Fall Pilgrimage
Saturday, October 23
Moundville Archaeological Park
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The AHA newsletter is designed and printed by Davis Direct, Montgomery, Alabama.

Founded in 1947, the Alabama Historical Association is the oldest statewide historical society in Alabama. The AHA provides opportunities for meaningful engagement with the past through publications, meetings, historical markers, and other programs. The AHA is a volunteer-led and membership-supported organization. Our members are from every walk of life but share a common interest in Alabama history and a belief in its value for society today. Visit www.alabamahistory.net for more information.
Kathryn H. Braund  
* Auburn University  

Our pilgrimage this year will take us to Moundville, a mysterious complex of Mississippian mounds on the Black Warrior River. In addition to exploring the mounds, we will tour the newly renovated and redesigned Jones Archaeological Museum, which showcases significant artifacts, including one of the most famous of all Mississippian objects, the Rattlesnake disk.

While the high-tech museum and earthen mounds are sure to be a hit with people of all ages, for me, the mounds and museum represent much more than a vestige of Alabama’s distant past. The archaeologists and anthropologists and ethnohistorians who have developed this site’s interpretative features are among our nation’s best and brightest scholars.

Their work is multidisciplinary, drawing on archaeology, folklore, ethnobotany, iconography, and a myriad of other specialized fields to interpret the lives of the people who lived in and around the complex. And their work reveals more than an understanding of why those distant peoples built mounds and carved hand-eye symbols. Moundville provides striking evidence that the best scholarship is a collaborative effort that draws from a variety of sources and disciplines to make complex subjects understandable and accessible.

For some, archaeology and history seem to be very distinct fields. At Moundville, we will see ample proof that they are not. We are all after the same thing, and one of my goals as AHA President is to showcase the various ways that Alabama archaeology is an integral part of the pursuit of history. Moundville’s story—like all great history—is compelling, dynamic, intellectually rigorous, and most importantly, accessible and engaging.

Moundville takes us to a time before this was Alabama—a time when peoples culturally different and distinct from Europeans related to and managed this land and its resources. And this points to another theme I hope will be obvious in the coming year: our history is multi-cultural and multi-faceted.

Soon, our state will commemorate a triad of events that has been dubbed “Becoming Alabama”: the bi-centennial of the Creek Indian War, the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, and the fiftieth anniversary of many events associated with the Civil Rights Movement. These events—like Moundville—point to diversity and multiculturalism and the need for innovative scholarly approaches to complex topics that resonate with the general public. Public history, in all its diverse forms, will play an important role in educating the current generation about our shared past and shaping the way the next generation regards, reveres, and reinvents it.

Our association, the oldest and largest historical organization in the state, will continue to play a leading role in supporting scholarship as Alabamians commemorate “Becoming Alabama” at a variety of venues over the next few years. As we move into the twenty-first century, I think taking the time to learn the many lessons of Moundville is as good a way as any to start the journey.
Around A.D. 900, along river valleys of southeastern North America, a distinct Native American culture began to emerge. With complex religious beliefs, beautiful art, extensive trade networks, construction of great public works and large towns, this culture would mark the climax of perhaps 20,000 years of prehistoric cultural development in North America. Archaeologists call this rich and unique culture Mississippian. Moundville, in west central Alabama, was one of the greatest of these Mississippian centers.

American Indians had previously lived in the Southeast for thousands of years, mostly as nomadic hunters and gatherers. With the development of full-scale floodplain agriculture in the eighth to tenth centuries, however, more permanent settlements began to be established, some with several thousand people. The emergence of Mississippian culture is marked most visibly by the construction of large earthen, flat-topped pyramids that served as platforms for civic and ceremonial buildings and the homes of the nobility. Mississippian also developed complex social and political systems, with clear and extreme social stratification. Mississippian political and ceremonial centers, like Moundville, served as capitals for chiefdoms that spanned up and down rivers and tributaries, encompassing many smaller villages as part of the larger political and economic system. Besides moundbuilding, social ranking, and complex political systems, other Mississippian cultural traits include the appearance of shell-tempered pottery, use of bows and arrows, long distance trade of raw materials and finished goods, and increased territoriality and warfare.

Moundville, located in west central Alabama on the Black Warrior River, is internationally recognized by

\[\text{Mound B is 60 feet tall and was probably the location of the chief's residence.}\]
scholars as one of North America’s most significant archaeological sites. In the 13th century, around 3,000 Mississippian people lived in this powerful and carefully planned capital town, an additional 7,000 occupying a 75-mile strip along Alabama’s Black Warrior River forming the core of the Moundville chiefdom. At Moundville, they constructed 28 earthen mounds that served as building platforms for civic and ceremonial structures and the homes of nobles. At its peak, Moundville can be considered America’s largest city north of Mexico.

The Moundville society existed from about AD 1050 to 1500, reaching its peak in the 13th century. The site contains at least two dozen constructed earthen mounds, the tallest sixty feet in height. Most of the mounds are neatly arranged around a large rectangular plaza where archaeology has revealed virtually no structural remains. Based on later ethnographic evidence, this open plaza could have been used for recreational games such as stickball, or it could have served as the gathering place for large religious events, such as the Green Corn Ceremony. Hundreds of houses were clustered around the mounds that formed this rectangular perimeter around the plaza. Beyond this perimeter was a bastioned palisade surrounding the site on three sides spanning a total distance of approximately one mile. Many small villages in the chiefdom were active participants in the economy, politics, and religion of Moundville. More distant villages, within perhaps 100 miles of Moundville, may have been strongly connected to the capital by trade or even by kinship, but were likely too distant to be considered active participants in the affairs of the chiefdom.
Moundville Indians produced spectacular art, much of which was religiously inspired. Archaeologists have discovered stunning figurines, pendants, ceremonial axes, and smoking pipes carved out of stone; painted and incised pottery; effigy pots; incised shell gorgets; incised stone disks; and embossed copper pendants and gorgets. While prehistoric Native Americans never smelted metal, they became quite adept at hammering and embossing copper. Many other types of art vanished from the archaeological record, but ethnographic information from other Mississippian sites at the time of early European contact helps substantiate that they were masters of woodcarving, basketry, and painting. The level of skill necessary to produce Mississippian art indicates that there was craft specialization among individuals. Indeed, Moundville archaeologists who study the ceramics intensely suggest that they can recognize the work of specific artists based on slight stylistic variations.

It is believed that one way that the Mississippian nobility held their power was by controlling trade of exotic raw materials and finished works of art. Objects made of copper, mica, galena, and marine shell have been found at Mississippian sites hundreds, and even thousands of miles from their source. Much copper from the Great Lakes area, marine shell from southern Florida, and quartz from the Appalachian Mountains have been found at Moundville. The trade of prestige goods helped maintain political ties and provided nobles with symbols of power. Because many of these objects also had religious importance, possession of them may have fostered the allegiance of members of
the chiefdom.

Moundville art is adorned with complex symbols that provide a glimpse into the religious beliefs of these ancient people. Perhaps the most common Moundville symbol is the mysterious “hand and eye.” Several archaeologists and folklorists have recently theorized that the “eye” in the palm of the hand is actually a portal into the afterlife. Some Native American stories explain that after people die, they leap off of this earth and enter the “Path of Souls.” Each of the points of light in the Milky Way are the dead making their way into the afterlife, sometimes facing various challenges, on this Path of Souls. Several stories have been identified that refer to entering the Path of Souls through the hand of the Creator, or in one case, an ancient warrior. By testing this folklore against what is known about Moundville from archaeology, several scholars have theorized that Moundville may have been considered to be the portal into the afterlife. We
know from archaeology that even after Moundville was almost completely abandoned, people continued to bring their dead, by the hundreds, to be buried at the site.

The University of Alabama now operates the Moundville site as a 326 acre educational park with a museum and interpretive exhibits. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the Jones Archaeological Museum at Moundville, a historic structure in its own right, in 1939. Besides developing the site as a park, the CCC conducted large scale excavations in the 1930s, unearthing an incredible collection of artifacts. The park has just completed a $5 million renovation and expansion of the museum which not only displays many of the treasures found at the site, but brings the culture of the Moundville people to life through engaging, immersive exhibits.

Nearly ten years ago, with funding from a National Endowment for the Humanities planning grant, the park brought together some of the nation’s most respected archaeologists, Native American representatives, a folklorist, museum educators, and exhibit designers to develop a plan for a new permanent exhibit in the Moundville museum. The exhibits had barely changed since 1971, so decades of research and new interpretations were missing from the museum. Typical of older archaeological museums, previous exhibits at Moundville focused on basic lifeways topics such as pottery making, weapons, and categories of artifact styles. No real story was told and the more complex themes such as Mississippian politics, religion, art, warfare, and diplomacy were mostly ignored. The exhibit planning team recognized that while lifeways topics are an important part of the story for any culture, including the Moundville people, these are not the traits that define the richness of the Moundville culture. It was decided that in order to present a more complete picture of how the Moundville people lived, the exhibit would have to move beyond the limited archaeological record to also rely on other disciplines such as history, ethnography, and folklore.

The exhibit planning team set two overarching goals: first to tell the Moundville story in a dramatic themed setting that immerses the visitor in the sights, sounds, and textures of ancient Moundville, and second, to display the unique Moundville artifacts in ways that reflect the sensibilities and sophistication of the people who created them. The resulting new exhibition, “Lost Realm of the Black Warrior” opened May 15, 2010.
It is a stunning display of several hundred outstanding Moundville artifacts presented in a rich, multisensory environment. Exhibits include recreated Moundville scenes with life-like human figures made from lifecasts of living Southeastern Indians. Visitors also experience a multimedia special effects presentation in a recreation of a Moundville earthlodge. Here a projection of a “Maker of Medicine” appears seemingly in thin air to tell authentic stories that provide a glimpse into the rich belief system of the Moundville people. Most importantly, the exhibition includes a number of spectacular loaned artifacts from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian that were found at Moundville over 100 years ago but have not been back in Alabama since they were found in 1906. The most famous example is the stone Moundville Duck Bowl, one of the most important prehistoric pieces of art ever discovered in the United States.

Over a century of research at Moundville has revealed a wealth of information. New methods and scientific tests have resulted in new interpretations. As a result, questions are now being formulated that could not have been imagined several decades ago. Only six percent of the Moundville site has been excavated. While future research will provide additional information, we can be certain that it will also raise more questions about the lives of these ancient Alabamians.

*Bill Bomar is director of Moundville Archaeological Park.*
The 2010 Pilgrimage program will feature a presentation by Vernon James Knight, Jr., Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama and author of *Mound Excavations at Moundville: Architecture, Elites, and Social Order*, recently released by the University of Alabama Press. The publisher’s editorial board chose the book for its prestigious Anne B. and James B. McMillan Prize, which recognizes the most deserving publication in Alabama or Southern history or culture.

Knight, one of the nation’s preeminent experts on the Mississippian period, will discuss the latest archaeological findings at Moundville, as well as the social and cultural complexities of one of the largest and most complex of the mound sites of pre-contact North America.

Knight is a native of Sylacauga, Alabama. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Florida in 1981 and joined the faculty of the University of Alabama in 1988. He has done field research in the southeastern United States and has a current project in eastern Cuba. His research interests are in prehistoric “social archaeology,” and in the period of early European-Indian contact. In addition to his latest book on Moundville, Knight is the author or editor of numerous books and articles, including *The Search for Mabila: The Decisive Battle between Hernando de Soto and Chief Tascalusa*.

“Moundville is one of the most important ancient sites in North America, and this book brings our understanding of it to an entirely new level. Knight’s research is absolutely first-rate. Apart from what the book teaches us about Moundville’s history, it also describes mound-excavation methods that are innovative and will be emulated by archaeologists for years to come. Simply put, this work is destined to become a landmark of North American archaeology.”—Vincas P. Steponaitis, author of *Ceramics, Chronology, and Community Patterns: An Archaeological Study at Moundville* and coeditor of *Archaeology of the Moundville Chiefdom*
2010 FALL PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE
Saturday, October 23, 2010
Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama

8:30 a.m. .......................................................Registration, Coffee, Book Sales
10:00 a.m. .......................................................... Program
11:30 a.m. ............................................................. Lunch on site
12:30 to 3:30 p.m. ..........Tours of Moundville Archaeological Park and Jones Archaeological Museum

Register for the pilgrimage program using the tear-out form found in this newsletter. Please postmark your registration by October 11, 2010.

Pilgrimage to Include Pies

AHA Pilgrims will enjoy a delicious lunch from one of the state’s most unique restaurants: the PieLab of Greensboro. Featured in The Birmingham News, Tuscaloosa News, Good Magazine, and nominated for a prestigious James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Restaurant Design, the restaurant—an experimental pie shop and design studio—will prepare lunch and dessert pies using their made-from-scratch recipes.
Moundville Archaeological Park
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, AL 35474-6413

The Park is located 13 miles south of Tuscaloosa on AL Hwy. 69. From I-20/59, take exit 71A and proceed 12 miles.
**Courtyard by Marriott**  
4115 Courtney Drive  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405  
(205) 750-8384

Call and mention the AHA by October 1st and receive a special rate of $89 plus tax.

**Fairfield Inn by Marriott**  
4101 Courtney Drive  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405  
(205) 366-0900

Call and mention the AHA by October 1st and receive a special rate of $79 plus tax.

**Hilton Garden Inn**  
800 Hollywood Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405  
(205) 722-0360

Call and mention the AHA by October 1st and receive a special rate of $99 plus tax.
The Alabama Historical Association invites proposals for individual papers to be given at its 64th annual meeting on Mobile Bay’s Eastern Shore on April 14-16, 2011. This meeting is open to scholars, educators, public historians, students, and local historians who share an interest in the history of Alabama.

Proposals must include a one-page abstract of a 20-minute presentation on an Alabama history topic and a CV or resume including author’s e-mail address, telephone number, postal address, and academic affiliation (if any). Electronic submissions are preferred.

Presenters will be required to register for the conference and be members of the AHA by the time of the meeting. The committee gives preference to authors who have not presented papers at the annual meeting within the last three years. Please send your submissions and any questions you may have to the program committee chair:

Dr. Kari Frederickson  
Department of History  
Box 870212  
University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487  
(205) 348-1862  
kfrederi@as.ua.edu

Proposals will be accepted until October 1, 2010.
Committee Seeks Nominations for the 2011 Virginia V. Hamilton Award

The Alabama Historical Association’s Virginia V. Hamilton Award honors contributions to Alabama history that promote an appreciation of and better understanding of Alabama history among the general public. The award is named in honor of preeminent Alabama historian Dr. Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton and past recipients include the following:

1991  Michael Thomason  
1993  Ed Bridges  
1996  Robert Stewart  
1999  Hardy Jackson  
2001  Mary Jane McDaniel and Lee Allen  
2003  Leah Rawls Atkins  
2005  Wayne Flynt  
2007  B. B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga  
2009  Jay Lamar

Letters of nomination (not to exceed two pages) should be sent to the following committee chair by January 15, 2011:

Dr. Dan J. Puckett  
Troy University  
136 Catoma Street, Room 110  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
dpuckett45442@troy.edu  
(334) 241-5478
GRADUATE STUDENTS INVITED TO APPLY FOR CLINTON JACKSON AND EVELYN COLEY RESEARCH GRANT

The Clinton Jackson and Evelyn Coley Research Grant from the AHA supports graduate student research with a $500 award given every other year. Any graduate student conducting research on an Alabama-related topic may apply, and the next award will be given at the annual meeting on April 15, 2011.

Applications should include a statement of the student’s intended plan of work, a letter of reference from the chairman of the department in which the student is enrolled, and/or a letter of reference from the student’s major professor.

Please submit nominations to committee chair Mark Palmer at Alabama Department of Archives and History, P.O. Box 300100, Montgomery AL 36130-0100 or by email at mark.palmer@archives.alabama.gov.

Applications must be received by the committee chair by February 28, 2011.

Jennifer Newman, previous award recipient, presents on her research at the 2009 annual meeting in Tuscaloosa.
The AHA would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support!

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The sixty-third annual meeting held in Gadsden on April 15-17 was a huge success, thanks to the leadership of the Etowah Historical Society and the hospitality of countless individuals.
AHA DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY
PRELIMINARY RESULTS

by Marty Olliff and Robert Burroughs

In her textbook, *On Doing Local History*, Carol Kammen wrote that “prior to 1976, local historical societies . . . membership was restricted by habit to local elites . . . and to the elderly—or at least those over the age of fifty.” We found this intriguing and wondered if the same held true today. So we did what academics always do—we searched the literature. Finding nothing, we asked the National Council on Public History and the American Association for State and Local History if they knew of any statistical studies that answered our questions. Again, we were unsuccessful.

Obviously, we had to roll up our sleeves and do our own research, which led the 2009 AHA Board of Directors to approve our survey to find out who made up the membership of the AHA. Our method was simple enough—we devised a sixteen-question survey that asked about occupation, marital status, family income, gender, race, education, community size, AHA membership type, length of time as a member and as an Alabama resident, and satisfaction with the Association. We also encouraged comments. The AHA Executive Committee vetted the questions, then the Troy University Institutional Review Board approved our research design to ensure responders’ anonymity.

To test the validity and usability of the initial questions and mechanisms for protecting your privacy, we conducted a preliminary survey of twenty-nine AHA Board of Directors and Officers in March and April 2010. Twenty of the twenty-nine responded for a return rate of approximately seventy percent.

Beginning in May 2010, with financial support from the Troy University Faculty Development Committee, we sent the survey to one-quarter of the AHA membership selected at random. Returns are still arriving and as of this writing we have not begun to analyze the results, but we would like to report on what we discovered about the AHA Board and officer corps.

Below is a sample of the preliminary survey’s results, reported in percentages. We will make a longer report of our general survey findings in the future.

Robert Burroughs is an associate professor of sociology and Marty Olliff is an archivist and associate professor of history, both at Troy University Dothan Campus.
This report marks the completion of my second year as editor of *The Alabama Review*—and a total of a dozen years as editor of quarterly historical journals. I can say without reservation that, while the job can be time-consuming and challenging, the experience has been rewarding for me personally and professionally. As always, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with the *Review* and I look forward to serving the Association as editor in the years to come.

I’m sure it will come as no surprise to you that the process of getting out four issues per year, on time, is far from a one-person operation. I am, therefore, as always, grateful for the effort that Carey Cauthen, our associate editor, puts into each issue. I can’t think of anyone more capable, more thorough, and more professional. The same goes for our graduate assistant, Tommy Brown, who has the unglamorous responsibility for tracking down book reviewers, checking out citations, dates, sources, and all the other details that result in a quality, on-time publication.

We received 13 manuscript articles in 2009, which is down from the number of submissions in 2008. Frankly, even though we have a healthy backlog of manuscripts accepted and awaiting publication, we need more people to submit manuscripts to ensure quality articles in the future. If you have an idea for an article, or have a manuscript that’s been sitting on your desk for a while, let us know and send it to us. We’re here to work with you.

Joining the *Review’s* Editorial Board last year were Drs. Bertis English of Alabama State University and Kari Fredrickson of the University of Alabama. Dr. David Alsobrook of the Museum of Mobile and George Rable of the University of Alabama kindly agreed to remain on the board for second terms. Without their expertise, as well as that of our many “outside” referees, we might still have a journal, but it would not be up to the scholarly standards we all take for granted.

We have a new Memorandum of Agreement between the AHA and Auburn University that renews our contract for the *Review* for another five years. Many thanks to Auburn, especially to the History Department and its chair Charles Israel, for their support of the *Review*, which now will now extend for a total of 20 years to 2015.

As part of the new Memorandum of Agreement, the AHA doubled its honorarium from $4,000 per year to $8,000 per year. Once more, thanks to state representative Mike Hubbard we also have a commitment for another year of state funding, although as this report goes to press we aren’t sure how much that will be reduced from last year’s allotment.

Congratulations to William Warren Rogers Jr., who won the Association’s Milo B. Howard Jr. Award for the most outstanding article to appear in the *Review* over the past two years. His “‘For the Destruction of Radicalism’: A Reconstruction Case Study,” which explores the complex post-Civil War politics of county seat location in Marengo County, was published in the July 2009 issue.

We’re in the process of putting together a theme issue of the *Review* marking the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Ken Noe of Auburn University has kindly volunteered to edit the issue, which will be out in April of next year. We’ll follow that with another special issue in 2012 commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Creek War, both of which played formative roles in early Alabama history. We hope you enjoy them.

by Bill Trimble
The Alabama Historical Association began sponsoring historical markers as early as 1950, and a standing AHA marker committee was created in 1952. The committee’s duties are to encourage and assist interested parties in the purchase and erection of markers for historical sites. The committee also serves to check the accuracy of information carried in the proposed marker texts and to attest to a site’s historic importance. The distinctive design of the Alabama Historical Association marker is a double-faced case aluminum plate with a baked enamel finish. The plate has a deep blue background and the text is portrayed in gold letters. The insignia at the top is the Alabama flag, the St. Andrew’s cross, in red, white and gold.

For more information regarding historical markers, please visit www.alabamahistory.net

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