

Newsletter

STONES AND BONES

July 1959

Birmingham Anthropological Society

Morgan-Limestone Chapter

THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Madison-Huntsville Chapter

Muscle Shoals Chapter

Member of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation



LETTERS

Mr. Federico Davila, one of our members, writes us from distant Puerto Rico (Santurce, P. O. Box 9654). It seems he had been a bit tardy with his dues, but has been very busy. Mr. Davila is Civil Engineer in charge of the Developments Section for water supply and sanitary sewers systems for new residential, public housing and industrial projects in Puerto Rico - so we don't wonder his personal matters suffer some neglect.

But he assures us of his continuing interest in archaeology, and in receiving the A. A. S. Journals and Newsletters. And he hopes to find time to write us an article some time in the future. (We hope that in his capacity as Civil Engineer he is alert for archaeological evidence, and using his influence to get something done about it. Volume 4 of the Handbook of South American Indians, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C., is the best source of a summary of the problems of Caribbean archaeology.)

Mr. Davila includes his regards to fellow members and "our good friend Martin Hullender, of Birmingham".

JOHN B. NUCKOLLS, M. D., President of the Tennessee Archaeological Society, also sends in his dues with a letter.

He says: "Dr. Tom Lewis sent me an item about the Journal of Alabama Archaeology that I will put in our next Newsletter. We are going to give you a nice boost and I hope it will be useful."

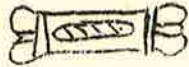
This is a timely reminder that we shall be known by our works and should strive to attract favorable mention. In turn, we wish to call attention to the excellent article by Madeline Kneberg on Engraved Shell Gorgets in the Spring, 1959 issue of the Tennessee Archaeologist - which you can not afford to miss.

Thanks to Rodger Schaefer and Sam Mosley for forwarding the above interesting letters for inclusion in the Newsletter.

MR. G. B. DANIELL, JR., of the G. B. Daniell Realty Co., Anniston Ala., writes in a question which our publisher, Frank Parsons, suggested we answer in the Newsletter in case other readers may be mystified and/or interested.

Mr. Daniell requested the identification of, and particulars about, the symbolic drawing on page 4 of the May, 1959 Stones & Bones.

(Repring of drawing)



This is regarded as a highly stylized representation of the bones of the human forearm, the radius and ulna. This was one of what are called "death motifs" used as decorative designs by Indians of a late culture in the Southeast. Etowah, Moundville and Spiro are type sites for this ceremonial complex.

However, the use of both the skull and long bones in similar ways has been widespread in many ages, as witness our own "skull and crossbones".

An excellent source of information on this interesting ceremonial complex is the book Sun Circles and Human Hands, Fundaburk and Foreman, which in chapter three quotes at length from Waring and Holder, two authorities, and illustrates the many symbolic designs, some of which seem to show Central American influences. This excellent book covering the many facts of Southeastern archaeology can be obtained from Emma Lila Fundaburk, Luvern, Ala. for \$7.50 (plus 3% sales tax for Alabama residents).

SPENCER WATERS writes to give us some more information about the excavated Paleo point which we reported in our June issue. The point was found in the 36-inch level of the dig. Paleo scrapers and knives, and one graver, were also recovered. Lewis and Kneberg took charcoal for radio-carbon dating, and soil samples for a pollen test, so we may expect to hear more about this history-making discovery.

Thanks to Spencer for keeping us posted. We naturally feel most proud of this important excavation by some of our members. It will become front-page news throughout the archaeological world, and forever be a significant mile-post in archaeological history. It is amateur archaeology as it should be, and so much more rewarding for everyone than being a mere "collector" of worthless relic baubles.



MISCELLANEOUS

APOLPGIES TO TWO OF OUR DIRECTORS whom we overlooked in our listing of officers in the May issue - Verne Reckmeyer of Huntsville and Spencer A. Waters of Moulton. Secretary Schaefer, who gave us a slight assist in making this mistake, also says, "My apologies to both of these gentlemen since they have both been very active in the Alabama Archaeological Society and are certainly both good candidates for other offices in the future".

We can say a hearty amen to that. And we should like to add that it really isn't painful to participate actively in the Society. In fact, it gives on a pleasant sense of belonging - it becomes your Society.

CHEMSTRAND'S RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, we hear via the radio, is to move to the Carolina mill area to be in closer touch with those who use their products, and to work with university research groups. We are most grateful to Chemstrand for having brought intelligent and vigorous men to Alabama who have done more for our amateur archaeology than we had ourselves accomplished.

But then they let our really irreplaceable Frank Soday get away from them. And now this!

Please, sirs, can't you see your way to promoting the archaeologists in your research department to better positions, and keeping them here in Alabama? We think you will find that those who take an interest in broadly cultural matters such as archaeology are well above average.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES to the correspondents for two of our affiliate Societies. We don't know the details, but they are too ill or overworked, or something drastic, to send us news of their activities.

CARRYING GALLSTONES INSIDE YOU is rather overdoing this rockhound business, our doctor told us recently. So we let him remove them. But you know rockhounds - we firmly insisted on keeping the stones for our collection!

And it reminded us that we have never seen gallstones reported in the literature as recovered from an Indian burial. We had to admit, too, that if covered with dirt our gallstones would have so resembled gravel that we doubtless would have cast them aside had we excavated them.

We should therefore like to sound an alert. Gallstones may be of any size, from what the doctors call "sand" up to as large as the end of your thumb. Of our own three stones, the largest is 9/16 of an inch across its greatest diameter. Its weight-in-hand is distinctly less than a common rock, perhaps less than bone. All three have both smooth and rough faces. They do not react to acid as does a bone, being largely cholesterol rather than calcium deposits - the same cholesterol a relative of the fats, that wrecks the arteries. They are rather soft, scoring easily with the thumbnail. According to current medical thinking based on a vast amount of experiment, gallstones should be more frequent in cultural groups subsisting largely on meat than highly agricultural groups or those subsisting largely on fish, or shellfish.

(Since arterial disease is by far the leading killer today, some of you may be interested in your own cholesterol deposits. Since we had our own coronary attack more than three years ago, we have been making an intensive study of the medical journals and current research on the matter of arterial degeneration. And as a "science

writer" familiar with medical interpretation, perhaps we can give a better-than-average lay opinion on possible preventive measures. Certainly we wish we had adopted them twenty or thirty years ago, but medical research had not made them available until just now.

But now you can go to your doctor for a blood cholesterol test. If he tell you your blood cholesterol is less than 200, you may be one of those not very prone to cholesterol deposits. The higher you go above 200 (some register over 1000), the more you should be interested in a book just published by the leading authorities on the subject - Ancel Keys, Ph. D. and his biochemist wife, Dr. Keys is head of physiological reasearch, Univ. of Minnesota, consultant to the World Health Organization and UNESCO, and internationally famous for his cholesterol and arterial research of many years. The book is Eat Well and Stay Well, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York (\$3.95)

INTERESTED IN FLINT CHIPPING - its evolution, methods, or doing some yourself? F. C. J. Spurrell, as far back as about 1879, discovered (in England) an ancient Levalloisian flint workshop associated with the lower jaw of a woolly rhinoceros. By some supreme stroke of genius, Spurrell was moved to collect every one of the many chips, flakes and cores. Incredibly, he even undertook the almost impossible task of trying to fit them together. Finally he was able to find and fit all the more than 60 chips from what had once been a flint nodule measuring 6 by 10 inches. And the final product, after all this chipping, had proved a dud! However, flint chipping seems to have degenerated to an even more uncertain status. For modern Australian flint workers have been observed to strike off as many as 300 flakes before getting just what they wanted.

If you have tried flint chipping, these examples may be encouraging by showing you are not as bad as you supposed. And these are examples of the excellent coverage of flint chipping which you will find in "MAN THE TOOL-MAKER, by Kenneth P. Oakley, a leading authority" on flint. The book is only \$1.25, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 37, Ill. We do not possibly see how anyone with the slightest interest in flint can afford to be without it.

Nor can we think of half a reason why you shouldn't order, at the same time, LeGros Clark's HISTORY OF THE PRIMATES. The same goes for Robert J. Braidwood's PREHISTORIC MEN, practically given away for \$1.25 by the Chicago Natural History Museum Press, Chicago, Ill. We think these inexpensive paper-back editions are a step in the right direction to get better publications in competition with the deplorable paper-back market. As someone has said, as scarce as truth is, the supply still exceeds the demand.

A NEW ALABAMA PUBLICATION, the Newsletter of The Alabama Mineral and Lapidary Society, is now being printed in Birmingham. It is what rockhounds want, including maps of sites where one can find an amazing variety of even semi-precious stones, such as beryl, tourmaline, turquoise. And there's gold in them thar hills!

This is a decided addition to the cultural possibilities of our State, and we hope to see affiliate local Societies formed. As soon as we can prepare an article to submit, we are going to send in our \$3.00 dues to Editor E. O. Dahlen, 1616 33rd St. W., Birmingham 8, Ala. It is well worthy of both our financial and literary support.



MORGAN-LIMESTONE CHAPTER

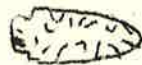
We are in receipt of several mimeographed notices from the Morgan-Limestone Chapter, which seems a good way to jog both interest and memory, and worth imitating.

The notice of May 4, for example, outlines in provocative detail the subject to be discussed at that meeting, 7:30 P.M. City Electric Auditorium. "Ancient Metallurgy" had been scheduled, but the speaker's wife had opera tickets for the evening, so the subject was switched to How to Write Archaeological Reports. The display of metal artifacts was postponed until the following month. It was announced that photographing of pipes and bannerstones would be completed - so please bring them in. (An excellent project.)

The notice for the June 1 meeting announced that C. B. Reymann would be present to discuss Ancient Metallurgy (his wife presumably having no more opera tickets). And please bring your metal artifacts!

And there was notice concerning the Field Trip to the Dismals, May 23.

We do like to get any news you have from the Chapters, as it can be most valuable in helping other Chapters to improve their own programs, etc. If you are too sick to write, dictate!



BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

On the day of the Field Trip to the Dismals we were having our stones removed (instead of acquiring new artifacts), so did not get to enjoy what we hear was a fabulous experience. But we were fortunate to be able to attend the June meeting, at which Mrs. James H. Mason again took us through the Dismals via her beautiful colored slides. We think we can speak for every member in saying that we shall never tire of Mrs. Mason's programs.

We confidently expect another fabulous program on July 3, 7:30 P.M. Birmingham Public Library. Our able conversationalist Ed Greene has been on a trip to Alaska this year (instead of Mexico), and is slated to take us along via his movie camera. Having seen some of Ed's

previous travel movies, and heard his running comment, we'd hear and see this one even if we managed to break both legs and had to attend by way of stretcher. And don't let any potential visitors miss this chance of a lifetime.

DID YOU USE THAT MEMBERSHIP BLANK YET

which we published in our last issue? Discovering interesting things to do in our leisure time is rapidly becoming a major problem of society. Help somebody find us!



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