

The August Meeting Tuesday, August 27, 2013, 3:00 p. m. The Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the JDCC Campus

The Program

"Escambia County During the Ice Age"

This 30 minute presentation by guest speaker John Hoomes will feature paleo-geographical images (Power Point), Ice Age Megafauna (large animals) fossil samples, and the earliest human artifacts found in Escambia County from a possible Paleo Indian kill site known as "Conecuh Springs." There will be a question and answer session to follow, and John will also be available during refreshments.

About Our Speaker

John Walker Hoomes (pictured) is a native of the Brooklyn area in Escambia County, Alabama. His mother is Jacque Stone, ECHS Secretary. He is a 1989 graduate of W.S. Neal High School, attended Jefferson Davis Community College, and holds B.S. (1994) and M.S. (1998), degrees in the Social Sciences from Troy University. While attending JDCC, John was a Museum Assistant at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum from 1990 to 1992.



John is a life member of the Escambia

County Historical Society. He is well known for his 35 years of exploration of Escambia County's cultural and natural resources. His collections pertain to ancient sea fossils, "Ice

Age" fossils, Native American artifacts, historic soda bottles, and much more. To date, 90% of his collections have been donated to various educational institutions in Escambia County and throughout the State of Alabama for scientific research and public education. Turtle Point Science Center in Flomaton, Ala-

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The September ECHS Meeting Tuesday, September 24, 2013

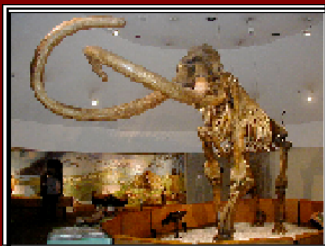
The Program:

"United States Operations in Antarctica"

Guest speakers:

Billy G. Blackwelder and **Gus Shin**, US Navy Retired and members of Old Antarctic Explorers Association. Gus Shinn was the first person to land a plane on Antarctica.

The plane Gus flew is on display at the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola.



Skeleton of Mammoth of the Ice Age

Volume 40, Number 8

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About Our Speaker

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bama, houses the largest of these collections, and it has been dedicated to his accomplishments.

John has made a career out of his passion by conducting informal education programs concerning cultural and natural resources. Career opportunities have included Educator positions with Eckerd Youth Alternatives, and Auburn University. He has also held

various Resource Specialist positions with the U.S. National Park Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas State Aquarium, and the Alabama Wildlife Federation (Alabama Nature Center). John is currently the Cultural Resource Specialist at Fort Toulouse - Fort Jackson Park for the Alabama Historical Commission in Wetumpka, Alabama. €

The Paleoindians

The following material about the Paleoindians is from the University of Alabama Archeology Department at <<http://bama.ua.edu/~alaarch/prehistoricalabama/paleoindian.htm>>.

Who were the Paleoindians?

Archaeologists believe that 12,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age, people migrated from Asia into North America. At this time, much of the water was frozen in glaciers and sea levels were lower than they are today. They crossed the Bering Land Bridge between Russia and Alaska which seems to have been teeming with life.

About Paleoindian Life

Small, nomadic groups of people, known as Paleoindians, were some of the first humans to live in Alabama as early as 11,000 B.C. They hunted megafauna such as bison, mammoth, and mastadon and smaller game such as deer and rabbit. When an animal was killed, all of its parts were used. The meat was eaten, the hide tanned and used for clothing and shelter, bones were made into awls, pins, fish hooks, and other tools. Nothing was wasted.

Paleoindians were hunters and gatherers. They supplemented their diet by gathering berries, nuts, and plants.

Paleoindian Sites

Finding Paleoindian sites can be difficult. Paleoindian sites appear to be small and scattered across the Alabama landscape. These Native Americans set up temporary, open-air camps. As hunters and gatherers, they moved frequently searching for food and following migratory animals. This lifestyle limits the



Distribution of Paleoindian Sites in Alabama

amount of material goods that can be carried and also restricts community size.

As shown on the map to the left, most have been found in the northern portion of the state, along the Tennessee River

Projectile Points

Most Paleoindian sites are identified by a presence of projectile points, or arrowheads. Projectile points vary in size and shape and this variation has been used to set up a relative chronology. This means that archaeologists can identify the time period a projectile point was made in relation to cultural stages, in this case the Paleoindian Stage.

Some of the projectile point types associated with PaleoIndians include Clovis, Beaver Lake, and Cumberland. These projectile points are relatively large and were some of the most time consuming and difficult to produce.

Paleoindians used other tools in addition to projectile points. Artifacts that have also been found in association with Paleoindian sites include tools for butchering and working hides, such as scrapers and knives. Additionally, drills, gravers, and hammerstones have been found in Paleoindian contexts.

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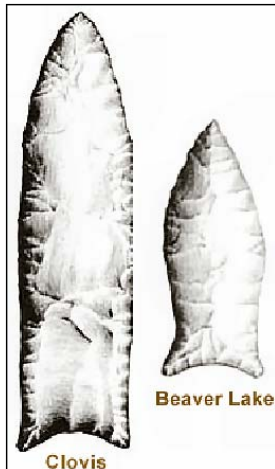
Lithic Tools

Lithic tools are often one of the few types of artifacts that survive in the archaeological record in Alabama. If you are interested in finding out more about how some of these tools were used and how they were made

The Quad Site, a Paleoindian Site in Alabama

Discovered by Frank Soday in 1951, the Quad Site has arguably become one of Alabama's most informative sites about Paleoindian culture. Situated on the Tennessee River, the Quad Site is actually a grouping of a number of smaller sites that all share similar

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Projectile Points

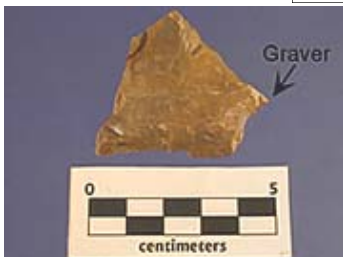
Clovis points are the characteristically-fluted projectile points associated with the North American Clovis culture. They date to the around 13,500 years ago. Clovis fluted points are named after the city of Clovis, New Mexico, where examples were first found in 1929.

The Beaver Lake projectile is named after a Paleoindian site in the Tennessee River basin.



Cumberland Projectile Points

A Cumberland point is a lithic (stone) projectile point, attached to a spear and used as a hunting tool. These sturdy points were intended for use as thrusting weapons and employed by various mid- Paleo Indians (c. 11,000 BP) in the Southeastern US in the killing of large game mammals.



Graver

Gravers were used to cut into wood or bone. They were made by flaking off parts of a stone in order to have a spur or point.

The more delicate gravers would be used to cut or perforate soft material; others were used to bore holes in shells and in the production of beads.



Scraper

Scrapers, along with knives were used for butchering and working hides. Very few scrapers are found as they were worn to a nub because of the intensive tasks they were used for.



Hammerstones (Above Left)

These are hard cobbles used to strike off lithic (stone) flakes from a lump of tool stone during the process of lithic reduction (the process of flintknapping).

Flintknapping (Left)

The hammerstone is in the right hand.



Drill (Left)
Used to create holes in wood or bone implements; drills often display extremely worn tips.

The Paleoindians

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characteristics. They seem to represent a group of camps that were concentrated in the same area over an extended period of time, perhaps the people were coming to the same spot when large and predictable food sources were available.

The Quad site is situated in an excellent hunting environment. Located between shoals downstream and bluffs

upstream, the lakes and sloughs of this area would have provided Paleoindians with excellent opportunities to ambush animals. Based on the animal bones that have been recovered from the Quad Site archaeologists surmise that this area was inhabited in the late summer to early fall. Hunting would be at its peak during this time of the year with animals migrating into the area.

A large quantity of lithic artifacts has been recovered from this area. Interestingly, there is very little evidence for lithic tool production. Few unfinished tools have been found at these sites and there is a low ratio of debitage to tools, suggesting that the inhabitants of this area were making tools elsewhere and then bringing the finished tools with them.

Of the tools that have been recovered from the Quad Site, most seem to have been used for butchering and working hides; however, there is also evidence that wood working and fiber shredding occurred at the site. These tools suggest that the Paleoindians in this area exploited a wide range of resources in their forest-riverine environment.

So...What Does It All Mean?

One of the purposes of archaeology is to interpret the stories of people from the past based on the objects they have left behind. Sites like Quad have enabled archaeologists to form a clearer image of Paleoindians in Alabama. The [artifacts](#) and [features](#)



Paleo-Indians Hunting a Glyptodont
This is an illustration by 19th century artist Heinrich Harder. The glyptodont was a large, armored mammal, a relative of armadillos.

that have been recovered have provided clues as to where Paleoindians lived and how their communities were set up. Paleoindians lived in temporary, open-air campsites.

We know that Paleoindians moved frequently in small bands, probably representing family groups, such as grandparents, parents, children, and perhaps aunts, uncles, and cousins. These family groups

may have only consisted of eight to fifteen people.

With the large number of sites that are apparent in the vicinity, it seems that this area had been visited over the course of many years, and perhaps by several bands at the same time. This might have been a time when the environment provided enough food sources for groups of bands to come together and share in each other's company, exchange ideas, and perhaps find a mate.

Paleoindians exploited their environment and the resources it provided. The area around the Quad Site, for example, provided excellent opportunities to ambush large prey. Hunters roamed the land searching for large animals, such as mastadons and bison, with large lanceolate projectile points attached to spears. €

An extensive article taken from the [Encyclopedia of Alabama](#) on the Ice Age and Paleoindian period can be found in the Journal Section of this issue. €

News and Announcements



June Smith

ECHS member June (Serravezza) Smith passed away this month. A psychiatrist (MD and PH.D), June, after completing her medical training at Emory University

and Grady Memorial Hospital, began a career that included private practice as well as positions at Atlanta hospitals and with several organizations in her field. She was currently working at the Southwest Alabama Behavioral Health Care Systems

June was known for her leadership and for her caring nature as well as her desire to learn and to experience new things. A core member of CCSA (Citizens for a Clean Southwest Alabama), she worked tirelessly against an unpopular landfill that was to be developed in Conecuh County.. Her love of the outdoors was reflected in her passionate gardening and the beautiful flower beds at her home near Lennox, Alabama.

Donation to the ECHS Memorial Plaque

Mr. & Mrs. Hugo Rogers, brother of ECHS Librarian Barbara McCoy, has made a donation to the Escambia County Historical Society in loving memory of the late Bucky McCoy. Bucky was Barbara's father-in-law and a member of the Society. Bucky's name has been added to the memorial plaque in the Elvira McMillan Parlor of the Thomas E. McMillan Museum. The Society thanks Mr. & Mrs. Rogers for the generous donation. The donation is used to further the work of the Society in preserving the history of Escambia County, Alabama.

Program on Autosomal DNA Testing for Genealogical Research

The West Florida Genealogical Society (WFGS) will present the program on Saturday, September



7, 2013 beginning at 10:00 AM at the West Florida Genealogy Library located at 5740 North 9th Ave., Pensacola, FL.

The speaker will be WFGS member Jerry Merritt.

Jerry will use a power point presentation to show the differences in using autosomal DNA rather than Y or mtDNA for research and matching. He will cover how to decide if autosomal DNA testing would help in tracing ancestry or be a waste of time and will also introduce the sites for testing and matching.

Cynthia Dean who sent the notice suggests that this program would be a good preparation for those attending the Megan Smolenyak Seminar on Nov. 9, as she will have a section on DNA.

For more information call [850-494-7373](tel:850-494-7373)

ECHS Scholarship Awarded

Matthew Ryan Hunt, a graduate of T. R. Miller High School, has been awarded the ECHS Scholarship for the coming academic year.

Interested in sports, Matthew has also worked in a summer program for Brewton's Parks and Recreation Department and participated in community fund raising activities.

Chamber of Commerce Membership

ECHS is now a member of the Brewton



*Greater Brewton Area
Chamber of Commerce*

Chamber of Commerce. As ECHS President Tom McMillan has noted, the Chamber does a good job of notifying members of events and activities through emails. Also, the Chamber provides good publicity for community and member activities on its Facebook page.

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News and Announcements

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New Museum Sign



A new sign is in place listing the location of the Escambia County Historical Society as well as that of the Thomas E. McMillan Museum.



200th Anniversary of Fort Mims

From the Fort Mims Restoration website we have this reminder:

“August 30th, 2013 will mark 200 years since the bloodiest battle between

Creek Indians and settlers in American history took place at Fort Mims in Tensaw, Alabama.

On the weekend of August 30th - September 1st, 2013, the Fort Mims Restoration Association will commemorate this historic event, remembering the lives of hundreds of white settlers, mixed-blood Creeks, enslaved Africans, and Creek Indians that were lost on Aug. 30th, 1813.

Many descendants of those who escaped and those who were killed will also be honored.”

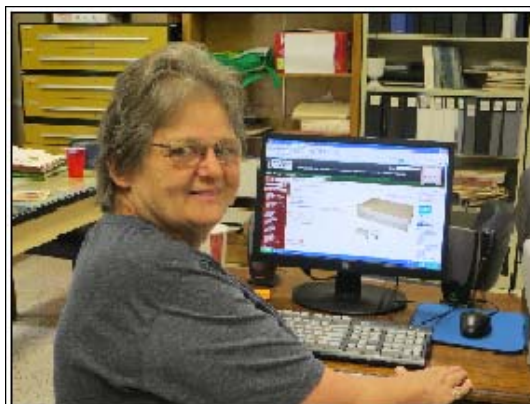
For more information, call the North Baldwin Chamber at 251-937-5665 or the Fort Mims Restoration Association at 251-533-9024, or visit <fortmims.org>

A schedule of events can be viewed at <www.fortmims.org/documents/schedule200aniv.pdf>.

Thanks to the ECHS Members Who Kept the Alabama Room Open

ECHS would like to thank and acknowledge all the volunteers who contributed time to keep the museum open to the public during Museum Coordinator Jerry Simmons' medical leave.

Barbara McCoy, ECHS Librarian, stepped up to the plate to volunteer on a daily basis while Jerry was out. Fifteen other volunteers assisted Barbara with some of the daily work of the museum between June 25th and August 1st.



Barbara McCoy in the Alabama Room

Other members, please be advised there is much, much more to be done, so accept the challenge to volunteer in the Alabama Room in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum in the remaining weeks of the year. You will gain more knowledge of Escambia County and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow Society members.

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Thanks to the ECHS Members Who Kept the Alabama Room Open

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Some volunteers worked one day, some members worked several days but all were greatly appreciated. In addition to Barbara McCoy, those who volunteered included: **Dave Allen, Ann Biggs-Williams, Susan Blair, Karen Castleberry, Susan Crawford, Byron Findley, Carolyn Geck, Shannon Hall-Jones, Carolyn Jennings, June Martin, Tom McMillan, Paul Merritt, Ranella Merritt, Jeff Ross, and Jacqueline Stone.** €



Jerry Simmons and Carolyn Jennings in the Alabama Room

Snapshots from the Commemoration of the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek



Snapshots from the Commemoration of the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek (continued)



Snapshots of ECHS Meeting for July 2013



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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Paleoindian Period

By Philip Carr of the University of South Alabama

This article and the illustrations are from the Encyclopedia of Alabama at <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1413>.

The Paleoindian period (approximately 15,000 to 10,500 years before the present) encompasses the era when the first people arrived in the Americas. Because there is little surviving evidence from this period, modern archaeologists have great difficulty in reconstructing what life was like for these first inhabitants.

Despite careful excavation of archaeological sites and recovery of artifacts ranging from stone tools to projectile points, scholars can make few absolute statements about Paleoindian culture and everyday life. This is in part due to the forces of nature, which cause organic artifacts to deteriorate quickly in Alabama's acidic soil.

Thus, archaeologists are left with stone tools as their main clues to Native American life during the Paleoindian period. Interestingly, some of the highest densities of the distinctive stone tools made by Paleoindians have been found in north Alabama, and these tools are present generally across the state. Detailed study of these tools and diligent searches for traces of Paleoindian occupation sites have produced interesting hypotheses and many more questions about how these ancient people adapted to what was a strange and often hostile new environment. Populating the Americas

Populating the Americas

Although there is continuing debate about when people first arrived in the Americas, most scholars date the beginning of the Paleoindian period to about



Dalton Projectile Points .
These Dalton projectile points manufactured during the Late Paleoindian Period are courtesy of the University of Alabama.

15,000 years before the present. This places the initial human migrations at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, also known as the Ice Age. There is also some debate among researchers about where these people originated, but much of the linguistic, archaeological, and genetic evidence supports the hypothesis that the first inhabitants were from Asia.

Presumably these people came across the Bering land bridge, which once connected present-day Alaska and Siberia. At the time, a

great quantity of the world's water was trapped in glaciers and the land area of the continents was significantly greater than it is today. These people most probably migrated further and further south, east, and west along the major river valleys in the Americas. Habitation of the southeastern United States by Paleoindian peoples is generally dated to around 11,500 years ago.

What is now the southeastern United States would be unrecognizable to its present-day inhabitants. Average temperatures in the Southeast were likely more similar to those in present-day Minnesota, there was less seasonal variation, and the coastline would have extended far out into the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the lower sea levels. Some of the plants and animals would have been familiar, but the plant species that existed in the Southeast at the time are now found in the northernmost portions of the continent, and some of the animals are now extinct.

During the last stages of the Ice Age, what is now Alabama consisted of two very different environments, with the general dividing line running east-west through present-day Montevallo. The northern portion was rapidly changing from a coniferous forest interspersed with open meadows to a dense oak-

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hickory forest. The southern portion of the state was already dominated by an existing oak-hickory forest. These environments provided different resources and foods for the first inhabitants, and these opportunities would change, in the short term, from year to year and, in the long term, over their lifetimes.

Many of the animal species roaming the Ice Age landscape were mammals that are among the largest that have ever lived and are thus referred to as megafauna. Many of these now-extinct animals were hunted by Paleoindians, including the mastodon, giant bison, mammoth, and giant ground sloth. Some scholars believe that overhunting by Paleoindians led to the extinction of the megafauna, but this hypothesis is still open to debate, given the scant evidence of Paleoindian ways of life.

Research indicates that some small animal and bird species also went extinct at about the same time, which points to alternative hypotheses such as the changing environment and disease. In addition, Paleoindians in Alabama hunted a variety of mammal species, including the white-tailed deer and rabbits, that still live in Alabama today.

Paleoindian Life

The mystery surrounding the origins of the peoples who first inhabited the Americas derives from the fact that so little evidence has been found from which to make inferences about their way of life. The most common Paleoindian artifacts found throughout the United States are finely crafted, distinctively fluted stone spear points, and even these are rare finds. Prehistoric peoples around the world made tools from rock types that were carefully selected for their fracture characteristics and their abil-



Cumberland Projectile Point

A tip from a Cumberland projectile point manufactured on Sand Mountain in north-eastern Alabama.

It is composed of chert, a fine-grained sedimentary rock deposited in marine environments, and is found in the eastern half of the United States.

ity to be shaped in a controlled manner.

Archaeologists refer to the manufacture of stone arrowheads, spear points, and knives as flintknapping. The name derives from a type of sedimentary rock called flint in Europe and chert in the Americas that is extremely fine grained and that fractures in a clean and predictable manner. A skilled flintknapper would remove flakes (broad, flat pieces of chert struck from a larger parent piece) similar to the way a sculptor creates a stone statue. The appropriate shape is achieved by repeatedly removing flakes with another rock or a piece of antler.

Modern archaeologists experimenting with flintknapping have found that by changing the striking tool, the angle of the strike, and the amount of force used, Paleoindians could have produced tools of different sizes and shapes in short order. Flakes were sometimes used as tools themselves, with little extra working, because they usually had a sharp cutting edge. If they could not be worked,

they were simply discarded.

Paleoindian stone tool technology includes distinct scrapers for processing hides as well as evidence of a blade technology. Archaeologists who study stone tools use the term "blade" to describe a flake that is twice as long as it is wide. Such tools are created from carefully prepared parent pieces. Blade technology can be compared with a modern assembly line in that it produced flakes of generally the same size and shape until the parent piece was used up.

Blades were then used as the basis of a variety of other stone tools, including scrapers. Undoubtedly, Paleoindians used a wide variety of other raw materials for tools, such as wood, bone, and antler, but

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these rarely survive in the archaeological record.

Armed only with stone tools in a harsh environment, how did Paleoindians make a living in the Southeast during the Ice Age? Scientists have established that Paleoindians were not farmers because there is no evidence of domesticated plants or farm animals from that time. Given that the few domestic dog bones in the Americas have been shown to be related to those from Asia, it is likely that Paleoindian people brought domesticated dogs with them.

Paleoindians lived off what the land provided in what anthropologists call a hunting and gathering way of life. Several hunter-gatherer societies exist today in the world, and anthropologists have worked with them for more than 100 years and gained some understanding about how they live in different environments. Archaeologists use information about these modern peoples to help them develop hypotheses about what life was like in the past.

Because archaeologists only have access to artifacts, they must use other ways to reconstruct the behaviors and activities of people who lived thousands of years ago. Experiments and study of living peoples are two ways of doing this. It is important to keep in mind, however, that modern hunter-gatherers are not "primitive" peoples, but that they help provide guidance for determining how prehistoric hunter-gatherers lived than do agriculturalists because hunter-gatherers from any era of human history likely solve basic problems of living in similar ways.

Although little has survived of the Paleoindian way of life, diligent investigations have allowed archaeologists to say with some certainty what these early people did not have, and this includes pottery, substantial built structures, and domesticated plants or farm animals. Rather, life for Paleoindians as commonly reconstructed by archaeologists likely re-



Clovis Projectile

volved around an extended family or small group of families of between 25 and 50 people (a social structure known as a band) who traveled long distances across a landscape generally devoid of other people in their search for food.

Hunting is generally emphasized in discussions of Paleoindian lifeways, but a focus on megafauna may or may not be accurate. The climate during the Ice Age supported fewer wild plants than today, but the Paleoindian diet was certainly more diverse than a nightly meal of mammoth. Paleoindians, especially in the southeastern United States, probably took advantage of a range of food resources, including big game when the opportunity presented itself.

Clovis Culture

Archaeologists often divide the Paleoindian period into sub-periods based on types of prehistoric projectile points, but few specifics of prehistoric lifeways are known for the entirety of the period. Clovis is the earliest style of projectile point in North America, with subsequent styles including Cumberland, Redstone, Quad, and Dalton, all of which have similarities to the Clovis type. The earliest artifacts found in the Americas, including Alabama, were made by people from the Clovis culture, which is identified by the distinctively fluted Clovis point. Fluting is the removal of a long thin flake from the base of a finely crafted spear point.

A Clovis point is lanceolate in shape and looks something like a flat "rocket" with parallel sides and a fluted, concave base. A typical specimen is approximately 2.5 inches long, 1 inch wide, and one-third of an inch thick. Investigators have found a wide range of Clovis point sizes, including some that are more than 6 inches in length.

All prehistoric peoples who manufactured chipped-stone tools relied on materials that would break in a

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controlled fashion, but Paleoindian peoples relied on particularly high-quality varieties of these materials. Paleoindian flintknappers invested great effort and used considerable skill in manufacturing their stone tools. They began the process with high-quality chert that is often found hundreds of miles from its geologic source, indicating that people probably traveled great distances for good sources of stone. This material aided flintknappers during the fluting process, which if incorrectly carried out would ruin the stone tool at the point when it was almost completed.

The fine detail of these tools and the wide range of lengths suggest that Paleoindian peoples resharp-ened and reused their tools often and designed them to have a long use-life. Paleoindian people thus created a technology that met the demands of their way of life, which involved moving frequently, often at great distances, in search of food. These travels undoubtedly took them to new places, and they must have realized that they might not have access to the raw materials for manufacturing their tools in these new areas. They therefore designed their tools to be long-lasting, so that they could afford to exploit these new areas without always having to remain close to sources of high-quality stone.

Finely crafted Clovis points were designed to maximize penetration into the prey animal and minimize breakage. The shape of the flute allowed for smooth and efficient attachment to a composite spear, a technology that has also been found in Asia and Europe. The blade was likely first attached to a foreshaft that in turn fit into a long and heavy main shaft. This composite weapon was a sophisticated



Flintknapping

Flintknapping is the term for the manufacture of stone blades and projectile points by striking a stone with another rock or an antler or bone tool to shape it.

The preferred material was a fine-grained sedimentary rock called chert or flint for its ease of workability

piece of hunting equipment that was well-suited for killing at close range, whether it was megafauna or smaller mammals.

Numerous Clovis points have been found throughout North America, but few Clovis archaeological sites have been located. Clovis points are typically found lying on the exposed ground, with no other archaeological evidence visible. These isolated finds provide some information about Clovis life, but without carefully excavated archaeological sites, the Clovis people largely remain a mystery.

Some scholars believe that present-day north Alabama served as a "staging area" for further Paleoindian migrations because so many Clovis points have been found in the area. Paleoindian peoples who entered north Alabama found an environment rich in resources, and their populations increased, spurring additional migrations.

The Paleoindian period in the southeastern U.S. is marked by changes in stone tool technology

over time. Scientists can say little about what prompted these changes, but they may reflect adaptations to changing environments. Some of the stone tool types that succeeded Clovis in Alabama include Redstone, Quad, and Beaver Lake. Their names derive from the locations where large numbers of them were collected. Only Redstone points are regularly fluted, but all of these point types are finely crafted with a distinctive base for attachment to a shaft.

Scholars believe that the distributions of specific point types suggest that they may have been local styles specific to the groups of small bands inhabiting territories of approximately 150 to 250 square miles. Little else is known about the lives of these prehistoric peoples, but presumably changes in the

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climate resulted in a more generalized hunting and gathering life. At some point around 10,500 years ago, people began making styles of projectile points that were so different from those of the Paleoindian period that they could no longer be described as belonging to that period.

The environment in the Southeast had changed quite a bit by that time as the Ice Age drew to an end, so archaeologists infer that the way of life for the region's inhabitants must have changed significantly as well. This new period is known as the Archaic and refers to the time period from about 10,500 years ago until about 3,000 years ago.

Paleoindian Archaeology in Alabama

The most extensive research into the Alabama Paleoindian period has been conducted by University of Alabama archaeologist Eugene Futato, who maintains the Alabama Paleoindian Point Survey database and has published a number of articles on Alabama's Paleoindian cultures. Some of the most important Paleoindian sites in Alabama are the Quad, located on the Tennessee River, which has produced more than

200 fluted points; and Dust Cave, near present-day Florence, which has produced radiocarbon dates and artifacts that date to the end of the Paleoindian period (circa 10,500 years ago).

Some sites that were once thought to include evidence of Paleoindian occupation, such as Russell Cave in Jackson County appear, now to date to the beginnings of the Archaic period. Although information on the Paleoindian peoples of present-day Alabama is scarce, there is great potential for future archaeological investigations of sites in Alabama. Because north Alabama has an unusually high density of these points, many Alabamians with an interest in artifacts and prehistory have been drawn to explore the period.

Members of the Alabama Archaeological Society regularly report finds to the state database and publish information on fluted points in the society's newsletter, raising awareness of and interest in the Paleoindian period in the state. That said, however, archaeological sites are being destroyed at an astonishing rate by both development and looting. For example, the Quad site has largely been eroded away. Research must proceed at a rapid pace if it is to keep up with this destruction. €

Memories of Fort Mims

By Claudia Slaughter Campbell

From: <http://blog.al.com/live/2013/06/mobile_press-register_200th_an_2.html>.

When I think back about my earliest recollections of Fort Mims, a smile comes across my face. I can see my brother and sisters running in the freshly plowed dirt in the field near Boatyard Lake playing and throwing dirt clods at each other. It was around 1954 or so.

Mama was there trying to keep up with all of us as we ran behind the tractor that Daddy was driving. He was plowing up the potatoes he had planted several months before. What fun we were having, but not paying that much attention to the job at hand -- what we were picking up was not the beautiful red potatoes that we would have for supper! Instead, the treasure we were finding were beautiful pieces of painted pottery in varying

shapes and colors, they were like the pretty flowers on the plates my grandmother had.

There were sharp triangular rocks, too, that I would later learn were arrowheads. We all had jars with lids and we filled them to the top! Being the youngest of five, I was immediately "hooked:" I wanted to hunt for treasure every day!

My mother, June Slaughter, began to write a lot of letters back in those days trying to get support for something to be done at Fort Mims. She put a jar out on the counter of the store, put pictures and notices in the newspaper and wrote to the state for help. One of the letters was to the Alabama Department of Parks and Conservation and before too long she received correspondence from Mr. Marks of the Parks

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Memories of Fort Mims

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Division, State of Alabama! She had stirred interest in Montgomery and the officials were coming to Tensaw to see what they could find. Fort Mims would not be forgotten! I remember that the whole family was happy and we could hardly wait to see what would come next.

Upon arrival to Tensaw a few months later, the officials from the state got my dad, Carl Slaughter, to bring his bulldozer to the site. The area was covered with trees, bushes and lots of undergrowth like the rest of the swamp -- as if nothing had ever happened there. As we were all standing around to see what would be uncovered, Daddy lightly pushed back the top layers of earth, a little at a time. Eventually, we were all able to see the charred remains of the outside walls of the fort. What an exciting time that was -- the site of Fort Mims had been re-discovered!

Because of the way the burned wood was found, the men decided that the fort must have been put up horizontally -- at least in several places. Two posts would have been put into the ground and logs laid between them and built up until the wall of logs was high enough to protect those inhabiting the fort.

Every year in the heat of August, Mama loaded up all five of her children, occasionally several cousins from down the road and any friends who were lucky enough to be around, and we would head down to Fort Mims for a memorial service. We were fairly good for kids during the "service," swatting at the mosquitoes and bugs, and trying to understand the serious look on Mama's face. Before long, she had a fence and a gate delivered to the store, "Smith and Slaughter," so an official improvement could be made to Fort Mims, as specified. That was 10 years after the Till family donated five acres to the state of Alabama.

The site of Fort Mims was cleared and cleaned, a small area at the time, by the archeological excavations done almost every decade. In the '60s, many of the local high school Key Club members, including my brother and cousins from Tensaw and others from Bay Minette, worked on the excavation. They were full of fun and energy as many artifacts were found in the wire bins that were filled with dirt and moved to and fro like a sifter. Excitement would sound out when something

was discovered. They were looking eagerly to find whatever may have been hiding in the clumps of dirt, things that had been left from the terrible day in August nearly 150 years before.

Articles appeared frequently in the local papers, the Fort Mims Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution placed a monument at the site, and interest in this historic site in north Baldwin County soared throughout the state and Baldwin County. My grandmother wrote a short book during this time, 'Sunshine and Shadows -- Along the Trails the Tensas Trod,' with some of the research she had done throughout the years.

A young girl, totally influenced and surrounded by this much history, could hardly go in any other direction. The mold was set: Fort Mims -- high priority! Do your best to bring recognition to this historic site in Tensaw, Alabama, that changed so many lives and affected the course of history for a young nation.

It looks like that is still what I think is of importance as many improvements have been made at Fort Mims by the Fort Mims Restoration Association -- and many more will be completed before Aug. 30, 2013 for the commemoration of the 200th anniversary.

My roots grow deep in the Tensaw Country as my ancestors settled here 200 years ago. Fort Mims was a part of that. Through my grandmother, Claudia Smith Slaughter, my great-great-great-grandfather, Reese Smith, his wife Nancy and their daughter, arrived at Fort Mims on or about, Aug. 29, 1813. Because of the conditions within the fort, they decided to move on, thus surviving the deadly attack on the 30th.

After the massacre at Fort Mims, my ancestors Capt. Joseph Booth and Col. Lee Slaughter rode south with Andrew Jackson to avenge those killed at Fort Mims. They went on to fight the British at the Battle of New Orleans; Jesse Embree and Reese Smith also joined Jackson's forces during the War of 1812 and the Creek Indian War, all settling in this area.

A portion of Capt. Booth's plantation remains in the family and his grave, and those of several of his children and grandchildren, are tended by descendants who honor them and the memory of their many contributions during the early days of this country. €

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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