

## **The Gentle Giant of Southeastern Archaeology: Papers in Memory of R. Jerald Ledbetter (SGA Part I)**

Organizer: K.C. Jones

**Session Abstract:** Jerald Ledbetter's contributions to southeastern archaeology are indisputably significant. His prolific works investigated life across thousands of years and the entire region, but his lifelong commitment to Georgia archaeology is his greatest legacy. Jerald was a dedicated researcher, an earnest colleague, and an advocate for student research. Papers in this session are presented by Jerald's colleagues and friends whose studies have been influenced by his methodologies, selfless generosity, and countless CRM reports. We remember Jerald's achievements with a retrospective look at his contributions to southeastern archaeology, offer some of our own, and tell a few stories along the way.

### **Presentations:**

**K.C. Jones:** Remembering the Gentle Giant: Jerald Ledbetter's Legacy and Impact on Compliance Archaeology

This presentation synthesizes the research career of Jerald Ledbetter and discusses his impact on interpreting *significance* in compliance archaeology. His ability to derive evidence for habitation in a region infamous for its lack of organic preservation and intact deposits was a testament to his tireless research ethic. He developed inferential methods essential to finding the unfindable, systematically identifying the subtleties of soil anomalies and rescuing ephemeral sites from outdated interpretations. His advocacy for the research potential of these sites and regions is a lasting contribution from someone whose work honors the ethos of compliance legislation.

**Mark Williams, Jerald Ledbetter, and K.C. Jones:** Twenty Oconee Farmsteads

Georgia's Oconee Valley once contained a large and stable Mississippian period society comprised of three major site types. These include small mound sites, briefly occupied festival sites, and thousands of farmsteads. In this paper we examine the 20 farmsteads that have been fully excavated over the past 30 years. The Oconee society supporting these small farms was clearly one representing a dispersed settlement system, something not common in the Mississippian world. We examine variation in the structure of these short-term family farms within the Oconee Valley, and compare them to those in the rest of the Mississippian world, and beyond.

**Daniel T. Elliott:** In the Trenches with Jerald

The author uses personal memories, yellowed CRM reports, and low resolution .pdfs to trace the experience of the first seven years of working in Georgia and Tennessee with R. Jerald Ledbetter. The presentation explores Jerald's antics and epiphanies from 1977 to 1984, particularly the Wallace Reservoir Backhoe Survey in the Lake Oconee basin of Georgia, which Jerald directed in 1977 and 1978. The Wallace Reservoir Backhoe Survey report resides as a typed draft document, never completed and never presented to the public. The author attempts to channel Jerald's spirit in retelling this earth-shaking survey project, shaky pots, and arrowhead mines.

**Tom Gresham:** A Retrospective of Jerald Ledbetter's Body of Work

Jerald came to Georgia as a CRM archaeologist in 1977, joining Southeastern Archeological Services in 1983. He directed a diverse array of substantive projects, including Paleoindian point studies, the excavation of Archaic period structures, the excavation of Lamar houses, and the excavation of an urban city block. His work was thorough, sound, and collaborative, and often led to important, fundamental advances. His most treasured time was spent helping others with their projects, and I am one who benefitted greatly from his sage counsel. In this paper I highlight some of his thirty to forty major projects in Georgia.

**Scott Jones:** What Would Jerald Do: Lessons I Learned from a Remarkable Ally

This paper is an informal and personal account of my work and acquaintance with archaeologist R. Jerald Ledbetter. Having met him the same year (1986) that I embarked on my somewhat unconventional career in experimental archaeology and primitive technology, our paths crossed frequently at the UGA archaeology laboratory. Apart from casual discussions, my first inkling that he saw value in my work was in 1991; little else occurred until around 1999, during his work at Reynolds Plantation in Greene County, Georgia. Thereafter, we worked regularly together on Reynolds and various other archaeological projects, from field work to final report. We also attended artifact shows to record projectile points for the Paleoindian Database of the Americas for Georgia, with my role being largely that of travel companion and spotter of potentially replicated (i.e., fake) artifacts, and also weighing in on raw material and typological questions. His calm demeanor and considerate nature are legendary, and my work with him taught me much about the human skills needed to make archaeology more than an interesting occupation.

**Gail Tarver:** Remembering Jerald Ledbetter and His Impact on My Work and Our Understanding of the Oconee River Valley

Jerald Ledbetter is tremendously missed. His legacy will surely prove itself for years to come as we recognize the substantial impact he made through his work and relationships. While the archaeological field lost an invaluable contributor this year, I lost a devoted friend and close collaborator. I would like to present details related to Jerald's involvement in recent projects in the Oconee River valley such as my thesis project at the Marshall Site (9OC25), the area near Scull Shoals recently acquired by the University of Georgia, and two recent excavations at antebellum homes in Athens, Georgia.

**Albert Goodyear, Ashley Smallwood Jennings, Thomas Jennings, Sam Upchurch, Joe Wilkinson, and Mark Corbitt:** The Mark Corbitt Clovis Quarry Cache in Lowndes County, Georgia

Some four decades ago, Mark Corbitt, a retired physician from Lakeland, Georgia, discovered a concentration of chert artifacts washing out of the east bank of the Withlacoochee River in Lowndes County, Georgia. He sought out the authors to determine the age and nature of the assemblage. Analysis has shown that it is Clovis in origin as determined by key lithic items including a broken Clovis point, two blade cores, and other typical Clovis tool forms. A chert outcrop and quarry are evident in the stream bed which was exploited by Clovis people. The assemblage is interpreted as a quarry cache.

**Discussant:** David G. Anderson