

Newsletter

STONES AND BONES

September 1959

Birmingham Anthropological Society

Morgan-Limestone Chapter

THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Madison-Huntsville Chapter

Muscle Shoals Chapter

Member of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation

NEW MEMBERS

Last month we received a membership list, corrected through June 1, 1959, with the Newsletter. It was most appreciated, and we especially appreciated that it represented a lot of work on the parts of a number of people. As we went down the list we visited pleasantly with those whom we know, and wished we knew all of them. We can't count that high, since we ran out of fingers and toes, but we made it 209 - with a few family memberships for which the size of the family was not stated.

We were impressed by the, shall we say far-flung, nature of our roster, what with members in Florida, Tennessee, Illinois, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Mississippi.

Mr. Federico Davila, P. O. Box 9654, Santurce, Puerto Rico, whom we mentioned in the July Newsletter, was somehow left out. With such an extensive list, and four affiliates involved, this could happen to anyone. If you have been so neglected, please write direct to your Newsletter editor so we can publish all names and addresses (Dan Josselyn, 408 Broadway, Edgewood, B'ham. 9, Ala.)

We have just received a memo from Secretary Schaefer listing 8 new members:

- William D. Owens - 2011 Lee High Drive, N. E., Huntsville, Ala.
- R. L. Rost - 107 South Side Square, Pulaski, Tennessee
- Tommy Littrell - Box 337, Moulton, Alabama
- Mr. & Mrs. W. F. Owsky - 909 East 15th St., Anniston, Ala.
- Joseph K. Long, III - 319 East Cross St., Greenville, Kentucky
- Charles K. Peacock - 1514 Bailey Ave., Chattanooga 4, Tenn.
- Bobby Gillespie - Box 103, Moulton, Ala.

Welcome aboard! We appreciate your interest. You already are doing amateur archaeology a service, too, by virtue of joining. The more members we have, the more money we have for publications to report our work. What we learn is "buried again" unless it is made available to archaeologists everywhere. And we hope to see our Journal become so important that many Institutional memberships will appear on our list. Thanks.

These new members were really what we were thinking about when we titled this section. We were talking with two recent members at our last meeting, Mr. & Mrs. Hollis B. Parrish, Jr., and were impressed by how much they had already studied the literature, and

how eager they are to learn.

It struck us all of a sudden that every time we get a new member we get a chance to improve. That is, we can teach new members to do a little better than we perhaps have done. We are a bundle of thought habits, as William James taught us long ago, and it is as difficult to change them as it is to change from right to left handedness. We oldsters have to die off so mankind can progress, so deep are the thought ruts we get into. But every time we get a new member we have an archaeological youngster who can acquire the best archaeological precepts we can pass along. It is quite an obligation. Let us live up to it and do the very best we can by our new members.

And by the way, have you signed up that new member we were all going to sign up this year? Frankly, we haven't. But we have a solution for the problem which we should like to see imitated. We are trying to think of someone who might get interested, and as soon as we do we are going to pay his membership dues so he can receive our literature. We'd like to get a good prospect, but if we can't think of a good one we'll pick the next best. Why not try it?

NEW MEMBERSHIP CARD

We also received a sample of our handsome new membership card from Secretary Schaefer. We think the arrowhead (pardon- projectile point!) drawing is excellent. And it looks to be an authentic point. We wondered if it is a named type. Good basal thinning - one would guess a rather old type. What would the members think of have a new, named type of projectile point each time we have a new card printed, with the name on the card? Over the years we might get a lot of points on our points!

In the meantime, if some more scholarly member will identify this point, by name and/or culture affiliations, we should like to publish it in the next Newsletter. Give us the whole story.

And receiving so many communications from Secretary Schaefer reminds us that we are growing, and the work is growing. We should like to see "assistant Secy." signed now and then. Have we a volunteer? To give you a sample of how the work may pile up on your officers and editors, this month we have this Newsletter to get out, a new booklet to write for our T. V. show, a talk to prepare for the Birmingham Anthropological Society, and a T. V. show to put on. See our add in the help-wanted-with-out-pay columns.

Of course, if you would just write us a bit of news it would help.

It doesn't have to be Chapter news - what are you doing in archaeology?

HIGHWAY MONEY

Last month we were informed, and so reported, that excavation had begun at the Mahan or Montevallo site. Our informant must have mistaken the old sand pit for new excavation. Bill Steele and Mr. Ginane went down and talked with Mr. Cisco, the owner, and were told that the State Highway Dept. had not begun operations. Sorry about our error.

But it did set us to thinking, which you probably won't believe and we couldn't prove. At any rate, a question presented itself. Since this is a State Highway operation, would it come under the recent provision by which Uncle Sam himself puts up half the money for archaeological salvage work when highway construction destroys a site?

Among our 200-odd members there should be several who could kick this possibility around. They are unanimously elected.

The site is large and interesting, with a long succession of cultures represented. We have a base sherd from the site which is like nothing we ever saw or heard of, which isn't surprising, but our ignorance was encouraged when the sherd stumped even Steve Wimberly, whose knowledge of pottery always amazes us. This base sherd is reminiscent of both the annular base and the base with wedge-shaped legs, except that the wedges extend laterally to act as lug-like braces to broaden the base. And they are only narrowly interrupted so that they represent almost a flared annular base. Steve pointed its similarities to Tchefuncte bases, possibly a variant. Everything from atlatl weights to house wattle and good skeletal material have been reported from this site. And the soft sand can be cut with the proverbial butter knife. A very moderate amount of work would be required to test the 40 or so inches of midden.

OUR TV SHOW BEGINS SEPTEMBER 8

Before we forget it on purpose, our Educational TV show opens on September 8 at 8:30 PM. For want of talent, Dan Josselyn will have to start the series (but as Britt twists a few arms off, he will get better lined up). However, we are going to spend several days working up this show, which will be strictly archaeology, and hope to have something quite "different".

We are pleased to hear that Dr. Frazer Banks will be in charge of the Birmingham area Educational TV.

NEWS DIRECT FROM FOLSOM, New Mexico, comes from Frank Parsons and Family, who "Have not found any points yet, otherwise having a fine trip".

MUSCLE SHOALS CHAPTER NEWS
A. W. Beinlich

For the July 27, 1959 meeting of the Muscle Shoals Chapter, Charles Gooch and A. W. Beinlich teamed up to present a program on Wampum (Shell Beads - Money). Several interesting collections of shell beads and shell gorgets were displayed.

(We should be very interested to know if their research turned up any sound evidence of the pre-Columbian use of wampum as money.)

BIRMINGHAM ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Our very pleasant Aug. program consisted of Western slides by Ted Rybka and Western movies by Harold Kleine. Added to Ed Greene's Western movies, we all feel as if we had had a vacation trip this year. We feel pretty sure, however, that the "snow" they were playing around in was just movie stuff.

At our Sept. meeting we shall return to archaeology. Dan Josselyn will approach archaeology from the Amateur side, with some visuals.

We always like to remind you that our meetings are the 1st Friday of the month, 7:30PM., Birmingham Public Library. We do like visitors, and do not pester them to join.

WAS DARWIN WRONG?

Last year was the 100th anniversary of "The Origin of Species". We thumbed reverently through our worn copy of this most signifi-

cant milestone in the history of man. And we read again some of the autobiography of this thoroughly amateur scientist who began as a collector of beetles. But time got away, as it has a habit of doing, without proper acknowledgement in these pages of man's belated rescue from his thousands of creation myths.

We are prodded by the recent news that there is a bit of agitation to repeal the Tennessee law against teaching evolution in the public schools. With lawmakers still making monkeys of themselves, one might ask, "What evolution?"

A professor of anthropology in our own state was telling us that the dirty word "evolution" is not used in the classroom because student polls show a majority do not "believe in" evolution. With even college students still making monkeys of themselves, we might again be provoked to snort, "What evolution?"

Of course by the time a student reaches college, he should have had the opportunity to rediscover evolution for himself, without any "indoctrination", in such obvious phenomena as the identity of cell mitosis from amoeba to man; in the embryonic evolution of man from the amoeboid single cell up through the invertebrates, gill breathers, etc.; in the almost skeletal identity of the vertebrates; and in well-traced evolutionary sequences such as that from Eohippus to Equus. But with majority voters doing nothing about funds for adequate education, making monkeys of their children as well as themselves, we may still again ask, "What evolution?"

With most of the old, hard laws of nature which enforced "survival of the fittest" now overcome - well, "What evolution?"

With the least promising of our population breeding at a rate two or three times that of the more promising, we of course do not have to repeat our question. We have an answer: devolution.

That is, but for the probability that some monkey will someday almost surely trigger an atomic war. Then the few amoebas that survive radiation can heave a sigh of relief and ask, "What evolution?"

If only we had been intelligent enough a hundred years ago, or 157 years ago when Lamarck first developed evolutionary principles scientifically, to understand that evolution is a 2-way proposition - it extends ahead as well as behind. And the important thing is not where we came from, but where we are going. We could have settled down to the long study of deciding where we wanted to go, and how to get there.

Francis Galton, Darwin's remarkable cousin, gave us quite a kit of tools with which to apply the laws of evolution less crudely than nature had done: intelligence testing, eugenics, statistical anthropology, the anthropometric laboratory, even fingerprinting for identification of our least desirables, and greatly furthered the studies of psychology, genius, heredity, instinct, etc.

Devolution proceeds by geometric progression, much more rapidly than is commonly understood. Our most optimistic thought is that realistic Russia might come to see that they could easily win the cold war in three generations of better breeding - thereby saving rather than destroying the human race.

THAT AMAZING GAL

Emma Lila Fundaburk has written another book, her third in as many years! "PARADE OF ALABAMA", An Epic of Southern History. Published this fall at \$7.50, prepublication price now \$4.75 (plus .14 sales tax). SUN CIRCLES, her very first book, won the 1958 Southern Book Competition and the 1959 Literary Award. Address Emma Lila Fundaburk, Luverne, Alabama. It looks like another good one - order now - we'll tell you more next month.