

The Birmingham Anthropological Society
presents

STONES AND BONES



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Oh, gosh, I believe I'll skip the Anthropological Society meeting this month - rather take off my shoes and get my feet up. Ho hum - a busy world.

Yes, it is. But suppose you lived in Talladega? One of our most regular attendants does live in Talladega!

We speak, of course, of Reverend Randolph F. Blackford. His is the enthusiasm, the tenacity, the devotion to a cause, the various priceless ingredients which get things done in this shoes-off, feet-up, busy world.

And we know him to be an inquiring historian and writer, and a leader in civic affairs in Talladega.

Not only has Reverend Blackford an excellent attendance record way over in Birmingham - he has been ever ready to address our meetings, to contribute to our publication, to volunteer his services.

Never once have we heard Reverend Blackford complain of a physical disability. Nor use it as an alibi. He has actually been apologetic on several occasions that physical limitations prevented his volunteering strenuous services.

We are, of course, delighted that Reverend Blackford can now retire in a land of sunshine and palms after a long and successful career in the exacting service of man and God. But we hate to lose him.

We are fortunate this month to have another of his interesting talks, this time a supplement to his exciting article on Precolumbian Discoveries of America which appeared in our April issue.

We don't know just how to say it of a Reverend, but he is a "regular guy". Our very best wishes shall snuggle down in his baggage and go along with him to sunny Florida.

Your editor is in a bit of a position, and owes an apologetic explanation to both Reverend Blackford and the Society.

At our May meeting, Dr. Gessmann spoke most interestingly on what he termed "Sunken Atlantis". He took exception to Reverend Blackford's negative mention of the "Atlantis myth" in our April Stones & Bones.

Reverend Blackford was too polite to mention the fact that his script had suffered somewhat at the hands of the editor. He had treated Atlantis a bit more leniently - though not as leniently as Dr. Gessmann

Your editor thought our publication was hardly the place to stir up the Atlantis controversy unless we were in a position to contribute original research. Reverend Blackford graciously agreed to the editing.

SO NOW WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BEAR UP UNDER MORE ATLANTIS. Your editor wants to get in on the discussion - not so much of Atlantis, but the scientific approach.

That will be the talk for our July meeting. We hope you won't want to miss SCIENCE LOOKS AT ATLANTIS. We do sincerely feel that the "other" approach merits representation.

By the way, our President Emile Dahlen wants to remind you not to hunt your files for a March issue of Stones & Bones - there ain't no such animal. As we took over the editing we clumsily began the first issue as January - though it appeared for the February meeting.

Now what is less interesting than yesterday's newspaper? It was March before we caught up with the oversight - and simply skipped a month.

Apologies!

For that hot month of August you will be treated to movies, made available to us by the Alabama Industrial and Recreational Planning Board. The subjects will be about as much a surprise to us as to you, but roughly they pertain to historic sites and industrial development.

So come and relax (kick your shoes off in the dark, if you like) and learn something about our great State - past, present, future.

Editorially speaking, we are trying to turn over a new leaf right now, at 3A.M., after a very interesting Committee meeting earlier in the evening - which we couldn't break off until midnight.

And, brother, there is a field trip down to the Montevallo site tomorrow. Should have been abed hours ago.

Our first Field Trip to the Montevallo site, May 10, was well attended, along with a troop of Cub Scouts for good measure!

There were not, however, too many volunteers for the "scientific dig" we want to get started. Well, we did get started - but not much more.

Bill Ballard is making movies of this "scientific dig". It will be a real contribution if we can get a documentary film on simplified, but correct, and detailed methods for beginners. Nothing of this sort is available. It could perhaps be of interest on a national basis, and a valuable aid in instructing new groups in Alabama.

We hope to have more volunteers tomorrow - or, that is, today, a few hours from now.

The "scientific dig" is to give learning priority over collecting. It will prove an interesting enlargement of our hobby.

In this connection we should like to quote a delightful passage from that always delightful naturalist, Donald Culross Peattie, from his much re-read "Almanac for Moderns".

"All through commonplace observation of Nature runs an infatuation with the rare that is the mark of limited understanding. Its amateurish emphasis stamps most collecting. The prideful and personal amassing of objects of some one sort, with self-congratulation upon having items that others do not possess, is antithetical to the aim or morality of science. It is better turned loose upon antique furniture or postage stamps than upon the material of the natural world. The really scientific mind cares little for a personal collection, and the veteran student knows that rarity is chiefly one of the illusions of the provincial point of view.

"Not that a boy has no right to the marvelous miscellany he assembles in his pockets. His inquisitiveness is of the very essence of research! Those untidy birds' nests adorning his walls, the stones or shells he is hoarding, may be the crude beginning to a lifetime's happy labor."

Is their a friendly little message in this for amateur archaeologists? Might not those "untidy" stones adorning our mantles also be the "very essence of research" and lead to more mature and rewarding explorations in this field of archaeology?

It is hoped that when the Montevallo site has been demolished by modern earth-moving machinery, and carted away in trucks, the Birmingham Anthropological Society will be able to boast a properly excavated and marked stratigraphic cross-section of the several peoples who lived there long ago and left their rubble for archaeological interpretation - if it is properly excavated and collected.

See you at the Birmingham Public Library, Friday June 6, 7:30 P. M.
