### BULLETIN

OF THE

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

OF

### NORTH CAROLINA



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# BULLETIN OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Dues, \$1.00 a year. Extra copies of Bulletin, 25¢ for members, 50¢ for non-members.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK IS OPEN TO ALL WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A PART IN UNRAVELLING AND RECORDING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS THE TRUE FACTS ABOUT THE INDIANS WHO OCCUPIED NORTH CAROLINA BEFORE OUR FOREFATHERS.

Raleigh

#### EDITORIAL

The Archeological Society has traveled far since the sunny spring day in May, 1933, when a few enthusiasts met in Graham Memorial building, Chapel Hill, and launched an archeological society in North Carolina.

Since then members have been enrolled from many localities in the State, meetings have been held in east, west and central portions, and two successful expeditions have been carried out. Perhaps the greatest contribution the society has made has been in teaching the people of the State the necessity of care, skill and training in archeological work.

Through contributions of members the Society has been able to maintain its organization, publish bulletins semi-annually, and provide fully for the first expedition and partly for the second. The total amount contributed is not large, but has been used to great advantage, and contributing members are assured of the satisfaction of knowing that considerable work has been accomplished through their generosity. The major part of the financing of the second expedition was provided by the State Museum, and its director, Harry T. Davis, is due a vote of thanks from the Society for his loyal support.

Provision of labor by WPA has been helpful in the Montgomery mound excavation although available help was not sufficient to complete the task. There is the possibility of greatly increased assistance from this source if projects are carefully developed in the near future.

Storage facilities have been provided by the University of North Carolina, with possible development of a laboratory and a display room for collections. This provision is of great service in facilitating the preservation and study of material assembled. The University officials have shown courtesy and willingness to assist in advancing the study of archeology in this State, and their co-operation is welcomed.

Our field director, Joffre L. Coo, has worked at a great disadvantage but has achieved splendid results. It is hoped that future projects will be so well developed and supported that he will be given a better opportunity to accomplish his tasks.

It should be a satisfaction to every member to know that North Carolina is definitely on the road to genuine archeological achievement in which our Society has taken the lead.

### Change in Publication Plans

Now that the Society has engaged in a couple of excavation projects, it is felt that the results should be reported in full printed form, with accompanying photographs and drawings. The size and financial condition of the Society makes it impossible to publish such a report and at the same time continue to issue the present mimeographed Bulletin twice a year. Therefore it was decided at the October, 1937, meeting to adopt the following plan of publication:

(1) a printed bulletin once a year, with the cooperation of the State Museum, containing a report of the excavation done during the preceding year, and (2) mimeographed news letters several times a year to keep members informed of one another's activities and of other matters of interest to the Society.

### SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN GRASS BALDS AS EVIDENCE OF INDIAN OCCUPATION

### B. W. Wolls North Carolina State College

Wild vegetation in the ordinary course of events becomes a veil which time draws over the works of ancient man. Many of the Mayan relies were so completely buried in the jungle that only blind chance disclosed them to the explorer. In sharp contrast to the usual role of plant life, the writer wishes to call the attention of the Southern Appalachian archeologist to his discovery that the mountain grass balds must have been initiated and used by the Cherokee Indians, and as remarkable disclimaxes (an aberrant climax of human origin) remain intact to the present, with their silent story of summertime camps, game lures, and lookout points. Instead of hiding the works of earlier men, the vegetation in this case is itself a record of early human activity.

The earliest settlers, it is well known, found those peculiar local areas of sedge or grass amid the dense virgin high mountain evergreen or northern hardwood forests and were much puzzled by them. They put cattle and horses on those which were accessible and in many cases enlarged them by tree girdling. The record of all these activities, prehistoric and modern, is left in the type and quantity of the plant species now found, a record which is becoming increasingly clear to the plant ecologist.

It should be mentioned early that "bald" in this article in no instance refers to a shrub bald or "slick". The shrub balds, like the one on the peak of Pisgah, are entirely different communities and are generally due to a combination of fire and exposure. The maps and local mountain people call them all "balds", hence the importance of carefully distinguishing the grass type from the shrub.

So that the reader may gain a clear conception of the grass (or related sedge) balds, Andrews Bald, located high on the south spur of Clingman's Dome, will be described. This bald is now made accessible through the construction of the seven-mile parkway from New Found Gap to the Dome. The bald is about 1.5 miles on the south ridge trail leading from the Dome parking area.

After traversing a heavy successional growth of fire cherry and a local stand of balsam on the knob top, the visitor comes suddenly on the bald. Hurrying down the gentle, southwest slope he is thrilled by this great meadow of perhaps 50 acros lying at 5,860 feet altitude and everlooking one of the grandest mountain scapes in the Appalachians. Virgin balsam-spruce forest surrounds it but due to the slope does not interfere with the sweeping view of three-fourths of the horizon.

This bald like others cut out of the balsam-spruce forest is covered chiefly by sedges rather than the usual oatgrass seen in the balds surrounded by the northern red oak, the commonest high mountain deciduous tree. The sedges are a response to moisture and since the sponge-like floor of the boreal forest furnishes seepage water continually to the bald below, we find on the upper border a tall coarse sedge (Carex flexuosa), and the great middle section with two or three smaller sedges (C. varia, radiata, normalis) and the lower end, away from the excessive moisture, is covered by a luxuriant stand of the oatgrass (Danthonia compressa). A few shrubs of viburnum, gooseberry, and rhododendron are widely scattered over the bald. And in August hundreds of turk's-cap lilies (Lilium superburn) waving against the sky make it a veritable show place.

At the lower part of the bald is a sunken area which in wet seasons exhibits a number of springs, the water of which drains out through what is essentially a marsh of tall sedges and grasses. Not much lower down but located in the woods is a permanent spring.

The early white mountaineers found this meadow-like place carved out of the dark fir-spruce forest in just about the condition we find it today. The boundaries were just as sharp, there being no gradation whatever at the sides - the marginal trees being of full size, yet standing near a sedge cover which has developed a deep sod indicative of its great antiquity.

Andrew's Bald and the numerous others scattered here and there in the high Southern Appalachians have constituted one of the greatest plant ecological puzzles encountered in Eastern America; no adequate theory had been propounded to explain their origin and maintenance.

In a recent paper ("Southern Appalachian Grass Balds"; JOURNAL OF THE ELISHA MITCHELL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY, 53: 1-26, Pls. 1-5. 1937), the writer presents the technical evidence to show that these balds could only have come into existence through the agency of man and since they are known to have existed in the prehistoric period, the men involved must have been the Cherokee Indians.

A brief summary of this evidence should be presented before some of the interesting implications of the Indian theory are pointed out to the archeologist.

The negative evidence in the case of the balds is perhaps most important. We may be certain that if natural causes including uncontrolled fire were responsible for the balds, vastly larger areas of the high ridges would now be in bald rather than forest. When the balsam burns or is logged and burned, the fire or pin cherry appears like magic over the whole region and acts as a "nurse tree" for the seedling balsams, making possible a restoration of the original forest. Instead of a distribution of the balds on a large scale the views from high strategic peaks disclose only a few of these dot-like areas on the mountain ridges. Thus the negative evidence runs strongly against any "natural" explanation.

On the positive side are a number of interesting guides to what the writer believes to be the true solution of this ecological problem. These will merely be summarized here since the author has presented in the above mentioned technical account of the balds, a full statement of these ecological facts which point only to a theory of human origin.

- l. A large percentage of the grass balds are on gently rounded ridge tops or knobs and almost universally are developed on the warm south facing slopes of low gradient. Steep slopes could not be used.
- 2. A large percentage including most of the above are located near "bold" springs. These were the camp sites.
- 3. The writer's observation that many of the high ridge trails have gone over into bald grass, and have remained so to the present, gives an indication as to what happened. Long sections of trails such as the one from Pisgah to Tennessee Bald are now in pure oatgrass with the same wild flowers scattered in the grass that are found in the broader balds. In other words a grass bald may be interpreted as an expanded trail.
- 4. Since publishing the original note on the Indian theory of grass bald origin, Mr. George Stupke, naturalist of the Smoky Mountain National Park, has informed me that near Mt. Sterling, an old mountaineer told him that his grandfather had related that when he was a boy the Indians always insisted that they made the Mt. Sterling bald for the purpose of shooting game. Turkey and deer would be attracted to such places and could be easily killed with bow and arrow from the ambush of the surrounding dark balsam forest.
- 5. On the top of Block House Mountain, a peak lying off the main ridge from Thunderhead in the Smokies, is a small bald on a rather steep slope which is so oriented in relation to the main range as to make an ideal lookout for miles along this important key ridge.
- 6. The camp balds near the springs actually show today where the fires were located by the fact that the excessive disturbance of the ground and accompanying washing in the rains have lowered these spots measurably. In some cases as at Andrew's Bald and Spence Field Bald, crude semicircular areas have been eroded more than a foot deep. These areas are confined strictly to the vicinity of the spring and are in marked contrast to the even grass protected slopes around them.
- 7. Recent camp and disturbed areas have been noted which were in various stages of progress from the original temporary weed stage into the permanent grass community.
- 8. My colleague, Mr. L. A. Whitford, reports three circular, shallow depressions in a granite rock on the lower side of Andrew's Bald, which appear to be artificial, suggesting the familiar rock mortars for grinding grain.

A critical question is - Why does not the woody vegetation invade the grass areas and restore the forest? Innumerable observations show that the dominant mountain oatgrass and the sedges in the moist balds which are only found at the high altitudes are able to set up such an intense competition for water and nutrients that the seedling woody, as well as most other herbaceous species, are incapable of becoming established. The less disturbed the bald by grazing, the purer is the stand of the grass or sedge. Andrew's Bald which has not had fire or grazing on it for many years shows such a high degree of herbaceous suppression that nearly all of the non-sedge herbs on it are reduced to rank 4 and 5 on a 1-5 dominance scale. An occasional fire on the balds would, of course, help in maintaining the grass and sedge dominance since young woody plants would be destroyed while the underground stolons would remain unharmed.

In the light of the ecological facts outlined, constituting both negative and positive evidence, we can draw no other conclusion than that the balds were originated by the Indians, who, starting in the case of the camp sites located near high springs, gradually enlarged these at the expense of the forest and through the local intensive destruction of the normally succeeding woody vegetation, finally made it possible for the weed and grass or sedge communities to enter immediately upon abandonment. And once these high mountain species of grasses and sedges claimed the areas, they have been able to hold them, aided, of course, by any subsequent fire or grazing which have occurred on them. Thus these grass and related sedge balds are true relics of the Indians.

Of especial interest to archeologists are the Indian legends concerning the balds, for most of which we are indebted to James Mooney's, THE CHEROKEE INDIANS (19th Rept. Bur. Ethnology, 1898).

The Indians were once harried by a great monster (an "ulagu") in the form of a gigantic hornet who periodically stole their children. Upon finally tracing this menace to its lair in a deep mountain cave, they found themselves helpless, but after many prayers for divine assistance, the Great Spirit split the mountain open, whereupon the braves quickly killed the creature with spear and axe. So pleased was the Great Spirit over the appeals for help and the high courage of the attacking party that he decreed that from that time on certain mountain tops should be bare of trees, to make lookout stations so that the Indians never again should be caught unawares by any other marauding monster.

The "ulagu" of this legend is unquestionably related to the Tsul'kalu or Jutaculla, a human giant or monster with slanting eyes who lived on the Juticulla Fields, a group of small balds in the high Balsam Mountains at the head of the Tuckaseegee River. He was greatly feared by the Cherokees.

On Joanna Bald lived a great lizard whose glistening throat could be seen for miles around when he sunned himself.

That the balds were places to be feared by the late Cherokees is best brought out by the story that a party of young braves boldly and in merriment entered the open ground of one whereupon the devil in the form of a huge snake swallowed fifty of the party.

The Nunnehi, a spirit folk who lived in the high ranges had many of their homes on the balds. They were probably feared as ghosts would be feared today by children.

Two small balds near Robbinsville were believed to have been made by a mysterious giant with head blazing like the sun who once alighted there.

These legends definitely indicate that the late Cherokees did not initiate the balds; they feared them as places inhabited by monsters and probably actually avoided them in hunting. The story concerning the Mt. Sterling bald could easily have been spontaneous in origin since the wild turkeys were hunted there by the early mountaineers.

The writer believes the grass and sedge balds to have been initiated by the Indians many centuries before the white man made his first contact with the red men and that these Indians made a large scale use of them in the summer period, a custom which was given up by the later people. Michaux and Bartram make no montion of them whatever. This deduction, if true, adds much interest to them and should encourage the search on them for ancient artifacts.

Mention has already been made of the excavated area in the spring region of Andrew's Bald. Such low places are almost uniformly present on the balds with springs, and are located generally above these springs. These may be interpreted as the early fire sites where the attrition of feet and rain has locally croded the bald. If artifacts are to be found the best chance would be in the washings below these fire sites. No such excavations have been made to the writer's knowledge. Since most of the balds are highly isolated and may be reached only by climbing two to three thousand feet and trail hiking from five to twenty miles for the round trip, shovels have not been included in field outfits. It is to be hoped that such studies can be made in the near future.

Whatever the results may be from these future archeological explorations, the writer is strongly convinced that the plant ecological data from the high mountains dictate a theory of human origin; the grass balds could have come into existence in no other way. And since they were there when the first white men reached the high Southern Appalachians, the origin must go back to the ancient Cherokees who like other Indians were known to prefer the ridge trails for travel and hunting and who must have gathered in bands at night since the distances and altitude would be too great to make a nightly return to the lowlands. Use of the trees for fire would account for the large size of many of the balds and persistent destruction of the juvenile woody plants for fire and through intensive occupation of the locality would make possible the herbaccous succession upon final abandonment.

This, we believe, is the story of the grass balds which makes of them remarkable relics of any early Cherokee culture.

### INDIAN MOUND SITE ON LITTLE RIVER BECOMES STATE PROPERTY

The formal transfer of the Indian mound site on Little River or in Montgomery County, by which the first archeological reservation in North Carolina came into existence, and the inauguration of archeological excavation in the mound area were celebrated with brief ceremonies on the afternoon of May 15, 1937, at the mound. The earthwork served as platform for the ceremonies and on it were assembled officials who took part in the program.

As presiding officer, Rev. Douglas L. Rights, president of the Archeological Society of North Carolina, called upon L. D. Frutchey, owner of the mound property, to make the presentation. Mr. Frutchey scooped up a shovel-full of mound turf, inserted a pretty Indian arrowhead therein, and handed it as a silent token of transfer to Lieutenant Governor W. P. Horton, who accepted for the State, in the absence of Governor Hoey. To make this ancient Indian ceremony valid according to present requirements, an envelope containing a deed for the property was passed along with the turf.

State Forester J. S. Holmes, representing R. Bruce Etheridge of the Department of Conservation and Development, made appropriate acknowledgement of the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frutchey.

Assisting in the ceremonies also were Dr. C. C. Crittenden, secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Harry T. Davis, of the State Museum and vice-president of the Archeological Society, B. A. Waldenmeier, of the WPA, Joffre L. Coe, field director, H. M. Doerschuk, secretary-treasurer, and James E. Steere, member of the executive committee of the Archeological Society.

These officials and other visitors present formally inaugurated mound excavation by each digging a shovel full of earth from the mound.

### REPORT OF OCTOBER 16 MEETING AT CHAPEL HILL

The annual meeting of the Society was held on Saturday, October 16, 1937, at Graham Memorial building in Chapel Hill. Although the meeting was not as well attended as usual, the program was excellent, and those present took a great deal of interest. Dr. Penrose G. Harland, who was to have spoken on "Excavating in Greece and the Near East" was unable to speak because of a throat ailment, and Dr. J. B. Bullitt of Chapel Hill spoke in his place. Dr. Bullitt spoke on "The Stone Age in Europe." He brought along a good many pieces from his private collection and illustrated his talk with them. He exhibited stone artifacts from various periods of European prehistory to show the development of the art of stone-chipping. He also exhibited miniature clay human figures, carvings on bone and

ivory, painted pebbles, and other objects illustrating the art and technology of the people of Europe during the Stone Age.

Joffre L. Coe, director of excavation, reported on the work at the Frutchey Mound on Little River in Montgomery County. work was done as a WPA project sponsored by the Archeological Society and the State Museum. Due to labor shortage, the mound was only half excavated, but some interesting discoveries were made. Mr. Coe gave a theoretical reconstruction of the manner in which the mound was built up. He stated that at the original level of the ground before the mound was built there were numerous postholes indicating that several house structures had once occupied the site. One set of postholes was particularly interesting because the holes clearly outlined the walls of a large rectangular earth-covered house. Apparently the house had had walls and roof of wood (large holes inside the rectangle showed the position of posts which supported the roof timbers) and had been banked and covered with earth so that the whole structure must have given the appearance of an earth-lodge. Other similar houses probably occupied the site at one time or another. Abandoned houses would eventually cave in, and later occupants of the site would build up a suitable base for new houses by piling new earth over the old ruins. The final mound was a flat-topped pyramid with possibly a ramp on one side. Mr. Coe showed a number of excellent enlarged photographs of the mound work, showing soil profiles, postholes, burials, etc. He also described the types of pottery and stone artifacts found at the site. After lunch the visitors went to the archeology room in Steele Building to see an exhibit of some of the material which came from the mound.

The report of the Excavation Finance Committee showed that members of the Society had contributed \$150 in cash and that the State Museum had contributed over \$500 to make this WPA project possible.

At the business meeting it was voted to make a change in the method of publication. This is described elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin. The following officers were elected for the year 1937-38: President, Mr. Harry T. Davis of Raleigh; vice-president, Mr. H. M. Doerschuk of Badin; members of the Executive Board for three-year term, Mr. J. E. Steere of Charlotte and Dr. Paul Lindley of Salisbury, and to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Doerschuk, Dr. L. E. Hinkle of Raleigh. Dr. Sanford Winston of Raleigh was re-elected editor, and Dr. Guy B. Johnson of Chapel Hill, who had been on leave of absence during the year, resumed the duties of secretary-treasurer.

### Special Noto:

At the Chapel Hill meeting it was voted to make Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Frutchey of Mt. Gilead honorary members of the Society as a token of appreciation of their service to archeology in North Carolina. As is well known, they donated the mound site on his property to the State of North Carolina. This site now becomes a part of the State Park system and will be assured of permanent preservation.

### POT-HUNTING: A STATEMENT OF POLICY

The man who digs up archeological specimens in order to sell them is known commonly as a pot-hunter. The problem of pot-hunting has existed since archeology began, but it has grown much more acute during the recent years of economic depression, when profitable employment has been hard to find. Today it is a serious menace to the future of the science of archeology, with hundreds of the most promising archeological sites throughout the country being robbed of their scientific value by men who dig for the money it will bring them.

Laws and federal departmental regulations exist for the protection of antiquities on public lands, but they have as little effect as had the recent law of prohibition, despite the severe penalties provided. They cannot be applied to private lands, although the destruction of archeological evidence on private land is no less a blow to the science than if the land were under federal jurisdiction.

The only way to stop the pot-hunter is to deprive him of his market. That market consists principally in museums and in other institutions of learning and research. There is comparatively little private buying of archeological loot.

Southwest Museum hereby gives notice that it will not buy any archeological specimens except under the following conditions:

- 1. Objects brought to light in non-archeological excavation, as road cuts, excavation for buildings, etc., or by such uncontrollable natural forces as erosion, wave action, etc.
- 2. Collections known to have been scientifically gathered. (The expression "scientifically gathered" signifies that the material has been collected by one trained in archeology, that accurate field notes have been kept and photographs made, and a report on the work prepared.)
- 3. Collections known not to have been gathered contrary to law.

Southwest Museum invites all institutions and societies which have an interest in archeology or any related science to take a public stand against the growing menace of pot-hunting. A word from you will be appreciated.

F. W. Hodge, Director Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, California

## Financial Statement of the Frutchey Mound Excavation Project

### Gross Receipts

	Gross Receipts
	Item A - Cash Contributions:
e	Works Progress Administration\$802.03 State Museum409.18
	Membership Contributions:
	Harry T. Davis
	Total Cash Contributions\$1,468.52
•	Item B - Other Contributions and Services:
	State Museum (Supplies and equipment)\$ 117.24 Department of Conservation (Photo.service). 25.00 University of North Carolina (Truck service). 30.00 Harry T. Davis (Travel expenses)

<sup>\*</sup> Estimated value.

### Gross Disbursements

### Item A - Cash Expenditures:

Labor. \$861.99 Car Rent. 66.00 Car upkeep and expenses 140.35 Travel expenses (H.T.D.) 23.00 Food supplies. 330.75 Photographic supplies 16.51 Miscellaneous 29.92	\$1,468.52·
*Item B - Other Expenditures (against Item B above):	
Equipment\$ 117.24 Photographic service\$ 25.00	
Truck service	
Director's salary	925.74
Grand Total	\$2,394.26
Bills outstanding	30.00

### \*Note:

Item B. is an estimate of the value of the equipment donated or loaned and the value of the services that were given without charge to the project.

### ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH CAROLINA

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### Ex-officio Members

Crittenden, C. C. Etheridge, Bruce

Judd, Neil M.

Swanton, John R.

Frutchey, L. D.

Frutchey, Mrs. L. D.

Hoey, Governor Clyde R.

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Mount Gilead

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