The background of the cover is a photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, rounded, grassy mound, which is likely an archaeological site. The mound is covered in green grass and is surrounded by a dense forest of trees. The trees in the background are mostly bare, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The sky is a pale, overcast grey. The title text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

REMNANTS OF
AMERICA'S
SOUTHEAST ABORIGINALS

PALEO TO MISSISSIPPIAN

MAURY E. MILLER III

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OF
AMERICA'S
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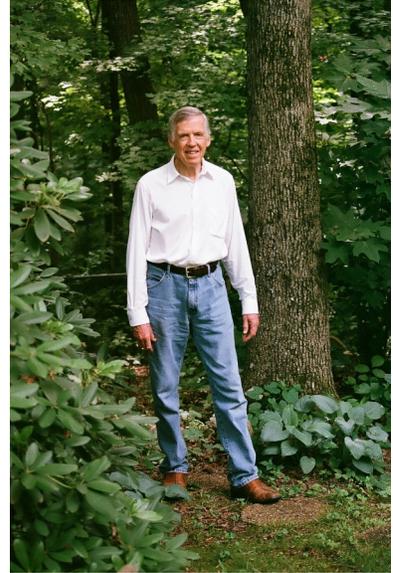
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maury Miller III has had a longstanding interest in archaeology/anthropology since his youth. He has led archaeological journey's throughout the Big Harpeth River Valley of Middle Tennessee for the last 25 plus years, showcasing aboriginal artifacts from the disparate sites.

Maury graduated from Baylor University with a degree in Earth Science from the Geology Department and a degree in History from the History Department. His studies included numerous courses in archaeology and anthropology. Since his graduation he has worked as farm manager, restored historical homes, and worked as an architectural/location photographer.



Combining his passion for forestry and photography in 2004, Maury was one of several photographers around Tennessee asked to record for posterity some of the most historic and significant trees across the state. Seven of his photographs became part of a Notable Trees of Tennessee Exhibit premiering in Legislative Plaza and later touring the State. In 2014, Tennessee Urban Forestry Council published Maury's photographs along with others in *TREES OF TENNESSEE*, a beautiful museum quality full color book.

Another passion for Maury has been his preservation of archaeological and historical places. He worked with State of Tennessee State Archaeologist, Michael C. Moore, in safeguarding the last Harpeth River Phase Site in Middle Tennessee, *Sawyer Bend* located in Williamson County. He worked with John Noel to preserve what is considered to be the second finest white oak stand in the nation, a place named *Bon Aqua Woods* in Hickman County. Additionally, Maury rescued and restored the historic Hickman County home of iron master James C. Warner, proprietor of Warner Furnace, and father of Edwin and Percy Warner for whom two popular Davidson County parks are named.

Since the 1970's, the author has given archaeological presentations and installed archaeological/anthropological displays at public libraries and Tennessee State Parks to bring American Indian awareness to individuals of all ages in order to give glimpses into the material remnants of past cultures as lived in the local environs. A permanent display that Maury and former Montgomery Bell Park Ranger, Sam Reed, created of Mississippian Period artifacts found at Mound Bottom and the Harpeth River area can be viewed at the park visitor center in Burns, Tennessee.

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The author gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and their willingness to share their knowledge, time, and expertise with the author, some over a period of years, and others of recent acquaintance, in gathering information and material for this book. Their invaluable information has made this book possible and enhanced its ability to spur a greater interest in our prehistoric times in the American Southeast.

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CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Author's Notes</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Field In Spring</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Year Dating System</i>	<i>xiv</i>
 PART ONE Archaeological Progression Through The Centuries.....	 1
THE PALEO PERIOD IN THE SOUTHEAST UNITED STATES BC 12,500 — 8050	3
<i>Illustrations:</i>	
<i>Cumberland Spear Point</i>	2
<i>Detachable Bone Fore Shaft</i>	5
<i>The Delicate Art of Stone Age Flaking</i>	7
<i>Clovis Spear Point</i>	8
<i>Fluted Points</i>	9
<i>Implements</i>	10
<i>Spear Points</i>	11
<i>Implements</i>	12
ARCHAIC TRADITION BC 8050 — 1500	13
<i>Illustrations:</i>	
<i>Archaic Indian Hunting with Atlatl</i>	14
<i>Points and Knives</i>	17
<i>Adz</i>	18
<i>Amulet and Points</i>	19
<i>Elk Dewlap</i>	20
<i>Benton Knife</i>	21
<i>Knife Forms</i>	22
<i>Chipped Flint Scrapers</i>	23
<i>“Southern Raised Ridge” Full-Grooved Axe</i>	24
<i>Bannerstones</i>	25
<i>Aboriginal Drilling Methods</i>	26
<i>Flint Drill</i>	27
<i>Plummet</i>	28
WOODLAND PERIOD BC 1500 — AD 750	29
<i>Illustrations:</i>	
<i>Archaic / Woodland Projectiles</i>	32
<i>Gorget</i>	33
<i>Mortar and Pestle</i>	34

<i>Beads</i>	35
<i>Awl and Tines</i>	36
<i>Chipped Chert Adz</i>	37
<i>Wolf Medicine Tube</i>	38
<i>Wolf Medicine Tube</i>	39
<i>Copena Poled Celts</i>	40
<i>Copena Projectiles</i>	41
<i>Woodland / Mississippian Arrow Points</i>	42
MISSISSIPPIAN PERIOD AD 750 — 1575	43
<i>Illustrations:</i>	
<i>Mound Bottom Site</i>	46
<i>Mace Bluff Petroglyph</i>	47
<i>Engraved Warrior Head</i>	48
<i>The Red Seven</i>	49
<i>Sun and Moon Painting</i>	50
<i>Plastering Trowel</i>	51
<i>Daub</i>	52
<i>Conch Shell Beads</i>	53
<i>Bilobated Earbobs</i>	54
<i>Cannel Coal Disk Bead</i>	55
<i>Owl Effigy</i>	56
<i>Flying Bird Pipe</i>	57
<i>Pottery Types Descriptions</i>	58
<i>Pottery Types</i>	59
<i>Pottery Trowel</i>	60
<i>Terra Cotta Duck Head</i>	61
<i>Owl Effigy Water Bottle</i>	62
<i>Negative Painted Bottle</i>	63
<i>Mississippian Arrow Points</i>	64
<i>Madison</i>	65
<i>Nodena Banks</i>	66
<i>Polished Celt</i>	67
<i>Notched Hoe</i>	68
<i>Flared Bit Spade / Hoe</i>	69
<i>Chisel</i>	70
<i>Chisel Set</i>	71
<i>Strap Handle Jar</i>	72
<i>Sunfish Bowl</i>	73
<i>Terra Cotta Wood Duck Bowl</i>	74
<i>Northern Shoveler Duck Head</i>	75
<i>Terra Cotta Gaming Disks</i>	76
<i>Discoids and Discoidal</i>	77
<i>Mississippian Period Artifact Grouping</i>	78
<i>Sitting Bird Pipe</i>	79

<i>Chungke Game Stone</i>	80
<i>Chungke Player Effigy Pipe</i>	81
<i>Chungke Game Players</i>	82
<i>Ceremonial Copper Axes</i>	83
PART TWO Scientific Evidence.....	85
ATLATL WEIGHTS — <i>Function and Classification</i>	87
PRIMARY MATERIALS USED TO MANUFACTURE VARIOUS ARTIFACT TYPES	93
ARTIFACTS FOUND IN CACHES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES	94
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS — <i>Detecting Where Sites Exist</i>	95
ABORIGINAL CHERT PROCUREMENT: <i>Cherts, Extraction Sites and Methods</i>	96
<i>Illustrations:</i>	
<i>Chert color variations showing blue-gray black to tan to red</i>	100
<i>Novaculite outcrops on tops of mountains in the Ouachitas</i>	100
<i>Novaculite debris and outcrops at Hot Spring County, Arkansas quarry</i>	101
<i>Hammerstone, novaculite bifaces, and novaculite tools</i>	101
<i>Sketch map of Indian Mountain novaculite quarry in Arkansas (Holmes)</i>	102
<i>The Four recorded Dover Quarries . . . Stewart County, Tennessee</i>	102
<i>Primary reduction debitage . . . Thompson Hollow quarry</i>	103
<i>Dover (Lower St. Louis chert) color variations</i>	103
A NEW METHOD OF DATING: <i>Infrared Laser Spectroscopy</i>	104
PART THREE Practical Lessons Learned Along The Way.....	111
A VISIT TO THE MUSEUM — <i>to see the real thing . . .</i>	113
AMERICAN INDIAN ARTIFACT SHOWS — <i>displays of artifacts Paleo to Mississippian</i> ..	114
CERTIFICATES OF AUTHENTICITY — <i>Proof of Authenticity . . . Or Not?</i>	115
PROVENANCE — <i>Does It Affect the Validity and Value of An Artifact?</i>	116
FACTS ABOUT FLUORITE IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE —	
<i>New Analysis Techniques Correct Misidentification . . .</i>	117
TAKING PROPER CARE OF ABORIGINAL ARTIFACTS	119
DOCUMENTING ARTIFACTS TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.....	120
AFTERWORD — <i>chronological cultural sequences of America’s Southeast</i>	122
EDITOR’S POSTSCRIPT ~ <i>Gleanings from the Rabbit Trails . . .</i>	123
FOR FURTHER READING ~ <i>Resources the Reader Can Trust ~</i>	125
INDEX	127

INTRODUCTION

Remnants of America's Southeast Aboriginals — Paleo to Mississippian is a book on the rich archaeological prehistory we have in the Southeast. It also promotes knowledge about the archaeological fragments that have been left to us by earlier cultures that lived across the changing landscape.

This report is in chronological sequence with information on preservation, provenance, characteristics, types, materials and certificates of authority concerning aboriginal artifacts while keeping them in the correct context of their cultural patterns.

When archaeological dates are listed, especially considering the earlier traditions of the southeastern aboriginal, assemblages are commonly, if arbitrarily, placed into transitory ranges. These same general dates are also associated with populations of peoples arriving and living in said areas.

Methods now available and too numerous and detailed to mention for the purposes of this book are often used to determine the age of excavated artifacts and sites, trumping the past most often used method of radiocarbon dating in many cases. Relationships between radiocarbon and actual time scales are within a range of educated guesses at best. This is why archaeologists establish a plus (+) or minus (-) before and after generally determined dates. For example, AD 1500 \pm 100 or 200 years either side of the line. Dates that are linked to later archaeological evidence are more inclined to be closer to actual dates thru radiocarbon and examination of deeply stratified sites but still follow sequences with plus (+) or minus (-) and/or “*at about*” interpretations.

This manuscript's photographs of aboriginal Southeast American Artifacts, together with a straightforward, readable text should appeal to specialists as well as the general populace who have an appreciation for and knowledge of American Indian Antiquities of the Southeast.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Archaeology/Anthropology has always held a special interest in my life. I have always been well-taken with museums where I could see and enjoy the various and beautiful antiquities of the American Indian showcased in the different educational formats behind sheets of glass. I have also been impressed with visiting archaeological labs where archaeologists were busy photographing and cataloging and plastering missing sections of archaeological items so that one could view what the piece would look like when made whole. The most enjoyable times, though, were had walking the plowed fields of Tennessee, and the arroyos and water courses of Texas, looking for remnants of past cultures left there by the aboriginal and waiting to be picked up so that I could actually shake hands with the distant and long ago early inhabitant of this land.

Mauvy E. Miller III

PREFACE

The anthropological and archaeological evidence of America's Southeast Aboriginals must be preserved. People are always asking who were the early inhabitants of the area? Who made this particular artifact? Where did they get the material for this particular artifact? America's Southeast is rich in this early evidence.

The first inhabitants or aboriginals went through different cultural phases, such as the Paleolithic, the Archaic, the Woodland and the Mississippian. All these phases are represented in America's Southeast by the evidences that have been found there across the region.

There are many archaeological sites already known in the Southeast, and there is only one common denominator: in each of them, man came to terms with what the habitat offered.

Peoples utilized different materials to manufacture fishhooks, spears, and harpoon heads; some learned to work bone for tools, and copper for ornaments; they had a variety of projectile points for all kinds of game.

Man utilized his resource to the fullest, yet still lived in harmony with his environment. In fact, J. R. Caldwell, a specialist in the archaeology of eastern North America, has lauded the Indian peoples for what he calls their "primary forest efficiency" — their adaptation to many kinds of environments in which only the surplus food resources were cropped as they became seasonably available.

More is known about the American Indian than any other major aboriginal group in the world. He has been observed, described, catalogued, and cross compared. It is important to preserve and protect the archaeological evidence and sites of the first inhabitants across America's Southeast.



Cumberland Spear Point

Paleo Period - BC 10,000-8000

Fountain Creek and Duck River

Maury County, Tennessee

Material: Ft. Payne Chert

Function:

Cumberland spear points were attached to detachable fore shafts that were then attached to main shafts.

The name *Cumberland* is credited to Thomas M. N. Lewis in 1954, for several examples found in the Cumberland River Valley drainage of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Shown actual size:

Length - 4-3/4"

THE PALEO PERIOD IN THE SOUTHEAST UNITED STATES BC 12,500 — 8050

EARLY - BC 12,500 - 8950

MIDDLE - BC 8950 - 8550

LATE - BC 8550 - 8050

THE LONG JOURNEY

The first peoples to come into the New World came from Siberia across the Bering Strait land bridge and into Alaska during the last ice age. The last advance of the Ice Age began about 70,000 years ago and lasted until about 10,000 years ago. Because huge quantities of water were locked up in the glaciers, the sea level fell 400-450 feet. A strip of land 1300 miles wide connecting Siberia to Alaska became exposed.

This land bridge was named Beringia by anthropologists. It was a broad, water-logged plain, broken only by low, rolling hills.

During the centuries of the Paleo time, the winters were dark, long and very cold. Small bands of hunters and their families pursued their quarry, ever moving eastward, farther and farther from their Siberia homeland, over the land bridge. Unaware that they were entering a new continent, their journey took them down ice free corridors. One followed the Brooks Range, the other the Yukon Valley, through western Canada, down into the United States, and finally, over time, into the Southeast. Their pathways were narrow and climate punishing. Their routes were uncharted as they followed their prey, their only hope for food and survival. Though the icy trek acted as a disease filter, many perished along the way because of the harsh conditions.

These ancient hunters are often called Paleo Indians because their lifestyle was a Paleolithic or Old Stone Age Culture. "Paleo" is from the Greek word for "ancient;" "lithic" is from the Greek word for "stone."

Some of the best evidence that's been retrieved so far concerning the extreme antiquities of man in the New World comes from a place called Fell's Cave in Chile. At the deepest level, artifacts dating to about 8000 or 10,000 years ago have been uncovered. This means that peoples must have been in North America, and especially the Southeast, at a much earlier date.

THE HUNT FOR SURVIVAL AND SHELTER

In the southeastern United States, heavy rainfalls nourished a thick forest cover of spruce, fir, and broadleaf trees. In the woods and grasslands mastodons could find plenty to eat, for they were browsers living off tree branches and leaves and thick grasses. Longhorn

ARCHAIC PERIOD

BC 8050 — 1500

EARLY - BC 8050 - 6500

MIDDLE - BC 6500 - 3500

LATE - BC 3500 - 1500

A CHANGE IN WAY OF LIFE FROM THE PALEO TRADITION

Around BC 8000 a new tradition began to take shape in the Southeast - the Archaic. It was both efficient and diversified. Not only did it rely on hunting deer and elk and smaller woodland animals, but it was also based on the gathering of vegetable foods, acorns, hickory nuts, muscle shells, and fishing. The Archaic people became increasingly sedentary, making a living in smaller territories. Archaic people lived in small bands of 20 to 50 people. They also began to exploit all the food resources the particular environment had to offer.

These Archaic people's way of life had changed due to responses to changes in the environment and through the accumulation of human ideas. Certain foods such as fruits, nuts and seeds were abundant, and large and small game thrived. The river teemed with fish and muscle shellfish. This environment made it possible for a more settled existence with more permanent and more substantial dwellings. They still dwelt in rock shelters, but they also began to erect domed structures and three-sided shelters covered with brush. This was a very important stride toward civilization.

This new period of life is called the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) or Archaic Era. It was a long one, lasting for thousands of years. In the Southeast, it began around BC 8000, and lasted for about six or seven thousand years.

This Archaic tradition changed from both within as local peoples developed new skills and promoted new ideas, and from without as new and later cultures came up with new ideas which became different. Cultures grow by borrowing from others. Most of the large Pleistocene animals left because of either the change in environment or excellent hunting by the Indians, or both. Mastodons, long horned bison, camels, and horses disappeared. Elk, bears, deer, wolves, and other smaller game stayed on the scene for the Archaic Indians to hunt.

NEW IMPLEMENTS FOR A NEW LIFESTYLE

For their life in the forest, and also in the savannahs (grasslands), many specialized tools were developed by the Archaic Indians. Mortars and pestles were used for crushing seeds, berries and nuts. Nutting stones for crushing nuts were also popular. They also had grooved axes, drills, and gouges, and stone adzes for woodworking. Evidence from some archaeological sites in the Southeast revealed that Archaic peoples had developed fish hooks and nets for fishing. Pendants, plummets, and beads came into fashion which were used either for decoration or ritual. The variety of polished stone tools and ornaments increased as time progressed.



“Southern Raised Ridge” Full-Grooved Axe

Middle Archaic Period - BC 5500-3500

Rutherford Creek and Duck River

Maury County, TN

Material - Limestone

Top - Front side Bottom - Back side

Length - 6" Width - 3-5/16" Depth - 2-11/16"

This style of axe is usually found with Big Sandy II, Eva, and Morrow Mountain atlatl points. Big Sandy I is too early, and Elk River atlatl points are too late.

WOODLAND PERIOD BC 1500 — AD 750

EARLY - BC 1500 - 200
MIDDLE - BC 200 - AD 500
LATE - AD 500 - 750

A NEW CULTURE ARISES EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

The Woodland Period began to come into existence in the eastern United States along rivers like the Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee around roughly BC 1500, and endured with cultural changes till AD 750.

This tradition brought on not only a change in ideology but also a reform in subsistence pattern. The Woodland culture was a blend of new traits that became a pattern that was singular to those lands east of the Mississippi. As a matter of consequence, the Woodland tradition was probably the most indigenous and distinctive culture in the east.

With the advent of the Woodland culture came refinements in the way food was collected and stored for later reuse. Collections of nuts and berries became more important as well as the use of underground pits in which to store nuts and seeds gathered in large quantities. Horticulture began to arise as a supplement to a hunting and gathering lifestyle. Tobacco crop, mainly used for magical or religious purposes, made its first appearance in the burial mound era of the Woodland Period. This brought on the making of carved pipes and medicine tubes of stone and terra cotta.

Woodland Indians began to live in small to medium size villages. Woodland culture dwellings were primarily circular huts built of small saplings that were placed into the ground and bent together to form a dome-shaped framework. The outside walls were covered with bark or mats. A small hole was left in the dome of the house to allow smoke to escape from open fires and underground ovens that were kettle-shaped pits in the ground, smaller at the top than at the bottom. The ovens were large enough to roast a bushel or two of food at a time.

MOUND BUILDING IN THE UNITED STATES SPREADS WITH THE WOODLAND INDIANS

The custom of constructing earthen mounds to house the dead or the cremated remains gained widespread acceptance. This practice of building mounds of earth to cover the deceased might have been an idea borrowed from the culture of the Olmecs in Mexico who were the first to initiate this practice. Ornaments and tools were buried with some of the deceased individuals.

A few archaeologists remain puzzled over some of the mounds and earthworks that dot eastern North America. Some of the mounds and earthworks were simple in design and function while others were large and truly grand. Some of the piles of earth that were built are just that and nothing else.



Mortar and Pestle

Early Woodland Period - BC 800-300

Marshall County, MS

Left - Mortar. Material - Sandstone. Diameter - 4-7/8".

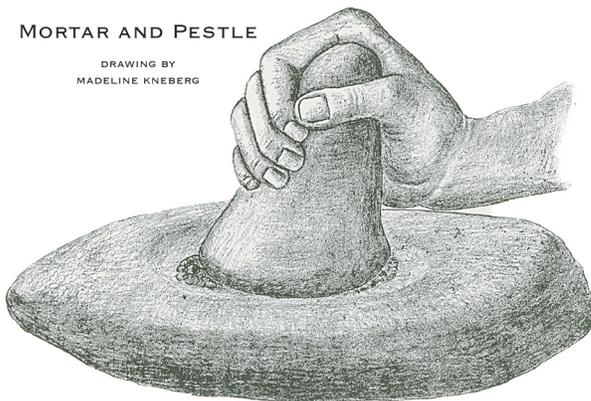
Right - Pestle. Material - Cave Stalagmite (calcite-aragonite). Length - 4-3/8".

Function:

Used for grinding grain, nuts, and herbs..

MORTAR AND PESTLE

DRAWING BY
MADELINE KNEBERG



Pictured at left is a *Mortar*, the bottom indented, round, relatively flat stone, and the *Pestle*, the elongated conical, sometimes oval-shaped as in the above photograph, as it would be used.

MISSISSIPPIAN PERIOD

AD 750 — 1575

EARLY - AD 750 - 1150
MIDDLE - AD 1150 - 1400
LATE - AD 1400 - 1575

FROM SMALL VILLAGE LIFE TO MOUND CENTER SOCIETIES

Throughout most of the Mississippi Valley and the southeast, a new and dynamic cultural tradition appeared. It embodied ceremonial and political concepts that were even more advanced than those of earlier cultures.

Also, there was a gradual change from the pattern of living in small villages to mound centers. Fresh and vigorous ideas were introduced. Great ceremonial and political centers arose during this time like Cahokia, Moundville, Etowah, Link Farm, Mound Bottom, Angel, Aztalan, Spiro, Town Creek and many smaller ones.

This new tradition or culture that appeared is called the "Mississippian" because much of it was concentrated in the confines of the river valley of the same name.

In formal anthropological terms, Mississippian groups had "ranked societies and chiefdoms" (Fried 1967, Service 1971). Only a few people were allowed to fill some leadership or a special privilege status role in Mississippian society. Some of these roles were chiefs, war leaders or shamans. Some of these social roles and statuses were inherited or were passed down within one family or clan for generations.

These Mississippian settlements formed a hierarchy of different kinds of sites. The most archaeologically important were the planned towns with centrally located plazas flanked by structures set on platform mounds with earthen steps and ramps. These towns were the political, social and religious centers of Mississippian society. These sites are some of the largest and most complex archaeological sites in the Mississippi Valley.

In the search for the beginnings of this new cultural tradition, the closest resemblances can be found far south in Middle America where temple mounds originated. The great centers of civilization in the valleys of Mexico, Guatemala and in the Yucatan were existing long before the Mississippian tradition developed. Also, some of the same elements that have been found in Middle America concerning arts and crafts and complex rituals can also be found in Mississippian society. This just goes to show that the temple mound age of the Mississippian tradition seems to reflect a widespread movement of peoples who brought with them a Middle American tradition.

By AD 900, the aboriginals of the Tennessee River Valley as well as the Mississippi River Valley were more dependent upon agriculture than upon any other activity. Corn, beans, squash and sunflowers and gourds were grown by the people. Fishing was important as well as collecting fresh water mussels for the shells and the food they contained. Hunting and gathering were still practiced but not to the degree that they had been.



Negative Painted Bottle

Middle Mississippian Period - AD 1150

Harpeth River Phase

Sawyer Bend Site

Big Harpeth River

Williamson County, Tennessee

This carafe neck bottle form was originally painted using the Nashville Negative Style.

In negative painting the background of a design is painted.

When the vessel is fired, the natural color of the clay (usually buff) remains, lighter in contrast to the carbonized area of the background where the stain was applied.

In Nashville Negative, a black negative design is superimposed over a previously applied surface of red with white ochre paint.

The now faded original design on this bottle featured a sun circle with scalloped or rayed edges.

Unfortunately its long burial has partly obliterated the design and coloring.

Height - 5-1/2" Diameter - 4-1/8".



The drawing at left by William E. Myer of a Negative Painted Bottle shows a sun circle with scalloped or rayed edges similar to the design once visible on the above pictured bottle. Long contact with the soil leached the negative paint design from the bottle.

ABORIGINAL CHERT PROCUREMENT: *Cherts, Extraction Sites and Methods*

The prehistoric quarries involving Fort Payne, Dover, and Novaculite are frequently referenced in the archaeological literature of the Southeastern United States. Many portions of the following article are excerpted from “A Chert Sourcing Study Using Visible/Near-Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy at the Dover Quarry Sites, Tennessee” (Ryan Parish, Master of Science Thesis, May 2009), in addition to other referenced sources, and where not otherwise referenced, from the book author, Maury Miller III.

“Prehistoric people had an intimate knowledge of the natural resources available to them. They exploited these resources to varying degrees throughout prehistory. Arguably one of the natural resources most relied upon by prehistoric people was stone. They utilized stone predominantly to craft various tools necessary for a wide range of tasks. The most popular stone of choice by prehistoric people was chert or flint *and novaculite (added by Maury Miller III)*. The physical characteristics of these materials made it conducive for the manufacture of sharp durable implements such as knives and projectile points. Due to the usually poor preservation of much of the prehistoric material culture stone tools (i.e., lithics) are often the only remaining traces archaeologists have of past occupations.

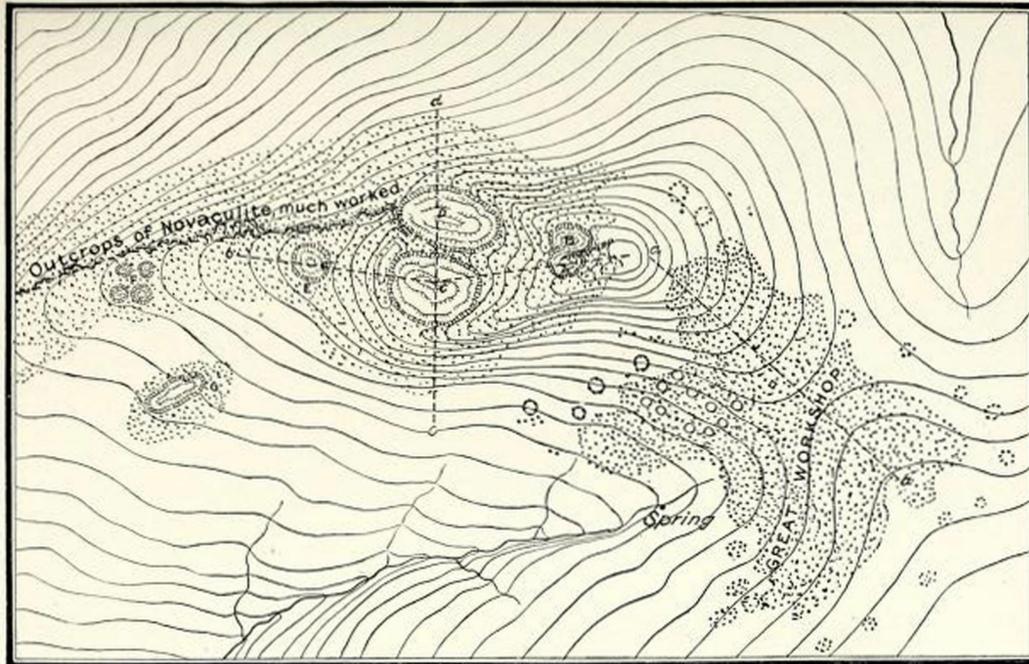
“The biased data set we are left with limits our knowledge about prehistoric life and constricts our interpretations. Despite these limitations archaeologists have been able to hypothesize about a number of aspects of prehistoric life from the analysis of lithic assemblages. Elaborate chronologies have been constructed linking prehistoric production technics and tool forms to temporally dated context. With the advent of experimental archaeology the identification of diagnostic polishes and edgewear damage can also give insights into the functionality of stone tools and the type of material modified by stone implements.

“Provenance studies of chert artifacts can provide data about migration patterns and trade networks. By examining the geologic occurrence of chert sources known to have been exploited by prehistoric people and demonstrating a link between these deposits and cultural implements, researchers can trace the movements of an object or a group of people across the landscape.

“The relationship between the landscape, natural resources, and how people utilized both can be explored in greater detail from the data generated by these studies. Patterns can be deduced that shed light not only on lithic material procurement localities, but also on production, use, and discard localities. . . .

“Like many other natural resources the quality of chert varies, and as a result the locations yielding high grade material were heavily exploited after by prehistoric populations. Ethnographic and archaeological evidence both demonstrate that prehistoric populations intentionally selected certain colors, textures, and glosses in chert (Luedtke 1992). As a result of this demand groups living in close proximity to a high quality chert source often manufactured

← ABORIGINAL CHERT PROCUREMENT: *Cherts, Extraction Sites and Methods* →



Sketch map of the Indian Mountain novaculite quarry in Arkansas. W H Holmes, 1919.

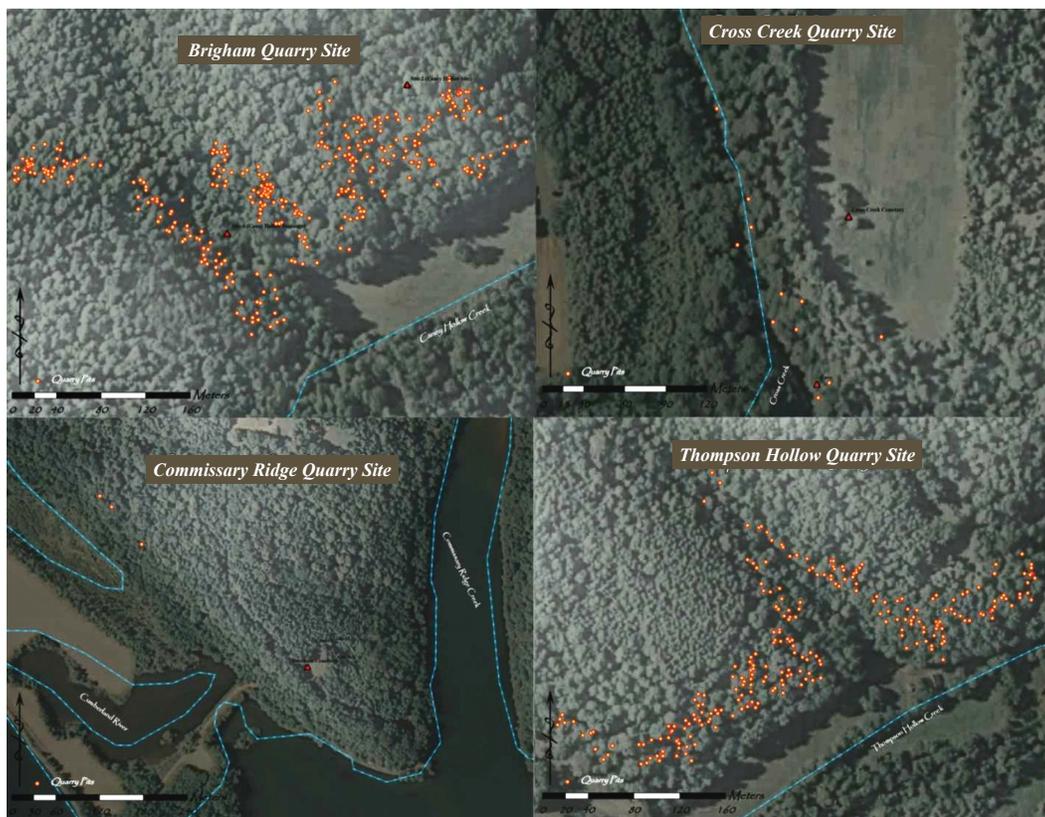
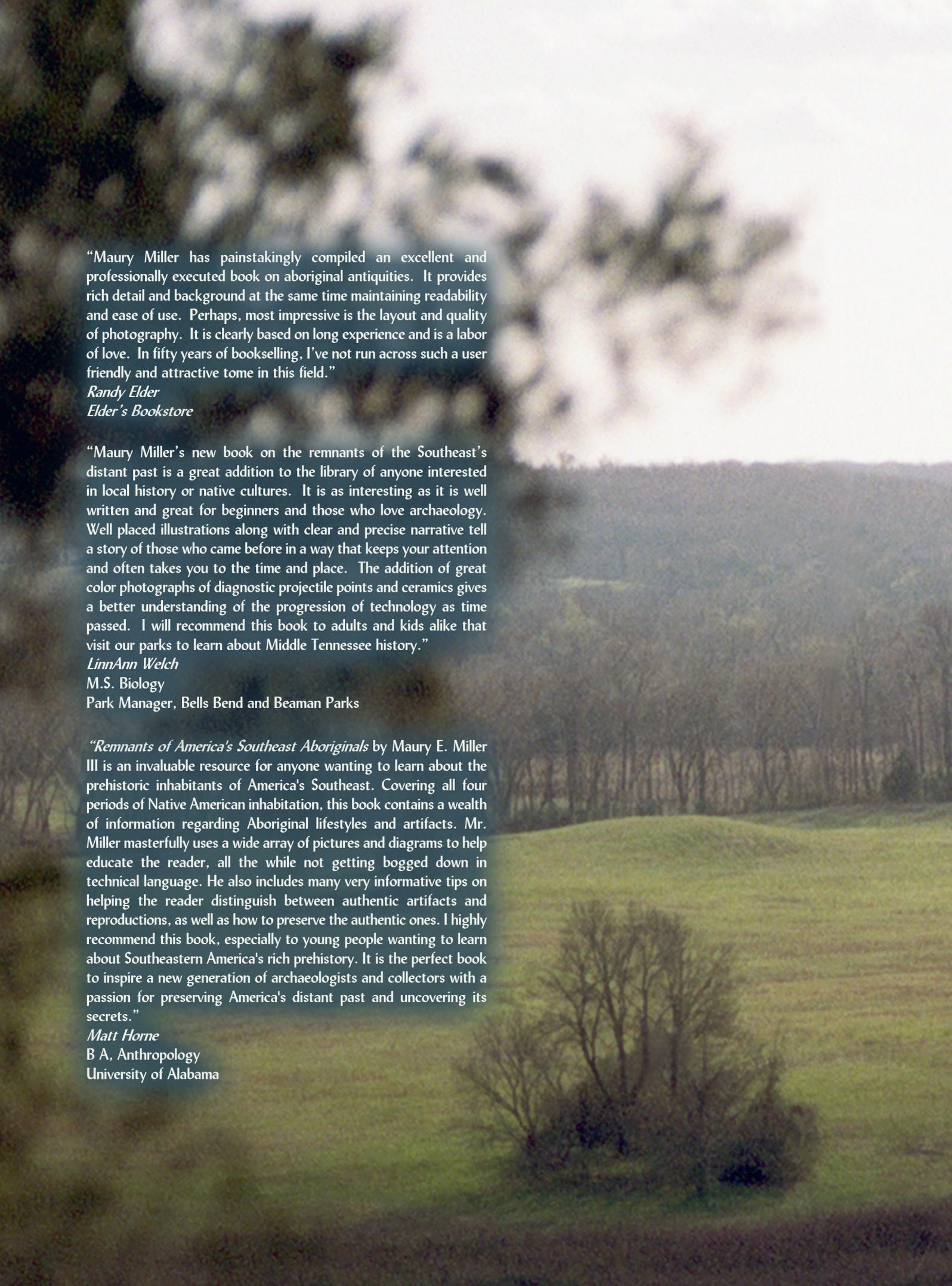


Photo provided by Ryan Parish.

The four recorded Dover Quarries; Brigham (40Sw64) top left, Cross Creek (40Sw66) top right, Commissary Ridge (40Sw80) bottom left, Thompson Hollow (40Sw67) bottom right, individual quarry pits overlaying aerial photograph, hydrology, and elevation layer data.



“Maury Miller has painstakingly compiled an excellent and professionally executed book on aboriginal antiquities. It provides rich detail and background at the same time maintaining readability and ease of use. Perhaps, most impressive is the layout and quality of photography. It is clearly based on long experience and is a labor of love. In fifty years of bookselling, I’ve not run across such a user friendly and attractive tome in this field.”

Randy Elder

Elder’s Bookstore

“Maury Miller’s new book on the remnants of the Southeast’s distant past is a great addition to the library of anyone interested in local history or native cultures. It is as interesting as it is well written and great for beginners and those who love archaeology. Well placed illustrations along with clear and precise narrative tell a story of those who came before in a way that keeps your attention and often takes you to the time and place. The addition of great color photographs of diagnostic projectile points and ceramics gives a better understanding of the progression of technology as time passed. I will recommend this book to adults and kids alike that visit our parks to learn about Middle Tennessee history.”

LinnAnn Welch

M.S. Biology

Park Manager, Bells Bend and Beaman Parks

“*Remnants of America’s Southeast Aboriginals* by Maury E. Miller III is an invaluable resource for anyone wanting to learn about the prehistoric inhabitants of America’s Southeast. Covering all four periods of Native American inhabitation, this book contains a wealth of information regarding Aboriginal lifestyles and artifacts. Mr. Miller masterfully uses a wide array of pictures and diagrams to help educate the reader, all the while not getting bogged down in technical language. He also includes many very informative tips on helping the reader distinguish between authentic artifacts and reproductions, as well as how to preserve the authentic ones. I highly recommend this book, especially to young people wanting to learn about Southeastern America’s rich prehistory. It is the perfect book to inspire a new generation of archaeologists and collectors with a passion for preserving America’s distant past and uncovering its secrets.”

Matt Horne

B A, Anthropology

University of Alabama