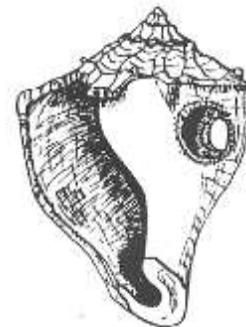


SWFAS

NEWSLETTER

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

MARCH, 2003



Art Lee receives the SWFAS Achievement Award after retiring as Director of the Craighead Laboratory. Jack Thompson presented this plaque as well-deserved recognition of Art's many years of SWFAS service to Art at the December Picnic held at the Collier County Museum.

**A CHANGE OF
PLANS CAUSES
ARCHAEOLOGY
DAY TO BE HELD
AT THE COLLIER**

COUNTY MUSEUM...

A change of plans has caused Archaeology Day festivities to be moved from its planned presentation on Marco Island to the Collier County Museum at the Courthouse Complex in

East Naples, March 22nd (Saturday).

Most of the already-planned events will be held there. These events include reenactments; lectures by noted archaeologists, atlatl (spear thrower) demonstrations, demonstrations of Indian arts and crafts, and other events to be announced. Please come out and support our efforts!

Inside this Newsletter

- 1 We have Moved! Florida Gulf Coast University is the new site of our General Meetings
- 2 Can You Canoe? Read Robert Gore, Part Five...

**ARCHAEOLOGY DAY –
MARCH 22ND, COLLIER
COUNTY MUSEUM –
SEE ARTICLE THIS
ISSUE**

THE DATE BOOK

March 12th SWFAS Board Meeting, Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

March 22nd Archaeology Day, Collier County Museum, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. There will be **NO** General Meeting this month at Florida Gulf Coast University



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

THE ORTONA ENIGMAS: CANOES, CANALS, COMMERCE, AND CONVEYANCE: V. CANAL HYDRAULICS, POND CEMETERIES, SPIRITS, AND ORIGINS

Although the answers might appear self-evident we should not gloss over the question: Why straight ditches, their ultimate direction notwithstanding? There are at least eight practical reasons: 1) A straight line is the shortest distance between two points; 2) Straight ditches allow water to flow faster down them than do curved ditches; 3) They diminish some erosional hydraulic factors on canal walls and bottoms; 4) They are easier to lay out and also require less time to build; 5) They can be more easily dressed or repaired by closing them down at one end or the other or anywhere along their length, simply by inserting flood-control gates; 6) They

allow easier passage and maneuvering by heavy canoes; 7) Both ditches led to the "main" village site in the drier scrub-shrub lands; and, 8) they are easily defended. Note that the Caloosahatchee River between the mouths of the eastern and western canals meanders noticeably. As any canoeist knows (and paddle steamers ruefully learned centuries later) water currents become both capricious and treacherous in and around river bends, and especially so below areas where rapids occur. Whether cargo-carrying, joy-riding, or going to war, a smooth straight ride is always appreciated.' Okay, why build such shallow canals? Again, there are probably several reasons. Sufficient labor might have been a continuing problem for the Ortonans unless they had prisoners to do the work, or a cooperative effort among villages was made. A more mundane reason may be that the canals simply did not need to be deep. After all, they were meant only to transport canoes. A depth three-feet or less would: 1) allow the canoes to be poled, in addition to, or rather than, being rowed, up or down the canal reaches; 2) allow humans to "walk" or escort the canoes in the canal in rather shallow water; 3) allow the canoes to be more easily beached for offloading or repairs; and 4) perhaps allow even heavier

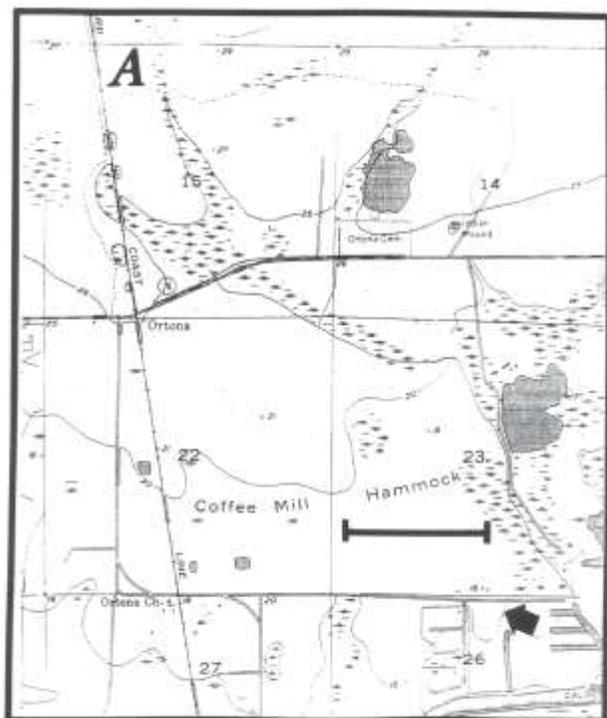
About SWFAS

The directorate: President Tom Franchino, first vice president Corbett Torrence second vice president Theresa Schoeber, membership secretary Charlie Strader, treasurer Charlie Strader, recording secretary Jo Ann Grey, directors Bud House, Sue Long, Liz Clements, Jo Ann Grey, Don Taggart, Jack Thompson, John Beriault, Charlie Strader, John Worth, and Dr Susan Stans.

The committees: Field: Beriault, 434-0624; Hospitality: position open; Membership: Charlie Strader, 941-992-6133; 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.



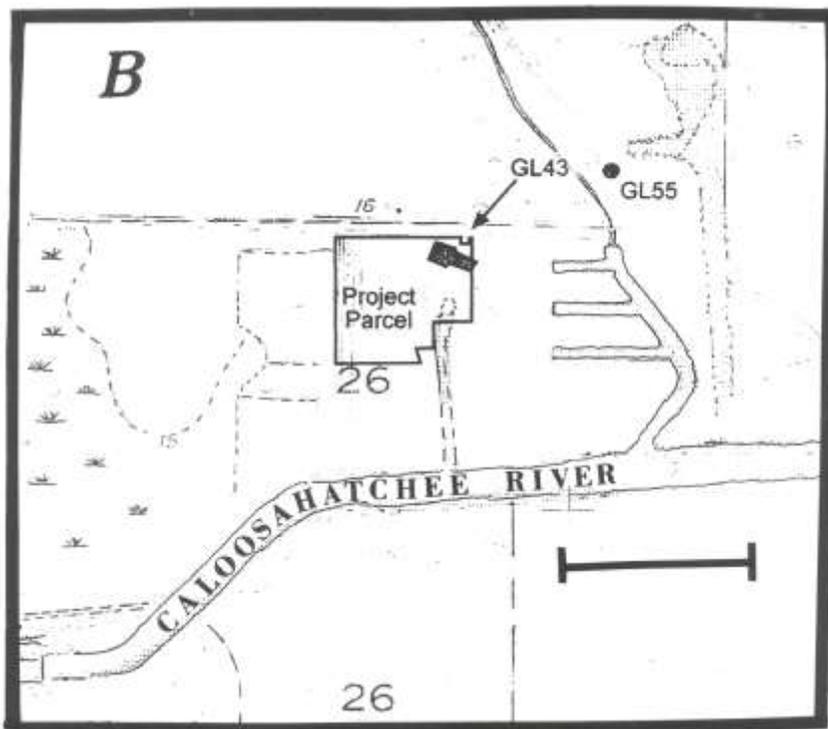
canoes to be "towed" using rope made from twisted grape vines and other vine-like-plants, in a manner similar to that seen with, say, tow-boats in the Erie Canal. Shallow water would also have made attaching the tow or overhauling lines much easier, for example under the prows or sterns.

Now let's shift focus. What about the so-called "Baton-shaped Ceremonial Pond" noted in the

newspapers. This pond, about 450 feet long by 180 feet at its widest, some 3 feet deep, and 1,300 years old (based on newspaper reports of radio-carbon dates) may have been built either during, or up to 400 years after the time the canals had been excavated between 200-700 AD. The pond once lay completely buried below but near the termination of the eastern canal at the head of a small natural embayment which connects to the Caloosahatchee River. When discovered and excavated its measurements indicated that it was wider across the top than at the bottom (up being toward the north), and that it supposedly resembled "a sacred baton."

Figure 11. The "Baton Pond" (or "Pestle Pond") of the Ortonans. A) Arrow indicates approximate location southeast of Coffee Mill Hammock and almost due north of the Caloosahatchee River. Scale line indicates one-half mile. B) Expanded view of site 8GL43. The excavated area resembles a pestle more than a baton, and even more the outline of a "typical" 20th century borrow pit. Modern-day "finger channels" south-east of the pond show the extent of land-alteration in the area. Scale line indicates one-quarter mile. Illustrations modified from data and figures provided by the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, and publications and reports by Robert S. Carr et al.

"Baton-shaped Ceremonial Pond" noted in the



My first and most parsimonious thought was: Why must the pond resemble anything, let alone a "baton?" And why must it be "sacred?" No one knows what the Ortonans putative religious beliefs were. It is often easier, at first glance, to impute reasons or resemblances for things, than it is to prove them.

Looking just at morphology, for example, what if the "pond" was meant to resemble a canoe paddle? Or, how was the "pond" determined to be "ceremonial" in nature and not just an original pre- or post-canal harbor-and-wharf area for Ortonan or visitors' canoes? After all (again, based on newspaper illustrations) the "baton-pond" does seem to lie close to an existing natural embayment leading directly to the Caloosahatchee River. Was the pond instead merely a canoe storage facility for the Ortonans? Or just a boatyard where trees were floated in and hauled ashore to be fashioned into canoes? Has its floor ever been examined for artifacts? Uncommonly large numbers of wood chips? Burnt wood? Uncompleted or discarded hulls? Shell or stone chipping tools? Or was it nothing more than a low spot in the Ortonan swamp?

Moreover, why would the Ortonans go to all the trouble

to excavate a 450 foot long, 180 foot wide, 3 foot deep "baton-shaped" pond anyway, especially if there already existed a short and shallow natural embayment that connected directly to the Caloosahatchee River? And if the pond "baton-shape" was meant to indicate power, over whom would a group of Johnny-come-lately Indians have held sway, located as they were in the middle of a water-clogged peninsula, just off the largest, continually overflowing Lake east of Utah and south of Illinois. Or, did the Ortonans and their Lake Mayaimi cohorts form the real seat of power in south Florida, and not the Calusa?

And what determines "ceremoniality" anyway? Skeletal remains on the pond floor? Artifacts scattered about in the sand and muck? Or are these just the consequences of some 1,300 years of use and misuse, the lost, the misplaced, the deliberately thrown-away; the same litter and trash one finds in the Catacombs in Rome? If skeletal remains are discovered then perhaps the "baton-pond" was a burial pond? Tribespeople or tribal enemies--it would make little difference to the deceased if the pond was a hydromatic funeral parlor and cemetery. It is, for example, well noted in the archaeological literature that tribespeople in the Greater Lake Okeechobee

watershed and farther north along the St. Johns River valley buried their dead in ponds. Okeechobean historian Lawrence Will even drew reference to the exposure of numerous skeletal remains during a water drawdown in Lake Okeechobee. None of these water bodies (the ponds, not the deceased) was shaped like a baton or any other effigial item.

Then, of course, there remains the question of all that labor to dig the pond out in the first place, no matter what the alleged semiotic reasons for its shape. Was the pond, in fact, a precursor, a test pit so to speak, to determine the underlying soils that would need to be removed for the subsequent canals?

There may even be a rather straightforward answer to the conundrum of the "baton-shaped pond," one at least tentatively supported by historical survey data, photography, and drawings. Quite simply, the "baton-shaped pond" may not have been a "ceremonial pond" at all. It may have been just a borrow pit. For what use? If the Ortonans dug it then why not as a supply for easily transported dirt for mounds, causeways, and pathways through the wetlands?

But what if it was dug by someone much later? Consider. The Tannehill survey plat map (1871) shows

only a circular pond at the approximate position of the "baton-pond." The Kreamer map (1882) also shows a circular feature just below the mouth of the eastern canal. A USDA aerial photograph of the site illustrates, two circular features, neither of which have any "baton" shape. The Miles map (1950) shows only a circular feature to the south-west of the eastern canal. The Goodno Quadrangle (U.S.G.S. 1958) is similarly devoid of "baton-shaped" objects. Were these circular appurtenances merely the slumped-in portion of the originally rectangular borrow pit? Or was "rectangularity" more perceived than actual? Like its "baton" shape?

Much of the area around the eastern canal was scheduled for additional sand-mining, with quadrangular borrow pits being the method of choice. With so much land-scraping going on over the past century a "baton-shaped" borrow pit could well fill the bill for both the Ortonans and the latter-day sand-miners. But no such rectangular pit was visible on site maps as early as 1871, and it was not noted by Buckingham Smith in 1848.

On another, cultural note, just because the Ortonans could build canals, and seemed to have some distant engineering-based relationship with the Hopewell Culture, doesn't necessarily confirm that

relationship either. It might be entirely coincidental. The Egyptians, and the Aztecs and Mayans, all built pyramids and canals but no one except some half-crazed mystics, Atlantistean, and spiritualists has made any connection among or between those peoples. Any recovered "Hopewellian" artifacts may be no more indicative of relationships or cultural diffusion than, say, my specimens of Chorotegan pottery or Cuna molas makes me a relative or descendant of those Costa Rican Indians. It merely means that I bought or traded for them.

Nor does it make the Ortonans any better or worse than any of the other existing Okeechobean polities, numbering by historical accounts at least 25 or more, and none of which have been shown to have any unimpeachable connections to the Hopewell peoples. Not saying, mind you, that the Hopewellian hopeful speculations are necessarily false--only that they haven't been shown to be true--yet. Like a lot of what happens in these columns, there is much speculation, the truth or falsity of which remains to be demonstrated. But it IS fun, isn't it? So keep an open mind.

From whence came the Ortonans? Another good question. One intimation,

again based on the similarity of the Ortona mound-canal complex to the mound and effigy constructs of the Hopewell Culture in the Ohio River Valley, is that they might have come to Florida from Ohio via the Mississippi River. This seems quite a leap of faith and smacks, to me anyway, of me saying that because I now reside in Naples-The-Hub-Of-The-Universe, but once lived in a colonial-style house in Vero Beach, I can therefore trace my ancestry to the American colonists who built Sturbridge Village. Even if Hopewellian connections are eventually made, just where and when the Ortonans entered the peninsula remains unknown, and probably will ever be so. Certainly they would have been met by at least some rather fierce local Floridians, the aboriginal tribes that had already settled in the north and central portions, and along the coasts--which is to say, the best agricultural and fishing lands. The history books are full of the war-fare, land-theft, and tribute demands that took place among and by these tribes. Thus, one possible scenario, and a non-heroic one at that, is that the only land still available and not under someone else's control or usufruct would have been in and around Lake Okeechobee. But settling in this water-bloated land might have

required a substantial change in mind-set in a group of essentially upland-dwelling, riverine-based, ostensibly "Ohio Yankee" Indians. The entire mind-set alteration and subsequent evolution of the ultimate Ortonan tradition, once they became firmly established in Florida, might have been addressed toward accomplishing just that. When given a lemon, make lemonade--and all that. If, for example, it became known that the shortest (but not necessarily the easiest) way to cross the peninsula from coast to coast was via the Caloosahatchee-Okeechobee-St. Lucie waterways, and if the Ortonans grasped the concept that their position was smack dab in the middle, and if some sort of tribute or toll could be exacted . . . well, then. Res ipsa loquitur? Nevertheless, some other questions remain. The Ortonan people may have first arrived on their scene sometime around 700 BC. Yet, based on radiocarbon dating, the mound and canal works did not appear until around 200-700 AD. The 900-1,000 year hiatus (700 BC-200/300 AD) before mound and canal construction began is a curious expanse of time. It might imply that it took that long for the Ortonans to finish their immigration into, and become settled, and adapted, and populous enough, within their new homeland. Or, that

the lands they were "forced" to adopt (let us say for sake of argument) were often (if not continuously) flooded, and the arriving peoples were so unfamiliar with this flooding, or incapable of handling it, that it took them that long to conquer it. Or, maybe they only came down seasonally, kind of like tourists to an early "Naples-On-The-Lake." Or, it might also indicate that the area was more or less drought-stricken and so canals were not yet needed. Or, the Okeechobean Watershed may indeed have been "Hungry Lands" for a people used to the animal and plant abundances of the upper Ohio Valley, and finding food was momentarily more important than digging ditches.

Or, perhaps they actually seized the figurative Caloosahatchee-Okeechobee water buffalo by the horns and began immediately demanding tribute from all canoeists passing by their village--or else. In which case, the canals and mounds may have been merely a clever afterthought. Or even a sort of Holiday Inn complex at the halfway point of passage between the coasts. There is another and more sinister possibility as well. Perhaps the so-called "Ortonan" villagers (i.e. those who most recently occupied the site), having come upon

the village-canal complex already in place, descended upon and wiped out the original inhabitants on the site. It would be difficult to prove or disprove this, but that does not eliminate the possibility. Lack of evidence is not evidence of lack . . . More speculation next month. . .

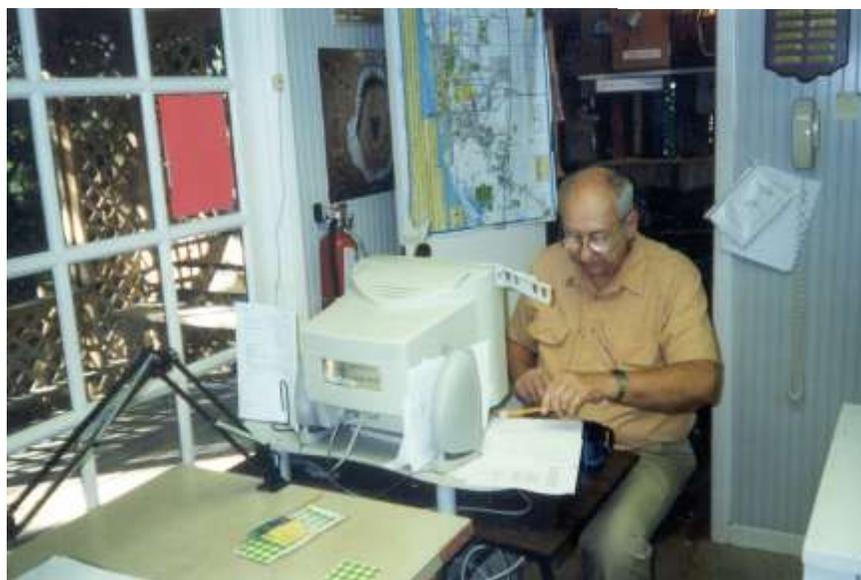
UNMASK THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society will host its tenth annual Archaeology Festival on Saturday, March 22, 2003 at the Collier County Museum located at the corner of Highway #41 East and Airport Road. Hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is no admission charge.

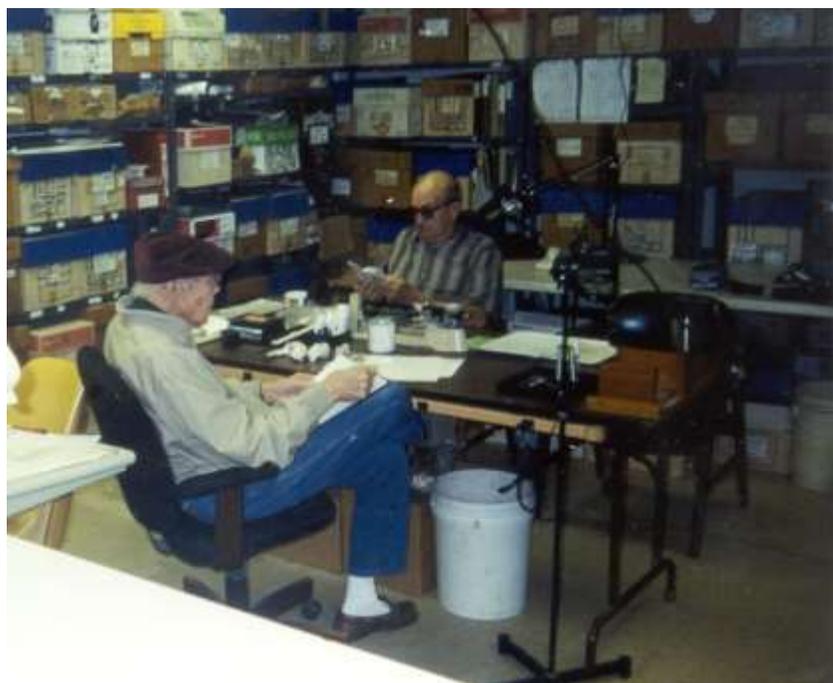
The event is part of a state-wide celebration of Archaeology Month. Activities throughout the day will include skilled craftsmen demonstrating how the ancient ones made their tools, Paleo Man reenactors of Calusa people, Atlatl throwing, speakers and a visit to a working archaeology lab where artifacts discovered at the Olde March Inn site are now being analyzed.

Four archaeologists who are experts on this area will be the speakers. Dr. Randolph Widmer, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Houston, will have a paper, presented by Arthur R. Lee, entitled "The Key Marco Site; Our Current Understanding of the Site", John Beriault, Founder of the Southwest Florida Archaeology Society, will discuss "The Recent Monitoring of the Olde Marco Inn Site During Construction"; Mike Russo, Archaeologist with the Southeast Archaeology Center of the National Park Service in Tallahassee, will discuss "Horr's Island: the Lost Shell Ring"; and Corbett Torrence, Professional Archaeologist and Co-Director of the Cultural Resource Mgmt. Program at FGCU, will explain "How The Past Influences the Future".

In addition, videos will be available during the day. They will cover information on Florida's Lost People, the Domain of the Calusa, PBS-British documentary on the Miami Circle, Florida Archaeology, Prehistoric Florida, Primitive Pottery Manufacture and the Miami Circle.



Craighead Lab Computer Man: Jack Harvey hard at work inputting data on artifact analysis...



So you've retired, huh? Fortunately Art is sticking with us despite retiring as director...

CRAIGHEAD LAB REPORT

The friendly “lab rats” are working hard analyzing the material from the Olde Marco Inn project. We are perhaps 10 % through the 93 boxes and have over 1,000 artifacts, it looks like we will have 10,000 total.

We still need office management skills and a librarian. Please volunteer.

SCHEDULE OF SPEAKERS AT ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

Archaeological Month
Festival At The Collier
County Museum, March 22,
2003, 10 A.M. To 5 P.M.

10:30AM Paper BY DR.
RANDOLPH WIDMER,
Presented By Arthur R. Lee.
“The Key Marco Site, Our
Current Understanding Of
The Site”.

11:30 AM, JOHN
BERIAULT, “The Recent
Monitoring Of The Olde
Marco Site During
Construction.”

1:30 PM, MIKE RUSSO, “
HORR’S ISLAND: The Lost
Shell Ring.”

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2:30 PM, CORBETT
TORRENCE. “How The Past
Influences The
Future.”



Window into Analyzing the Past: Jean Belknap and Art Lee working on material at the Craighead Lab as viewed from the outside looking in...