

ArkyFacts

Monthly Newsletter of the
SOUTH SUBURBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Lecture meetings are at 7:30 p.m. at
The Marie Irwin Community Center
18120 S. Highland Avenue, Homewood

JUNE - 2022

Thursday, Sara Pfannkuche, MA ~ 7:30 PM
June 16 "The Pecatonica River Valley during
 the Middle Holocene (5,000-500 BCE):
 Where People Lived"
 (Ms. Pfannkuche will be appearing in person.)

Monday, Officers' Meeting ~ 6:00 PM
June 27 Mama & Me Pizzeria, Homewood
 Hosts: Susan & Milan Saric

Deadline for material to be included in the next
ArkyFacts is two weeks before the monthly meeting.
Contact Susan Saric

For more information about South Suburban Archaeological Society, or if you have a special
need because of a disability, contact SSAS President Will Kelley



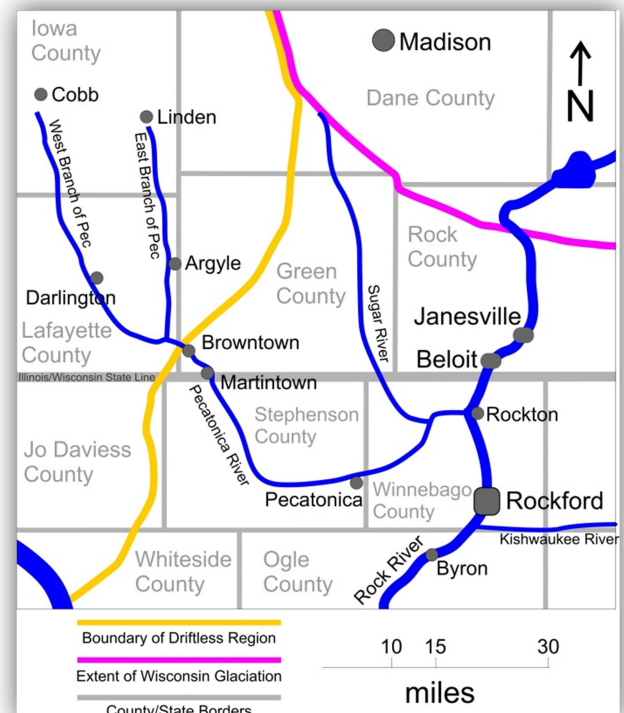
Thursday, June 16 ~7:30 PM

“The Pecatonica River Valley during the Middle Holocene (5,000-500 BCE): Where People Lived” with Sara Pfannkuche, MA

Archaeologists attempt to identify how people in the past adapted to their environment by looking at where sites were located on a landscape. This “settlement pattern analysis” is usually done in conjunction with large regional archaeological surveys. Our program will focus on settlement pattern analysis and its application for the Pecatonica River (southwest Wisconsin and north-central Illinois) during the Middle Holocene (5,000-500 BCE).

The Pecatonica is the main tributary to the central valley of the Rock River. Its mouth is located within the village of Rockton, Illinois, and its headwaters are about 120 miles northwest, within the Driftless Region of southwest Wisconsin. During its short course, the Pecatonica passes through a variety of landscapes. The study of settlement patterns for the river, especially during the Middle Holocene, can give us insight on how aboriginal people dealt with shifting climate patterns away from the major river valleys, and how their lifestyles were affected.

Sara Pfannkuche, who is completing her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is a professional archaeologist who has worked on both historic and prehistoric sites in the United States for nearly 30 years. Beginning in 2006, she expanded her work to include museums, curating archaeological collections, and designing exhibits and tours. Ms. Pfannkuche is currently Senior Collections Specialist in charge of Archaeological Collections at Illinois State Archaeological Survey.



NOTE: Ms. Pfannkuche will be appearing in person at the Irwin Center. Please join us for light refreshments before the program!

For those who wish to view this presentation remotely via Zoom, see our insert page.

Bookmarks! Find us online.....

Search: “South Suburban Archaeological Society”

OR: <http://southsuburbanarchsociety.weebly.com/>

OR: <http://southsuburbanchapter.tumblr.com>

South Suburban Chapter Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SouthSuburbanChapter2015>



SSAS programming is made possible through generous contributions from our members of time, effort and financial support.

Oldest Mine in North America ?

More than 12,000 years ago, the first inhabitants of present-day eastern Wyoming came across a fruitful deposit of **hematite**, or red ocher, and began digging out the valuable, blood-red mineral using animal bones and antlers. Now, new research suggests that this prehistoric quarry is the oldest documented mine of its kind in all of North and South America. The site, named Powars II, is also likely the oldest known mine of any kind on the continent, according to a study published this month in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Archaeologists have been studying the mine, located in the town of Sunrise in Wyoming's Platte County, since 1986, but these most recent revelations stem from a 2017-2020 excavation that involved digging a 6-by-1-meter trench that bisected a previously unexplored section of the quarry. Underground, researchers uncovered more than 1,200 artifacts, animal bones and antlers used at the mine by the Paleoindian people who lived in North America at the time. They used radiocarbon dating techniques to analyze 13 animal bones and determine that people began excavating the site 12,840 years ago.

"Beyond its status as a quarry, the Powars II artifact assemblage is itself one of the densest and most diverse of any thus far discovered in the early Paleoindian record of the Americas," said Spencer Pelton, Wyoming's state archaeologist and one of the study's authors. During the Paleoindian Period, which lasted from about 30,000 years ago to around 9,000 years ago, groups of hunter-gatherers migrated to North and South America. These early Native American people were nomadic and hunted large animals using hand-made spears and other stone tools.

They also quarried red ocher, which served an array of important functions throughout ancient history. People used the richly pigmented substance to repel bugs, protect themselves against the sun, heal maladies, stick things together, tan hides and paint on cave walls, to name a few. "Its vibrant color and ability to adhere to surfaces—including the human body—make it an ideal crayon or paint base," said archaeologist April Nowell (University of Victoria).

For further information, visit https://apple.news/AnNKIRAU3SVu_6weIYd4zeQ

Excerpted from *Smithsonian Magazine* / Sarah Kuta

How to Remotely View our June 16 Program:

Interested in participating through Zoom?



Send an email requesting access to **southsubarkyzoom-request@yahoo.com**. Those who are not SSAS members are also welcome to use Zoom, but should include enough information in the email to verify their identity.

A day or two before the program, the host will respond with an invitation to attend through Zoom. For questions about remote viewing, contact Will Kelley.



Business Notes

Officers' Meeting

Our next business meeting will take place on Monday, June 27 – 6:00 PM, at Mama & Me Pizzeria in Homewood. Our hosts will be Susan and Milan Saric.

Special Note to our 2021 Members

This will be the final newsletter sent to 2021 members who have not renewed for 2022. If you are unsure of your membership status, contact Membership Chairman Milan Saric.

Please renew! We hate to see you go! 😞

MEMBERS' EXCURSION - JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 16

South Bend, Indiana



On **Saturday, July 16**, we will tour the fabulous Oliver Mansion in South Bend, Indiana. The Oliver Mansion is an exquisite residence built by a prominent South Bend family in the last decade of the 19th Century. Almost everything in the house remains frozen in time in the early 1930's. Except for a few changes to some wall treatments and floors, everything in the mansion is original.

Downtown South Bend is less than ninety miles and only about 1 ½ hours from the Irwin Center in Homewood. The Oliver Mansion is very close to the South Bend History Museum and Studebaker Museum. **Our tour includes all three of these, and for a group, is only \$10 per person. (All meals, snacks, etc. are “on your own.”)**

If we meet at the museum at 11:00 AM and begin the tour at 11:30, this will let us break our excursion into several parts, with lunch at one of the nearby restaurants in the middle of the day.

If you haven't already, please contact Will Kelley with the following information:

- (1) Do you plan to come on the tour?
- (2) Would you like to participate in carpooling with your fellow members?

SSAS Summer Excursions are open to all 2022 SSAS members and their guests. Further details will be posted soon. We hope to see you in South Bend!

MEMBERS' EXCURSION - AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie



On **Saturday, August 20 at 10:00 AM** (rain date-August 27) Jamie Countryman, Ph.D. candidate - University of Chicago, and SSAS member and Midewin archaeologist Joe Wheeler will show us why Native Americans preferred a particular portion of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (Wilmington, Illinois) over other possible settlement sites, even though their modes of living changed over the course of several millennia. Jamie and Joe have worked out a suitable half-mile walking tour on the shaded section of a flat, gravel-paved path. Our tour will allow you to take in some of the natural beauty of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, and of course, there are the bison!

After the main part of the tour, we can break for lunch, then return later in the day to visit other parts of Midewin as we please. **There is no fee for this excursion; however, all purchases of meals, snacks, etc. will be “on your own.”**

If you haven't already, please contact Will Kelley with the following information:

- (1) Do you plan to come on the tour?
- (2) Would you like to participate in carpooling with your fellow members?

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In Rural Alabama, Archaeologists Have Revealed North America's Largest Cave Paintings Through the Magic of 3D Imaging

Thanks to state-of-the-art technology, researchers have detected new images that were previously too faint to be seen by the human eye. In a dark underground warren of tunnels in Alabama known as "19th Unnamed Cave," ancient Indigenous American artists once traced figures resembling humans and animals into the mud on the cave's walls and ceilings. The drawings, known as glyphs, were first studied in the late 1990s. Now, thanks to state-of-the-art 3D photogrammetry techniques, researchers have been able to detect new glyphs that were previously too faint or large to be seen by the human eye within the dark and tight confines of the cave.

The glyphs were drawn over a millennium ago and are believed to be the largest cave artworks in North America. Among them are recognizably anthropomorphic figures believed to be wearing ceremonial clothes, and one image resembling a diamondback rattlesnake that reaches more than 10 feet in length (back page). Other discovered animals have included birds and insects.

The artists worked by torchlight and likely had to crouch due to the cave's low ceilings. The exact location of the cave, a veritable treasure trove of Native American cave art covering 4,300 square feet, has been kept secret to protect the art from damage or looting.

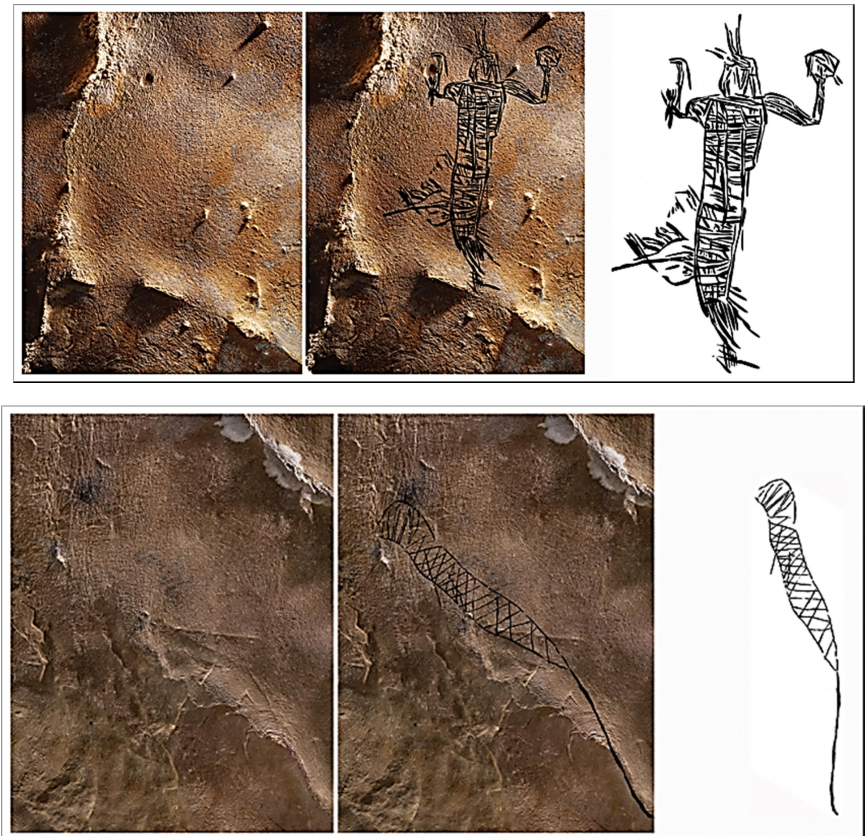
The new images were developed using photogrammetry, a technique that uses photographs to create 3D models of a person, object, or surface. "It allows a brief glimpse into the genius of these artists," said Stephen Alvarez, the founder of the Ancient Art Archive.

The new discoveries were published recently in the journal **Antiquity** by the team of researchers, led by archaeologist Jan F. Simek from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, who worked alongside Alvarez and photographer and cave specialist Alan Cressler.

The researchers say we can only guess at the artworks' meaning, but speculate that they may depict spirits of the underworld dating to the Middle Woodland period.

The discovery challenges the long-held assumption that large-scale cave art was only present in the American Southwest. "These images are different than most of the ancient art so far observed in the American Southeast and suggest that our understanding of that art may be based on incomplete data," Simek said.

Upper-Figure in Ceremonial Garb / Lower-Rattlesnake



For further details: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/alabama-cave-art-2108498>

Excerpted from Artnet News / Jo Lawson-Tancred

Photos: S. Alvarez / Illustrations: J. Simek