



Meade County Archeological Society Newsletter

March 2010, Issue 25

February Happenings: Our annual open house took place in February at the Library Annex in spite of the snowy conditions of the previous week. We had a good turnout, too! Tables were set up to display artifacts, genealogy, and Civil War items. Talks were given on lime kilns, petroglyphs and Civil War medicine. Pizza and popcorn were enjoyed by all.



NEXT MEETING: March 1, Monday, at 6:00 pm

PLACE: Meade County Library Annex

Program: Planning Summer Excavations, presented by Gerry Fischer and Steve Straney.

This month's program will be "hands on", where we will learn the procedures for doing an archeological excavation in the field. This session will be of interest not only to those who plan to go on our summer dig, but also to those who are just interested in the tools and methods of archeology. We will learn about layout, testing and excavation procedures. We will discuss how interpretation and analysis is done. We will practice being "detectives" and how to deduce ancient lifestyles from little bits and pieces of archeological finds. This will be a lot of fun. Plan to be there, especially if you plan to go on a dig this summer.

Upcoming Program at the Falls of the Ohio Interpretive Center:

March 27, 2:00 pm *Atlantis (Mystery of the Minoans)*

Of all the tales of legendary lost worlds, the story of one fabled civilization in particular exerts an almost mystical hold on the modern imagination. While the earliest mention of the fantastic island realm of Atlantis dates to the writings of Plato, the modern search for clues to the "real" Atlantis begins in the 1800s—and offers astonishing evidence of the truth behind the myth.

At a time when the glories of classical Greece were thought to have emerged full blown onto the world stage, Englishman Arthur Evans found tantalizing hints of an earlier, advanced society on the

island of Crete. His renegade theory would eventually lead him to a dazzling archaeological wonder: the vast Knossos palace complex and its builders, the pre-classical culture Evans dubbed the Minoans. It was a discovery that would turn scientific doctrine on its head—and turn tales like that of King Minos and the Minotaur's Labyrinth from fiction to fact.

This film embarks on an expedition through time to witness an extraordinary intersection of myth and reality. This is an intriguing story that echoes Atlantean fable right down to the cataclysmic fate of the Minoan world.

News And Notes

Note from Our President: It is with great sadness that we announce to our readers the passing of Jane Willis. She was a great supporter of our society, a past speaker at our meetings, president of the local chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, author and researcher on Meade County history and genealogy, and a true Meade County icon.

Copper men: Archaeologists uncover Stone Age copper workshop near Monk's Mound, Cahokia *excerpt from News-Democrat* Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010 **BY GEORGE PAWLACZYK**

COLLINSVILLE -- About 800 years ago, in a large room lit by a wood fire, fierce-looking men bedecked in bright feathers and polished copper ornaments gathered to smoke and talk.

Their intricate jewelry -- fanciful objects hammered from chunks of naturally occurring raw copper -- reflected the firelight. A variety of these ancient Mississippian-era copper decorations have turned up throughout Illinois and the Southeast United States, including triangular, 8-inch long-earrings embossed at the ends with a human face, headdress ornaments depicting stylized birds, even diminutive but carefully crafted copper ovals that may have been applied to a ritualistic leather belt or cape. When they are unearthed, these antiquities are covered with a green or gray patina.

Today, traffic on Collinsville Road passes a short distance from the collection of over more than 80 mounds where, archaeologists say, this American Stone Age scene is thought to have regularly occurred. But there is something unique about a particular excavated area beside a rather plain looking mound -- Mound 34 -- that lies about 200 yards east of the world famous and huge Monk's Mound at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. The carefully sifted soil at this excavation has revealed evidence of the only known copper workshop from the Mississippian-era, a culture that peaked about 1250 A.D. throughout the middle and southern portions of America. The overall Illinois state site was the location of a large, prehistoric city of perhaps 20,000 that archaeologists call Cahokia.

"It's the only one (copper workshop) that's been discovered," said James A. Brown, professor of archaeology at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Brown and his research partner John Kelly, a lecturer in archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis, have for eight years led an investigation into finding the workshop and then carefully excavating the often minute particles and bits of copper that were left behind.

Brown said that the copper workshop was purely for religious purposes, to produce ornaments for those who participated in significant ceremonies that probably occurred atop the mounds.

"They are all depictions of other worldly beings," he said of the symbols and figures found in copper as well as on pieces of pottery and decorated shells.

to read the full article go to: <http://www.bnd.com/2010/02/16/1134050/men-of-copper.html>