



# Meade County Archeological Society Newsletter

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January 2010, Issue 23

**December Happenings:** Our meeting last month was presented by Beverly Furnival. It concerned the Cahokia Mound Site, and the lives and culture of the Mississippian People. It was well received by an enthusiastic crowd. In addition to the talk, there was a video followed by a question and answer period.

**NEXT MEETING: January 4, 6:00 pm**

**PLACE: Meade County Library Annex**

**Program:** Our January meeting will be hosted by Gerald Fischer, Shirley Brown, Steve Straney and Andy Woolfolk. Gerry and Shirley will tell stories and present slides concerning little known Civil War guerrilla raiders across the "Heartland" of Kentucky. Steve and Andy will show the weapons they used and demonstrate their features and battle strength.

## **Upcoming Program at the Falls of the Ohio Interpretive Center:**

January 30, 2:00 pm      *Mysterious Mummies of China*

For the Chinese archaeologist who stumbled on them, it was the discovery of a lifetime: In one tomb, a priestess, tall and blond, with exquisite hands—and unmistakably European features. Nearby were red-bearded mummies with fine tartan clothing and feathers in their caps.

What were these people doing in China's Takla Makan desert 3,000 years ago?

Silent for centuries, the voices of the mysterious mummies of China are beginning to be heard. These eerily lifelike specimens, perfectly preserved by the desert sands, are revealing startling new information about the contact between East and West in the ancient world—evidence so provocative the current Chinese regime is struggling to keep it under wraps.

Set off on a journey along the Old Silk Road as scientists search for clues: Dancing fertility figures etched in rock, identical to images found in Bulgaria and the Ukraine. A remote cave lined with drawings of the Tocharians—perhaps descendents of the mummy people—shown with red hair and blue eyes and words in a European script.

It's a jolting journey through time that leads to a captivating question: Could a lost European people have breached China's fabled isolation some 1,000 years earlier than anyone thought?

# News And Notes

**Notes from Our President:** Lithic means stone. The lithic materials used by the Indians was chosen in the same way we choose wood for certain products. For example, we choose Walnut or Oak for furniture making because of its beauty, and durability. We choose Cedar or Cypress for fence posts because of their resistance to rot. Hickory for- ever has been used for axe and other tool handles because of its tight grain and toughness. The Native Americans knew the purpose of different woods as well. They also knew the lithic differences.

Flint and Chert are types of Silica stone. Within this type of stone there are numerous sub-types and colors, but generally Chert is a Silica Stone that is opaque. Flint is a silica stone that is translucent. These stones were important to the Indians because they fractured in a predictable way. This allowed an individual to learn how to strike a piece and shape it into a projectile point, spear head, hoe, or other artifact. Silica stone is brittle like glass but also can be made as sharp as glass, making it ideal for arrowheads, knives, and spears. But this same ability to be sharpened, made it unusable for cutting trees. It would shatter if used to cut trees.

The Indians choose the stones for axes and celts (un-grooved axes), that had a hardness, but were not so brittle as Flint and Chert. Most of these were river cobbles pushed into the Ohio Valley by the glaciers. These stones could be shaped by chipping and abrading making them ideal stones for hammering on Flint and Chert to make arrowheads, making axes to cut wood, pestles to grind corn and nuts, and to fashion celts.

To be sure the Indians made ceremonial arrowheads out of exotic materials such as quartz and volcanic glass. They also used Slate for gorgets, Catlinite for pipes, as well as shells for beads and ornaments. The Indians knew the properties of the materials they used just as we know the properties of the metals we use today. Aluminum is used for air planes, while steel is used in making automobiles. These ancient people knew as much about their business as we know about ours. Never think they were technologically deprived. At the time they lived their technology was the most advanced in North America.