

Newsletter

STONES AND BONES

August 1959

Birmingham Anthropological Society

Morgan-Limestone Chapter

THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Madison-Huntsville Chapter

Muscle Shoals Chapter

Member of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation

NEWS

WE REGRET the death of Mr. L. C. Wimberly, father of Steve Wimberly, former Alabama State Archaeologist.

Mr. Wimberly, retired, was for many years Head of the Department of English, University of Nebraska, and Editor of the literary magazine, Prairie Schooner. He was born in Plaquemine Parish, Louisiana, for which the Indian pottery "Plaquemine Ware" is named and sometimes found in this area.

Steve's many warm friends will join us in sincerest regrets.

SPENCER WATERS, who is doing such a good job in amateur archaeology, suffered a bad facial burn from a butane explosion. Our informant could give us no further particulars. Spence will have a lot of friends pulling for him.

JACK CAMBRON and his patient trowel and brush excavated a Dalton point in the mutual excavation project reported in the June issue of Newsletter. We haven't heard any details, but a Dalton and a Quad (excavated by Mrs. Spencer Waters) from the same excavation might yield important information on temporal relationships. We can "Kick archaeology around" a hundred years and not learn as much as one proper excavation will disclose. And we may add that one improper excavation can destroy all that history! And usually does! It is increasingly difficult to find a site that careless and ignorant shovels haven't ruined.

EXCAVATION IS RUINING the Mahan or Montevallo site on Mahan Creek, we are informed. This is the site which is to be carted off as road-building materials. Society members couldn't get up enough steam to sink stratigraphic test pits, you will recall. If there were any "collectors" or "Pot hunters" or "grave robbers" in our group they might be rewarded by following the mass excavation as it rudely disinters five thousand or more years of history.

SAM MOSELY gave us a most engaging and helpful article on HOW TO WRITE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS in our June Newsletter. We agree it was amusing reading, but that was just for readability. It had serious intentions. However, the Editors of our Journal report that manuscripts are conspicuous by their absence, and the spring is going dry.

Manuscripts from NEW contributors are particularly desired. We

should like you to enjoy more participation in your Society. And we want to know what you have and what you know. Or maybe what you want to know, in case you claim you don't know anything to write about. Why not crudely sketch a projectile point which you would like to identify, a potshere, or other artifact, with descriptive information and location of area where found? In other words, we can even write about our ignorance.

Really, write something for the Journal!

A MEETING OF OFFICERS was held at Cullman, July 14, and good food and good company enjoyed. The chief matter of discussion was the STONES & BONES Educational TV program for the coming year. Frank Martin, who does the good job of putting on our shows (and putting up with amateur talent) honored us with his presence.

Programs - that's the problem! All members should assist our excellent and popular MC, and President of the State Society, Britt Thompson. Will you do a show? Have you a good artifact display you can lend? Have you any connections with people who will or have? Have you any ideas? Will you build models? What particular type of program would you like to see?

Give it some heavy thought. STONES & BONES has been a very popular program, with tremendous mail response, despite competition with leading commercial programs on other stations. Let's be proud of it, do an even better job, and HELP!

BONES OF MORE THAN A THOUSAND PERSONS DOWN THERE guessed William Royal, amateur archaeologist and skindiver, in reference to a huge deep spring near Venice, Florida. A sacrificial pool like the cenotes of Central America? Dr. John Goggin, Anthropologist at the University of California, is on the job and "thinks this is one of the most important archaeological finds ever made in Florida". Mr. Royal, 55 years old, is a former Air Force Colonel - and we add with gratitude, a good, intelligent, conscientious amateur archaeologist for bringing this find to Dr. Goggin's attention. May his tribe increase!

THE WYOMING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY "is an extraordinarily vigorous group of amateur archaeologists who...should go far toward solving many problems of Wyoming archaeology". So we read in the latest issue of the Newsletter of the MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS INDIAN, Thos. F. Kehoe, Editor, Browning, Montana.

Editor and Curator Kehoe also reports further on the bison drive site excavation which we mentioned in our Feb. 1959 issue (and Dan Calf Boss Ribs, a Blackfoot Indian volunteer excavator). "An average of about three points appears to have been required per bison killed" reports Curator Kehoe after an analysis of bones and artifacts recovered at the foot of the cliff over which the bison were driven.

In the Dec., 1956 issue of ARCHERY, Joe Fries, one of the best two or three archers in the country, recounts how he was engaged by the

producer of the "High Road to Danger" TV show, to kill a buffalo with bow and arrow. Four hundred head of ton-size buffalo were driven directly toward him at full speed. The very ground shook - and, we suspect, Joe too. But finally the herd parted in two groups to race by. Joe, as ordered, steadied himself enough to select a bull and let fly. About 150 yards later the bull "rolled over and majestically died like the magnificent animal he is". And he hadn't been driven over a cliff first. One shot!!!

FINAL SOLUTREAN TRANSITIONAL TO MAGDALENIAN has been excavated in a cave in Spain. The Solutrean culture has long been a mystery, coming as it did between the early and late cave painters, seemingly without connections. This is therefore a welcome contribution.

In another cave in Spain where 19 feet of midden deposit was excavated, remains of Homo neanderthalis were recovered at a level above a level containing remains of Homo sapiens!

Giant human teeth, along with the bones of giant Pleistocene mammals, have been discovered in Tanganyika, East Africa. For the first time in China, remains of Dryopithecus, the widely spread Miocene man-like ape, have been discovered.

As we thumb through the latest reports of the COUNCIL FOR OLD WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY, covering the Western Mediterranean area, Balkans, Equatorial Africa, East Africa, Far East and Australia, the above fascinating and history-making items catch the eye. This new service (began last year) keeps you in touch with world archaeology. If you are interested in archaeology, suscribe. If you are not, suscribe anyway to help support this invaluable service. \$4.00 per year, Lauriston Ward, 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge 38, Mass. Send \$4.00 extra and request the voluminous publications of last year, too, so you can cover all areas of the world and have a complete file. If you would like to help archaeology, this is one important way that you can!

HAROLD KLEINE drops us a card from the great Taos Indian Pueblo, New Mexico. Says he will be gone a month or more and visit every western state. Get set for some good movies!

ANTIQUITY, Jan. 1959 issue, contains five papers on the Archaic Culture, from Eastern Archaic to California Archaic. You can't miss this if you work with Archaic. \$8.00 annually, David A. Baerreis, Sterling Hall, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison 6, Wisc.

MUSCLE SHOALS CHAPTER NEWS
A. W. Beinlich

For the March 24, 1959 meeting our president gave a talk on "Skull Gults and Scalping". There may have been skull cult practices carried out by the prehistoric people in the Tennessee Valley area, even though little is known definitely.

For the April 27th meeting, Mr. James W. Cambron of the Decatur Chapter was the speaker, assisted by Mr. Spencer A. Waters. Mr. Cambron discussed and illustrated a variety of projectile point types that are common to the Tennessee Valley in the vicinity of Decatur. He referred to Special Bulletin No. 1 of the Oklahoma Anthropological Society by R. E. Bell, and to a publication of the Tennessee Archaeological Society. A number of the members displayed points of various types.

On May 23, three members of our Chapter (Charles Gooch and Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Beinlich) met with other members of the Ala. Arch. Society at the Dismals near Phil Campbell, Ala.

For the May 25th meeting our President gave a talk on "Bone, Antler and Tooth Artifacts". These artifacts were classified as to (1) utility and (2) ornamentation. The talk was well illustrated with artifacts from the speaker's collection. Artifacts brought by the members were classified.

For the June 23rd meeting one of our members, Mr. C. E. Smith, gave a very interesting talk on the "Origin of Prehistoric Man". He discussed the discoveries such as Java Man, Peking Man, and Neanderthal Man.

We are still a very active group.

BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Our "summer" diet has been on the light side, but informative as well as pleasant. At our July meeting Ed Greene showed movies of his western motor trip, camping style and close to nature. The Tetons, Yellowstone Park, etc. Did we say close to nature? One night a bear clawed a hole in the tent - and no guns allowed in the Yellowstone Park!

Ted Rybka has also been on a western trip this summer and will entertain our August meeting. Those who saw his Cliff Dwelling program certainly will not miss this one.

We meet at 7:30 PM, first Friday of every month, at the B'ham. Public Library. Come and bring a guest.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF "BEADS"

Grenada, "The spice island of the West Indies", was sighted by Columbus on Aug. 15, 1498. But the Carib inhabitants (from whom we get the word "cannibal") discouraged colonization...until June of 1650! At that date, according to Pere du Tertre, the island was "fairly ceded" to France in "lawful purchase" for "some knives and hatchets and a large quantity of glass beads" -

and of course a few bottles of the usual for the Chief.

What is this bead fascination? Since time untraced, beads have assumed special significance, often religious, in the minds of men. In fact, beads still have religious associations today, even among major religions, such as the Buddhists, Mohammendans, and some Christian sects.

The Anglo-Saxon word for prayer is "bede", and in those days prayers were very popular. So much so that professional "bedesmen" developed, and there was much professional praying. Bedesmen were appointed to pray for the King and the State in such quantities that "bedehouses" were built for them until, as one theory has it, the heavenly powers became so wearied that they relented.

One paid, of course, for a certain number of prayers. In order to "keep books" on the number of prayers, small perforated balls strung on a string were used to keep count - a sort of prayer quipu, as the Peruvian mnemonic device was called (a knotted string).

And so, in time, the little perforated balls strung on strings and used for counting "bedes became "beads".
