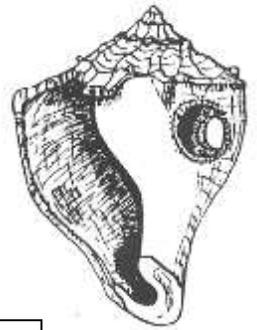


SWFAS

NEWSLETTER

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR

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Home, Sweet Home: This vintage, circa 1930's postcard (for sale originally through the Manhattan Mercantile Corp., Everglades), shows the camp of Johnnie Osceola, on what was then "Highway 94", the Tamiami Trail.

ARCHAEOLOGY DAY (AND MONTH) ARE A GREAT SUCCESS AT THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM

Sunday, March 18th, was a day many of us penciled in our calendars to honor our commitment to Florida Archaeology and show support for the kind folks at the Collier County Museum who have allowed us to these many years to

conduct the
the
Craighead
Laboratory on
their premises.
We (SWFAS) like
to reciprocate in
several small
ways, one of
which is to be as
major participants
as possible in a
yearly festival
which gives the
public some
insight into
WHY
archaeology
in Southwest
Florida is
important,
interesting,

and even enjoyable. The Collier County Museum had as fine a festivity as has ever been with the attendance of close to 300 people from the community. There were people such as Dick Workman demonstrating the use of various materials used by the prehistoric Indians, and even people who are living or exhibiting a recreated live-style of those vanished people. Lectures by the like of Drs. Ryan Wheeler and Corbett Torrance, and a chance to tour

our own very fine Laboratory rounded out the picture. Yours truly (the acting editor) even got to participate in giving atlatl (spear-thrower) lessons. The paper targets provided by David Southall of the Museum were excellent (and reinforced with three bales of hay!). Those mammoths (in effigy) sure got torn apart as many promising "Pleistocene" hunters, young and old, took their turns with the newly refurbished darts, generously supplied by Art Lee and the other Laboratory Staffers. Archaeology Day was a sure success, thanks to all who participated!

Inside this Newsletter

- 1 We are Moving!**
Florida Gulf Coast University will be the new site of our General Meetings
- 2 Splashdown – Part Four!** Read Dr. Robert Gore...

THE DATE BOOK

May 9thth SWFAS Board Meeting – Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

May 16th , 2001 General Meeting – HELD AT FGCU MAIN CAMPUS – TAKE EXITS 19 OR 20 EAST OF I-75

About SWFAS

The directorate: President Betsy Perdichizzi, first vice president Don Taggart, membership secretary Charlie Strader, treasurer Charlie Strader, recording secretary Jo Ann Grey, directors Steve Tutko, Sue Long, Dottie Thompson, Jo Ann Grey, Charles Dugan, Jack Thompson, Tom Franchino, John Beriault and Charlie Strader.

The committees: Field: Beriault, 434-0624; Hospitality: position open; Membership: Charlie Strader; Publicity: Dottie Thompson, 597-2269; Sales: position open; Finances, Jack Thompson 597-2269, 774-8517; Lab: (774-8517), Art Lee, 261-4939, Walt Buschelman, 775-9734, Jack Thompson, 597-2269.

To Join: Address your check to the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 34101. Dues are: Individual \$20, Individual Sustaining \$50.00, Family \$35, Student \$15.

Any questions, comments, contributions to the Newsletter: John G. Beriault, acting editor, P.O. Box 9074, Naples, FL 34101-9074 or Email to: JGBeriault@aol.com.

DUES ARE DUE!

Friends, it's that time of year again to remind you that SWFAS membership dues are due and payable January 1st, 2001. We're not like the phone or power company – can't remind you by turning off the utility. We hope you will see this notice and sit right down and send us a check payable to the **Southwest Florida**

Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 34101-9965. As a group we've had a positive impact in informing people, preserving our historic and prehistoric resources, and just plain enjoying each other's company and having a good time! Please help us by staying with us and sending in your dues. Thanks!



POTSHERDS AND POTSHOTS... AN ONGOING SERIES BY ROBERT GORE

BIRDSHOT AND THE BEACHBALL. IV.

Late In August, 1565, five Spanish ships rolling slowly and heavily northward under, full sail, entered the south entrance of the Bahama Channel. The little fleet, consisting of the galeass San Pelavo, the galleon San Andres, the shallop San Miguel, the galiot La Esperanza, and a fifth smaller vessel whose name has been lost, sailed under the captaincy of the famed Pedro Menendez de Aviles. He had departed the

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harbor of San Juan de Batista In Puerto Rico on August 15th, and by August 24 or 26th (the avail-able documents are contradictory) was just two days away from landfall at Fort San Mateo adjacent to what would become the newly founded village of St. Augustine. The vessels carried numerous soldiers under the command of 12 *capitans*, plus their horses, supplies, and ammunition. They were on a mission of royal retribution. Pedro Menendez de Aviles, Capitan-General of the West Indies, and Adelantado of La Florida, meant to surprise the French troops of Jean Ribaut and Rene de Laudonniere who were trespassing on Spanish territory at the mouth of the River of May, or St. Johns, as it would later be called. And, because they were diabolical Lutheran heretics, he meant to kill them all.

The fleet had made a daring passage through the contorted channels, shallow shifting sandbeds, and capricious currents of the lower Lucayos. As the fleet swung Into the Bahama Channel abreast of Grand Bahama Island the deep, cobalt blue waters of the Florida Current grabbed the vessels and propelled them rapidly northward. Other

than threading the sandy needles of the Bahama Banks the passage had so far been uneventful. That night, August 25th, was clear and the millions of stars far overhead were taunted by the equivalent millions of bioluminescent planktonic organisms that flashed and scintillated in the bow waves of the ships and roiled in glowing and fading patches down the shimmering slip stream of their wakes.

Toward early morning one of the Franciscan friars on board, Father Mendoza Grajales, came on the main deck. Perhaps he felt a bit claustrophobic in the confines below; perhaps he wished to escape the noisome effluvia of the lowest decks and get a breath of fresh air while saying his matins, Father Mendoza was an important person and would not be challenged by the watch; he was to be the chaplain at St. Augustine. As he paced the deck of the Adelantado's San Pelavo, perhaps deep in worry and meditation concerning his new post, he was startled from his contemplations by the shout from a lookout high in the rigging.

"Cometa! Cometa! Aiii, Madre de Dios! Cometa!"

Looking skyward, the surprised priest saw a huge and brilliant meteor traveling slowly across the star-strewn firmament and westward in the direction of the still invisible Florida peninsula. As the fiery object fell toward the distant horizon to the

west it seemed to blink out, leaving only the faint glowing trail that marked its long passage, and which quickly dissipated into the darkness. Father Mendoza was encouraged. He could not help thinking to himself that here, indeed, was an auspicious omen for the Adelantado's coming enterprise.

Omens are always ambivalent--good for someone, bad for some-body else. It is, however, safe to say that Father Grajales would have been resolutely doubtful that objects of any size could fall from heaven, let alone be found later on earth. In fact, there was no word to describe such a preposterous event, even had he witnessed such himself. Such "falling stars," even though their passage was rapid, were generally lumped under the substantially slower but equally spectacular, long-term phenomena called comets. In either case, in those days both were portents that required careful consideration and interpretation by astrologer and cleric alike. The aboriginals, however, seemed to be of a broader mind in this regard, as will become clear.

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Earth is a planet under siege. Every 24-hour day it is bombarded by thousands of tons of rock and metal, the shattered or conglomerated debris of the universe. Fortunately for life in general and humans in particular most of this debris is microscopic "space dust." Less common are the larger particles that flare briefly then go out as they enter our atmosphere. Even rarer (Gracia a Dios!) are the huge stones that from time to time punch through the air and pockmark the surface of our planet. These last are not only the most dramatic, but (as we have already seen) also have the most far-reaching effects on earth, its atmosphere, its waters--and its life. Yet even lowly space dust has weight and mass, and the estimated 20,000 tons that fall on the average each day increases the overall weight and mass of our planet by miniscule but continual fractions.

Asteroids, in spite of their name, are not little stars. But they do appear "star like" when viewed through telescopes because they reflect sunlight from their irregular surfaces. Found in several concentric orbital planes in our solar system, they range in size from yards to miles. Those less than a few hundred

meters in diameter are classified as meteoroids, hinting at their eventual fate. Most astronomers consider these fragments to be the residue of a "failed planet" that, had it coalesced and stabilized, would occupy an eccentric orbit between Jupiter and Mars. When these

fragments fall into the 'earth's atmosphere, and ignite, they change status and become meteors.

Then, if they fall slowly enough, or are large enough that they are not completely consumed, when they strike land they become meteorites. The suffix change reflects a convention in geology that many rocks and minerals usually end with "ite" (granite, calcite). In essence, they also change from a "falling star" to a "fallen star." The largest of these, as we have seen at Chicxulub, become truly terrestrial "movers and shakers" in the most literal sense.

Meteorites on the earth are classified into three further groupings. Stony meteorites or chondrites (93% of all fallen stars) are composed primarily of rock (usually the mineral olivine) with bits of iron and other metals

scattered throughout. Iron meteorites (about 6% of the total), often also called nickel-iron, are nearly completely metallic, and are made of roughly 80% iron and 20% nickel. (Don't ask me why they aren't called



"OOOOOOooooooo ... COOL!"

the more logical iron-nickel.) Stony-iron meteorites (about 1% of the total) are approximately 50% stone, plus 50% mixture of iron and other metals. The need for such distinctions will become apparent later when we consider Lake Okeechobee and other star-fall sites in Florida.

For aficionados of arcane knowledge these categories also give hints as to the relative stratigraphic position of the objects n

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their particular asteroid or "failed planet." Nickel-iron meteorites, being the densest, probably composed the core; stony-iron the intermediate levels; and stony meteorites the crust of the planetesimal. And, when such a planetesimal collides with another the fragments from the various levels are also again set free into their own orbits. Their subsequent destinations may then extend toward the farthest edges of the universe, or to a permanent orbit around the sun. On rare occasions their fate may be a flaming demise in the atmosphere of one of the major planets or their respective satellites. Their cenotaphs then appear as craters; their remains appear as scattered fragments.

Let's go back to the deck of the San Pelayo in 1565. For our purposes it is fitting to call this shooting star the Grajalve meteor. Falling in late August it could well have belonged to the Perseid shower, well known for its spectacular, large, bright, slow-moving, glowing-train meteors. Did it land? And if so where? Regretfully, we shall

never know. But there is rock-solid evidence for several meteor falls onto the Florida peninsula, although the arrival dates in every case are lacking. And curiously enough, some of the objects were preserved--not (at first) by wizened curators in some museum's Hall of Astronomy--but by Floridan aboriginals. We'll discuss these objects next time.

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SORRY FOR THE INATTENTIVENESS...

I'm afraid I've been less of an acting editor than normally over the last several months. I've been moving into a new home and all the work and hassles have been an interesting chapter of my life I would not like to repeat any time soon. Part of the move will involve the move of my computer, and since we're not talking a lap-top, that may necessitate being off-line and out of commission for (hopefully) a brief while. Please bear with me, and any contributions to the Newsletter, please hang on to them till, say, June. Or if the news is pretty urgent, let our splendid president, Betsy Perdichizzi or Jack Thompson have the information. I hope to be up and running soon... Thanks for understanding...