June 1,

Well, best laid plans, I suppose. My intent was to produce a newsletter on a somewhat quarterly basis, with the second issue you hold in your hands (or before your eyes) either right before or right after the SAA annual meeting in Memphis. But, here it is, the beginning of June!

I can say that HAIG had a strong showing at the 2012 SAA annual meeting. The Biennial Gordon R. Willey Symposium on the History of Archaeology: New Deal Archaeology in the Tennessee Valley was an interesting and informative session. Thanks to Anna Lunn and David Dye for putting this together. And, for all the great presentations as well! It was a pleasure being a discussant for this session. I look forward to seeing the edited volume that will come from the University of Alabama Press on this session, hopefully at least in manuscript form by the time of the 2014 Biennial Gordon R. Willey Symposium. The topic for that symposium is wide open still, and certainly does not need to be limited to New Deal archaeology.

Speaking of the University of Alabama Press and the HAIG, I just finished responding to copy edits for the volume resulting largely from papers presented at the 2010 Biennial Gordon R. Willey Symposium. The cover is finished and the ad announcing the book’s publication is available online at: http://www.uapress.ua.edu/product/Shovel-Ready,5507.aspx

I was very impressed with our turnout for the HAIG membership meeting. We had a lively discussion and various members had interesting suggestions for the content of future newsletters. A report on the membership meeting is on the next page following.

HAIG Members have contributed two short articles for this newsletter as well: one on early Tennessee archaeologist Egbert Floyd Hassler and the other on the history of archaeology at Chucalissa.

Have a great summer,

Bernard K. Means (bkmeans@vcu.edu)
We had a decent turnout for the 2012 HAIG meeting, including (alphabetically): Mark Barnes (National Park Service-retired); David Browman (Washington University in St. Louis); Jane Browman (Washington University in St. Louis); Marlin Hawley (Museum Archaeology Program, Wisconsin Historical Society); Alice Kehoe (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee); Bernard K. Means (Virginia Commonwealth University); Philip Neusius (Indiana University of Pennsylvania); Christina Rieth (New York State Museum); Roland Rodell (University of Wisconsin-Rock County); and Tammy Stone (University of Colorado at Denver). Christina Rieth is our new liaison with the SAA board.

Our discussion was quite lively, especially for the 8 o’clock hour! We discussed ways to increase attendance by members to our next interest group meeting. One basic solution suggested is to try and increase our use of social media. This is especially an issue because we usually have to deal with scheduling conflicts with other interest groups, as well as other SAA events.

Much of the interest group meeting focused on how we can increase our fellow colleague’s appreciation and understanding of the history of archaeology. We potentially could create a blog site with links to other organizations that also focus on histories of archaeology, as well as list significant archival and archaeological collections related to the history of archaeology.

Members suggested having some themed sections to the newsletter, notably:

- Undocumented/unwritten histories
- Hidden histories of female archaeologists
- Urban legends about past archaeologists or archaeological discoveries
- Revisiting old collections: archival records and archaeological remains

Along these lines, members discussed how we develop histories of events not deliberately recorded, or deliberate attempts to erase our disciplines history. Related topics include the history of women denied or discouraged from the chance to continue their studies to the doctoral level, and the role of women in the River Basin surveys. I welcome all contributions to this newsletter along these topics, as long as they are reasonably well documented and avoid simply representing ad hominem attacks on people who cannot defend themselves.

No specific topic was chosen for the 2014 Biennial Gordon R. Willey symposium and I am looking for any and all suggestions. While the last two symposiums have focused on New Deal archaeology, other topics are certainly welcome. HAIG can also sponsor sessions at the 2013 SAA annual meeting, if there is sufficient interest.
History and Significance of Excavations at Chucalissa
Adapted by Mark Barnes and Bernard K. Means from the National Historic Landmarks nomination

The Chucalissa Site (40SY1) is located on the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in southwestern Shelby County, Tennessee, within T.O. Fuller State Park, approximately 10 miles south of downtown Memphis, Tennessee. It is the best preserved civic/ceremonial center complex of the Walls Phase (A.D. 1400-1500), one of the best documented Late Mississippian phases in the central Mississippi River Valley. The site includes a large platform mound on the north side of the plaza and a smaller mound on the west side. Small house mounds form a ridge around the south and east sides of the plaza. An extensive village area lies beyond the central core of the site to the north, east, and south.

Archeological Investigations
The Chucalissa Site was known to local collectors by at least the mid-1930s and entered the Tennessee archaeological site survey records in 1939 as 40SY1. It was recorded as a result of artifact discoveries by the Civilian Conservation Corps crew assigned to develop the T.O. Fuller State Park property after its purchase in 1938 for use as a Negro state park. The University of Tennessee sent George A. Lidberg and Charles H. Nash and a crew from the Kentucky Lake Reservoir salvage project to test the site in 1940.
Dr. Jeff Chapman of the McClung Museum, University of Tennessee, researched the surviving records of the early work at the site and located copies of important reports of work done and/or planned at the site during 1940-1941. These included a preliminary testing report (Lidberg n.d.) apparently summarizing work done in 1940; a memorandum (Hay 1940) dated October 26, 1940, reporting to the National Park Service recommendations of a preliminary meeting about site development possibilities; a summary document (Lewis n.d.a) apparently written after that meeting, entitled Proposed Plans for Archeological Development of Shelby Park; an apparently later (Lewis n.d.b) Master Plan Pertaining to the Excavation and Preservation in Situ of Prehistoric Remains Contained in Shelby Negro Park, Memphis, Tennessee; and a handwritten sheet (Anonymous n.d.) summarizing the progress of excavations from July 16 to at least September 8, 1941. It appears that the initial unit numbering system of 1940 was revised by early 1941, a matter of concern in dealing with the surviving early records and collections, particularly since neither of those systems corresponds to the current system. Lidberg and Nash’s work included testing of the main mound on the north side of the plaza and excavating a series of trenches in the main village area to the north of the mound. The collections and detailed field records for this work are curated at the McClung Museum (K. Foster, personal communication 1993).

Modern excavations began in 1952 with test work conducted in Unit 6 by the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society. A mimeographed report of this work was published by Kenneth Beaudoin in 1953, but some of the field records and artifacts were lost during a series of relocations during the 1950s, the rest are housed at the Chucalissa Museum. This work and the surface collections reported in the Harvard University survey of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (Phillips, Ford, and Griffin 1951) placed the site as a component of the then Walls-Pecan Point phase, since subdivided into the Walls, Nodena, and portions of perhaps two or more other phases.

In 1955 Charles Nash was appointed archaeologist for the site and long-term excavation work was begun. The plaza and mound area of the site was cleared of vegetation, a new grid and unit numbering system established, and excavations were commenced. The current unit designation system was begun at that time, which differs from the 1940 designations. Excavations by Nash from 1955 to 1967 included investigations of the two major mounds, the three main village units, and testing of several areas beyond the central core of the site. Additional work was done by Gerald Smith from 1968 through 1987, emphasizing excavation of a large structure on the main mound, major expansion of Nash’s block excavation in Unit 6, and smaller scale test work in various other parts of the site incident to public interpretation of the site.

Unit 1 (east of the main village area) investigations consisted of salvage work under Nash first in 1963 and later under Smith in 1985, in both cases to mitigate the effect of staff housing construction projects on a portion of the archeological content of Unit 1. These excavations revealed a shallow Walls Phase (A.D. 1400-1500) midden (up to a foot or 0.3 m in depth). One partially definable house, a few post molds and a few pits were present other than the midden itself. Unit 2 is a small midden area south of the site museum. Investigations there were conducted primarily in 1960-61, with additional minor salvage work done since then as required by additional museum construction affecting the margins of Unit 2. Of particular interest in this unit was the finding of a Mississippi Plain jar and a Baytown Plain jar (Woodland Period) in the same stratigraphic context. The 1960-61 work is reported in Lumb and McNutt’s 1988 volume on part of the early excavations at the site.

Unit 3 is the circum-plaza ridge, formed largely of superimposed house mounds, on the south and east sides of the plaza. This unit has had three major excavations, one in the southwest corner and two in the southeastern portion. Areas excavated during 1955-57 include a block excavation in the southwestern corner of the unit and a 65-foot long north-south trench extending from the
southeastern corner of the plaza to the south edge of the midden. The block excavation revealed part of a series of Walls, Boxtown, and earlier (Esley Phase) houses and two Walls phase burial clusters suggestive of family cemetery plots. The long trench cut through several Walls house floors and superimposed small substructure mounds overlying Boxtown and Mitchell/Ensley Phase (A.D. 950-1350) midden deposits with additional houses of those phases. Unit 4 is an eroded pre-Walls substructure residential mound adjacent to the southwestern corner of the plaza. A trench cut through it to subsoil in 1962 did not reveal definable floors, but did indicate construction stages and that it overlies midden dating up to the introduction of shell-tempered ceramics. A Walls Phase burial deposit was found to have been added to the eastern end of the mound. Additional excavations during 1963-66 to investigate the late addition revealed several flesh burials, including one with three apparent trophy skulls, and several partial and partially articulated bundle burials.

Unit 5 is a large platform mound on the north side of the plaza. Initial tests by Nash in 1940 revealed that the mound had been built over a ravine eroded to at least 10 feet below plaza level, and that it had a single stepped ramp down to the plaza centered on its south side. Additional work done in 1956-57 revealed part of a structure on the western side of the mound summit, but it was not possible to define its extent until the excavations of 1969-71. Extant data indicate that there was a series of superimposed construction stages on the mound, each with at least one large structure on the western side of its summit. The 1969-71 excavations (Smith 1988) revealed a structure approximating 50 feet (15 m) square on the western half of the mound. This building was supported by a set of interior cypress posts arranged in a rectangular pattern. Artifact remains from the floor suggest high-status domestic use rather than a ceremonial context. Several large subfloor storage pits were found inside the structure, conforming with the needs of ceremonial redistribution in a complex chiefdom as discussed by Steponaitis in his 1978 paper. Initial tests indicate a second, slightly smaller structure on the eastern half of the mound, with its floor set deeper below the mound surface than was the case with the western structure.

Unit 6 is the main village area, north of the Unit 5, platform mound. Some of the earliest excavations on the site were conducted here, by the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society (MAGS) (Beaudoin 1953), and by Nash in 1962-66 (Nash 1972, Lumb and McNutt 1988). The MAGS excavations exposed at least part of a house floor and provided basic data on midden contents. Nash opened two 10-foot (ca. 3 m) wide test trenches and a 40-foot (12 m) square block excavation extending from the side of one of the test trenches. This work revealed multiple structures and over 4 feet (1.25 m) of stratified midden deposits with excellent bone preservation. Major stratigraphic units include those assignable to the Walls, Boxtown, and Ensley Phases (A.D. 950-1500). Additional work by Smith during 1977-85 expanded Nash’s block excavation eastward to include the eastern half of a series of superimposed structures partly excavated by Nash, and ultimately another, atypical structure. Unit 7 is a small shelf extending southward into a gully from the southwestern portion of Unit 3. It lies about 15 feet (5 m) lower in elevation than the edge of Unit 3. This unit has had no excavation work.

Unit 8 north of Unit 6 across a swale between the heads of two gullies and is essentially a continuation of Unit 6. The University of Tennessee conducted extensive trenching there in 1940, but most of the records and materials disappeared during World War II. Surviving data housed at the McClung Museum indicate a shallow Walls midden in the area. Unit 9 is an area of Late Woodland or Early Mississippian midden which extends northward from beyond Unit 8, across Plant Road, to the northern terminus of the north-south portion of the bluff line. It includes a topographic anomaly north of Plant Road which may be a small mound. Unit 10 is a well preserved borrow pit east of the main site occupation area. Limited testing indicates that this is a Walls Phase (A.D. 1400-1500)
feature. The pit is irregular, approximately 10 feet (3 m) deep and about 30 feet (10 m) by 50 feet (15 m) in extent.

**Site Significance**

From the standpoint of integrity, variety of preserved remains, professional excavation, existing documentation, and potential for future research, Chucalissa is easily one of the most significant sites on the Mississippi River between southeast Missouri and the Winterville Site in the Yazoo Basin of Mississippi. Chucalissa is the best known and preserved of all the Walls Phase sites in the Central Mississippi River Valley. The Walls Phase, in turn, is regarded by Phillips as “perhaps the most satisfactory phase dealt with in this entire study” (Phillips 1970:936).

Although much research has been conducted at Chucalissa, the site still contains vast potential for significant studies that will be of crucial importance to understanding the complex cultural dynamics of the Mid-South during the Mississippian Period. Chucalissa provides a rare opportunity to examine the development and internal dynamics of a regional prehistoric center within Late Mississippian Period chiefdoms. Beyond the classic treatments of chiefdom societies by Service (1962) and Fried (1967), work by Peebles and Kus (1977), Steponaitis (1978), and Anderson (1990) have provided models of particular regional relevance for archaeological study of societies at this level of social and political organization. While all deal with entire social systems, basic elements of these systems are represented at prehistoric regional centers and thus are amenable to study on a site-level basis within the larger social context.

The site thus provides important potential data regarding Late Mississippian cultigens, the use of wild plant and animal food sources, and possible dietary differences corresponding to socio-political status differences (Blake 1965, n.d.). These are all crucial issues in the understanding of both Late Mississippian and long-term subsistence-settlement systems drawing on varying proportions of wild and cultivated food sources, and on the nature of status differentiation taking place in regional socio-political systems.

One of Chucalissa’s greatest research assets is its potential contribution to an understanding of late prehistoric (i.e. Mississippian) chronology and cultural dynamics in the upper Mid-South/Central Mississippi River Valley. Excellent preservation of materials associated with middens and architectural features permitted application of a wide variety of dating techniques - radiocarbon analysis, paleo-magnetism, and thermo-luminescence to name the more obvious ones. Only by utilization of a number of independent techniques can a truly satisfactory chronology be reconstructed, and this can certainly be accomplished at Chucalissa with its unusually clearly visible stratigraphy.

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The above information was derived from the National Historic Landmark study for the Chucalissa Site, prepared by Drs. Gerald P. Smith and Charles McNutt, Professors of Anthropology at the Department of Anthropology, Memphis State University, Memphis, in 1993. Technical Assistance in the development of this nomination was provided by Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D., Senior Archeologist, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia, now retired. Chucalissa was designated a NHL by the Secretary of the Interior under the auspices of the 1935 Historic Sites Act on April 19, 1994.
Egbert Floyd Hassler (1863-1966): 
A Nearly Forgotten Early Tennessee Archaeologist

By Donald B. Ball, Independent Researcher, Louisville, Kentucky

Although mentioned numerous times throughout the pages of William Edward Myer’s as yet unpublished Record of Relics No. 2 (Myer n.d.a; this manuscript is further discussed in Ball 2011), E. F. Hassler – who labored to excavate a number of sites later reported in Myer’s Stone Age Man in the Middle South (Myer n.d.b) – has remained virtually unknown to archaeologists working in Tennessee. Egbert Floyd Hassler (often shortened to just E. F. Hassler) was born January 17, 1863, in Crab Orchard, Cumberland County, Tennessee, the third of eight children born to David Larkin Hassler (September 5, 1829-December 29, 1892) who rose to the rank of captain in service to the Confederate army and Sarah Elizabeth Hamby Hassler (April 16, 1839-November 25, 1889). Egbert Floyd Hassler married Ferbia Lawrence Tomkins (April 13, 1874-February 18, 1957) on October 23, 1890, and this union produced fifteen children.

As recorded in a genealogical website titled “Zimmerman, Wells, See, Bertram” (accessible at: http://guyzimmerman.com/07042008/b339.htm; accessed September 18, 2011), it is noted that:

Egbert Floyd Hassler was born “over a den of rattlesnakes.” Neighbors helped his parents smoke out and kill over 200 rattlers which were under the little log house in which Egbert was born. Egbert, along with his mother, listened to the cannon fire of the Civil War battle on Lookout Mountain. He taught nine schools in Overton, Fentress, Cumberland and Pickett Counties and taught Cordell Hull [Secretary of State from 1933-1944 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt]. He was postmaster at Armathwaite, [Fentress County] TN. He was present at the historical hanging of the Braswell brothers in Cookeville in the late 1879. Egbert farmed, dug for ginseng and other herbs, traded some in fur pelts, studied Indian life and lore and collected Indian artifacts most of his life. He walked, explored and dug with archaeologists and college professors. He drank the most potent coffee in Pickett County and smoked the strongest pipe, but he never inhaled. He enjoyed eating wild pawpaws, mulberries, cherry pie, angel food cake, oysters, and cornbread made yellow with too much baking soda. He had a nickname for everyone and everything. He collected postage stamps, coins and played the violin. His grandchildren enjoyed hearing him tell “Haint tales” as they sat around the fireplace during the winter time. Egbert spent most of his life in Pickett County. He was 98 years old before he took a dose of prescribed medicine, and at age 103, he had all of his natural teeth. He spent the last five years of his life in Masters Rest Home in Algood, smoked a cigar on his 100th birthday, and died on Oct 23, 1966, at the ripe old age of 103. He lived to be one of the oldest residents of Pickett County.

In searching for information on the life of E. F. Hassler, it was noted that his name appeared in some rather unexpected places. In a brief note regarding the discovery of the mollusk V. gibbosus Barnes, var. armathwaitensis nov., published in the March 1898 issue of The Nautilus, Wright (1898:123) remarked without further elaboration that “Mr. E. F. Hassler collected a quantity of these shells along… A branch of the South Fork of the Cumberland River at Armathwaite, Fentress Co., Tenn.” As reported in the March 19, 1901, issue of The Gazette, a newspaper published at that time in Jamestown, Tennessee, “G. T. Norman and Miss Mary Jane Parker were married 3-16-1901 with Esq.
E. F. Hassler officiating” in the settlement of Armathwaite, Tennessee. Taking into his account his background as a teacher, it may come as less of a surprise that E. F. Hassler served as a member of the Pickett County Board of Education for the scholastic year 1914-1915 (Sherrill 1916:26). A synopsis of his activities should also mention that he served as the chairman of the Pickett County fuel office from November 1, 1917, to March 1, 1919, and in this capacity oversaw the rationing of coal within the county during World War I (Myer 1920:354). In this position, he was directly accountable to William Edward Myer who held the position as Fuel Administrator for the state of Tennessee (Myer 1918; 1920). At the close of his long life, Egbert Floyd Hassler was interred next to his wife and near the graves of his parents and other relatives in the Love Lady (Sims) Cemetery in Pickett County, Tennessee.

In a communication dated September 30, 2006, one member of the extended Myer family in Carthage, Tennessee, remarked, “Hassler was a local relic collector that Myer hired to do exploration for him in the Celina-Byrdstown area. I once had a friend Henry Hassler of Nashville, TN, who was a cousin to him and we mentioned him a few times in our conversation. I also knew Harold Hassler [1914-1997] of Cookeville, TN, who was a collector of firearms who was the son of E. F. Unfortunately all these people have passed on now but I am sure they would have descendants in the Upper Cumberland area.”

Comments within the text of Myer’s Record of Relics No. 2 indicate that E. F. Hassler lived in Byrdstown in Pickett County, Tennessee, and he was mentioned frequently as being paid by W. E. Myer to excavate various rock shelters and graves. Aside from these paid excavations, Myer also purchased a number of lots of surface collected material from him indicating that Hassler was likely a part-time relic dealer. Warren King Moorehead (1917:12, 289, 292, 300, 304, 305, 306, 314, 322, and 331) referenced various bannerstones and other artifacts owned by him in the course of compiling Stone Ornaments Used by Indians in the United States and Canada. Hassler is known to have corresponded with P. E. Cox (died October 25, 1932), the first individual to hold the title of State Archaeologist in Tennessee, regarding archaeological sites in Pickett County (see letter in the “Department of Education, Division of Library and Archives, 1923-1932” Record Group 27, Series 2, files of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville).

A lesser known firsthand account of Hassler’s archaeological explorations appeared in the April 25, 1931, issue of the Overton County News published in Livingston, Tennessee:

**E. F. Hassler, of Byrdstown, Tells of Indian Exploration**

Among many of my discoveries in the last 40 years, I found a peculiar burial in the spring of 1919. The grave was under a large rock shelter, two and one-half miles east of Byrdstown, and one mile up the Wolf River from the “Devil’s Back-Bone” on the north side of the river under the top bluffs.

The ancient Indian grave was lined with thin stone slabs. The grave was five feet long, depth three feet. The bones were of an adult, perfectly sound. The skull was missing. The outer envelop [sic] of the body was cane matting. The next cover was black bear skins. The next wrapper was of cloth, made of twine and twisted. The innermost teguments was a mantle of cloth like the preceding but furnished with large brown feathers arranged with great art so as to be capable of guarding the living wearer from wet and cold.
The fabric had been made from the inner bark of a tree, twisted and colored. More than five hundred beads and ornaments were found with the remains. Everything had been preserved with lumps of saltpeter as large as a baseball. The grave was covered with the bark of a cucumber tree taken off while the sap was up. The bark was as sound as when it was placed over the vault.

As evidence to the find, I have scraps of the cane matting. I let Mr. W. E. Myers [sic] of Carthage, Tenn., then connected with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. have the larger pieces of cane matting, fabric, bear skin, and the bark covering the vault. Also, I let Mr. P. E. Cox, State Archeologist, Nashville, Tenn., have some scraps of fabric, cane matting, etc.

This is likely one of several sites discussed in a 1926 article by P. E. Cox, Tennessee State Archaeologist, in the *Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science*. As noted by Cox (1926:22, 25):

In the winter of January, 1924-25, survey was made in Overton and Pickett Counties, Tennessee, along the waters of Obed River. There are a great many caverns in this section of country which [pg. 25] were reported to have produced evidences of human occupancy and sepulture. …I …visited another cavern in the same county having an enormous opening, the details of which I am not permitted in this article to describe, which will be the subject of a detailed report. I was accompanied on this expedition by Mr. E. F. Hassler of Byrdstown, who pointed out to me beneath the stone and ash where he had removed sixteen human skeletons. I opened a pit in the ash bank to the depth of nearly six feet procuring therefrom fragments of pottery, flint implements, human, animal and bird bones. It was reported to me that in this section a grave had been opened containing a body which had been partially mummified in cloth, wrapped in bear skin and a mat of cane wicker work. I have procured fragments of the cloth and on examination of the fiber I find it is made from vegetable matter, and that bird feathers are interwoven along with the vegetable matter. I have also procured fragments of the cane mat and bear skin in which the body was wrapped.

Over twenty years after the death of W. E. Myer in 1923, Hassler published a series of short articles (Hassler 1945; 1946a; 1946b; 1947a; 1947b) relating to archaeological sites in and near Pickett County in the pages of the early issues of the *Tennessee Archaeologist*. Although these papers are sometimes cited by modern archaeologists (e.g., Diaz-Granados and Duncan, eds. 2004; Simek et al. 2001), it is not out of line to suggest that they likely know little or nothing about the man who wrote them. Inasmuch as it would be misleading to suggest that Egbert Floyd Hassler was one of the early “prime movers” of Tennessee archaeology, it is fitting to contend that by virtue of both his unheralded “behind the scenes” labors on behalf of William Edward Myer and subsequent writings he was one of the first people to study the prehistory of a region of Tennessee which yet remains largely unknown.

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Moorehead, Warren King

Myer, William Edward

n.d. a Record of Relics No. 2. Privately held manuscript. Edited and annotated transcription in possession of Donald B. Ball, Louisville, Kentucky.

n.d. b Stone Age Man in the Middle South. Unpublished manuscript filed as NAA MS 2566-a, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Museums Support Center, Suitland, Maryland (edited and annotated transcription in possession of Donald B. Ball, Louisville, Kentucky).

Sherrill, S. W.

Simek, Jan F., Alan Cressler, Charles H. Faulkner, Todd M. Ahlman, Brad Creswell, and Jay D. Franklin

Wright, Berlin H.

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**Recent or Noteworthy Publications**

Freed, Stanley A.

Hawley, Marlin

Skeates, Robin, Carol McDavid and John Carman (editors)

Note: there are multiple chapters of interest in this volume, including chapters on the history of metal detecting and archaeology, writing histories of archaeology, and the history of archaeological representation.

Adapted from *Adventures into Darkness* 4.
(Now in the public domain)