



Our Old Bookcase, June 12, 2017 Bannerstones, among the most beautiful prehistoric artifacts

Photo caption: A winged Bannerstone. Photograph credit, “*Ohio Slate Types*,” by Robert N. Converse, published by The Archaeological Society of Ohio, 1978, p. 23.

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

By Joyce L. Alig, President, Mercer County Historical Society

Sunday afternoon, June 25, 1:00 – 4:00 the Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors will host their 37th Annual Prehistoric Artifact Exhibit at the Mercer County Historical Museum, located at 130 East Market St., a block east of the Mercer County Courthouse, in downtown Celina, Ohio. [A prehistoric artifact was made by prehistoric man, i.e. before history books were written, thousands of years ago.]

Today, I am addressing Bannerstones, made of slate, because the Bannerstones are among the most beautiful prehistoric artifacts made, in the Early Archaic Period. The ice age was disappearing between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago, and man began appearing here in Ohio. His tools are works of art in stone. The Early Archaic Period is recognized as dating between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago. The Middle Archaic Period, is recognized as dating between 7,000 and 5,000 years ago. The Late Archaic Period is recognized as dating between 5,000 and 2,500 years ago.

Winged Bannerstones, dating in the Early Archaic Period, have been found here in Ohio, including Mercer and Darke Counties and other counties in Northwestern and Midwestern Ohio. Elaine Holzapfel, Greenville, Ohio, edited the book “*Archaeology and Artifacts of Darke County, a 12,000 year history of human occupation in West-Central Ohio*,” in 2004. Since Darke County is adjacent to Mercer County, the two counties have many prehistoric artifacts in common.

For information or research about Ohio’s Bannerstones, read Robert N. Converse’s book, “*Ohio Slate Types*,” published by the Archaeological Society of Ohio. Converse stated, “*Ohio Winged Bannerstones*

are nearly always made of banded slate or shale-like materials. *The Time Period or Culture was Early Archaic.*” Robert Converse’s three books, “*Ohio Slate Types,*” and “*Ohio Flint Types,*” and “*Ohio Stone Tools,*” are among the best references for identification of prehistoric artifacts in Ohio. I will have copies of Converse’s books, and Holzapfel’s book, at the June 25 Exhibit at the Museum, for you to see.

What came as a surprise to me, was that July-August, 2017 issue of “*ARCHAEOLOGY,*” the world-wide read magazine, had a story, “*SET IN STONE; Why did prehistoric Native Americans fashion the enigmatic objects known as bannerstones?*” The author Eric A. Powell debated the idea if Bannerstones were used as fashion, a tool for hunting, a tool which was part of the atlatl, a ceremonial piece, or perhaps, a cultural identification insignia. “*ARCHAEOLOGY,*” is published by Kevin Quinlan, and printed at Long Island City, NY. Their website is WWW.ARCHAEOLOGY.ORG. Go to this website and read about the rich archaeological discoveries around the world. This magazine addresses archaeological sites around the world, including pyramids around the world, prehistoric art found on walls of caves, ancient fort discoveries, ancient battle field sites, buried cities, buried caches of gold coins, etc.

I wonder about the skills of prehistoric man, here in Ohio. I wonder how they survived, how they acquired their food, and how they prepared their food and made their clothing and built their shelters. Much of their time was consumed by survival activities, but they still took time to create the art making Bannerstones, and other artifacts. They have my respect for their accomplishments.

On Sunday afternoon, visit the Mercer County Historical Museum’s “Prehistoric Artifact Exhibit on the Lawn.” I was asked the difference between Ohio’s prehistoric people and prehistoric dinosaurs. Sunday, I will bring a dinosaur vertebrae of an Allosaurus Butsmalier, Ceratosaurs, c. 150 million years old.

[Mercer County Historical Society President Joyce Alig, may be contacted at 3054 Burk-St. Henry Road, Saint Henry, OH 45883, or hystalig@bright.net or 419-678-2614]