

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA MUSEUMS

MUSEUM

SPRING 2023 • NO. 63

Chronicle

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MUSEUM

Chronicle

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Executive Director
The University of Alabama Museums

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*Cover Image: Hoop Dancer and Moundville Native American Festival performer,
Lyndon Alec (of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas).
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From the DIRECTOR

The word “unique” is often overused, or perhaps misused. By definition, the term should refer to something that is one-of-a-kind, the only one of a particular type. Technically speaking, something cannot be “very unique;” it either is or it isn’t. In this edition of the *Museum Chronicle*, we highlight the uniqueness of The University of Alabama Museums. We don’t have to exaggerate when we describe UA Museums as unique. For example, we have many truly unique objects in our collections including holotypes (the original specimen upon which the description and name of a new species was based), one-of-a-kind works of Native American art, the Waterford crystal replica of Coach Bryant’s hat, and the only meteor known to have struck a human being.

We also have some truly unique programs. The annual Moundville Native American Festival, usually attended by 10,000 people, features a unique blend of traditional and contemporary Southeastern Native American cultures with the backdrop of the most visually stunning ancient mound site in the United States. At the Warner Transportation Museum, over 250 visitors attended *An Evening at the Pool* in conjunction with the community wide “Flow Tuscaloosa” project. Special lighting outlined the edges of the historic pool and guests mimicked swimming before lighting up Tuscaloosa’s Riverwalk with lanterns they made in appreciation of our water resources in Flow Tuscaloosa’s lantern parade.

The University of Alabama Museums also provide unique opportunities for students to apply their academic studies to public education or gain practical communication skills in ways

unavailable anywhere else on campus. William Smith, a student volunteer at the Gorgas House, applied his original research to create a fantastic exhibit, *William Crawford Gorgas and the Panama Canal*. Other students, like Jenny McClain and Morgan Potts, have created unique, and often hilarious, social media content to bring history and natural sciences to life while increasing awareness of UA Museums.

Museums, in general, are unique as both places of learning and centers for the expansion of knowledge through object-based research. Of all the different types of museums, college and university museums are unique in the way they connect the scholarship of the academy to broad audiences through exhibits and public programs. While some museum professionals are drawn to museum work for the opportunity to study and care for unique objects, it was the uniqueness of the museum educational medium that drew me. It is such a thrill to see the excitement in our museum visitors as they interact with real and often unique objects, specimens, or works of art. Researchers in informal or “free-choice” learning are only starting



Bill Bomar, Executive Director,
University of Alabama Museums
Photo Credit: Mary Kathryn Carpenter,
Strategic Communications,
The University of Alabama

to fully understand the enormous and layered impact that museum experiences have over the course of a lifetime.

The University of Alabama Museums could not do all of the amazing work that you will read about in this issue without the support of our members. Within the next year, we will be restructuring our membership program to offer even more opportunities and benefits to our members beyond the usual discounts and invitations to special programs. Stay tuned for details! If you are not already a supporting member, please consider joining today. I hope to see you soon in one of our museums or at one of our programs!

BILL BOMAR, PH.D.
Walter and Hazel Jones
Executive Director

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A Current Through Time: UA Museums Receives Largest Gift in Its History to Honor Walter and Hazel Jones

Written by **BECKY ROBINSON**, The University of Alabama Division of Advancement and *The Giving Effect*

In 1919, the future of geology in the state of Alabama was forever altered with the chance meeting of Dr. Douglas R. Semmes, a geology professor at The University of Alabama, and Walter B. Jones, a student pursuing a master's degree in geology. Douglas and Walter became fast friends and life-long colleagues; Douglas even introduced Walter to his future wife, Hazel.

Walter went on to serve as the state geologist of Alabama and as the director of museums at the Capstone, transforming the landscape of Moundville Archaeological Park and setting up the department for

numerous successes through the years.

One of Walter's three sons, Warren Jones, recalls running barefoot

By establishing the Walter and Hazel Jones Endowed Directorship for UA Museums, Tom and Pat ensured a remarkable future for the museum system at the Capstone.

through the corridors of Smith Hall and spending countless hours as a child unearthing pottery at Moundville.

"Moundville was just a special place to all of us," Warren said. "On the weekends, Dad would say, 'I need you boys to go to Moundville and bush hog.'"

We didn't get paid or anything, but it was a duty and an honor."

Growing up, Douglas Semmes' son, Tom Semmes, spent a great deal of time with the Jones family.

"I fondly remember summer stays with the Joneses in the mid-1950s," said Tom, a 1964 University of

Alabama graduate. "We would go on cave explorations, trips to a duck camp on the Tombigbee River and walk the Coosa River cataloging Native American sites."

"I know that Mother and Dad — who was Tom's godfather — were very fond of Tom, and treated him like their own son," Warren said. "They took him fishing and hunting and camping the same as they did with us growing up."

As Walter Jones' academic influence grew, so did Tom's appreciation of the Jones family. As president of the Semmes Foundation — a charitable foundation established by his father, Douglas, in 1952 — Tom and his wife, Pat, began giving back to the Capstone in recognition of the Jones family's numerous accomplishments.

A WAVE THAT BEGINS DEEP WITHIN

In 1984, Walter's son Doug became the director of UA Museums. As luck would have it, he maintained a strong friendship with Tom Semmes over the years, which cultivated the early gifts from the Semmes family.

What began as an initial gift to name the Walter B. Jones Memorial Scholarship in 1982, soon blossomed into several named gifts, including the 2007 pledge to renovate the Jones Archaeological Museum at Moundville, the 2010 Douglas E. Jones Geological Sciences Advisory Board Endowed Scholarship and the 2018 Hazel Phelps Jones Award in STEM studies.

At the 2012 dedication of yet another Semmes gift to Moundville — this one allowing for the construction of steps on Mound P behind the museum—Warren Jones had an opportunity to reflect on what Tom and Pat's gift would mean to his late father.

"During the Great Depression, I think Dad mortgaged our house twice to buy parts of the park that were being cultivated," Warren said. "I would come to Moundville with Dad, and now and then, I would see him giving a thousand-yard stare with a smile on his face. I never knew what it meant.

I never knew what he was thinking, but now I know. This is what he was thinking about. This is the Moundville he was envisioning back when I was a young child and a teenager working down there. It's becoming what he was dreaming."

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE

When The Rising Tide Capital Campaign launched in September 2021, Tom and Pat Semmes were not only serving as members of the College of Arts and Sciences Campaign Steering Committee, but would soon receive another opportunity to carry on the legacy of the Jones family. By establishing the Walter and Hazel Jones Endowed Directorship for UA Museums, Tom and Pat ensured a remarkable future for the museum system at the Capstone.

"Tom and Pat Semmes have been supportive of the museums for many years," said Dr. William Bomar, the executive director of The University of Alabama Museums. "Tom is very respectful of the contribution that the Jones family made to the University, to the preservation of Moundville

and to the University Museums. I really believe he views this endowed directorship as an opportunity to continue that honor."

Bomar said he plans to use the \$1.5 million endowment to address "critical needs" within the museums that normal funding will not cover.

Furthermore, he said endowments such as these allow directors the ability to reach a wider and more diverse audience in

the community through exhibits, public programming and academic research projects.

"University Museums play an important role in connecting our academic work at UA to a broader public. We expose people to the kinds of academic work who would not have that exposure otherwise, and I feel that's extremely important."

For Warren Jones, Tom and Pat's gifts are a wonderful way to see his parents' legacy continued at a place so dear to him.

"They're a great couple," Warren said. "The ways they have honored Mother and Dad is just fantastic. My family and I are so appreciative." ■

This is the Moundville he was envisioning back when I was a young child and a teenager working down there. It's becoming what he was dreaming."

Student Spotlights

Written by **REBECCA JOHNSON**



MORGAN POTTS

Morgan Potts is a senior at The University of Alabama, studying Chemical Engineering with a minor in History. She became involved with UA Museums when she started as a student docent, giving tours and helping with tasks around the Gorgas House Museum.

Morgan has been integral in helping with the UA Museums' TikTok account since the Fall semester of 2020. Since then, she has been creating and managing video content and won a 2023 Silver ADDY Award from the American Advertising Awards for the Gorgas House Museum's Spirit Week TikTok campaign during Halloween.

What was it that inspired you to first get involved with UA Museums?

History has always been an interest of mine from a young age. In 3rd grade, my grandparents got me a book with a bunch of historical stories and I've been hooked ever since. This passion, coupled with growing up in the south and surrounded by the historic plantation houses, I've always wanted to be the person giving the tours. After seeing an email, asking for student docents at the Gorgas House Museum, I jumped at the chance to be involved.

What do you wish more UA students knew about UA Museums?

I wish UA students were more aware of the presence of UA Museums and how easy they are to access. I have had UA seniors, who visit the Gorgas House Museum for tours and describe how they walked by the house every day without ever entering or knowing it was a museum. I have heard of similar things with Smith Hall and the Alabama Museum of Natural History and I know a lot of students don't even know of the existence of the Warner Transportation Museum or Moundville. That's why I like the TikTok page so much because it spreads awareness of everything UA Museums has to offer. ■



JENNY McCLAIN

Jenny McClain is a sophomore at The University of Alabama, majoring in History, with a Concentration in Public History and minoring in Anthropology and Digital Consumer Engagement. She has been involved with UA Museums' events and

programs like Haunting at the Museum, Bama Bug Fest, Growing Up Wild, and our Members and Supporters' tailgate. In addition to contributing to UA Museums' social media content creation, Jenny designed the self-guided tour for the Alabama Museum of Natural History, where she works as the receptionist.

What was it that inspired you to first get involved with UA Museums?

Post-graduation, I plan to work in the museum field and specialize in museum education, interpretation, and outreach programming. However, as a freshman at UA, I was uncertain which aspect of museum work I wanted to pursue. Getting involved in UA Museums offered me a way to explore a vast assortment of volunteer opportunities, from graphic design to education to exhibit design, and allowed me to find my true passion for education and outreach.

What do you wish more UA students knew about UA Museums?

A nonprofit organization like a museum requires people of all careers and backgrounds to make the organization run smoothly. Not only does a museum require people who are knowledgeable in history, anthropology, or the natural sciences to curate exhibits, but a museum also needs people skilled in fields like graphic design, advertising, marketing, finance, and education to ensure that the museum communicates with and educates its visitors effectively. UA Museums can offer beneficial volunteer and internship opportunities for students with a wide range of interests and career paths, not only students interested in fields traditionally associated with museum studies. ■



2022 Museum Studies Annual Scholarships

Written by **REBECCA JOHNSON**

In 2022, The University of Alabama Museums awarded two annual scholarships: The Craig T. Sheldon and Elisabeth S. Sheldon Endowed Graduate Scholarship in Museum Studies and the Camilla Canty Endowed Scholarship. Students must be officially enrolled in The University of Alabama Graduate Museum Studies Program to be eligible for these awards. Priority of consideration is given to well-rounded applicants as is evidenced by academic and extracurricular achievements.

UA Museums would like to recognize and congratulate Lilly Honea, an M.A. student in Anthropology and Museum Studies, as the recipient of the Camilla Canty Endowed Scholarship and Irene Sanchez Gonzalez, a Ph.D student in Biology and Museum Studies, as the recipient of the Craig

T. Sheldon and Elisabeth S. Sheldon Endowed Graduate Scholarship in Museum Studies. Each received an award of \$1,500.

This funding will provide Lilly with the resources to complete innovative and collaborative research projects that benefit the Tribal Nations of Alabama and the Southeastern United States and allow Irene to pursue a unique and unprecedented opportunity to study phenotypic plasticity in freshwater mussel morphology.

These awards have helped our museum studies students greatly and we are grateful for the generosity of Drs. Craig and Elisabeth Sheldon and Ms. Camilla Canty for making graduate scholarships possible. ■

(ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT): Lilly Honea, Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, UA Museums Communications Specialist; Irene Sanchez Gonzalez, Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, UA Museums Communications Specialist



Student Finds Rare Mosasaur Bones at Harrell Station

Written by **DR. ADIEL KLOMPMAKER**



On Saturday, March 26, 2022, a class field trip was scheduled for students enrolled in the undergraduate Paleontology & Society course offered through the selective Blount Scholars Program at The University of Alabama. The classic fossil locality, Harrell Station Paleontological Site in Dallas County, owned by The University of Alabama and managed by UA Museums, was the destination of this trip. Here, Cretaceous-aged (~82 million-year-old) marls of the Mooreville Chalk are exposed in a series of gullies on this 132.5 acre property owned by The University of Alabama. The trip was led by instructor, Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, UA Museums' Curator of Paleontology. A number of avocational (hobby) paleontologists also came along to meet and interact with the students as part of this course.



Less than half an hour into the trip on this sunny day, Brianna Day, an aerospace engineering student, thought she had found something. She sure did! Several parts of vertebrae of an ancient marine reptile called a mosasaur were lying on top of the marl and several more were still embedded in the rock. Finding loose, single vertebrae of mosasaurs does happen on occasion at Harrell Station, but finding several ones from the same animal is very rare. The bones were carefully excavated and put in a plastic bag for further study. Other students in the class (Sophia Comino, Skyler Dunn, Loren Evans, and Mitchell Lynn) also found numerous fossils that day, ranging from shark and fish teeth, bivalve shells, and worms to single bones.

Most vertebrae came in several pieces. They were prepared out of the surrounding rock and glued back together in the paleontology lab. The puzzle amounted to a total of six vertebrae. Dr. Lynn Harrell, a mosasaur specialist at the Geological Survey of Alabama, and Klompmaker studied the vertebrae by comparing them to

mosasaurs in the Alabama Museum of Natural History collection, which houses one of the largest mosasaur collections in the United States. They determined that the vertebrae belong to an individual of the Halisaurinae subfamily. Not only is finding six vertebrae of a single mosasaur animal uncommon, but this taxon is also relatively rare in Alabama. It is fair to say that these vertebrae, with catalog number ALMNH:Paleo:6367, are a great addition to the Alabama Museum of Natural History collection.

Experiences like this help students to understand how to recognize and find fossils, interpret the paleoenvironment, and appreciate the importance of collecting and documenting fossils. Interacting with paleontologists is another important part of this course and field trip. Students worked with avocational paleontologists, several of whom donated fossils of scientific interest that day and one donated lobster specimen even made the national news! ■

“Finding loose, single vertebrae of mosasaurs does happen on occasion at Harrell Station, but finding several ones from the same animal is very rare.”

(FACING PAGE): Closeup of some of the bones in the field. Photo Credit: Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, Curator of Paleontology for The University of Alabama Museums (FACING PAGE, INSET): Brianna Day posing with the vertebrae (to the right of the shadow of her head). Photo Credit: Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, Curator of Paleontology for The University of Alabama Museums (ABOVE): The six vertebrae after hours of preparation and gluing the broken pieces back together. Photo Credit: Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, Curator of Paleontology for The University of Alabama Museums



Many Alabamians consider *Discovering Alabama* the “flagship” program about the state.

FAME IS THE NAME

Discovering Alabama Receives UA College of Education Hall of Fame Acclaim

Written by **PAM SLOAN**

Dr. Doug Phillips, *Discovering Alabama* series producer and host, has reaped yet another claim to fame. This time, the recognition was granted by UA’s College of Education (COE), where Dr. Doug earned his Ph.D., pioneered many early innovations for environmental learning, and developed the educational concept for the now-popular *Discovering Alabama* TV series integrating academic content through the study of Alabama’s natural history.

Induction into COE’s prestigious Hall of Fame is the College’s highest honor. “I am truly humbled by such an honor,” said Dr. Doug, adding jokingly, “And it comes as a big surprise, since I was often considered a bit of a renegade during my graduate days. A couple of members of my doctoral committee were constantly on my case urging that I should ‘come out of the woods and act like a professional’. Well, bless their hearts, I guess the joke is on them. Turns out, my profession is being in the woods.”

To date, *Discovering Alabama* has produced almost 100 programs showcasing all aspects of Alabama’s natural diversity, attracting a home audience of more than one million viewers, and providing a favorite instructional resource used in school systems throughout the state. The series is approaching its 40th year, putting it among the longest running programs in television history. Many Alabamians consider *Discovering Alabama* the “flagship” program about the state.

Meanwhile, the Hall of Fame accolade is simply the latest of *Discovering Alabama*’s long record of significant recognitions. Last year, Tuscaloosa leaders tapped Dr. Doug as a “Pillar of the Community” for his long-standing assistance with local schools and community groups, and the production of numerous *Discovering Alabama*

programs about the Tuscaloosa area, including the *Discovering Alabama Bicentennial Special*, “Tuscaloosa.”

Looking back across the years, *Discovering Alabama*’s walls are filled with awards from a range of sources. These include state awards (for example, the “Governor’s Conservation Educator Award,” national awards (for example, USDA’s “Caretaker of the Land Award”), citizen group awards (for example, the Alabama Wildlife Federation’s “Conservation Communicator Award,” and Land Trust awards (for example, the Nature Conservancy’s “Gold Leaf Award”). Most impressive among television professionals are *Discovering Alabama*’s multiple Emmy awards, ranking the program in the top circles of television excellence. And to think, *Discovering Alabama* is a home-grown program based right here in Tuscaloosa with the Alabama Museum of Natural History. A fitting place, because, as Dr.

Doug says, “*Discovering Alabama* presents one of the most naturally diverse states in the nation, is produced by one of the earliest museums of natural history in the nation, and is a service of one of the finest universities in the nation.” ■



(FACING PAGE): Dr. Doug Phillips navigates his way down the Flint River. Photo Credit: *Discovering Alabama* (ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM): Dr. Doug Phillips was inducted into The University of Alabama’s College of Education Hall of Fame at the NorthRiver Yacht Club on February 11, 2023. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama Museums; The College of Education Hall of Fame is located inside Autherine Lucy Hall on The University of Alabama campus.

Happy Reunions & New Beginnings

THE RETURN OF THE MOUNDVILLE NATIVE AMERICAN FESTIVAL CULMINATED IN A WEEK OF HAPPY REUNIONS AND FUN ACTIVITIES THAT REMINDED ALL OF US OF THE BENEFITS OF COMING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE ACROSS THE STATE OF ALABAMA.

Written by MARSHA M. HOLLEY

(ABOVE): Representing the Cherokee, Mary T. Newman demonstrates pottery making and firing at the Moundville Native American Festival. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama Museums



The 34th annual Moundville Native American Festival, which was held on October 12-15, 2022, was the first return of the festival being held in-person after a two-year pandemic hiatus. While we were thankful to continue our yearly festival fellowship and educational programming via virtual festivals in 2020 and 2021, nothing beats the benefits of coming together with new friends and old, to celebrate the vibrant and rich culture of Alabama's Native American friends and communities.

This year's festival came with even more exciting changes, as Moundville Archaeological Park's three newest employees began their positions during the festival season. Madison Bryant was hired as the Education Assistant in August, Dr. Clay Nelson was hired as the Director of the Park in September, and I, Marsha Holley, was hired as the Education Coordinator and Festival Director in October, with my first day on the job being the week of the festival. While starting this position during such a large event may seem like an overwhelming accomplishment, it could not have been more enjoyable as the teamwork of the park employees and volunteers in executing the 2022 festival was phenomenal! Planning and executing such a large and long-standing festival is such an intricate process and I truly felt that witnessing this process for myself, right out-of-the-gate, was the best way to jump in. The relationships that I was able to build and the tips and tricks that I was able to learn from our long-standing employees, volunteers, and participants was invaluable and I cannot wait to harness this knowledge in planning for this year's 35th annual Moundville Native American Festival, which will be October 4-7, 2023.

On top of planning for our Moundville Native American Festival, we also have several other events and programs throughout the year, all of which culminate and overlap with the programming of our festival. In March, we held our annual Moundville Knap-In, which brought together traditional flintknappers from all over the Southeast. The flintknappers met at Moundville Archaeological Park for

a weekend of demonstrating, teaching, and competing in the skills of stone tool making. The flintknappers camped at Moundville Archaeological Park's campground for the weekend and the event is open to anyone who is interested

in learning or honing their skills of flintknapping. Stone tool making is one of the oldest and most important traditions in the history of humanity and we are thrilled to offer this excellent opportunity for keeping this tradition alive. This year's annual Knap-In was held on March 3-4, 2023. Other programs at Moundville Archaeological Park include our Saturdays in the Park program, where we bring in traditional demonstrators and academic specialists to spend a Saturday in Moundville's Jones Archaeological Museum to bring educational hands-on activities to the public. Other programs include archaeological summer camps and school outreach, and we are very excited to begin offering programs throughout the new year. All of our programming is geared towards enriching our community with educational activities and engaging with all age groups to spark their interest and imagination as to what life was like at Moundville during the site's Mississippian period occupation (~A.D.1000- A.D. 1450).

Overall, we are thrilled with the fresh opportunities for enrichment that we are offering here at Moundville Archaeological Park, and we are honored to continue on the legacy of programs past,

"nothing beats the benefits of coming together with new friends and old"

such as the Moundville Native American Festival. We are steadily working to ensure that Moundville Archaeological Park and the Jones Archaeological Museum reflect the magnificence of the site and the incredible ingenuity of Native American craftsmanship and culture. If you have not visited Moundville in a few years, or if by chance you have never been, we would like to invite you to come out and take part in the fun changes taking place throughout the park. ■



(FACING PAGE) Members of Chikashsha Hithla dance at the Moundville Native American Festival. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communication Specialist, The University of Alabama Museums (ABOVE, TOP): Betsy Irwin, former Moundville Native American Festival Director and Gourd Artist, on Artist's Row. Photo Credit: Joanna Chavez, Strategic Communications, The University of Alabama; (ABOVE, BOTTOM): Award-winning Muscogee basket weaver, Mary Smith, is a demonstrator at the Moundville Native American Festival. Photo Credit: Joanna Chavez, Strategic Communications, The University of Alabama



(ABOVE): Festival visitors participate in a traditional dance with Chikashsha Hithla, Chickasaw dance troupe. Matthew Wood, Strategic Communications, The University of Alabama



Cultures, Not Costumes

Written by **BRANDON THOMPSON**

In 2022, the Gorgas House Museum created a blog to share reviews and reflections about activities in the space. This article is an excerpt from the Gorgas House Museum's blog, available on: gorgashouse.museums.ua.edu

First celebrated in 1990, Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) is a time to recognize the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the United States. Decades in the making, it is a month dedicated to celebrating the diverse cultures, rich histories, and important contributions of the nation's first people. The Gorgas House Museum, in partnership with the Alabama Museum of Natural History, Moundville Archaeological Park, The Fashion Archive, and The University of Alabama's Intercultural Diversity Center worked with tribal artisans of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and the Louisiana Coushatta of Alabama, to create *Cultures, Not Costumes*.

This exhibit showcased in the Intercultural Diversity Center (located inside The University of Alabama's Student Center), provided a brief history of Southeastern Native Americans with historic and modern examples of regalia, such as clothing, adornments, and jewelry. It demonstrated that these pieces are reflections of cultural traditions that span centuries and are more than fashion statements.

The history of Alabama's first people begins more than 11,000 years ago in an era called the Paleoindian period. Paleoindians lived in a cooler environment and moved across the landscape in small bands hunting megafauna

including mammoths, mastodons, and bison. The Archaic period followed and lasted roughly 7,000 years. Changes to the climate and wildlife saw Native Americans hunt smaller game and gather naturally occurring edible plants. After this, came a time referred to by archaeologists as

the Woodland period that lasted from about 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D. Populations grew and cultures became increasingly complex with people adopting horticulture, the bow and arrow, pottery-making, and complex funerary ceremonies. The construction of large earthworks, including the mounds found at Moundville Archaeological Park, is a hallmark of the Mississippian period (A.D. 1000-1550) in Alabama. Mississippian people lived in fortified towns, they grew corn, squash, and beans, and shared similar rituals and symbols.

By the time European explorers and colonialists arrived in the sixteenth century, the Native Americans of Alabama merged into the distinct cultural groups known from the historic period. These included larger groups such as the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creek and smaller cultural groups such as the Alabama-Coushattas and Yuchis. As time progressed and more Europeans, and later U.S., settlers moved throughout the Southeast, these peoples met with continual assaults on their land, warfare, the spread of non-native diseases, and resource exploitation. Between the 1830s and 1850s, the majority of Native Americans in Alabama were forcibly removed from their land to allow for European American expansion. Despite their nineteenth-century removal, the first peoples of Alabama still exist and have a presence in Alabama.



(FACING PAGE): Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas piece made by Anita Flanagan (Eastern Band of Cherokee) Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums (ABOVE) Yellow Chickasaw ribbon dress donated by Mary Williams of the Choctaw Nation; Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums



“First celebrated in 1990, Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) is a time to recognize the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the United States.”



(ABOVE AND FACING PAGE): Southern Cloth Buckskin with matching jewelry and adornments created and loaned by Laretta Weaver of the Cherokee;
Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums



Today, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians maintain their traditions on portions of the tribal homelands in the state. Other tribal groups, including the Muskogee Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee, preserve and maintain connections to their ancestral lands in Alabama. They work together, and with different institutions, including The University of Alabama, to highlight their histories and

continue to contribute to the rich cultural heritage of the state and nation. ■



◀ Scan this QR Code to read more from The Gorgas House Museum's Blog!

An Evening at the Pool

Written by KATHERINE EDGE

The Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum invited the public to An Evening at the Pool on May 21, 2022, a free event that provided an after-hours opportunity to visit the museum, see the old Queen City pool illuminated with special lighting effects designed by Lyndell McDonald (University of Alabama Assistant Professor in Theatre and Dance), and attend the culmination of the Flow Tuscaloosa Lantern Parade that traveled down the River Walk. It was a lovely evening at the museum with music, fellowship, and yummy food from local food trucks. The Museum invited everyone back to the old pool to remember past times and create new memories. It was a successful event with 250 attendees and it was fun to watch both children and adults enjoy the old pool space once again and even mimic swimming across the blue-lit area outlining where the pool

“The exhibit showcased how local history aligned with national trends, challenged myths about integration and public pools, and encouraged community response”

once existed. The lighting created an aquatic ambiance that harkened back to the days when water created reflections on the sides of the building, the Art Deco fountain, and bleachers. Dr. Julia Brock of UA’s History Department and an organizer of the event, stated “I loved that the community

came together to co-create and experience the wonder of lights—we hope it “illuminated” the unique histories and ecology that surrounds us in Tuscaloosa.”

This event was in connection with the Warner Transportation Museum’s participation in the Flow Tuscaloosa project, which is an initiative to highlight the successful restoration of Hurricane Creek as inspiration to protect the resources of the Black Warrior River watershed and bring attention to environmental justice efforts in West Alabama. It is organized through the Salvage Collective (Teresa Bramlette Reeves and Kirstie Tepper) and led locally by Jamey Grimes (UA, Art) and Dr. Julia Brock (UA, History).

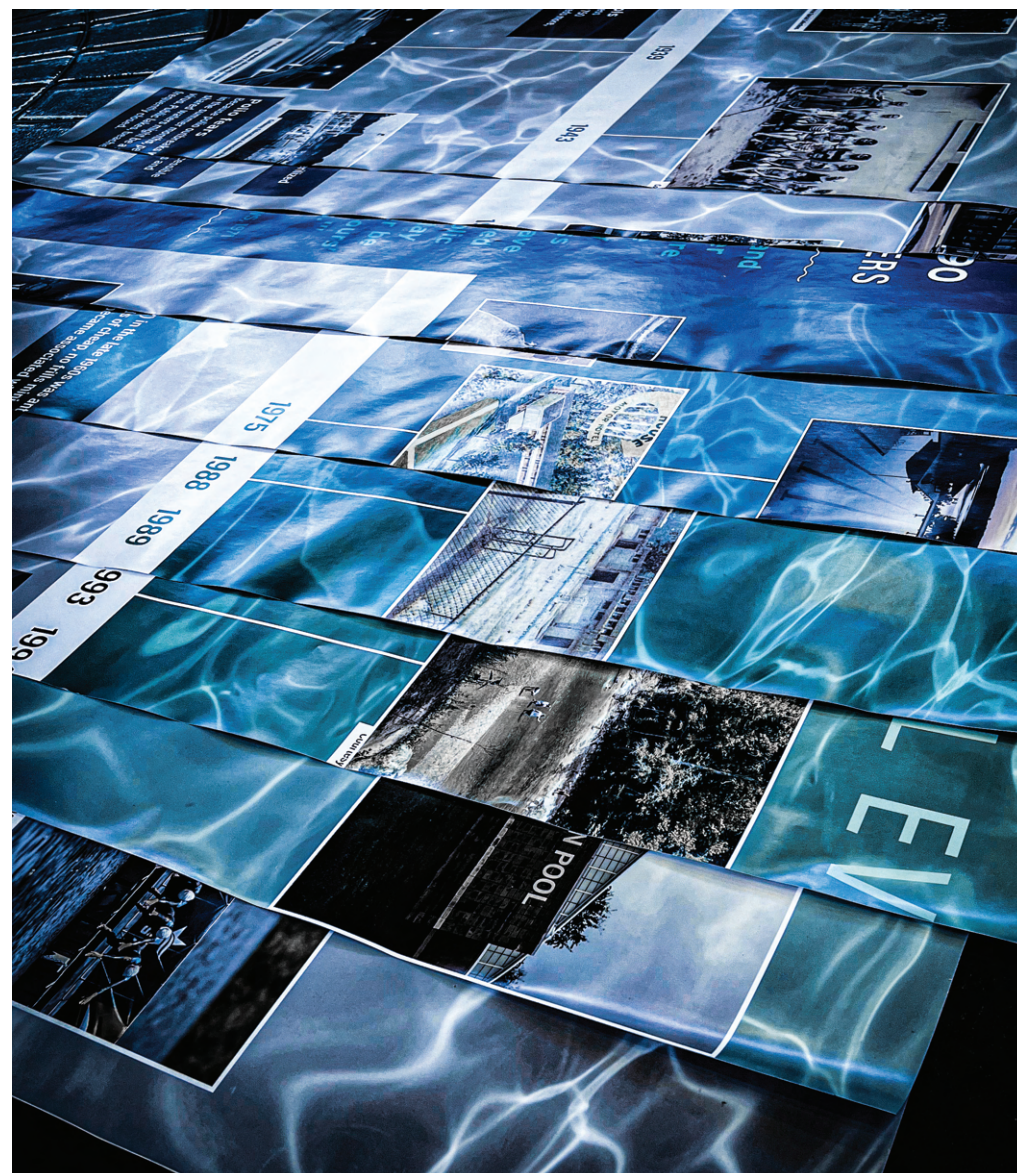
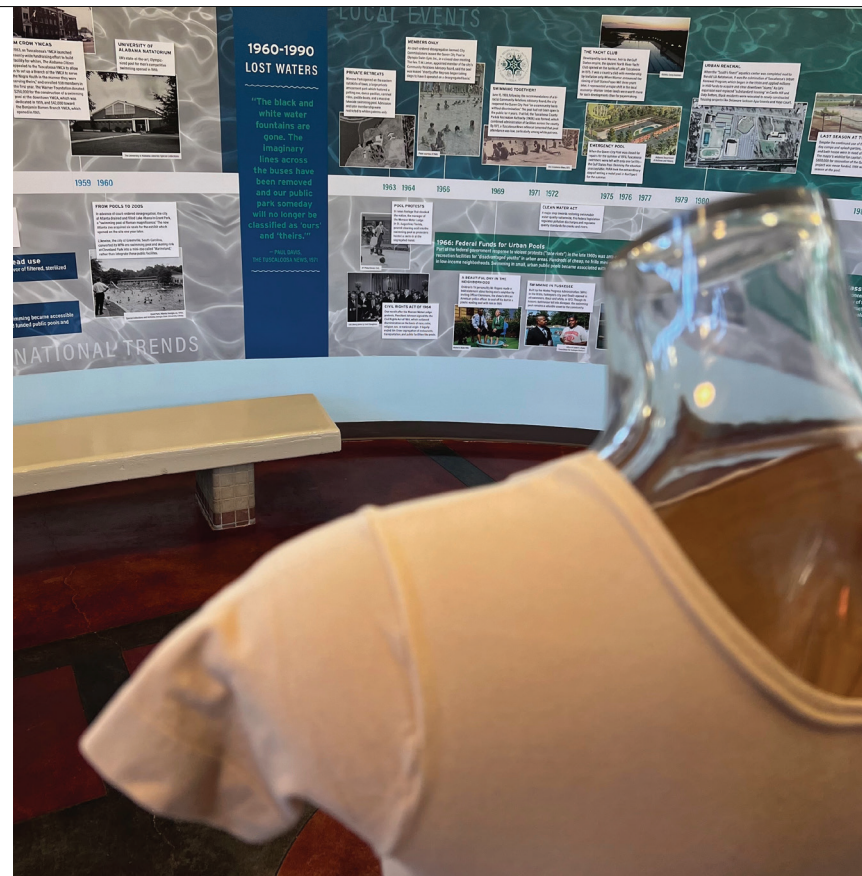
In addition to An Evening at the Pool, the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum hosted a custom exhibit titled *Swimming Together* and collaborated with artist Hannah Palmer of Atlanta, Georgia. Palmer works as an urban designer in Atlanta and is interested in the intersection of southern stories and urban landscapes. “We are so excited to work with Hannah because she is particularly interested in swimming pools and given the museum building’s original purpose and its location on the Black Warrior River, is a perfect fit for this collaborative project,” said Katherine Edge, Director of the Transportation Museum. Palmer writes about the intersection of southern stories and urban landscapes for venues like CNN, *Art Papers*, *Atlanta Magazine*, *ATL Studies*, and for urban design and planning projects around the world. A graduate of Agnes Scott College, she earned an MFA in creative writing from Sewanee: The University of the South. *Flight Path* is her first book.

The exhibit showcased how local history aligned with national trends, challenged myths about integration and public pools, and encouraged community response about swimming with engagement boards. Dr. Brock said of the exhibit, “I learned more about the particulars of public swimming in Tuscaloosa, and how, in the 20th century, it was bound up in larger structures of Jim Crow and later, urban renewal.” Vintage swimsuits from UA’s The Fashion Archive were included in a custom interactive and artifacts on loan from members of the local community and the Paul W. Bryant Museum were on display. This was the first exhibit at the Warner Transportation Museum that focused on the swimming history of the historic building and our community. ■



◀ Scan this QR Code to view a video about the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum’s *Swimming Together* exhibit!

(FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE LEFT TO RIGHT): Hannah Palmer speaks at the An Evening at the Pool event. Photo Credit: Katherine Edge, Director of the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum; *Swimming Together* Exhibit at the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums; *Swimming Together* Exhibit at the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums; The lighting effects designed by Lyndell McDonald at An Evening at the Pool. Photo Credit: Katherine Edge, Director of the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum; The blue-lit area mimicking water of the old Queen City pool. Photo Credit: Katherine Edge, Director of the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum





HALLOWEEN HAUNTING

Written by **BRANDON THOMPSON**



To celebrate Spooky Season in the Fall of 2022, the Gorgas House Museum, in partnership with the Alabama Museum of Natural History, provided a weeklong Halloween Haunting event. Events like this provide a fun and entertaining engagement opportunity for museum patrons and communities. In addition to established exhibitions and tours, they allow guests to visit the space with special decorations and learn new and often untold histories.

Due to the pandemic, 2022 was the first year the Gorgas House Museum was able to provide a large-scale in-person event for Halloween Haunting since 2019. Throughout the last week of October, Gorgas House Museum staff, students, and volunteers provided guided tours of the home. Each tour included haunted, spooky, and macabre stories associated with the museum and its former occupants, including ghost sightings and poltergeist activity. With closed shutters, extinguished lights, and theatrical lighting provided by Lyndell McDonald, Assistant Professor and Technical Director of Dance in The University of Alabama's Department of Theatre and Dance, more than 400 guests visited the home.

“The Halloween Haunting event, while fun, also serves as a public service adhering to a core tenet of the Museum System and the University of Alabama.”

But *Halloween Haunting* was not limited to our physical spaces. UA Museum students also created Spirit Week, a series of twelve short videos released on the Museum System's TikTok account. These videos were entirely student created, researched, and produced and they generated more than 3,400 views.

Being able to open the museum to the public and educate and entertain guests during special seasons of the year provides an opportunity to reach members of our community who may not have an interest or chance to visit at other times. The Halloween Haunting event, while fun, also serves as a public service adhering to a core tenet of the Museum System and The University of Alabama. We look forward to this annual event and invite our readers to visit next October for more haunted adventures. ■

(FACING PAGE): Lyndell McDonald's theatrical lighting set the right tone for Gorgas House tours during Halloween. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, UA Museums (ABOVE): UA Students created video content for TikTok, recounting ghost stories around campus. Photo Credit: Morgan Potts, UA Student



Slow Art Day

and the Gorgas House Museum

Written by **SHARONY GREEN**, Associate Professor of History, The University of Alabama

In Spring 2022, students enrolled in my “Antebellum America” class participated in Slow Art Day, an international event that has drawn growing attention over the past decade. The key idea surrounding this day, which is the first Saturday of spring, is inviting people to slowly view a creative work.

We were fortunate to partner with Gorgas House Museum for our contribution to Slow Art Day, a global movement involving more than 1,500 galleries and museums. That two museums in Ukraine were scheduled to also participate made our effort even more significant. To be clearer, horrific events often cause many of us to slow down to contemplate the state of the world around us. The inclusion of two spaces in Ukraine, among them one that was offline owing to the war, in Slow Art Day made the world truly feel small. I was also struck by our ability to have an historical building and students enrolled at UA connect with other institutions around the world as we all read heartbreaking headlines.

There seemed to be no better place to engage to think about our ability to build bridges across various backgrounds and borders than at UA’s Gorgas House. As a contribution to Slow Art Day, my students displayed burlap pieces that they decorated over the course of the semester in this museum, the oldest dwelling on campus. I have often partnered with Gorgas House Museum for class assignments and projects because of the building’s history in the antebellum period, my area of specialty, but also because of the openness of Brandon Thompson, Director of Gorgas House. Thompson’s enthusiasm about our shared historical past and his genuine desire to get

not only our students, but the UA community and larger community involved is impressive. No matter the unseen hurdles that may present themselves as we embark upon a new project, he remains positive. Such a disposition was certainly needed for our Slow Art Day project.

Our project’s beginnings were partly a result of my having an abundance of burlap fabric. Some background: as true of some people, I purchased more crafting supplies during the initial lockdown days of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to create and breathe through the

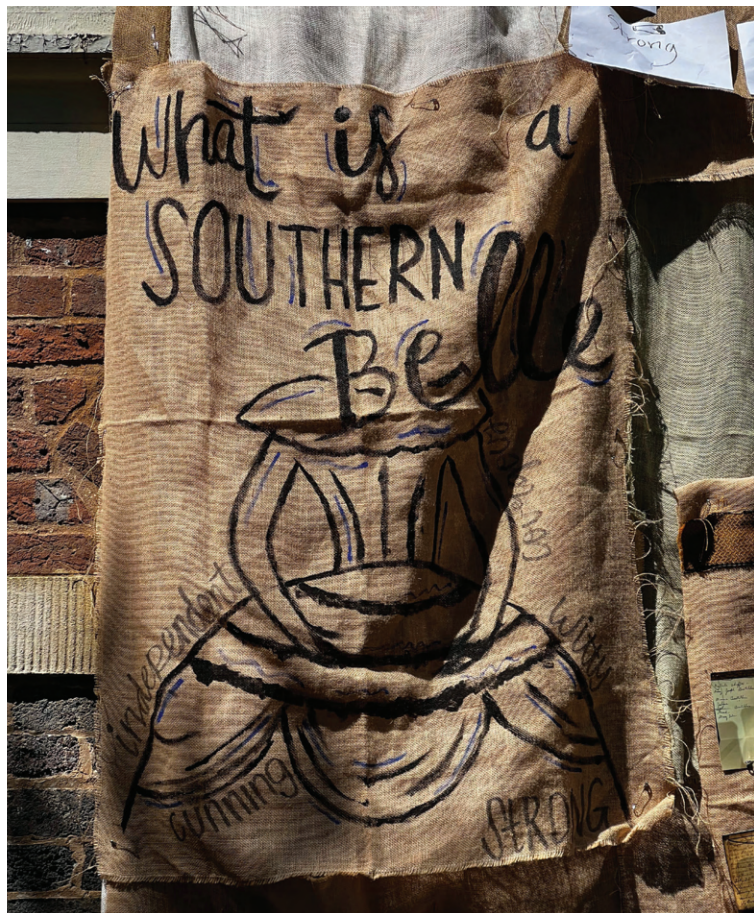
uncertainties involving the pandemic. Among the goods I ordered was burlap. I was shocked to see a box big enough for an adult to sit inside arrive on the porch of my home. I made a few art pieces but put most of it away.

Because burlap is often associated with the south, a region that gets lots of attention in my Antebellum America class, I decided a couple of years later to give each student a panel of burlap. They were asked to decorate it in any manner they wanted as long as it was tasteful and had some linkages

to our study of the antebellum period. They were even encouraged to present what I call “origins” stories, which is to say, they were invited to reflect on their family history during the years leading to the Civil War, directly or indirectly. One student boldly took this cue and created smaller panels that gestured toward his Irish ancestors. Another student placed photographs of a Bible that her family has owned since the antebellum period as well as a decorated lock of hair from one of her ancestors. Another student turned his burlap into the flag for the state of Alabama and burned its edges so it could look like it had survived a war.

“Ultimately, students, faculty, staff, and other passersby were invited to contemplate the many social and historical issues that bring people in this country together or keep them apart as well as the act of slowing down, a needed idea in these trying times.”

(ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT) The burlaps created by Dr. Sharony Green’s Antebellum America class hang from the balcony of the Gorgas House Museum. Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama Museums



(LEFT TO RIGHT, CLOCKWISE) One Antebellum America student created a burlap resembling *The Journal of Sarah Haynsworth Gayle, 1827-1835: A Substitute for Social Intercourse*, who was the wife of early Alabama governor, John Gayle. The accounts found in the journal are of antebellum life in the American South.; UA Head Football Coach Nick Saban and his philosophy of “The Process” was represented among the burlaps on Slow Art Day at the Gorgas House Museum.; During a time of war in Ukraine, a UA student used the burlap to ask for peace.; A University of Alabama student uses her burlap to situate the Southern Belle as being someone who is as thoughtful and witty as the men around her. All Photos by: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama Museums

I even contributed a panel that included a christening gown from the cedar chest of my mother-in-law as well as a t-shirt that had a quotation inspired by UA’s head football coach, Nick Saban. He often mentions “the process.” I believe this idea has resonance with our course and my efforts to teach. Indeed, learning is a process. Ultimately, students, faculty, staff, and other passersby were invited to contemplate the many social and historical issues that bring people in this country together or keep

“Why remain only in the classrooms when the campus and community are also meaningful learning spaces?”

them apart as well as the act of slowing down, a needed idea in these trying times. The tapestry also offered a chance to ponder what textiles represent in a modernizing country in the

years leading to the Civil War and what textiles mean today when we celebrate all things “handmade” and what Koritha Mitchell has called “homemade citizenship.”

Passersby also had a chance to think through the experiences of University of Alabama librarian, Amelia Gayle Gorgas, who may have sewed from time to time while juggling many jobs for this campus. She certainly sat down from time to time on the porch at the present-day Gorgas House. As I have also written earlier, our thought may have led to the experiences of enslaved artisans, including women, who also sewed out of necessity and maybe even survival, as well as their notions of belonging, dignity, and citizenship. Some viewers of our work doubtless saw the sense of community that was created because of the students’ group effort.

The students generously allowed me and my husband, Dr. John Beeler, a professor and my colleague in the Department of History, to connect their huge burlap pieces together to make a piece tapestry. I blogged along the way. The tapestry was halved and hung on April 1st from Gorgas House’s second-floor balcony railing for a pop-up installation. Later, students enrolled in my Antebellum America class as well as my American Civilization Since 1865 class joined me and Dr. Beeler, a frequent collaborator, in the quad for the former Manly and Woods Halls. While there, we dropped the eventual 63-foot burlap tapestry from the third floor of the former Woods Halls. Even though the fall to the ground was not as graceful as it had been on the windy day we practiced (one student had to run to the second floor to unharness the burlap from a railing onto which it stuck while falling, making us laugh), the students and I smiled partly because we had used another historical campus space to think through our shared past and do so with others

slowly observing our art. Graduate students enrolled in a course taught by Dr. Jennifer Purvis in the Gender and Race Studies Department even walked over and asked thoughtful questions about our project. The following day, we participated in the global Slow Art Day event by promoting our project digitally via UA Libraries’ websites and my own social media pages.

One of my biggest joys was being asked to allow the organizers of Slow Art Day to feature our collaborative effort with the Gorgas House Museum on their web page. It was an honor to show others how Tuscaloosa is a “lab” to learn about our shared past. Why remain only in the classrooms when the campus and community are also meaningful learning spaces?

In addition to Gorgas House, my students have engaged coursework elsewhere including UA’s Quad, Moundville Archaeological Park, the Old Bryce Hospital, and the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum. We have also had scavenger hunts in the Alabama Museum of Natural History and the Paul W. Bryant Museum. Jemison Van de Graff Mansion and Gorgas House figured into “Druid City,” a 2014 music video that students enrolled in my “The Nineteenth Century City” class made. That video, which featured music by Bible Study, a now-defunct group that performed in Tuscaloosa, premiered in 2014 at the Jemison mansion before a standing-room-only audience.

Other Gorgas House projects include an exhibit receiving inspiration from my students’ focus on young women attending female academies in Tuscaloosa, and an animated exhibit bringing together the antebellum experiences of Alabama Senator Robert Jemison Jr., Horace King, the enslaved man-turned-architect and Sarah Gayle, mother of Amelia Gayle Gorgas. *New York Times* bestselling author, Dolen Perkins-Valdez was our guest speaker on the lawn of Gorgas House at the latter exhibition.

In 2023, we will participate in Slow Art Day again. This time, students in both of my American Civilization survey classes and my American Swagger class have been invited to push their thinking on community and capitalism in our slowly modernizing world via the work of sci-fi writer, Octavia Butler. They will write free-style haikus that will hang in the parlor of Gorgas House alongside footage of physician William Gorgas in Panama and the 1927 sci-fi film, *Metropolis*. As I pursue such projects, I am grateful to have worked with many campus partners, including Thompson and Rebecca Johnson, The University of Alabama Museums’ Communications Specialist. ■



◀ Scan this QR Code to learn more about the Antebellum America class burlap tapestry project.



William Crawford Gorgas and the Panama Canal

Written By **BRANDON THOMPSON**

The Gorgas House Museum speaks to the legacy and contributions of the Gorgas family, their local, national, and international impact, and the history of The University of Alabama. Its location in the heart of campus provides the perfect place for museum life to meet student life. Thousands of campus visitors, many of whom are students, come through its doors each year. They learn about its history, volunteer in numerous ways, and engage with their peers.

William Smith, a junior in the University's Department of History, is one of the Gorgas House Museum's student volunteers. William's interest in history and museums lead him to explore the museum and its in-house collections and those stored in the Department of Research and Collections curatorial repository. His fascination with William Gorgas, son of Josiah and Amelia Gorgas and conqueror of yellow fever, fostered a desire to create an exhibit based on his story and time in the Panama Canal Zone.

Over several semesters, William conducted original research, analyzed the collections, and created an exhibition to run through the fall 2022 semester. His exhibit, titled *William Crawford Gorgas and the Panama Canal*, details the history of the Panama Canal, the health and sanitation

challenges faced during its construction, and the role of William Gorgas in its completion. Using books, articles, and a host of reference materials, William created an exhibit that enriches the space, expanded his research ability, and has been seen by countless members of the University community. It included text panels, teaching collection artifacts, objects from the permanent research collection, and audiovisual elements.

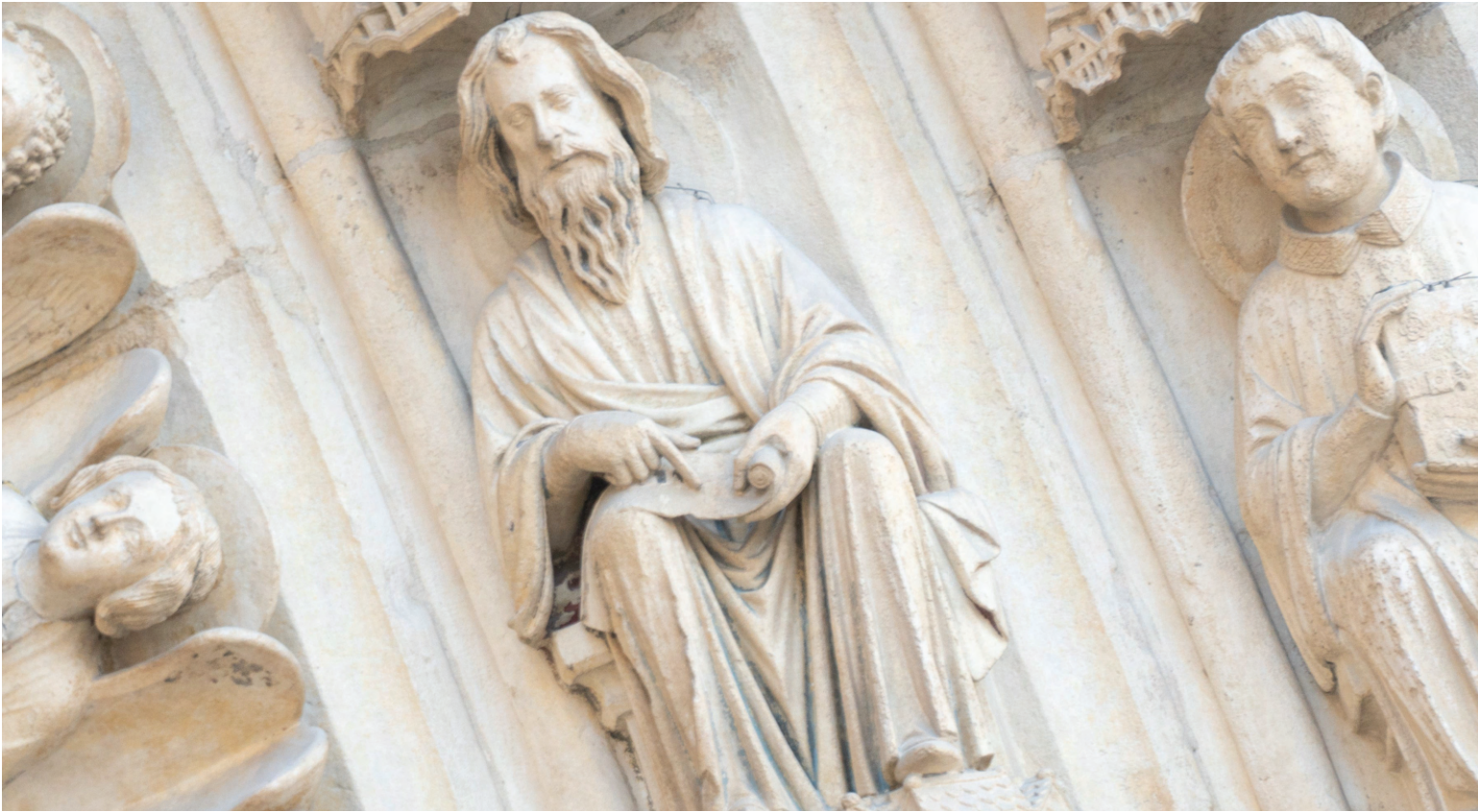
William serves as an example of the contributions students make not only at the Gorgas House, but also across the entire museum system. He, and students like him, help with research, public awareness, community engagement, and content generation. They provide a way for the museums to collaborate and partner with departments across campus, expand our reach off campus, and enrich our spaces with their voices. ■

"William serves as an example of the contributions students make not only at the Gorgas House, but also across the entire museum system."



◀ Scan this QR code to watch a video interview with William Smith discussing the William Gorgas and the Panama Canal exhibit!

(ABOVE): Items on display in the William Gorgas and the Panama Canal exhibit at the Gorgas House Museum. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums



Digitally Recreating the Polychromy on the Central Portal of Notre-Dame de Paris

Written By **MATT GAGE**

Jeremiah Stager, Senior Cultural Resources Assistant of the Office of Archaeological Research, has completed the first of what may be multiple trips to Paris to work with researchers, Dr. Jennifer Feltman and Dr. Alexandre Tokovinine from The University of Alabama and several professionals from French institutions to create 3-dimensional models of the central portal of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. The models will be used as a base for digitally recreating the layers of paint that once decorated the detailed sculptures of the cathedral. The paint colors will be based on paint core samples that were taken from the sculptures in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The images of the microscopic layers contain the history of the

polychromy of the statues. Very little paint remains on the sculpture today and it would be impossible to repaint them in the real world. A specific sculpture of an Old Testament prophet will be used to develop this process. Through a re-analysis of these paint cores, it may be possible to determine the sources of dyes and coloring. The construction of the Notre Dame de Paris began in 1163, and completed in 1260, and there have been seven and a half centuries of architectural changes, damage, and restoration. The digital re-painting of statues will help us better understand what both the priesthood and the commoners experienced when the building was still new.

"The digital re-painting of statues will help us better understand what both the priesthood and the commoners experienced when the building was still new."

(ABOVE): The Old Testament prophet sculpture that is being used as the test subject. Photo Credit: Dr. Jennifer Feltman, University of Alabama Associate Professor of Art History, Medieval Art

Sensory Friendly Museum

Written By **BRIAN MAST**

Museums are meant to be inclusive of everyone. The Paul W. Bryant Museum is no different. One of our audiences we seek to engage more are individuals with sensory issues. One in four people have a disability with an overwhelming number of them being a sensory issue. Typically, when you think of a sporting event or sports museum, “quiet” is not a word which comes to mind first. Between the band, cheering crowd, video board, flashing lights, whistles, etc. it can be an extreme experience. Those with sensory issues struggle with such an intense environment causing them to be overwhelmed. Unfortunately, our exhibit space reflects this environment with a constant barrage of loud noises and flashing lights which can easily trigger a negative response.

“Our goal is to provide anyone with the opportunity to visit the museum.”

We took an additional step towards accomplishing such a goal through a partnership with KultureCity, the world’s leading nonprofit on sensory accessibility. The

museum officially became a certified sensory friendly institute over the winter months after working closely with KultureCity. To attain the certification staff must attend training, the museum purchased curated sensory kits for people to check out at the front desk, multiple signs were placed throughout the museum to establish sensory area warnings such as the headphone zone for the loudest parts to establishing and identifying a quiet area for individuals to visit who are experiencing a sensory overload. For more information on the location of our quiet area or to check out a sensory kit, talk to the cashier at our front desk when entering the museum. Before visiting the museum, individuals can also go on to the KultureCity app to view the social story created to familiarize visitors with the resources and navigate the museum. From where to find the sensory kits, loud parts of the exhibit hall, to location of the quiet area, all of this information is critical to orienting individuals to make them more comfortable and welcoming to visit our institution thus increasing our access to the public. These resources are open for anyone to utilize as part of their visit to the Bryant Museum. Feel free to ask about them next time you visit.



BRYANT MUSEUM EXHIBITS



ALABAMA SOFTBALL: THE FIRST 25 YEARS

Alabama Softball – The First 25 Years lists all of the players and coaches who helped to build this program. It features personal items and memorabilia from the players themselves, as well as trophies, and other items on loan from the Alabama Softball team and coaches.



BRYCE YOUNG'S TROPHIES

During the 2022 Alabama Football Season, the Paul W. Bryant Museum displayed Bryce Young’s trophies inside the exhibition hall. In a statement, the Young Family said, “Bryce Young and his parents would like to make these awards available to the Bryant Museum as a thank you to Crimson Tide fans.”



THE LEGACY LIVES ON

Forty years ago, Coach Paul W. Bryant announced his retirement from college football. *The Legacy Lives On* chronicles how Coach Bryant still impacts the world today through his scholarship, namesakes, and annual coaching award honoring and recognizing his impact, years after his last season. Artifacts from the 1982 season, along with the famous jacket he wore during the Liberty Bowl, are on display for everyone to view.

Photo Credits: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama



The Iron Bowl, But Make It Nature Observations

Written By **REBECCA JOHNSON**

Football Season in the South is the time of the year for tailgating, cheering, and trash talking, but in the Fall of 2022, it transformed into a productive achievement in Citizen Science nature observations with the introduction of the first-ever Marble Bowl. From September 3rd until November 27th, a competition pitting The University of Alabama against Auburn University provided the much-needed competitive incentive to venture out into the Alabama outdoors and photograph wild plants, animals, and fungi to assist in research and the understanding of our local natural world.



The creation of the Marble Bowl has ties to the Alabama Museum of Natural History through the late University of Alabama legend, Dr. Edward O. Wilson. Dr. Wesley M. Anderson of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System took inspiration from E.O. Wilson's 2015 documentary *Of Ants and Men*, which included scenes from the Iron Bowl. "By connecting the Marble Bowl to the Iron Bowl, I thought bringing in an event Alabamians are already competitive over might get folks excited to participate and hopefully bring in some who had never participated on iNaturalist before," explained Dr. Anderson. Participating in the Marble Bowl was a no-brainer for the

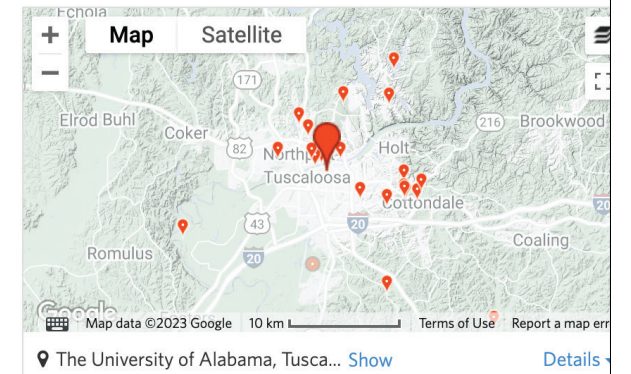
(ABOVE): Dr. John Friel's photograph of a Golden Silk Spider he spotted on The University of Alabama campus. Photo Credit: Dr. John Friel, Director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History Photo (INSET): The Marble Bowl Logo, Logo Credit: Alabama Cooperative Extension System (FACING PAGE): What Dr. John Friel's observation of a Golden Silk Spider looks like in iNaturalist. Photo Credit: iNaturalist

Golden Silk Spider (*Trichonephila clavipes*) Research Grade



friel
13,193 observations

Observed: Sep 14, 2022 · 10:32 AM CDT
Submitted: Sep 14, 2022 · 10:34 AM CDT



Alabama Museum of Natural History, which has been promoting iNaturalist as an ideal tool for Citizen Science efforts. iNaturalist is the world's most popular citizen science platform for documenting nature observations and with its free apps and ease of use, it was well-suited to serve as the host platform for this friendly competition.

"When our natural history museum colleagues at the Auburn University Museum of Natural History suggested the Marble Bowl challenge, we knew we had to accept it because regardless of which team won bragging rights for a year, both museums would win by engaging our public audiences to get out in nature and help document the amazing biodiversity of our state," said Dr. John Friel, Director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History.

The Marble Bowl was made easy, even to those just starting out in their amateur naturalist pursuit, through utilizing the smart phone version of iNaturalist, which allows users to upload their images, geotag a location, and collaborate in the identification process so that observations can reach what is known as "Research Grade."

To win the Marble Bowl, the victor would need the highest score out of 100 points, which would be calculated from a combination of unique observers (40 percent of total score), unique observations (30 percent) and unique species (30 percent), as determined by the iNaturalist platform.

Only one winner could take the trophy home and unfortunately, Bama did not win the inaugural Marble Bowl. Despite the loss, the Alabama Museum of Natural History's team of 125 observers contributed 16,945 of 34,521 unique observations and 3,214 of 4,928 unique species (there can be overlap between teams on this). Overall, those participating in the Marble Bowl accounted

for 53% of observations, 78% of species, and 11% of observers for all logged iNaturalist observations in Alabama, adding valuable new records that can potentially be used for future research.

"Researchers can use the observations, as simply presence of a species, to examine the spread of invasive species, or, in some cases, look at changes in phenology over time. Invasive species are an enormous threat to biodiversity," explained Dr. Wesley M. Anderson. "For example, a participant documented the oriental weatherfish in the Cahaba River watershed whereas before the competition we just knew it occurred in the Coosa River watershed. As far as threatened and endangered species, participants logged 17 Endangered species and nine Threatened species across 63 observations, which are valuable data to have. In fact, one participant supporting The University of Alabama team logged 10 Endangered Species Act-listed species."

Still, it's never fun to lose to Auburn. We'd be lying if we said that it didn't (insect pun intended) "sting" a little bit. Just as the Alabama football team might need to recover and learn from a season when things don't work out their way, the Alabama Museum of Natural History sees this first attempt with the Marble Bowl as motivation for next year to beat that other school in the state. ■

"...both museums would win by engaging our public audiences to get out in nature and help document the amazing biodiversity of our state"



The First-Ever Fossil Camp

Written by JOYIA DAVIS

In the summer of 2022, the Alabama Museum of Natural History hosted its very first Fossil Camp. The week-long camp was a hands-on experience for students ages 8-11. The camp, led by museum staff and volunteers, took students through the basics of paleontology, geology, museum collections, and ended with a scientist-led trip to Shark Tooth Creek to collect fossil shark teeth.

“The camp was a unique experience; allowing campers to see and do things they would not normally be able to on a regular visit to the museum.”

The camp was a unique experience, allowing campers to see and do things they would not normally be able to on a regular visit to the museum. Each day was filled with themed activities, interactive lessons, field trips, and guest speakers. Students were able to connect with faculty and staff and had access to the University’s resources such as 3D printers.

The camp was well received by campers and their families, and we look forward to bringing the camp back in the summer of 2023. ■

The 2023 Fossil Camp will be held June 5-9. For registration and pricing, visit uayouthprograms.com.

(ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT): Joyia Davis (Education Outreach Coordinator, Alabama Museum of Natural History) with campers at Shark Took Creek. Photo Credit: Dr. Takehito Ikejiri, Research Associate of Vertebrate Paleontology, The University of Alabama Museums; Fossil Campers learn about Shark Teeth through a virtual lesson from Sharks 4 Kids’ Barbara Mattiace! Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, UA Museums (BOTTOM, RIGHT): Campers worked together to recreate a fossil that most closely resembles a Pterosaur. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums

George Martin Receives the Alabama Avocational Paleontologist Award

Written by DR. ADIEL KLOMPMAKER

Alabama has a fantastic fossil record and many important fossils have been discovered by avocational (amateur/hobby) paleontologists. In 2020, a new award was created by The University of Alabama Museums honoring an avocational paleontologist who has made substantial contributions to paleontology in Alabama. The criteria for this award are diverse, but include making fossils available for scientific study, involvement in research, and outreach activities.

The award committee held a meeting reviewing the contributions of the many deserving candidates and for 2022, the committee selected George Martin from Auburn as the recipient of the Alabama Avocational Paleontologist Award (ALAP award). This award was officially presented to George during the celebration of National Fossil Day on Saturday, October 15, a free event at the Alabama Museum of Natural History in Smith Hall on The University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa.

“George Martin’s accomplishments for Alabama paleontology are truly outstanding,” said Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, University of Alabama Museums’ Curator of Paleontology and a member of the committee. George has been very active in paleontology through finding, preparing, and making available fossils by donating many thousands of them to multiple museums in the southeastern US. “The fossils George discovered have been and will be incredibly useful for scientific research by many paleontologists. For example, some fossils he found in Alabama turned out to be new species, including a crab and a turtle that have since been named after him. Other fossils he discovered are shown during outreach events, collection tours, and are on display in the museum for everyone to enjoy,” Dr. Klompmaker said.

One of the activities George enjoys is fossil preparation. “He is one of the best preparators of fossils in Alabama with a keen eye for detail, often working on both small and large fossils in his own lab at home,” Dr. Klompmaker mentioned. George has also been participating in various outreach activities, has co-authored a scientific paper,

and he has been very generous with sharing his vast knowledge. The committee concluded that George is very deserving of the ALAP award.

“I am surprised and excited to even be considered,” George said in a first reaction. “I’m very honored to be the recipient of the Award. It’s great to be recognized, especially for doing something one loves to do. It’s always nice to know that ones’ work is valued by other people, especially in the scientific community. Aside from donating and preparing fossils for several museums and locating new sites, I enjoy sharing my small collection with children and adults to help them become aware of the opportunities in Alabama to enjoy a fascinating hobby and possibly make important discoveries,” George said. He likes the thrill of the hunt, learning new things, and working with and meeting people with similar interests.

George has always been interested in nature and science. “I began by collecting artifacts in the fields around home and progressed to fossils as opportunities presented themselves.

I worked as a Soil Scientist for 40+ years, so I was much aware of geology and never missed an opportunity to examine rock outcrops, which sometimes contained fossils. After retiring from full-time work about 15 years ago, I spend much of my free time collecting, preparing, and studying fossils,” he said. George plans to continue his field collecting activities and preparing fossils as long as he is able to. ■



(ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM): George showing an outcrop of the famous 66 million-year-old Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary in Alabama. Photo Credit: George Phillips; George Martin with the award plaque during National Fossil Day. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist for The University of Alabama Museums



Volunteer Achievement Award for Bing Blewitt

Written by DR. ADIEL KLOMPMAKER

Dr. Harry L. "Bing" Blewitt, a retired chemistry professor at The University of Alabama, has been a volunteer in the paleontology collections at The University of Alabama Museums since 1999. He has spent well over 7,000 hours cataloging and putting away specimens in the collections, but he has also helped to prepare some specimens

"Without Bing's efforts over the last 25 years, the paleontology collection would not be nearly as useful to researchers as it is today!"

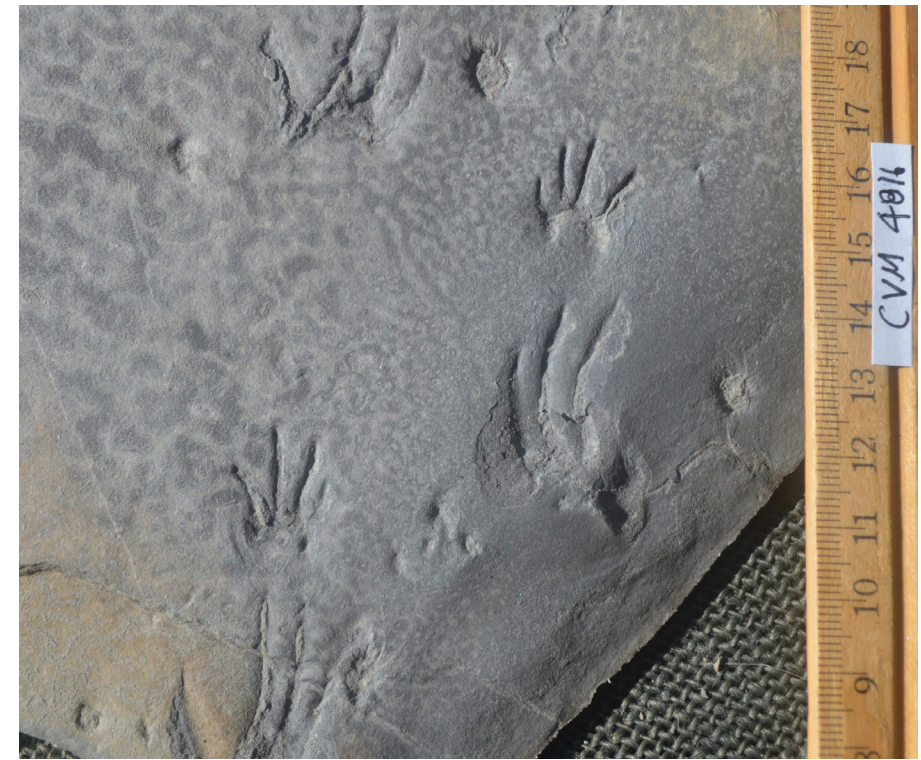
and rearranged the vertebrate paleontology collection taxonomically. His main interests lie in vertebrate

paleontology, particularly mosasaurs. He has counted more than 1,000 mosasaur remains, making the Alabama Museum of Natural History collection (under the care of the Department of Museum Research and Collections) one of the largest mosasaur collections in the world.

Bing has worked with several curators and collection managers in the past and since 2019 with the current Curator of Paleontology, Dr. Adiel Klompmaker. Bing continues to volunteer to the present day, coming in at least once a week.

Recently, Bing hit a true milestone as a volunteer. He has now helped to catalog 3,000 records and put the associated specimens away in their appropriate place in the paleontology collection. As a sign of appreciation, he was presented a well-deserved Volunteer Achievement Award for this milestone in 2022.

"We are very grateful for Bing's truly remarkable dedication and his enthusiasm," Klompmaker said. "Without Bing's efforts over the last 25 years, the paleontology collection would not be nearly as useful to researchers as it is today!" Volunteers play a very important role in a variety of ways in museum collections across the nation and Bing is a fantastic example of it. ■



Major Fossil Footprint Donation to Paleontology Collection

Written by DR. ADIEL KLOMPMAKER

Trackways of ancient animals inhabiting a swampy area during the Coal Age in what is now northern Alabama have been known for nearly a century, but they were nearly forgotten for a long time. The discovery of many ~315 million-year-old trackways in the Union Chapel Mine (Steven C. Minkin Paleozoic Footprint site) in Walker County in 1999 and subsequent trips spurred renewed interest and golden opportunities for research and education ongoing to the present day. But the Union Chapel Mine is not the only site.

In 2011, a new locality with many fossil footprints was discovered in Walker County by Dr. Ron Buta, prominent avocational paleontologist, University of Alabama Professor Emeritus of Astronomy, and Research Associate of Paleontology at The University of Alabama Museums. This Crescent Valley Mine has also yielded many trackways from ancient reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates in addition to plant fossils, but from a more nearshore environment than the Union Chapel Mine. These two strip-mine sites have yielded many spectacular fossils of national and even international significance.

Ron singlehandedly collected over 5,000 slabs from the Crescent Valley Mine, the majority was donated previously to museum collections, including the Alabama Museum of Natural History collection. On October 21, 2022, Ron donated the last 600 slabs he collected from January 2019 through May 2022 prior to the final reclamation of the

Crescent Valley Mine. Ron, his wife Deb Crocker, and Dr. Adiel Klompmaker (UA Museums' Curator of Paleontology) packed up the ~50 boxes and oversized specimens and transported them to the museum for further curation.

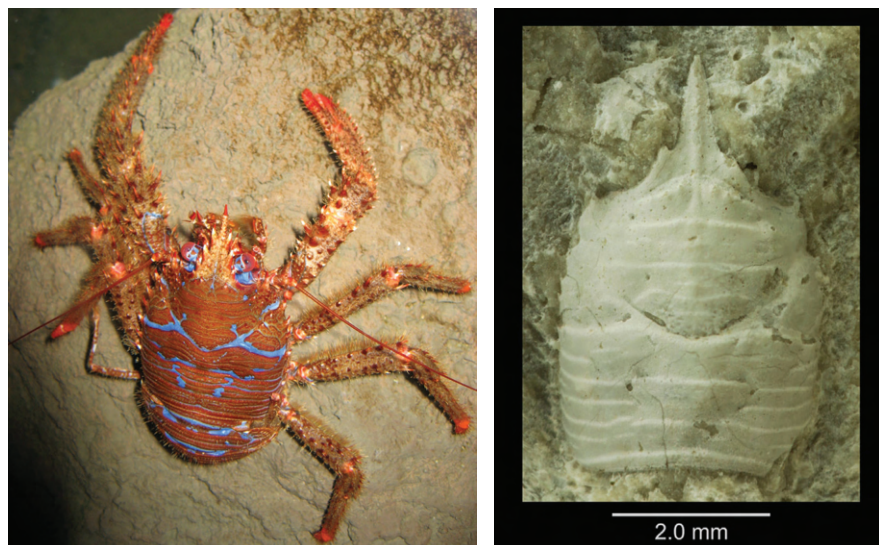
"We are very grateful to Ron for this new donation," Dr. Klompmaker said. "His efforts to collect and preserve this many fossils from the Crescent Valley Mine are truly remarkable. These Alabama fossils will be very useful for scientific research in the short and long

term, as well as for education and outreach." In fact, the newly donated fossils as well as those donated before are already the subject of ongoing research by Ron. For this project, he has made 15,500 digital images of the specimens, all of which have been made publicly available online. ■



(ABOVE): Bing Blewitt with his Volunteer Achievement Award. Photo Credit: Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, Curator of Paleontology for The University of Alabama Museums

(ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM): Example of a great *Cincosaurus cobbi* trackway made by a primitive reptile. Photo Credit: Dr. Ron Buta; Dr. Ron Buta with the new donation of Crescent Valley Mine fossils in his garage. Photo Credit: Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, Curator of Paleontology for The University of Alabama Museums



Six New Fossil Squat Lobster Taxa Discovered

Written by **DR. ADIEL KLOMPMAKER**

Squat lobsters of the Galatheoidea superfamily live in all oceans today, from shallow waters to depths of thousands of meters, and from hot hydrothermal vents to cold waters in the polar regions. The number of extant species is currently ~1,300 species, many of which are truly colorful. Ongoing research by biologists tell us that many more species remain undiscovered. The same applies to the fossil record of squat lobsters. Until this year, only about 200 species were known from the fossil record, starting in the Middle Jurassic.

In a paper published in the *Journal of Paleontology* in May 2022, The University of Alabama Museums' Curator of Paleontology Dr. Adiel Klompmaker, UA Museums' Research Associate Dr. Cristina Robins, and two Danish colleagues report on five new species and one new genus of squat lobster from the fossil record. Their description is based on usually tiny (<5 mm) carapaces that are diagnostic for species. The new species originate from the Jurassic of Germany, the Cretaceous of Mexico, and the Paleocene of Denmark. The new genus is described from the Eocene of Italy. Known species from the Cretaceous of Texas and Colorado, as well as the Jurassic of the Czech Republic and France, were restudied. Among them is the now reinstated oldest record of Galatheoidea to date, originating from 167 million-year-old rocks in France.

"This goes to show the importance of going out in the field as well exploring and maintaining museum collections."

Most species were found in limestones representing ancient coral and sponge reefs.

"These new species mean that fossil record of Galatheoidea has expanded by 2.5%," Dr. Robins said. Many more species remain to be discovered in the fossil record, however. "There are many reasons to think there are many more unknown species of galatheoids undiscovered: the number of known fossil species is small compared to modern species, cryptic species may

have gone unnoticed in previously described faunas as this new paper shows, and fossil squat lobster species have yet to be reported from many countries and states where we would expect them to occur, including Alabama. Since they are so small and relatively unknown, they can be frequently overlooked in larger

collections or in the field," Dr. Robins explained.

The newly published paper has been many years in the making, as is the case for many scientific papers. For example, the specimen from the Czech Republic was found by the authors in 2013 in an active quarry. Other specimens used were discovered in museum collections in the last 10 years. "This goes to show the importance of going out in the field as well exploring and maintaining museum collections," Dr. Klompmaker said. ■

(ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT): Modern specimen of *Galathea strigosa*. Source: Wikipedia. Photo Credit: Wikipedia; A carapace of the new species *Protomunida bennickei*, named after Danish avocational paleontologist and collector Peter Benniscke. Source: Klompmaker et al. (2022)

Welcome to UA Museums!

BROOKE BOGAN
Natural History Collections Manager,
Department of Museum
Research & Collections



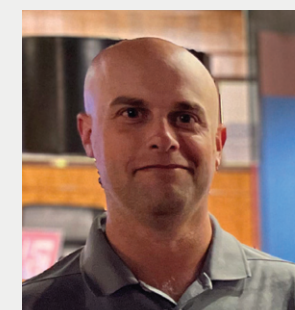
MADLINE BURKHARDT
Research Outreach Coordinator,
Alabama Museum of Natural History



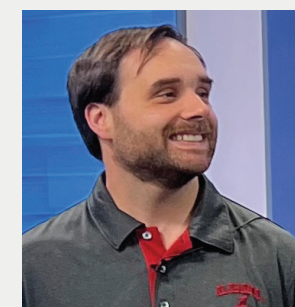
KAYLA GETLAK
Inventory Manager,
Paul W. Bryant Museum



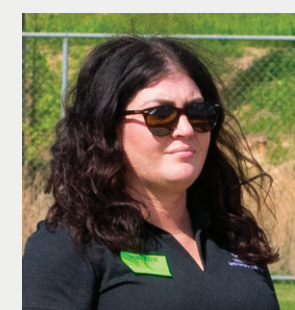
BRIAN MAST
Education Outreach Coordinator,
Paul W. Bryant Museum



DR. CLAY NELSON
Director,
Moundville Archaeological Park



MARSHA HOLLEY
Education Outreach Coordinator,
Moundville Archaeological Park



MADISON BRYANT
Education Assistant,
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DR. TREVOR DUKE
Curator and Director,
NAGPRA Program



JAMES BRUMETT
Park Maintenance Worker,
Moundville Archaeological Park



BRANDON COBB
Assistant Museum Manager,
Moundville Archaeological Park



JAMES SCOTT
Education Outreach Coordinator,
Mildred Westervelt Warner
Transportation Museum



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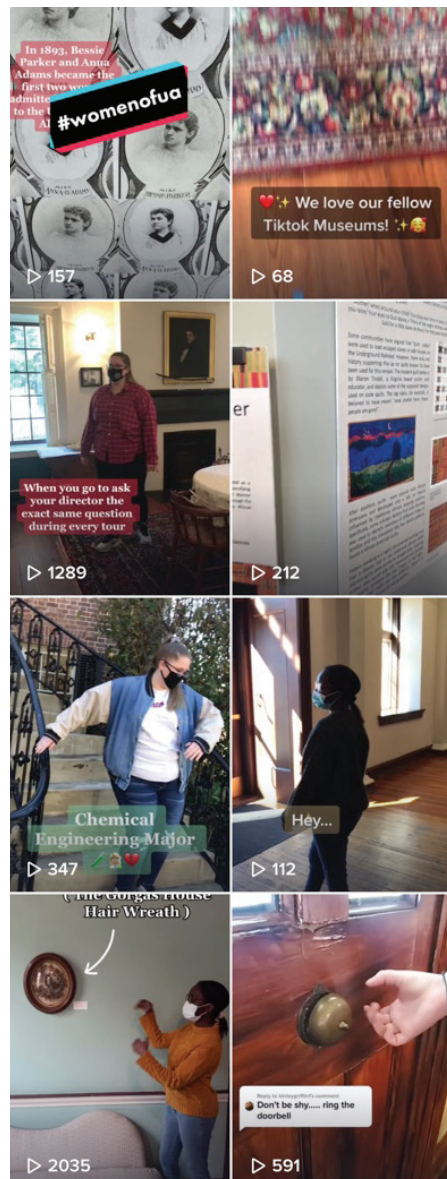


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(ABOVE): Members and Supporters of UA Museums receive invitations to special events like this tailgate at the Gorgas House Museum. Photo Credit: Rebecca Johnson, Communications Specialist, The University of Alabama

BIRDFEST

- **APRIL 29**
Moundville Archaeological Park

GROWING UP WILD PRESCHOOL FRIDAY

- **MAY 12 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**
Alabama Museum of Natural History

SATURDAY IN THE PARK

- **MAY 20 – Bill Skinner, Tools and Weapons**
Moundville Archaeological Park

MUSEUM MONDAYS

- **MAY 22 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM**
Alabama Museum of Natural History

AFTER PROMONTORY: 150 YEARS OF TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROADING

- **MAY 23 – SEPTEMBER 9**
The Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum

FOSSIL CAMP

- **JUNE 5-9**
Alabama Museum of Natural History

FOSSIL HUNTING TRIPS

- **JULY 11, 13, 17, 22, 25, 29**
Alabama Museum of Natural History

SATURDAY IN THE PARK

- **AUGUST 19 – Guy Meador, Flintknapping**
Moundville Archaeological Park