

Primitive People Here Before Exodus of Israel From Egypt

W. J. Morgan, Native of Macon, Unearthed Valuable Information—Harvard Sent Professor to Investigate.

More than 3400 years ago, when Ramesses III was the Egyptian pharaoh, before the exodus of Israel from Egypt, more than 300 years before the Trojan War, and at a time antedating the laying of the foundations of Thebes or Ilium of Greece, an aboriginal tribe is believed to have occupied the valley of the Little Tennessee river in Macon county, and in Rabun county, Georgia.

This is according to W. J. Morgan, student of archeology and Indian lore, who states that he has unearthed evidence that human life existed in this region between 3200 and 4000 years ago. The tribe was distinctly primitive, had never learned to make even the crudest pottery, and instead of flint, shaped the yellow quartz of the region into the few crude weapons it had learned to make.

Mr. Morgan, who has written a series of Indian articles appearing in The Press, states that on the Nantahala river he dug out a cliff shelter 15 years ago that showed evidence of having been occupied by three different races. The shelter was 24x36 feet. At a depth of three feet indications of occupancy by members of the oldest of the three races were found. These had left yellow quartz implements but no pottery.

The second layer revealed stone implements and thin pottery. From this layer Mr. Morgan removed a stone tortoise, the size of a silver dollar, which was sent to the department of archeology at Harvard. It was almost perfect in detail and proportion, and is believed by Mr. Morgan to have been a totem.

The top layer was not more than two inches below the surface of the dirt. In it were the usual implements used by the Cherokees, including a great amount of stamped pottery. The Cherokees, stated Mr. Morgan, always baked their pottery

stamped, erect, round or oval. A great many bones were found in each of the sectional remains, including the bones of deer, tortoise and drum fish.

A report of this finding was sent to the Harvard department of archeology, but the information was not credited as reliable by the Harvard professors. Accordingly, Dr. Charles F. Peabody, head of the department, was sent to Macon county to investigate. He accompanied Mr. Morgan to the cliff shelter where the reports were checked and found to be authentic. Dr. Peabody spent some time here with Mr. Morgan during 1916 in archeological research in the fascinating Nantahala country.

It has been more than forty years since Mr. Morgan first became interested in the study of Indian relics and the history of the native Cherokee.

"Before I was 10 years old, any kind of pretty rock or Indian implement fascinated me," he stated. "I read everything on the Indian that I could obtain. Since beginning the work, which I have merely followed as an avocation, I have spent time and many hundreds of dollars on investigation in this section. None of the work has been profitable, but is fascinating and delightful.

"The Indian mound at Franklin, for instance, is one of the better known of the Cherokee remains. It is at least 600 years old, possibly 1200 or 1500 years old. It was commenced in a small way, and to this small beginning the Indians added from time to time. It was probably a long while in the course of construction. The Cherokee could become highly enthusiastic, but his ardor did not last over a long period. For this reason, it is not probable that the mound was constructed without interruption."

The mound at Franklin, Mr. Morgan believes, should be taken over by the town or state for care and preservation. A person could come to Macon, he pointed out, purchase the mound and have it leveled to the ground in search of Indian relics and remains before any steps could be taken to have him stopped.

The state forester, J. S. Holmes, recently asked Mr. Morgan what he thought of the plan of the state taking over the mounds in the counties of Western North Carolina for the creation of little parks. Mr. Morgan believes it would be an excellent method of insuring the preservation of these remains.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as administrator of S. C. Conley, deceased, late of Macon county, N. C., this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 28th day of July, 1929, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement. This 28th day of July, 1928. C. R. CABE, Administrator.

As indicated earlier in this article, Western North Carolina has not always been the home of the Cherokee with his comparatively advanced forms of living. W. K. Morehead of the Phillips Academy at Andover, Mass., in 1914 advanced the theory that some branch of the human race might have originated here. It was Mr. Morehead's plan to make investigations to prove his theory, and in addition to make an archeological survey of every state in the union, the information to form the contents of a book. Mr. Morgan was furnished expense money and a promise of the proceeds from the sale of the book provided he would make a survey of Western North Carolina. He was to work along all the principal streams of this section.

The information gathered by Mr. Morgan did not show that Western North Carolina was the cradle of any branch of the human race, but indications of the existence of aborigines here probably 4000 years ago were found. The theory of Mr. Morehead was upset, along with other ideas upon which he had been working, necessitating the rewriting of portions of the book which was planned. The war came on, delaying plans, and later Mr. Morehead died with the result that the book never went to press.

Since then Mr. Morgan has worked on his own initiative. In 1917 Mr. Meyer, who made the survey of the Cumberland valley in Tennessee for Mr. Morehead's book, came to Macon

and with Mr. Morgan visited and investigated the "track rocks" near Prentiss. At that point rocks have solidified, leaving the tracks of birds and animals impressed in the stone.

This summer Mr. Morgan made investigations in Clay and Cherokee counties, where he located Indian camping grounds and unearthed information similar to that which he has previously gathered. Previously, Mr. Morgan has worked along the French Broad, Little Tennessee and Pigeon rivers. A number of small mounds have been located by him in Transylvania county. In this county there are five other mounds, he states, besides the one at Franklin. There are six other mounds in Western North Carolina and one near Dillard, Ga. From this it will be seen that Macon county has a larger number.

Asked if he had ever found Indian skeletons in Macon, Mr. Morgan reported that he had unearthed two. One of these he found in the road bank below Jim Moore's shortly after the road had been completed. He was attracted by the teeth of the skull which were barely exposed above the earth. The other skeleton was found beyond the home of Jube Calloway, where the skull was partly exposed above the ground.

Mr. Morgan has 40 or 50 volumes on the subject of the Indian. These include volumes on the various tribes of the United States as well as on the Indians of Central and South America.

It is not surprising that Mr. Morgan, who is a native of Macon but who now lives in Brevard, keenly desires to arouse the interest of people in the matter of the preservation of the mounds, historical sites, and Cherokee history. During the

years he has been in the work, he has handled thousands of relics, including as many as 5,000 arrowheads. Mr. Morgan desires that each county

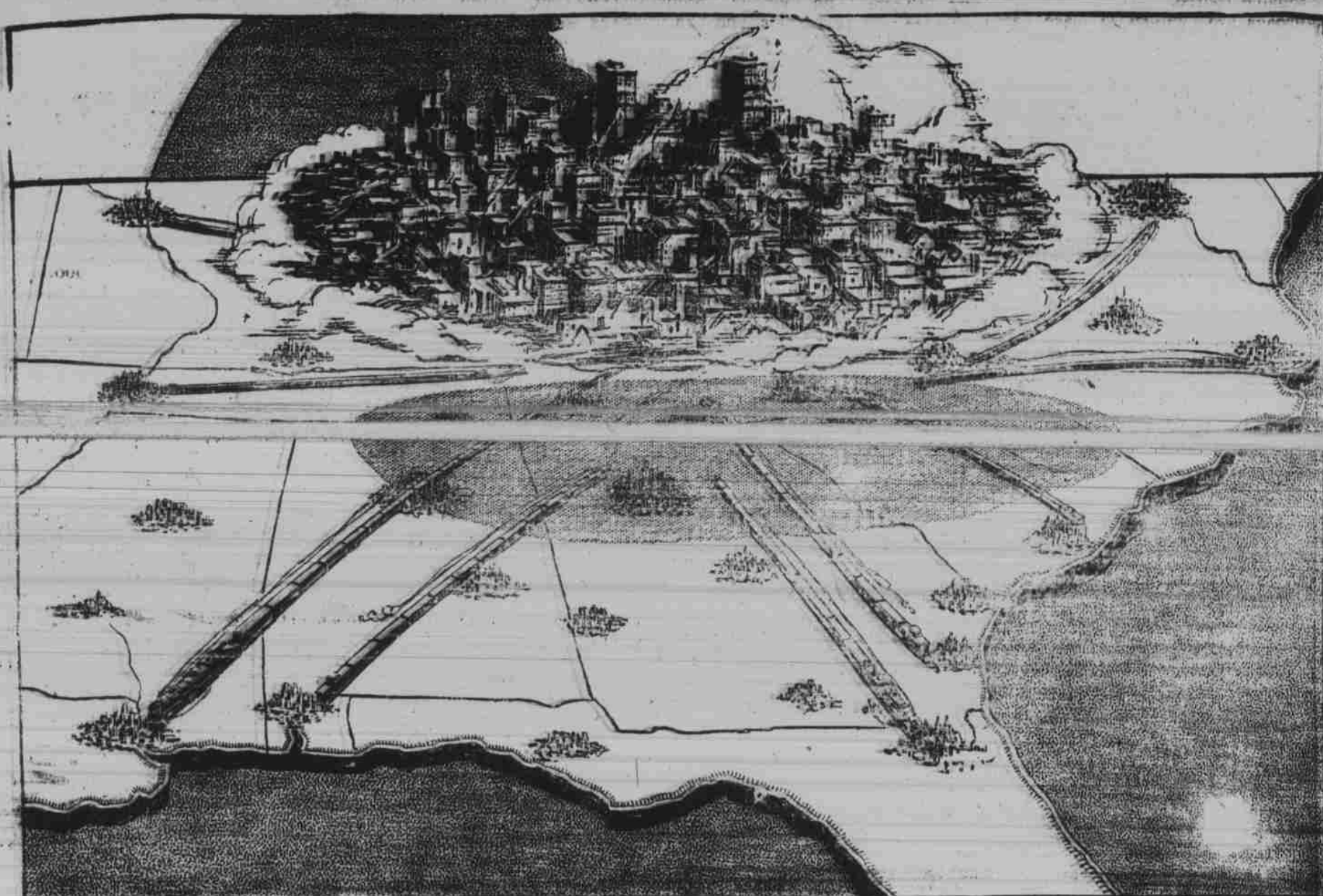
take steps to preserve the mounds and historical sites found in its borders and that the more rare of the relics be kept in county museums.

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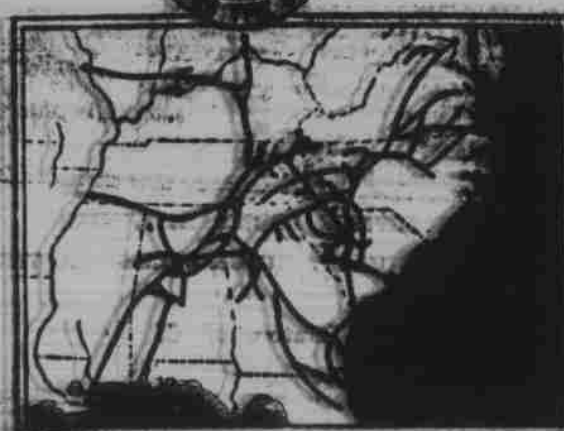
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