enlisting a company of Indians from nearby towns and started in pursuit. Overtaking the deserters at Line Creek, sixty of them were slain and eight returned to the fort as prisoners. Then they were sent to Mobile where they were executed.

In 1763, at the conclusion of a war between England and France, the latter surrendered the territory to England. The Commandant dismantled the cannons and departed with the garrison to Mobile. The site then became a British post but was voluntarily abandoned by them the following year. One of the old French cannons is preserved in the Department of Archives and History at Montgomery.

According to the boundaries established by the English the southern part of our present state, including the site of Montgomery, was in British West Florida while Fort Toulouse and the territory north of it was embraced in the Province of British Illinois.

Subsequently, the country up to the vicinity of the French post was claimed by Spain. It was not until 1801 that Spain recognized the American claim to the country.

With the beginning of the Revolutionary War the territory was entirely reclaimed by the Indians and became a lawless frontier, the scene of many revolting depredations. Alexander McGillivray, half-breed grandson of the murdered Marchand, had grown to manhood and one of his plantations was near the old French fort. Being an ardent loyalist, like his Scotch father, he embodied the Creeks in the service of the king. He occupied a commanding position among the Creeks and the power of his influence was sought alike by the English, American and Spanish. President Washington eventually dispatched a personal letter to him by a special emissary extending him an invitation to come to New York, then the seat of government, to discuss a proposal for a treaty with the Creeks. McGillivray, already a Colonel in the British Army, returned with a commission as Brigadier General in the American Army with his salary paid a year in advance. The Spanish government then commissioned him as Superintendent General of the Creek Nation. This crafty chief was probably the only person ever to hold military rank at the same time in the armies of three conflicting nations.

In 1814, exactly a century after Bienville constructed his fort, General Andrew Jackson marched his troops to this site following his decisive victory over the Creeks at the Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa. The old French fort was rebuilt and renamed Fort Jackson. The scattered chiefs, realizing the hopelessness of further resistance, came in to make peace with Jackson. Among these chiefs was William Weatherford, or Red Eagle as he was known to the Indians, who had commanded the Indians in the shocking massacre at Fort Mims. So intense was the hatred for him that General Jackson had the greatest difficulty in restraining his rough soldiers from exacting summary vengeance upon him. After a brief visit to the Hermitage, General Jackson returned to this site to meet the assembled chiefs and conclude a treaty of peace. By the terms of this treaty, known as the Treaty of Fort Jackson, the Creeks ceded away much of their lands in Alabama and thereby opened up a vast territory for settlement. Jackson constructed a number of barges here and embarked with his equipment and some of his soldiers for Mobile, the others going by land, for his task did not end with the defeat of the Creeks. He still had the Spaniards to defeat at Pensacola and the British at New Orleans.

William Bartram, the celebrated botanist, was a visitor here in 1777 and was so favorably impressed with the location as to comment "This is, perhaps, one of the most eligible situations for a city in the world; a level plain between the conflux of two majestic rivers." Years later the site was actually plotted for a city and given the name of Jackson but the town was shortlived and no trace remains of it today. A marble shaft, reared in recent years near the circular embankment which outlines the walls of the old fort, commemorates the French occupancy. Nearby the red man left a monument to his own race in the form of an imposing pyramid of earth. The place is isolated on a peninsular between the two rivers and, being without habitations, presents to the present generation a quiet, peaceful and picturesque prospect.

MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY OFFICERS

President	--	Brittain Thompson	3609 Montrose Road	TR 1-0698
Vice President	--	Floyd F. Taylor	1123 No. 16th St.	AL 1-9984
Secretary & Treasurer	--	Martin F. Hullender	202 18th Way SW	5E-8900

Meetings: First Friday Every Month, 7:30 P.M., Birmingham Public Library, 3rd Floor, Art Room, unless otherwise announced.

July 6th: Guest Speaker - Dr. James B. McCabe, University of Alabama
 Subject: - "Visual Determination of Age Through Teeth"

Dr. McCabe is a native Alabamian who is a graduate of Howard and the University of Alabama. While continuing his postgraduate study he became interested in Anthropology, and his Master's thesis was on the Shell Mound Indians of North Alabama. He is presently engaged in the practice of Orthodontics, and also teaches at the University of Alabama dental school.

August
August

"Picnic"

A two penny postcard will tell all our members the where and the when of the picnic. It is believed we can make arrangements to have a car caravan to the site selected with the least fuss and bother. The picnic should be most enjoyable, and advise as to what to bring will be on the postcards.

OUR CHILDREN PARTICIPATION PLAN

During the summer since so many members and children are away on vacation or at camps, we have made no plans of a formal nature. There may be, however, a few occasions when small groups take a trip somewhere, therefore, we will advise by phone should something come up.

"There are three faithful friends - an old wife, an old dog, and ready money."

- Ben Franklin