

# Newsletter



Volume 56, Number 3

August 2020

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and policies of participating entities, the MAA has cancelled all planned Archaeology Month events, except for one. An event hosted by the Delta Chapter of the MAA is still on for Saturday, October 17th, from 10:00 am-5:00 pm, at the Museum of the Mississippi Delta. The famous Jaketown Effigy Tablet will be on display, in addition to presentations and artifact identifications. Hopefully, the presentations will be filmed so those who can't attend will be able to enjoy them at a later date. Check the website and Facebook page as we share virtual events being held in neighboring states.

## President's Letter

Hello and happy fall to all of our MAA members! I hope all of you have been doing well during this unprecedented year. Just a few more months and we'll officially be done with 2020. In fact, I think the next newsletter you receive will be after the new year. In that case, may you all have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

I really do not have much to say; I would rather let this newsletter speak for itself (and also give Jessica a little extra room to fit more in). It is unfortunate that so many of our regular plans have been cancelled or postponed, like the Archaeology Expo, lots of Archaeology Month events, planned digs, etc. I hope you have all found ways to stay involved even with all the changes this year. I know I have personally seen many Facebook posts or heard from people about archaeological finds, sporadic fieldwork, etc., so I know that there is still activity going on out there that many of you have been involved in, and that is always good to see and hear.

Hopefully things can get back to some semblance of normal after the new year. I know we would all like that very much. However, even if we cannot have a "full normal", I know we will all do the best we can to be involved with and support the MAA. Again, I wish all of you health and happiness for the end of this year and beyond.

Bradley Carlock

Jaketown Site Effigy Tablet  
22-Hu-505  
Humphreys County  
ca. 2000-600 BC

Special Thanks to the  
Frank and Peggy  
McCormick Family

With Guest Speakers  
Including Sam Brookes  
& James Starnes, RPG

Artifacts and Fossil  
Identification

**MISSISSIPPI**  
**ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH**  
*Delta Regional Event*

Saturday - October 17, 2020  
10:00am - 5:00pm  
Museum of the Mississippi Delta  
Greenwood, MS

Free & Open to the Public!

Telephone: 662-626-0316

## Plans For Book On Mississippi's Prehistoric Indians and Artifacts

Preliminary discussions have begun for a book about Mississippi's prehistoric Indians and artifacts that will be similar in style and content to the *Alabama Handbook of Prehistoric Indians and Artifacts*, edited by David M. Johnson, Jr., with contributions from Steven Meredith, Ashley Dumas and Ben Hoksbergen. That volume was published by Borgo Publishing, Tuscaloosa, AL in 2019. It's a great book and is available through Borgo's website [borgopublishing.com](http://borgopublishing.com) and Amazon. Mississippi can certainly use its own handbook, too!

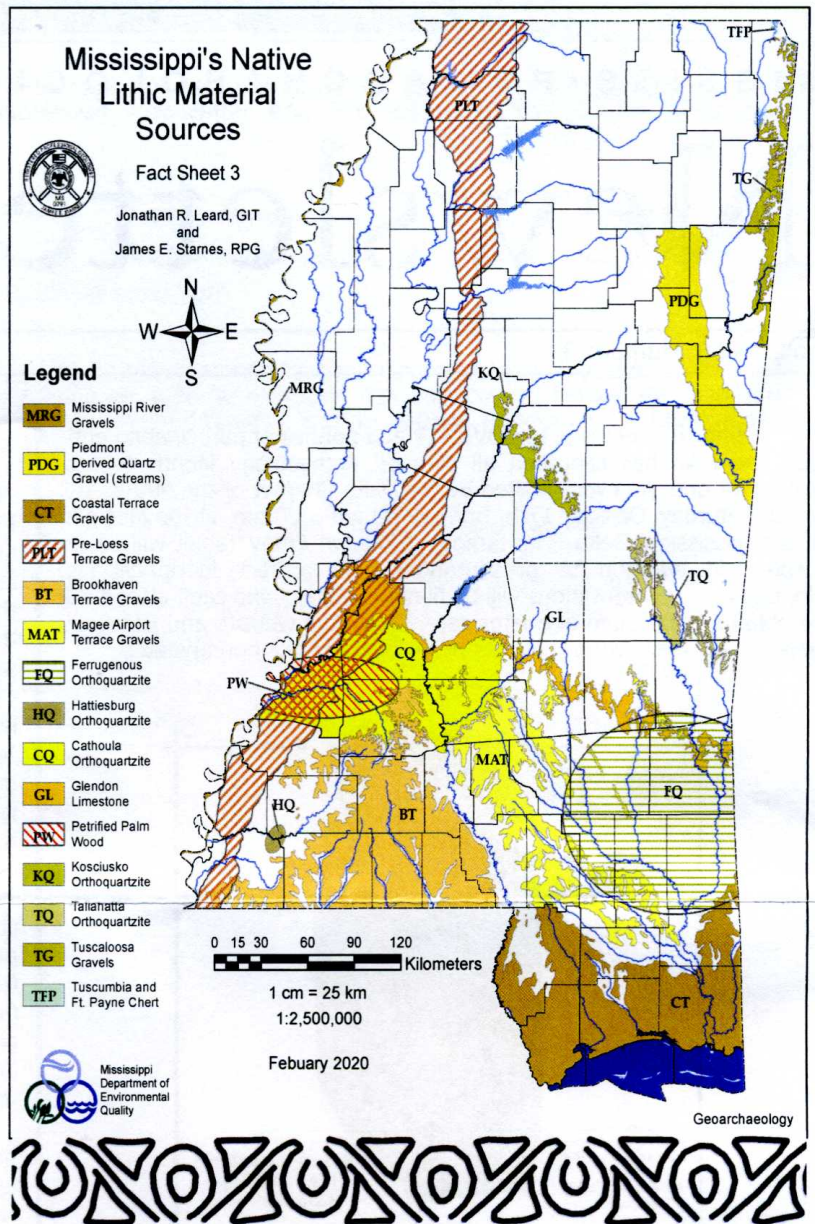
**MDEQ Office of Geology Publishes Georarchaeology Map Fact Sheet #3 Mississippi's Native Lithic Material Sources by Jonathan Leard, GIT and James E. Starnes, RPG & Brad Segrest**

In archaeology, "lithics" are stone artifacts that have been worked by human hands. In a science where anthropological theory of pre-historic cultures is pondered and debated largely on the examination of worked stone objects, an understanding of the naturally-occurring stone or "native materials" throughout the local geology is an important piece of the archaeological record in the documentation of prehistoric aboriginal sites. The sourcing of these naturally-occurring materials provides the archaeologist and prehistory enthusiast with an understanding of Mississippi's past peoples' relationships with their available geological resources and how that relationship, including trade, may have evolved over time.

The following Fact-sheet publication is a characterization of the known native lithic resource materials of our state. The ability to identify the stone artifacts are made from and to source them to raw bedrock materials allows for a more thorough understanding and improved documentation of our aboriginal cultural resources. Soon to be available is an accompanying photograph gallery with comparative examples of the rock materials and information about the different bedrock geological resources, including links to our Mississippi Office of Geology literature for each of the geologic formations depicted on this map.

[www.mdeq.ms.gov/geology/work-areas/publications-and-map-sales/categories/fact-sheets/mississippi-native-lithic-material-sources-58801/](http://www.mdeq.ms.gov/geology/work-areas/publications-and-map-sales/categories/fact-sheets/mississippi-native-lithic-material-sources-58801/)

[www.mdeq.ms.gov/geology/work-areas/surface-geology/lithic-materials/](http://www.mdeq.ms.gov/geology/work-areas/surface-geology/lithic-materials/)



**News from Ole Miss**

**Center for Archaeological Research**

CAR activities since the spring have focused almost entirely on organizing and cataloging our archaeological collections. These collections began in the early 1900s with the activities of UM professor Calvin Brown who published *Archeology of Mississippi* in 1926. They also include materials from field schools, research projects, and CRM projects from the 1950s to today. The materials are mostly from Native American sites across Mississippi, but there are some ethnographic materials and some archaeological collections from other parts of North America.

The cataloging efforts are being overseen by Stephen Harris who is working with a group of (socially distanced and masked) graduate and undergraduate students. This work is funded by a five-year, \$500,000 Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service and administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

*(continued on page 3)*

(continued...news from Ole Miss)

As materials are being cataloged and re-boxed, we also are moving them into their new permanent home in a curation facility at UM's South Oxford Center which is located about a mile from the main campus at the site of the old Baptist Hospital. This new space includes a lab, an area for storing field equipment, and several rooms for curating archaeological collections.

**Students** Two second-year graduate students under the direction of Maureen Meyers were awarded scholarships from the Archaeological Society of Virginia to support their research. Taylor Greene was awarded a grant for his project "An Analysis of a Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Multi-Phase Mississippian Domestic Structure at the Carter Robinson Site, Lee County, Virginia." He will use the money to radiocarbon date a Middle Mississippian occupation of a rebuilt structure. Shannon Wooten was awarded a grant for her project "Understanding Relationships at the Frontier: An Analysis of Ceramics at Carter Robinson and Ely Mound Sites in Southwestern Virginia." She will use the money for radiocarbon dates of one structure and multiple mound levels, the first radiocarbon dates of the Ely Mound.

Undgraduate Sophie Husslein, working with Maureen Meyers, analyzed ceramics from a structure at the Ely Mound over the summer, through support from a UM Undergraduate Research grant. She is currently analyzing the data as her Honor's thesis. She also received funds for radiocarbon dating.

Gillian Steeno is also undertaking an Honor's thesis on ceramics from the Starkville Farms site under the direction of Tony Boudreaux.

Two recent Honors college theses completed in anthropology under the direction of Carolyn Freiwald include Sloan Weeden *Epiclassic Mobility and Diet at Chicoloapan Viejo, Valley of Mexico* and Skyler McCoy *Forensic Comparison of Ancient Maya Oral Microbiomes*. Congratulations to all students!

We welcomed four new graduate students this year. Riley Freeman is from Texas and is a member of the Chickasaw Nation. She is interested in contact-period Native groups in the Southeast particularly concerning changes in ritual and religious beliefs over time. Matthew Perry was a History major at Mississippi State University who worked at the Hester site. His interests lie in the deerskin trade and its effects on contact-period groups in Mississippi, particularly with regard to lithic toolkit changes. Cheyenne Bennett is also a Mississippi State graduate who plans to study the effects of the Tellico Dam on local communities and more broadly on how modernization has positive and negative effects on communities. Mina Brandon is a University of Mississippi graduate from Chicago with interests in forensic chemistry and bioarchaeology. She is studying dental pathologies in Mayan populations in Brazil around the time of the Maya collapse. Welcome to all the new students!

Maureen Meyers

## MDAH Awarded NPS Grant to Ensure Return Of Tribal Ancestors

The National Park Service has awarded \$88,822 to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) to support efforts to return the Native American human remains in its archaeological collections to present-day Tribes. MDAH will use the money to hire a new collections manager, provide paid internships for Tribal partners, purchase equipment, and provide staff training.

The Chickasaw Nation and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma supported the grant and will provide guidance as MDAH staff document the human remains and ceremonial objects from graves in northeast Mississippi. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) requires consultation with Tribes whose ancestors lived on the land where graves were located.

One of the department's highest priorities is the proper care of its significant archaeological collection," said MDAH director Katie Blount. "In keeping with our standards of excellence, we are embarking on this project with renewed dedication to collaborating with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Chickasaw Nation while becoming fully compliant with NAGPRA."

MDAH sought the grant after discovering that some of its collection had not been appropriately inventoried. "With this funding, we will properly catalog NAGPRA collections while strengthening our relationships with Tribal partners through a transparent dialogue," said Meg Cook, director of MDAH archaeology collections. "The project allows us to honor and best care for these individuals through the purchase of culturally appropriate curation material. We do not lose sight of the fact that we are working with people—mothers, fathers, and children."

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Historic Preservation Department congratulates the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as NAGPRA grant recipients," said Deanna Byrd, NAGPRA liaison for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. "Our THPO and NAGPRA liaison look forward to working with all of our Tribal partners and MDAH's compassionate professionals to help facilitate the return of our ancestors. We are committed to supporting MDAH in this collaborative process and know it will be rewarding. Our ancestors will finally know the peace we envisioned for them."



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## News from the U.S. Forest Service

**Bienville NF-** Maria L. Schleidt, Zone Archaeologist

Although still working on the remaining Southern Pine Beetle outbreak reports, I've moved onto preparing task orders for green timber sale surveys for FY2021 and 2022. Bryan Tate, USM graduate, has been working with me since last September surveying fire lines.

**Delta NF-** Zone Maria L. Schleidt, Zone Archaeologist

Unfortunately, the Delta was flooded for most of spring and early summer. Eroding levees were fixed at Green Ash Greentree Reservoir (GTR) and 10 failing culverts at Dowling Bayou and Green Ash GTR were replaced this summer. Work was monitored by Zone Archaeologist.

**Holly Springs & Tombigbee NF-** Kyran Kelley, Zone Archaeologist

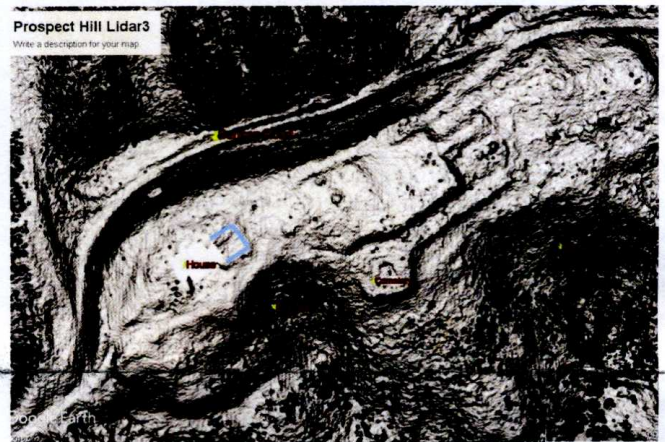
On the Holly Springs National Forest, we've been doing a cultural resources assessment to clear a stretch of stream for a research project to test ways to improve habitat for the Yazoo Darter. This fish is a native species to northern Mississippi and is currently imperiled. The assessment uses archival records to demonstrate that the current stream course is an artificial channel created prior to the 1930's. The research project is looking at means to improve stream habitat using simple materials and hand tools.

## Field Work Planned at Prospect Hill Plantation

Under the direction of Tony Boudreaux, Bryce Krumke, graduate student at Ole Miss, will be testing and conducting excavations at Prospect Hill Plantation (ca.1809) in Jefferson County, shortly after Thanksgiving.

The goals of this project are locating of the quarters where enslaved people lived and identifying the spaces where they worked. To accomplish these tasks, we will conduct a systematic archaeological survey across the 10-acre area around Prospect Hill. This work will be done with a small crew of about six people across the area doing shovel test pits. Bryce hopes his research will allow us to better understand Mississippi plantation landscapes and the people who worked and lived on them.

Jessica Crawford, The Archaeological Conservancy



## A Bit On South Mississippi Geology and Geoarchaeology Relating To Its Early Inhabitants

Long before the Mississippi River cut its channel deep into the coastal plain, it was as dominated by the ancestral Tennessee and Ohio systems that flowed across south-central Mississippi on its way to the Gulf of Mexico, much farther to the east than it is today. During the Pliocene, a different, but still mighty, river's flood plain surface was at an elevation of 500-550 feet above modern day sea level in south Mississippi while the river's basal gravels, deposited from its laterally migrating channels, were perched about 400 feet above sea modern day level. This is evident by the thick sand and chert gravel terrace deposits that cap the eroded uplands of south-central Mississippi from above Mendenhall (south of Jackson) through Brookhaven, towards the coast.

These deposits were once mapped erroneously as "Citronelle" Formation along with various other deposits in the coastal plain of different ages that contain sand and chert gravel. We now know these deposits' place and time in our geologic history and they are now mapped as the Brookhaven and Magee Terraces. This geology of the Brookhaven and Magee Terraces are heavily dissected by erosion creating the distinctive ecological region of the state called the Southern Pine Hills.

The Clovis people were the earliest inhabitants of this region and they seemingly did not seem modify their tool kit much as well as brought their own high-quality materials in with them and rarely seem utilize the abundant, locally-available gravels. Over time, people adapted to this specific ecosystem and began to further utilized the various resources of their environment. The chert gravels that occur in this area from the ancestral Pliocene age river system (now mapped as the Brookhaven and Magee Terrace), though abundant, are generally poor in quality due to deep chemical weathering of the deposits and are also relatively small in clast size (rarely exceeding 8cm in length). Late Paleoindian San Patrice points (10,000-9,500 BP) of the Leaf River variety demonstrate an early tradition that is a specific adaption to the environment and ecosystem of the area which utilizes the high terrace chert gravel resources naturally available to the area. James E. Starnes, RPG

# San Patrice (var. Leaf River)

Specimens courtesy:  
Jim House



length: 3.5cm  
width: 2.1cm



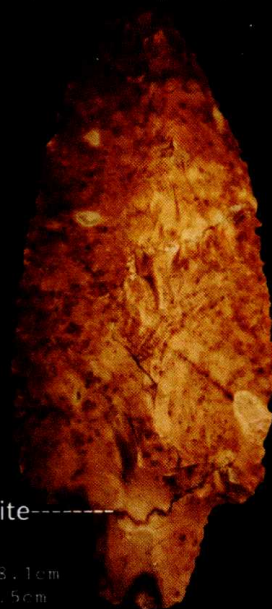
length: 4.2cm  
width: 2.2cm

Special thanks to Jim House with the Madison MAA Chapter for these excellent specimens

## Geoarchaeology And Tuscaloosa Gravels

Learning about cultures of the first Mississippians requires knowledge of their natural environment. Understanding the natural resources available to the early Native Americans provides us with insight to how they adapted to different regions of the state as they utilized and traded natural resources. After thousands of years, utilized stone (referred to as lithics) is usually the only thing to survive that can tell us about their existence. We can trace the trade of lithics throughout the state because the geology in certain areas provides literally no availability of adequate naturally-occurring stone resources. Humans have always relied on natural resources and the first inhabitants mastered the geologic resources that were available. This insight is invaluable when studying lithics from archaeological sites as it provides insight to where people have been and what regions people have been in contact with.

Tuscaloosa Gravel  
(artifact replica)



stylolite-----

length: 3.1cm  
width: 3.5cm  
thickness: 0.4cm

Specimen  
courtesy:  
Gay Moulton

Continued from page 5

Outcrops of the Tuscaloosa Formation are Cretaceous age chert gravels derived from Paleozoic era limestones that occur along the Mississippi-Alabama border, from Tishomingo County south to Lowndes County. Gravels of the Tuscaloosa Formation are predominantly chert, with lesser occurrences of grainy clasts of metamorphic quartz and white vein quartz that derived from deeper in the Alabama Piedmont. Chert gravels of this formation are derived largely from the erosion of the bedrock of the Fort Payne, Tuscumbia, and Bangor limestones which the Tuscaloosa Formation unconformably on-laps bordering the foothills of the Appalachians and the Gulf Coastal Plain.

Gravels from the Tuscaloosa Formation can also be re-deposited to lower elevations into terraces and stream valleys along the Tombigbee River and its tributaries. These chert gravel resources were utilized widely throughout north-central and east-central Mississippi's Flatwoods region, in the hills of the Wilcox belt, and across the Black Belt region of northeast Mississippi due to lack of naturally-available chert resources occurring in the area. These chert gravels vary naturally in color in shades of tan, red, pink, gray, black, brown, yellow, and white. Tuscaloosa chert gravel clast commonly retain pressure-solution features, called stylolites, from their origins in the bedrock limestone.

These occur as zig-zag patterns and are typically infilled with secondary quartz or chalcedony minerals. These flaws in the rock often cause problems during the manufacturing of stone tools by in Mississippi pre-historic peoples. Heat-treating to better the stone was a common practice for processing Tuscaloosa gravel. Heat-treated Tuscaloosa chert gravel typically exhibits a distinctive red and pink mottled appearance and can strongly contrasts the stylolites in the stone.

James E. Starnes, RPA



Stylolite in Tuscumbia Limestone. Rip-rap at the Ross Barnett Reservoir spillway, Rankin County Mississippi



#### Chickasaw Inkana Foundation Updates Website

Using the Chickasaw name for "friend," the Inkana Foundation, seeks to preserve the past, protect the present and interpret for the future in the Chickasaw Nation Homeland, which is in portions of Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. Executive Director, Brady Davis is pleased to share that the Foundation's website has been updated and invites MAA members to visit and learn about the important work the Inkana Foundation is doing and to join the Chickasaw Nation in its mission to preserve some of Mississippi's proudest past. The web address is

[www.inkana.org](http://www.inkana.org)



## Hattiesburg Quartzite

Spillman-Sturdivant Quarry  
Amite County, Mississippi



length: 7.75cm  
width: 2.80cm  
thickness: 1.00cm

Specimen  
courtesy:  
Janet Spillman

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