

THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

STONES & BONES

Box 2171
Birmingham, Ala.

VOLUME II

JANUARY 1957

ISSUE 1

Our more observant readers will note the change in the name of our newsletter. Whether for better or worse, the change can be blamed on the officers of the Society who met at the home of President Britt Thompson on January 18 to discuss plans for the coming year. It is hoped that our new name will at least lend a little more distinctiveness to our publication. It is sincerely hoped that our members will contribute many articles this year so that STONES & BONES will truly speak for our Society.

* * * * *

Despite weather which threatened to rival modern hurricanes and Biblical floods, many of our members turned out for our last meeting to elect new officers and enjoy a fine speaker. After due deliberation, those who braved the weather elected the officers who will lead the Society through our program for the coming year. Those who were not present will be glad to see that their fellow members elected the following officers for 1957:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Brittain Thompson | President (Re-elected out of gratitude for the excellent past year's service) |
| Martin Hullender | Vice President (Promoted after proving his efficiency as Secretary last year) |
| Edward O. Conerly | Secretary-Treasurer (Has a good fountain pen and an honest face) |

Best of luck to all of these men! We hope that all of our members will give our officers all of the support they will need in putting over our program for the coming year.

* * * * *

The election of officers was followed by a most interesting talk by Dr. Joseph Volker, Dean of the Dental School of the University of Alabama on the double barreled subject of "Determining Age Through Examination of Dental Tissue" and "Fluoride Analysis for Determining the Age of Fossils". Dr. Volker's ability to discuss a highly technical subject in language that a layman can understand made the meeting as enlightening and enjoyable as any we have had lately.

* * * * *

In addition to changing the name of the newsletter, the officers also placed the responsibility for editing STONES & BONES upon the willing but inexperienced shoulders of Sam R. Shannon, Jr. and Edward O. Conerly. We will be the first to admit our shortcomings, but we hope that you will save STONES & BONES from an ignominious death by regularly contributing articles, book reviews & notes on field trips. Knowledge gained is a virtue, but knowledge gained and kept to one's self is a sin. We don't want sinful members. If anyone is afraid we won't publish his article - - just try us and see.

Just send your article or note (in any decipherable form) to the following address:

Shannon & Conerly
906 Massey Building
Birmingham, Alabama

* * * * *

Real Estate **** 9,000,000 Acres for Sale

Although the Creek Indians were removed from Alabama to their Reservations 140 years ago, problems over their rights to land in Alabama are still with us in a big way.

Shortly after the passage of a Congressional Act in 1946, which established the Indian Claims Commission, the descendants of the Creek Nation filed a claim for \$36 million dollars as compensation for lands of which they were deprived by General Andrew Jackson. The Federal Government has conceded that the tribal descendants have a valid claim concerning 9 million acres in Alabama and Mississippi. All that remains to be established is the value of the land in question in 1814. Attorneys in the case believe that a value of \$4.00 per acre will be agreed upon.

The Creeks also seek to recover 17 million acres of land in Alabama and Mississippi which was taken from them by General Jackson's forces. The Commission has agreed that Jackson took the land from friendly Creeks who were allies of the United States in the War of 1812 against England.

Some estimates state that recovery on the total of 27 million acres will run as high as \$150 million dollars plus interest for 140 years.

Large numbers of people are still registering as descendants of the Creek Nation. A large number of Creek descendants live around Bay Minette and Atmore, Alabama.

Final decision of the Claims Commission is expected within a month.

* * * * *

The Society hopes to publish two special pamphlets this year designed to further archaeology and anthropology in Alabama. The first attempt will be a special site survey of Lamar County, Alabama. Formats for the publication are being assembled now. Your suggestions for projects along this line are solicited.

The projects are being undertaken with full knowledge that we are amateurs, but it is felt that some effort toward recording the results of our field work is badly needed.

* * * * *

In the hope that they would discover another Bridgeport Cave, Sam Shannon and Jim Wilkinson recently explored a cave located north of Warrior, Alabama. The expedition was composed of Shannon, Wilkinson and several members of Explorer Scout Post #225, guided by Mr. Wayne Davis, who discovered the cave while hunting several years ago.

After about four hours of clinging to precipices and jumping bottomless chasms, the expedition concluded that no Indian would ever inhabit the cave unless he was equipped to walk on ceilings and perpendicular walls.

Although no evidence of primitive occupancy was found, the beautiful and awe inspiring sights of weird limestone formations made the trip worthwhile.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY MEETING - - - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1957, 7:30 P.M.
BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

SPEAKER: DR. FRANK SODAY

Dr. Soday is well known to most of our members. He is Vice President of Chemstrand Corporation and serves as Director of Research. For many years Dr. Soday has displayed an avid interest in Paleo Indians, Lithic Materials and Geology. He is recognized in these fields as an outstanding amateur. Dr. Soday's knowledge in these fields and his ability as a speaker leads us to predict a very interesting meeting. Come and bring your friends.

SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON PALEO INDIANS

* * * * *

SPECIAL INVITATION

The Alabama Archaeological Society will have its annual meeting in Decatur, Alabama on February 9, 1957, at 2:00 P.M. in the Power & Light

Company building in Decatur. Dr. Joseph Volker, Dean of the Dental School of the University of Alabama will be the principal speaker. All members of the Birmingham Anthropological Society are cordially invited to attend.

* * * * *

Mailing lists for STONES & BONES and the YEAR BOOK are now being completed. Members who have not as yet paid their 1957 dues are urged to do so without delay.

Dues should be mailed to the Secretary as follows:

Ed Conerly
906 Massey Building
Birmingham, Alabama

* * * * *

TWO RECENT DISCOVERIES IN CHINA

"The Manchester Guardian Weekly" recently published two short articles relating to archaeological discoveries in China. The first of these articles, published October 11, 1956, discusses a brief report of Dr. W. C. Pei, of the Academy of Sciences in Peking. Dr. Pei, who was associated with the discovery of the Peking Man in 1929, reports that he is in possession of about forty fossilized teeth of a giant "ape-man", generally known as Gigantopithecus, who (or which) is reputed to have stood eight feet in height. The age of Gigantopithecus is estimated by Dr. Pei at about four hundred thousand to six hundred thousand years, and the age ascribed is equal to or greater than the generally estimated age of the China and Java man. The fossils of the ape-man's teeth, according to Dr. Pei, were collected by peasants and sold in Nanking. With the exception of three of the teeth, found "in situ" by Dr. Pei, the fossils were not examined on the site of discovery by professional palaeontologists, and consequently, the significance of the discovery is somewhat diminished.

The giant ape-man was first brought to the attention of the scientific world by Dr. C. H. R. Von Konigswald, who bought three of its teeth in a Chinese drug store in 1935. In 1945, Dr. Franz Weidenreich gave the creature human status, but other palaeontologists have been non-committal on the subject. No doubt further study and research will eventually determine whether or not Gigantopithecus will take a place among the ancestors of modern man.

On December 13, 1956, "The Guardian" reported the discovery of some early Chinese wall paintings on over twenty kilometers of cliff overlooking the Ming River in Kwangsi Province in South China. The pictures are all in red and for

the most part depict human beings. It is thought that these wall paintings show the celebrations of different contingents of early Chuang troops, who had joined forces in a battle. One of the human figures seems to have been pierced by a sword and some of the figures have only one arm. The significance of the drawings is still a matter of much speculation.

In regard to the age of the paintings, Chinese scholars will only say that they are between a thousand and three thousand years old.

These two reports from Communist China are encouraging in that they offer proof to Western scientists that archaeological research is being conducted in one of the richest fields of exploration. We are told that no civil engineering work is done without a resident archaeologist.

* * * * *

Book Review?

"Have you not a house, O Braheem Effendi?", said my friend Suleiman.

"Yea, verily, O Suleiman".

"Have you not a father and a mother?"

"Thy lips drop fragrant truth, O most magnificent of merchants."

"Then why in the name of Allah came you here to Maasr?"

"To see men and things. To gather knowledge by travel. To know the world."

"Is it not written, 'Men are a hidden disease?' and elsewhere, 'Communion with men profiteth nothing, unless for idle talk?'. Thou mightest better have remained at home Braheem Effendi"; and the smoke from his chibouk curled in the still air up to the roof over the bazaar, and out into the sunlight, and vanished.

I sometimes wonder whether, after all, the old man was not right - -

So begins the very long and excitingly curious fabric of a story of "Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia" by William C. Prime - Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, N. Y. C. 1859.

Apparently in the middle eighteen hundreds, the customs of making a book included the quaint one of saving periods; for herein lies some of the most undiagrammable sentences that ever covered a page or more, and yet, withal, the most delightful; as they are a mixture of truths, tales and adventure; mummies of men and beasts; fair ladies, unspeakable filth, wealth, moonlight, bastinado users and slaves; history, both Egyptian and Biblical; dogs, Shaiks, Copts; tobacco, good and bad; The Nile; the tombs; the temples; the cartouches; and categorical questions; men of wrinkles, men of colors - from wet sand to blackness like a dream of darkness - caves, pits, bravery, customs, bandits - all stirred into a potpourri and panorama, of the Egypt before the British were other than interested visitors and

French fighters; and Suez had no canal except in men's dreams - an Egypt of only 2,000,000 population with the Arab name of Masr, the Turkish name of El Kabit, the Hebrew name of Mizr or Mizriam (after Noah's progeny) - still divided into Upper Egypt (Said), Middle Egypt (Vostani), and Lower Egypt (Bahari) including the delta - an Egypt with its 200,000 square miles, still torn and riven by centuries of hostile inroads, ever depleted of its treasures by vandal hordes, and yet so immense, so old, so magnificent, that the viewer of this country, whether he be the Herododotus of half a century before Christ in the wake of Cambyses, or our humble author, all alike find much to wonder over, to conjure the whys and who's, and to admire, and of course, borrow from and talk of until death.

A hundred years ago the archaeological procedures employed by author Prime were excellent. He simply went to the heads of the Egyptian Government with letters from prominent Americans - got carte blanche permissions - hired donkeys and fellahs (at 8 cents per day) and opened tombs from Alexandria to the second cataract. He purchased, talked, admired and dreamed his way, with the "Phantom" (a luxurious boat) as his home, for about five months. On some tombs as he says "It required gunpowder to start it" --. He climbed hills of pottery, hills of bones, hills of broken temples and hills of crocodile mummies. He climbed down tombs, down caves, down pits, down catacombs. He dug and dug and shipped home and shipped home. (Frankly, in spite of his possession of a beard, I've rarely been so envious of a person.)

To sort and create order from Mister Prime's writings may not be worth the while, but to read of the times and his journey is as beguiling as a tale by Scheherazade.

BT

* * * * *

Life is too short to waste
In critic peep or cynic bark -
Up! mind thine own aim, and
God speed the mark.

-Emerson

GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!