

THE BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

STONES & BONES

VOL. II JULY 1957 ISSUE 7

We had a pot luck group of artifacts at our July meeting, and Mr. Dan Josselyn was primary curator of the discussion and explanations that went with them. In addition, Mr. William Ballard came before us to briefly tell of the possibility of our Stones & Bones T.V. Program being extended to aid the proposed T.V. History Classes that are being backed by the State Education Board and the Ford Foundation. More news about this in the future.

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PICNIC - AUGUST 3rd. See Map on Back Page - - Bring Friends.

It's from 10:00 A.M. on, at Montevallo, Alabama. After the eating, we hope to spend an afternoon searching for artifacts. A free brochure of "The Archaeological Story of Alabama Indians" will be given for the best and the most collected that afternoon.

No Regular Meeting on 2 August - - Come to the Picnic.

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HANGERS ON

In this age of atomic and hydrogen bombs, scientists have found a living people who do not know how to make fire.

These people, who are still in a Stone Age culture, live their primitive lives on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The Onges, as they are called, have no weapon more advanced than the bow and arrow, but they use this very effectively with specially shaped and sharpened arrows.

The Onges are interesting to scientists for several reasons. They are true pygmies, and so are rare for this reason. They are among the very few people in the world who have a peculiar hump of fat like a bustle over the buttocks of the women. This is so prominent in the Onge women that they put it to practical use and carry the baby perched on it as if it were a shelf specially built in for the purpose. It has a survival value because a person can draw on this stored fat for nourishment in times of stress such as pregnancy or famine. But chiefly, the Onges are of interest because by observing the customs of these people, it is possible for scientists to see with their own eyes how people lived, worked, and thought in the remote past of the Stone Age.

The first scientist who has succeeded in winning the friendship of the hostile Onges so that he was able to visit their homes in the interior of Little Andaman Island, photograph them, and watch their daily living is Professor Lidio Cipriani, an anthropologist retired from the University of Florence, Italy.

After four years spent cautiously in making friendly overtures from the coastal edge of the Little Andaman Island, he was at last accepted by the Onges and he was then able to make his way through the extremely dense tropical forest to find the homes of the people.

One of the Stone Age customs that Professor Cipriani was able to watch was the building of kitchen midden. The Onge people are still piling up broken shells, bones from their dinner, human bones from their dead, and other discards from the household, just as did our own ancestors in the very remote past.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To give credit where credit is due, let's remember and recognize some astonishing feats and ideas of aboriginal Americans.

Consider the social and political organization of the Inca and Aztecs, which was certainly the work of a people far advanced on the scale of civilization. The Maya conceived the abstract concept of the zero, making it possible for them to perform intricate astronomical calculations. Also, their domestication and improvement of the wild Teocentli grass gave us one of the world's staple foods, now known as corn. Furthermore, the terraced irrigation systems of Peru, the canals of the American Southwest and highways built through the mountains of Peru and the jungles of Yucatan attest the Indian's skill as an engineer.

J. W.

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The Birmingham Anthropological Society has recently received several Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletins from the Smithsonian Institution. These reports will no doubt be very interesting to most of our members, and may be checked out by members at any time from our library which is located at the offices of Shannon & Conerly, 906 Massey Building. The following is a list of titles of the books received:

- Origin Myths of the Navaho Indians
- Prehistoric Settlement Pattern in the Viru Valley Peru
- River Basin Surveys Papers, Numbers 1 - 6
- The Horse in Blackfoot Culture
- Seminole Music
- Arapaho Child Life and Its Cultural Background

Journal of an Expedition to the Maevaisses Terres and the Upper
Missouri in 1850

Symposium on Local Diversity in Iroquois Culture

The Modal Personality Structure of the Tuscarora Indians

Chippewa Child Life and its Cultural Background

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REALISM

Sometime ago, I imposed upon my sister and several of her friends and showed them some of my prized artifacts. During the course of the display, my niece, a three year old daughter of my sister, approached with a very apparent show of curiosity, but when she saw my relics, she took one look and uttered the single word, "Rocks!", and turned away to find more interesting fields of entertainment. This childlike observation served very well to dull my enthusiasm and completely ruin the atmosphere of the exhibition, but I finished without any acknowledgement of the disturbing remark.

I didn't give this incident any deep consideration until I went home and lay down to go to sleep. A single word kept running through my mind - ROCKS. But reason remained in control, and I dismissed the whole affair as an inconsiderate, infantile, ill-considered statement. When sleep finally overtook me, I was still a confirmed and ardent amateur archaeologist.

For some reason I didn't sleep too well and awoke early. The cold light of dawn was a good setting for sensible reflection and mature deliberation. That word came forth again, followed by the thought that the child was hardly more than a babe-in-arms. What weight would her opinion carry with the many devoted people who have made archaeology their lifelong career? Seizing upon this beginning, my thinking went further. This little girl couldn't possibly know anything of the importance of parallel and oblique flaking, multiple fluting, basal grinding, three-quarter grooving, blade industries and unifaced tools. Finally, the shocking conclusion was plain! This child could, by no means, be classified as an authority on archaeology, but above all, considering her sincere and forthright manner, she must be a realist. This conclusion set off a chain reaction, and I decided to examine some of my collection with an unbiased, impartial, realistic attitude.

A nicely shaped and polished grooved axe was the first subject of examination with my newly adopted point of view. This axe was most certainly, to put it bluntly, a rock, but why should it be a collector's item? It took hours and hours to accomplish the grinding and polishing, and this was all done by hand. So what! I remember that our milk cow ground and polished on a salt brick for months and months, and I don't know of anyone who goes in for collecting well polished salt bricks. The material of which the axe is made didn't come from the locality of

the site where it was found. This material or the axe itself must have been transported on foot for hundreds of miles. Pondering this last fact and its significance, I recalled that while I was in the Army, I transported a canteen on foot for thousands of miles and no one would think of having this item in a collection of any sort. Well, grooved axes never were my favorite artifact.

I put the axe aside and picked up a treasured fluted point and looked at the well executed flutes extending along the entire length of either side. Surely, such a thing would be a matter of interest to anyone, as man has long since forgotten the art of fluting arrowheads. But what's so important about that? I have long since forgotten the art of making bird traps, and at one time I was considered to be one of the best in the neighborhood. Next, I examined the fine chipping on the point and thought of the amazing patience that was required in the manufacturing process. But patience, in itself, doesn't always amount to much. There was a patchwork quilt around the house for a number of years, and judging by its appearance, a lot of patience went into its making, but eventually, the family dog fell heir to this 'domestic artifact'. No collector of any calibre would have wanted the quilt - even before the dog took over.

When the beauty of the fluted point faded before my very eyes, I knew that my position as a collector and admirer of Indian artifacts is quite defenseless. But some comfort can be found in the fact that others are in worse shape than I. There are whispered rumors that some folks collect Confederate money.

Ed. Comment - - I know several people who will take the "Rocks" off the author's hands, and if necessary, will tell the author not to eat things that bring sleepless nights and moments of lagging enthusiasm.

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THE INDIAN'S TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The translation of parts of the Bible into Indian talk has been quite a problem, and an interesting task for missionaries. Such translations often result in comprehensive versions. An outstanding example of this is the Twenty-third Psalm, which some clever and patient divine translated into Indian as follows:

The Great Father above is a Shepherd Chief. I am His, and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope, and the name of the rope is Love. And He draws me, and He draws me to where the grass is green and the water is not dangerous, and I eat and lie down, satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but He lifts it up and draws me into a good road. His name is Wonderful.

Sometime - it may be very soon, it may be longer, or it may be a long time - He will draw me into a place between the mountains. It is dark there, but I will not draw back. I will be afraid not, for it is there between these mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger I have felt in my heart thru this life will be satisfied.

Sometimes He makes the Love rope into a whip, but afterward He gives me a staff to lean on.

He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hand on my head, and all the "tired" is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over.

What I tell you is true. I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me thru life, and afterwards I will go to live in the "Big Teepee" with the Shepherd Chief forever.

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OUR TELEVISION SHOW

More than fifty letters have been written saying nice things about our programs. Though this may not seem like much of a showing, it appears to be the outstanding show of the summer season. Many letters are from places that merely need a bit of sparkplugging to get an organization started in their area, since obviously the interest is there. One of the things revealed by the letters is the wide scope of occupations and educational backgrounds of our listeners. It varies from the little boy who can't spell too well through the professions. We members should feel very proud of our efforts and take all opportunities possible to make friends with others interested in the past of our State.

Our next few programs are listed below. Remember the time - 8:30 P.M. every Thursday - Channels 2, 7, & 10.

1 Aug. Mr. James Wilkinson and Mr. Joseph Dale are going to have a merry time telling about the historical Indians in their presentation of "Beads, Skins and Firewater". Both of these gentlemen have been avid students of early history since their youth. Mr. Wilkinson is an Engineering Inspector with the City of Birmingham, and Mr. Dale is a restaurateur who has fine food in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery and Atlanta. Their enthusiasm is barely matched by their collections.

8 Aug. Mr. Thomas Martin, Chairman of the Board, Alabama Power Company, has been an extremely discerning and staunch supporter of our State's heritage. As Chairman of the "Horseshoe Bend National Park Association", he spearheaded the public spirited

citizens who put before Congress a bill to honor the decisive battle that took place between General Andrew Jackson and the Creek Indians. Their efforts culminated in a public law being passed approximately one year ago establishing a National Park at the battleground area. Mr. Martin is outstandingly qualified to tell the "Story of Horseshoe Bend" and this chapter of our history which had such notable National significance.

15 Aug. Mr. Daniel Josselyn could survive better than most persons if he was put to the test of his program, "Stone Age Living". His inquiring mind has rarely accepted what has been said about Indian manufacturing processes, and therefore, like Ben Franklin, he has experimented. The results of his research, both by book and by trial and error, have produced an ability to speak with authority on the Indian techniques for daily living. He can make anything from arrowheads to sewing kits, and will prove it, in front of the camera's eye.

22 Aug. Dr. Peter A. Brannon of Montgomery, who is Director of the Department of Archives and History for the State of Alabama, will discuss "Aboriginal Alabama Customs". Dr. Brannon has devoted his life to the fields of Archaeology and History. A charter member of the Alabama Anthropological Society, he has been Secretary, as he puts it, except for a few years served as President. He has researched the Southern Indian groups, perhaps more than any other person, and promises to present a precis of his findings.

29 Aug. Surprise - Program not yet filled.

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ON THE 'LIGHTER' SIDE

Could Cleo show Julius Caesar through the pyramids with a flashlight? She could if the bulb were available because up and coming Bagdad silversmiths were goldplating jewelry . . . using electric batteries. The batteries, originally discovered by a German archaeologist and recently reported in America by science-historian Willy Ley, were used by the Parthians between 250 and 224 A.D.

(The Laboratory, Fisher Scientific)

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None of us are entirely useless. Even the worst of us can serve as horrible examples.

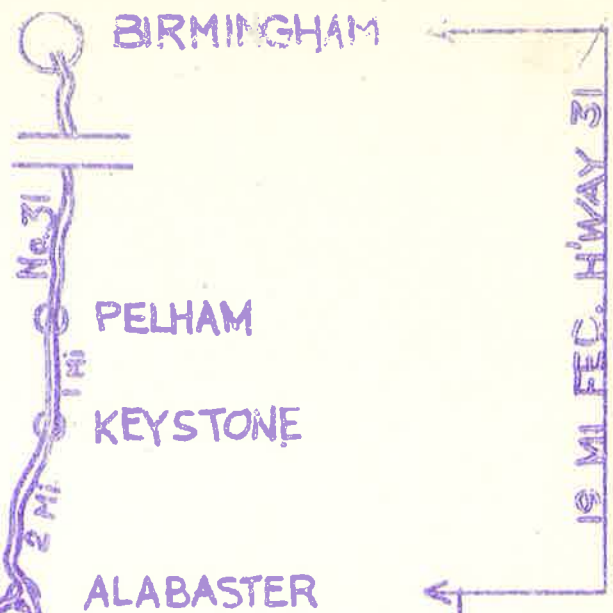
GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

PICNIC MAP

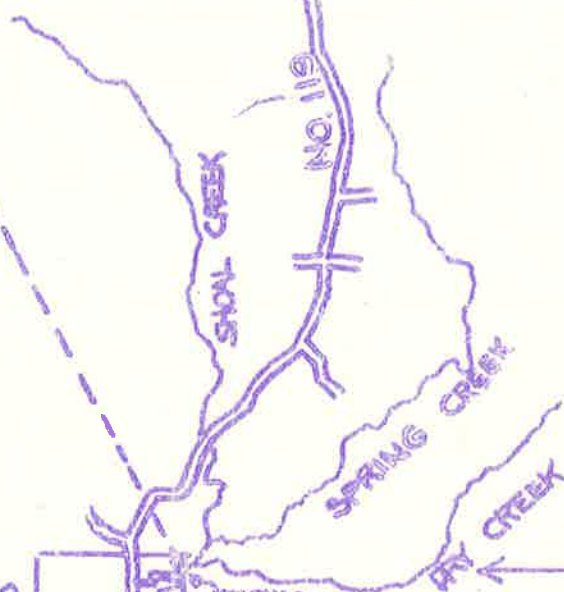
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE
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MONTEVALLO QUADRANGLE
ALABAMA 1957 A.D.

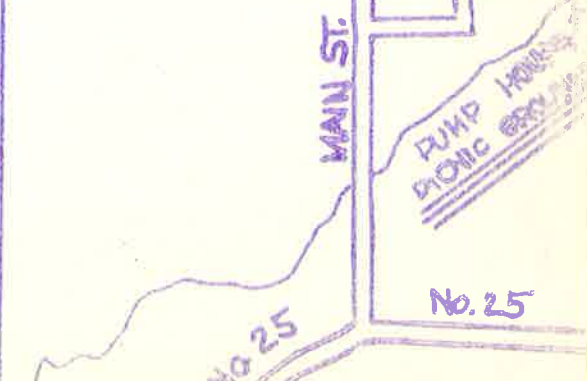


SILURIA



MONTEVALLO MOUNTAIN IN THE VALLEY

MONTEVALLO DETAIL



TO CENTRALE
LE CUMASA R.

LA HAY CREEK
(RED MANNA'S FAMILI)