

THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

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Our Guest Speaker this Friday, April 5, is Dr. Howard Harlan. For some years he has been at Birmingham Southern instructing in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology. Prior to that time he was instructor in the same field at the University of Alabama. His Doctorate Degree was received from the University of Virginia. Some of our members had the pleasure of attending an evening short course in Anthropology given by Dr. Harlan at Birmingham Southern some months ago. He is an interesting and fascinating speaker, with an erudite ability, that is very nicely tempered by his sense of humor, to put across the subject of his talk, which is THE PILTDOWN MAN.

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One of our main items of business for the April 5th meeting will be further discussion relevant to the matter of joining the Alabama Archaeological Society and the Society for American Archaeology.

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On March 19th Dr. W. A. Krogman gave a talk under the auspices of the Alabama Dental Association. It was a dinner meeting, and Messrs. Josselyn, Hullender and Thompson attended. Dr. Krogman is the well known anthropologist who is presently doing work at the University of Pennsylvania. The meeting was a very interesting one and highly educational.

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The following article on location of archaeological sites by air was borrowed from the Explorers Journal, 1956, Volume XXXIV. As will be seen upon reading it, the potential implications of utilizing this method for such items as are in our territory is considerable. The one spot that has received the most attention with the least proof is the site of the battle between DeSoto and the Indians at Mauvillia. Perhaps the opportunity to utilize this method may be available to some of our members, and the further study of techniques for interpretation perhaps over a period of time could be developed to such an extent as to permit us to make a genuine contribution to our archaeology and history in the southeastern area.

LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES BY AIR

by Darsie Gillie, UNESCO

In an air photograph of an ancient site the earth seems transparent and the lines of ancient buildings show through as if they were at the bottom of a clear water lake. Where man has turned up the earth, has worked deeper in one place than in another, or where he has left wooden buildings to decay and enrich the earth, there the grass will grow more lush, crops will grow taller and flowers brighter in colour. Where he has left stone foundations or where only a thin layer of soil covers ruins of stone and brick buildings, there the vegetation will be shorter and thinner.

To a man walking across a field, this pattern may not be visible. To an air-borne observer, the plan of a neolithic village, Roman camp, or an ancient city in Cochin-China, will be plainly apparent. Photographed and examined at leisure, it will reveal the right place for the archaeologist to dig and will restore the whole plan of agricultural settlement as it appeared 2,000 years ago.

Woodhenge - A photograph of a field in southwestern England, taken in 1924, showed dark marks of richer vegetation where the wooden columns of a circular sanctuary of the bronze age had once stood. In Britain's damp climate, no piece of timber could endure for 4,000 years, but the decayed wood timber had enriched the soil for that length of time. So Woodhenge was discovered as a sister site to the more famous circle of stones near Salisbury called Stonehenge.

This technique has been adopted by the French in Algeria, Tunisia, Syria and Indochina, by the Americans in Persia, and a British scholar in Italy and Greece. It is being applied in the Soviet Union and in many other countries of both the old world and the new. Photographs taken during military reconnaissance are useful but do not always give the information that they might because they were not taken in the right light or season and new surveys are constantly needed.

Soil Marks - There are two kinds of marks in the soil - - unevenness and crop-marks. To detect from the air the slight irregularities of level where there have been ditches or walls centuries ago, it is necessary that the light should be oblique, and the vegetation regular and low, or non-existent. To detect crop-marks, the vegetation and the season must be suitable. Young corn will show the outline of a farm that was abandoned three thousand years ago, but the same field when harvested or when planted with potatoes may show nothing. Pastureland in a drought will reveal the whole plan of a city beneath it, for stone or brick foundations will make a pale line where the grass has been quickest to wither, and long vanished wooden palings a dark one where the soil is richer and deeper. Neither may be visible after rain has made the whole field green again. A big field may tell a clear story, but broken into small fields with different crops its message may be so obscure as to be meaningless.

In Britain itself aerial photography has increased knowledge of the past as far back as two thousand years before the written record. The discovery of Woodhenge was followed up by photographs which revealed fields on the bare hills dating back to the earliest days of agriculture when men's axes were not sufficient to cut down forests in the valleys. The shadows of the old field limits still show through the grassland. Bronze age and early iron age sites have been found from the air and subsequently excavated. To the many Roman sites already known - forts, camps, signalling stations, villas and towns - dozens of new ones have been added, in particular camps in parts of Scotland which were probably only occupied by the Roman soldiers for a few weeks or even days during punitive campaigns outside the Roman province.

Ancient Carthage - On other Roman frontiers, in Southern Algeria, Libya and Syria, it has been possible to trace from the air the entire system of Roman defences over hundreds of miles as well as the irrigation systems supplying water to those who manned them. From the air, too, the outer fortifications of ancient Carthage have been identified. In Tunisia, aerial photography has shown that the fields over great areas still fit into the Roman surveyors' squares - a regular chequer board pattern extending for mile after mile which enabled the administration in Rome to organize colonization from afar. The same system of "centuriation" as it is called, is visible in parts of Dalmatia, Italy and southern France.

In Apulia, in an area near Foggia, where there are today great expanses of pasture and big corn fields, it has been possible to identify from the air successive settlements which date back to the earliest days of farming in Italy. In the grassland and corn, the aviator can see the outlines of round neolithic huts, grouped for safety within circular ditches and fences. But these circles are overlaid by the squares of Roman farms, laid out in regular order. You can see the straight lane, that seems still to lead up to a farm house which probably ceased to exist some fifteen hundred years ago. Cutting across these Roman fields are the irregular outlines of others that lay around a village and manor belonging to the Emperor Frederick II in the thirteenth century.

Further north in Italy it has been possible to plot for the first time correctly and fully some of the great Etruscan cemeteries, to distinguish the ancient roads that ran through them for funeral processions and even to see on which side of the tombs the entrance lies - a detail which only laborious spade-work will reveal at ground level.

At Rhodes, a scholar has distinguished from the air the plan of the ancient Greek city, which is invisible at ground level because of extensive later building, while over Paestum in South Italy, you can see the lines of the streets, now buried under fields and largely invisible from below.

New Finds in Cochin-China - Some of the most exciting discoveries of air archaeology were made during the war in Indochina. In the extreme south of Cochin-China, between the river Mekong and the gulf of Siam, a number of ancient city-sites and some short lengths of canal had already been noted by surveyors. One site, the city of Oc-Eo, had been excavated in 1941 and 1942 by a French scholar. It proved to date from the first centuries A. D. and to have been built by Indian settlers who

brought their type of civilization to this area about the same time that Rome was bringing Mediterranean civilization to Gaul and Britain.

Of particular interest was the discovery of a small number of objects originating from the Mediterranean just as there were a small number from China. Here under the rule of kings who used Sanskrit for their inscriptions, the civilizations of the West and East were both known. To the twenty sites already noted by surveyors on the ground, another twenty have been added by air-photography, some of them of much larger cities than Oc-Eo. The short lengths of about 30 canals became, when seen from the air, a vast network of 150. Here, when conditions once again permit research, the archaeologist on the ground will be able to uncover one of the least known chapters in the history of civilized man.

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The members of the Alabama Archaeological Society, Morgan Limestone Chapter, invited some of our members to look over some of the sites along the Tennessee River. As a result of this kind invitation, Richard Radford, who is a member of both Societies, led Messrs. Lively, Steele, Shannon, Conerly and Thompson along 287 miles of Tennessee river bank on foot. This fabulous mileage was accomplished from 11:00 to 4:00 and any one who doubts it need only speak to the well(?) conditioned members who were on the trip. The sites are many and the finds were excellent. Jack Chambron joined the party in the late afternoon with his boat, and we crossed the river looking at some other sites. This particular territory is literally fabulous in the sense that it has every evidence of habitation of a continuous type from historic through Paleo Indians. The river in the Spring tends to do much of the excavation work and uncovers all manner of artifacts and burials. A genuinely delightful time was had. We should extend an invitation to the Morgan Limestone Chapter in the near future and have them join us in some of our weekend hunts.

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We received a letter from Member Ed Mahan, which is quoted below in part. Ed is starting a scientific dig at Cathedral Caverns, Route 1, Woodville, Alabama. It is near Grant, Alabama. We surely wish him the best of luck, and he has advised us that he will be happy to have visitors - and even shovelers.

"At present I am down to six feet in the first five foot square. It looks as if I passed the pottery cultures at the 30 inch level. From there on to the 60 inch level was solid rock and a little sterile clay. On breaking through the great slabs of stone for 30 inches a large fire hearth showed up. That produced a fine ripple flaked Archaic point, also a number of fine flint chips, two broken fragments of points, one spoke shave made from a large flake, plus bone, snail shells and charcoal. As much of the charcoal as possible was saved and sealed in the proper containers.

In looking around to see who would run the tests on the charcoal, one of my friends of the Huntsville Society got the laboratory at Redstone Arsenal to do it free of charge. Isn't that wonderful!"

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NOTICE . . .

If your newsletter came in an envelope, it was because you had paid your dues and your membership card(s) were included. Any family members who did not receive cards can obtain them at the regular meetings or through a note containing the name desired on the card (addressee) to the President.

Those of you who received the newsletter in the regular way are requested to pay dues as soon as possible, as our yearbook is due to be published shortly and we want all correct names, addresses and phone numbers included.

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RAINY WEATHER

The amateur archaeologist's means of studying the American Indian or any ancestral man is limited to a great extent by the normal processes of natural destruction, and quite often, evidence as to the nature of ancestral cultures is found only in the form of artifacts and structures that are not readily subject to destruction. Artifacts manufactured of stone and pottery are, of course, the most prolific source of information. Occasionally, wood, bone and woven material is found intact, but these finds are exceptional in our area. Another problem results from the fact that the shape and form of particular artifacts do not always demonstrate the use of the item or the exact manner of employment.

Historic accounts by writers who traveled among the American Indians during the exploration and settlement of this country can furnish the archaeologist with much information that would never be discovered by field work alone. Many accounts are questioned in regard to their accuracy, but others are painstakingly written and serve as excellent source material.

The following quotation from DeVoto's Journal of Lewis and Clark will illustrate how we can overcome the adversity of nature and how a rainy day can be converted into a very real and interesting archaeological expedition:

"the metal which we found in possession of these people consisted of a few indifferent knives, a few brass kettles, some arm bands of iron and brass; a few buttons, worn as ornaments in their hair, a spear or two of a foot in length and some iron and brass arrow points which they inform me they obtained in exchange for horses from the Crow or Rocky Mountain Indians on the yellowstone river. the bridle bits and stirreps they obtained from the Spaniards, though these were but few. many

of them made use of flint for knives, and with this instrument, skinned the animals they killed, dressed their fish and made their arrows; in short they used it for every purpose to which a knife is applied. they renew the edge by flecking off the flint by means of the point of an Elk's or deer's horn. with the point of a deer or Elk's horn they also form their arrow points of the flint, with a quickness and neatness that is really astonishing. we found no axes or hatchets among them; what wood they cut was done either with stone or Elk's horn. the latter they used always to rive or split their wood. their culinary utensils exclusive of the brass kettle above mentioned, consist of pots in the form of a jar made either of earth, or of a white soft stone which becomes very black and very hard by birning, and is found in the hills near the three forks of the Missouri between Madison's and Gallatin's rivers. they have also spoons made of Buffaloe's horns and those of the Bighorn.

they sometimes make bows of the Elk's horn and those also of the Bighorn. those of the Elk's horns are made of a single piece and covered on the back with glue and sinues like those made of wood, and are frequently ornamented with a strand wrought of porcupine quills and sinues wrapped around them from some distance at both extremities. the bows of the bighorn are formed of small pieces laid flat and cemented with glue, and rolled with sinews, after which, they are also covered on the back with sinews and glew, and are highly ornamented as they are much prized.

forming the shield is a ceremony of great importance among them, this implement would in their mind be divested of much of its protecting power were it not inspired with those virtues by their older men and jugglers (medicine priests). their method of preparing is thus, an entire skin of a bull buffaloe two years old is first provided; a feast is next prepared and all the warriors, old men and jugglers invited to partake. a hole is sunk in the ground about the same in diameter with the intended shield and about eighteen inches deep. a parcel of stones are now made red hot and thrown into the hole. water is next thrown in and the hot stones cause it to emit a very strong hot steem, over this they spread the green skin which must not have been suffered to dry after taken off the beast. the flesh side is laid next to the ground and as many of the workmen as can reach it take hold on it's edges and extend it in every direction. as the skin becomes heated the hair seperates and is taken off with the fingers, and the skin continues to contract until the whole is drawn within the compas design for the shield, it is then taken off and laid on a parchment hide where they pound it with the heel when barefoot. this operation of pounding continues for several days or as long as the feast lasts. when it is delivered to the propryeter and declared by the jugglers and old men to be a sufficient defence against the arrows of their exemies or even bullets if the feast has been a satisfactory one. many of them believe implisityly that a ball cannot penetrate their shield, in consequence of certain supernatural powers which have been inspired by their jugglers.

the Poggamoggon is an instrument with a handle of wood covered with dressed leather about the size of a whip handle and twenty-two inches long; a round stone of two pounds weight is also covered with leather and strongly united to the leather of the handle by a throng of two inches long; a loop of leather united to the handle passes around the wrist. they also have a kind of armor which they form with many foalds of

dressed antelope's skin, united with glue and sand. with this they cover their own bodies and those of their horses. these are sufficient against the effects of the arrow."

E. C.

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Children's Program

Saturday A. M. at 10:00 o'clock - the place - The Birmingham Art Museum in the City Hall - There will be a movie on Sioux Indian Life. It's in sound and extremely well done - so all children and their friends are invited, adults also. We hope to have Dan Josselyn, after the movie to show our group something about arrow heads and how to make them.

Come and bring all your friends.

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Learn from the mistakes of others -
you can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!