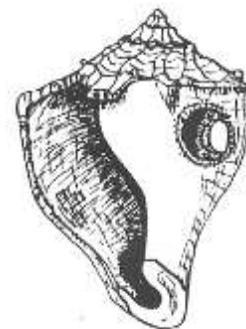


SWFAS

# NEWSLETTER

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4

APRIL, 2003

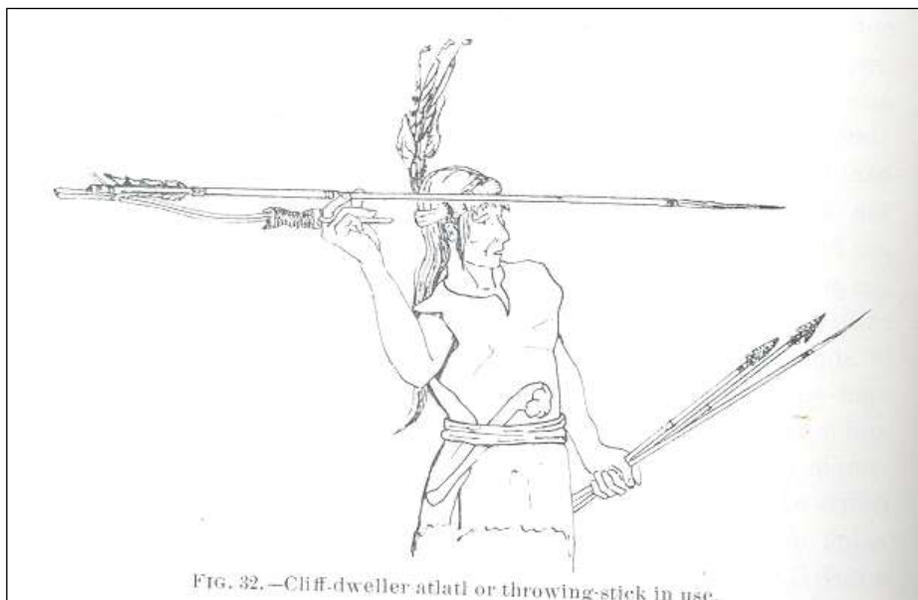


FIG. 32.—Cliff-dweller atlatl or throwing-stick in use.

Another illustration from Frank Hamilton Cushing's work, *The Arrow*, published in 1896. I guess this time of year (Archaeology Day, March 22<sup>nd</sup>) has me thinking about this implement as I (and various visitors) get to toss those darts a few thousand times during that day...

## ARCHAEOLOGY DAY HELD AT THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM...

Members of SWFAS, particularly those participating, can congratulate themselves in putting on another successful Archaeology Day event at the Collier County Museum

March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The crowds were light, but we have come to expect that, due to lack of interest in the local newspapers for featuring advance notice of the event plus competition with art festivals and other more mainline events featured in the area that same day. The newspapers (to their credit) did send out at least three reporters, so there should be some articles that can't but help future events at the

Museum. As usual, the people manning the exhibits, running the video equipment, greeting the people as they arrived, and, yes, throwing the atlatl, are to be thanked by one and all of us. Again, I have to commend Charlie Strader and his hardworking crew for cooking the hotdogs and providing drinks and other refreshments (it's a lonely job eating all those left-over hotdogs – thanks, Charlie).

## *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 Six...

**POTTERY  
MANUFACTURING AND  
FIRING EVENT AT DR.  
ROBIN BROWN'S – SEE  
ARTICLE THIS ISSUE**

**THE DATEBOOK**

**April 9th** SWFAS Board Meeting, Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

**April 16th** General Meeting at Florida Gulf Coast University, Reed Hall, Room 139 at 7:30 P.M.



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

Hence, one reason for the canals.

Canals, of course, are not a new idea, having been around since the time of the great civilizations in the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile River valleys. Closer to home, and of much more recent dates, canals were an important part of life in the Aztec and Maya civilizations as well. Interestingly, the latter were constructed between 200 BC and 900 AD. Thus, the possibility is that "canal fever" occurred nearly simultaneously in at least three different relatively nearby parts of the New World--the Ohio River Valley, Florida, and in Central America. We will leave speculation as to any greater interconnections for another time.

Which now leads us into considerations of commerce. If the Ortonans were accomplished canoeists then their waterworld, from their home base west of Lake Okeechobee, could well have been their oyster (to mix a metaphor). Consider canoe routes available for travel. The Okeechobee route, through or around the Lake and then eastward via the St. Lucie River, would provide downstream access to the Guacata aboriginals (or their forbears) on the upper St. Lucie; the Jeaga, Hobe and Santa Lucas on its lower environs; then upstream and

**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 Clement, 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](mailto:JGBeriault@aol.com).

THE ORTONA ENIGMAS:  
CANOES, CANALS,  
COMMERCE, AND  
CONVEYANCE: VI.

VI. "THE ORTONAN  
MERCHANT MARINE.  
PASSPORT TO  
ADVENTURE?"

Putting speculation as to origins riverine, lacustrine and ethnic aside, it would stand to reason that one way to overcome vagaries of life in a Florida waterland would be to build, during the dry season, mounds of earth (which the Hopewell Culture people knew how to do, as did the Mayans), on top of which dwellings, perhaps granaries or breadroot storage areas, and other constructs could be erected. It would then (seemingly) follow that any method to divert waterflow away from these mounds would help ensure a longer lifetime for both the mounds and the buildings on top.

northern access to the Ays hegemonies along the Indian River; and the Jororo-Mayaca moieties farther to the north along the St. Johns River valley. Turning southeast from the St. Lucie "interchange," and still moving downstream, southern access was available to the coastal settlements at the mouths of the St. Lucie, Boca Raton, Hillsboro, New, and Miami Rivers on the southeastern coast via the Intracoastal lagoons.

The southeastern coast was also available via the Everglades by using the now obliterated lead of the old Democrat River (named by that New Orleans newspaper's most famous son, Archie Williams, in 1883). Once located near the defunct town of Chosen at the southeasternmost point of Lake Okeechobee, the Democrat River was a typical Okeechobean "dead river" some 80 yards wide and six feet deep. One of at least 17 such spillways, it disembogued from the Lake and lost itself several miles later in the sawgrass of the upper Everglades. Surficial flow in the 1880s was two feet a second or greater, giving the Democrat River its nickname "Gulfstream of the Everglades." Its general flow extended southeasterly

through a series of larger and smaller lakes, called Brooker's Run, towards the present city of Miami.

Perhaps of more importance was that where the old Democrat River once left the Lake were located several large earthworks known as the

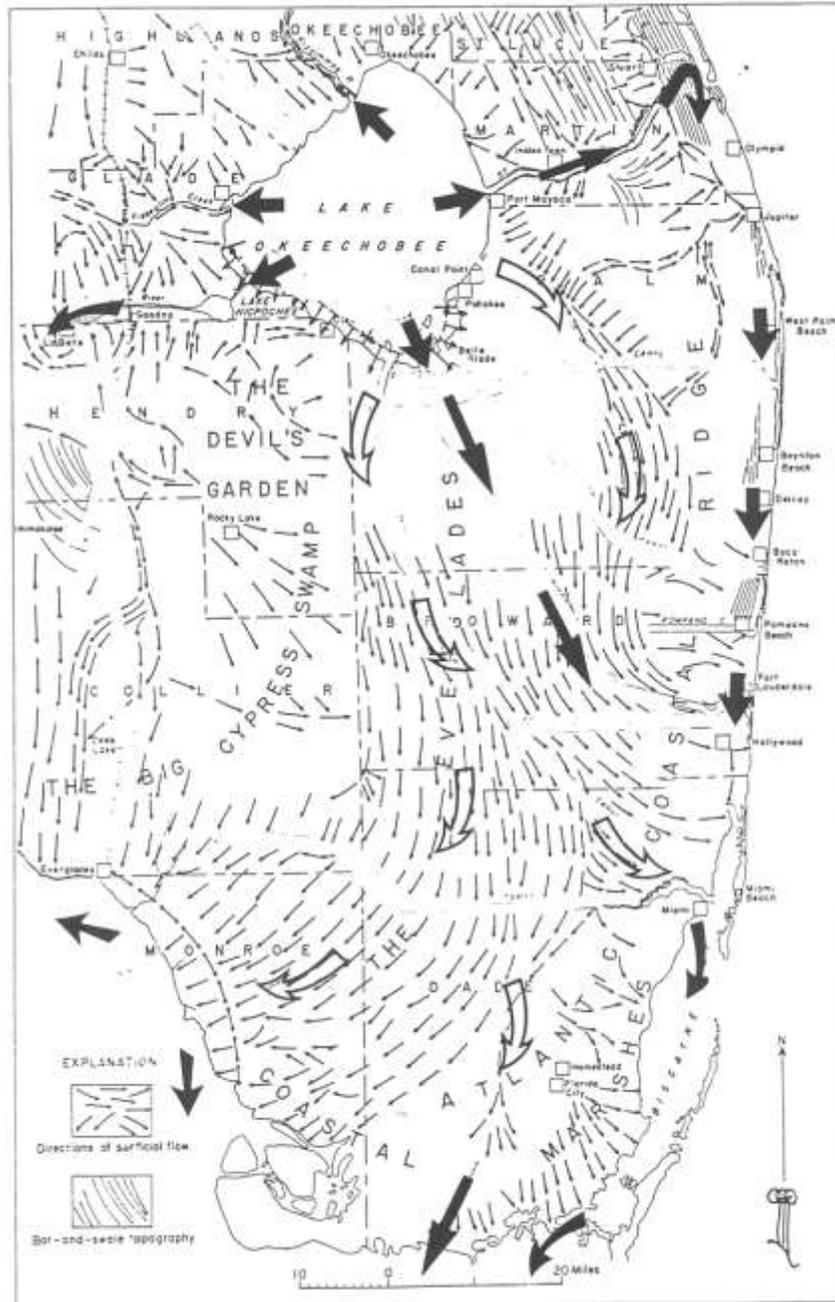


Figure 12: Probable canoe routes out of Lake Okeechobee, through the Everglades, and along coastal areas, superimposed on known flowway patterns, and based on a survey of the historic literature.

Chosen Mounds. As data such as these continue to be collected it becomes glaringly apparent that south Florida was not the lost and flooded wasteland that the later Spaniards and white explorers so derogatorily held it to be.

Returning our attention northward, whether the Kissimmee River played a part in all this travel is unclear. That River flows rapidly down into the Lake, and canoeing up it toward the north Floridan aboriginal tribes would seem to be a trip involving great travail and even greater internecine danger. It may, instead, have been a one-way return waterway (downstream of course) from whatever northern tribal areas had been reached.

Back now on the Caloosahatchee, in the opposite (western) direction, the again downstream route would allow westward travel to and around present-day Charlotte Harbor, and its associated Peace and Myacca Rivers, and then, via Intracoastal lagoons, northward toward the fierce tribes in the Manasota area around Sarasota and Tampa Bays. Southward from Charlotte Harbor, beginning at Estero Bay and extending to Cape Romano, the equally fierce Caloosahatchee and Muspa tribal regions beckoned. From there the Florida Keys, riding coastal

currents, lay no more than 3 days away, while the coastal settlements of the Tancha and other unnamed tribes around Cape Sable lay close nearby along the north shores of Florida Bay. And, if Key West was reachable, could Cuba be that much farther away? Neither the Calusa, the Tequesta, nor the Seminoles thought so.

Regardless of the direction chosen, the overflow from the Lake, coursing down the Caloosahatchee or St. Lucie Rivers, or through the Everglades, would provide a fairly easy canoe trip both downstream and down-peninsula, once the rapids near the Caloosahatchee's origin were bypassed, or the 35+ mile width of the Lake was crossed. We must regretfully put aside any further consideration of the problem these rapids must have caused aboriginal canoeists prior to Ortonan canal construction. There are simply no data available--and the rapids are now destroyed.

A third possible canoe route would be around the lower south-western portion of the Lake and then through the numerous leads (more dead end rivers) that led into the upper Everglades. The destination now was directly southward (and again downstream) down the Shark River "valley." This route was, in fact, followed by the dilettante "explorers" from the

New Orleans Times-Democrat in the early 1880s, who were laboring under their own misguided self-justification that they were the first white men to ever cross the Everglades. In any case, 3/4 of the way down the Shark River the intrepid canoeist could again turn eastward across the lower Everglades toward either the Miami River, or continue canoeing part of the way across the Everglades and then turn southeastward into Taylor Slough and yet another access route directly into Los Martyres and the world beyond.

From the disembogement of the Shark River at the peninsular tip a canoeist could further proceed westward into the Cape Romano area, or follow the coastline eastward instead through the mangrove islands and oyster shellbanks of the Ten Thousand Islands toward Cape Sable. This same disembogement became relatively well known and was also the ingress-egress location used by the Seminole and Mikasuki tribespeople during their conflicts with the U. S. Military in the late 1830s to early 1850s. It gave them a brief tactical superiority through the tangled waterpaths of the Big Cypress Swamp until the U. S. Navy canoeists learned the way.

While cross- or down-country canoeing through the Everglades could be difficult, the aboriginals, certainly through repeated use, and perhaps with the help of a little fire-clearing, could easily have established semi-permanent canoe trails in this direction as well. We know from numerous 19th century accounts that the Seminoles did so (perhaps following earlier trails?) and became so accomplished in their travel that they could make the trip from west to east coast in three days or less. (Figure 121

We'll wrap all this up next time.

## **APRIL MEETING**

Stuart Brown will be the speaker at our April meeting. He will talk to us about "Making an Aboriginal Canoe." It is reported to demonstrate that our prehistoric people were pretty clever.

The meeting is in Reed Hall, Room 139 at 7:30 P.M. on April 16.

Stuart is co-owner of Chaos Productions, Inc. based in Ft. Myers. He wrote and directed the award winning documentary "Domain of the

Calusa" for the Florida Museum of Natural History and shot and edited the award winning documentary "Shadows and Reflections" for the Florida Anthropological Society. Jeanne' Sanders has volunteered to serve coffee and refreshments at 7:00 PM at each of our future meetings.

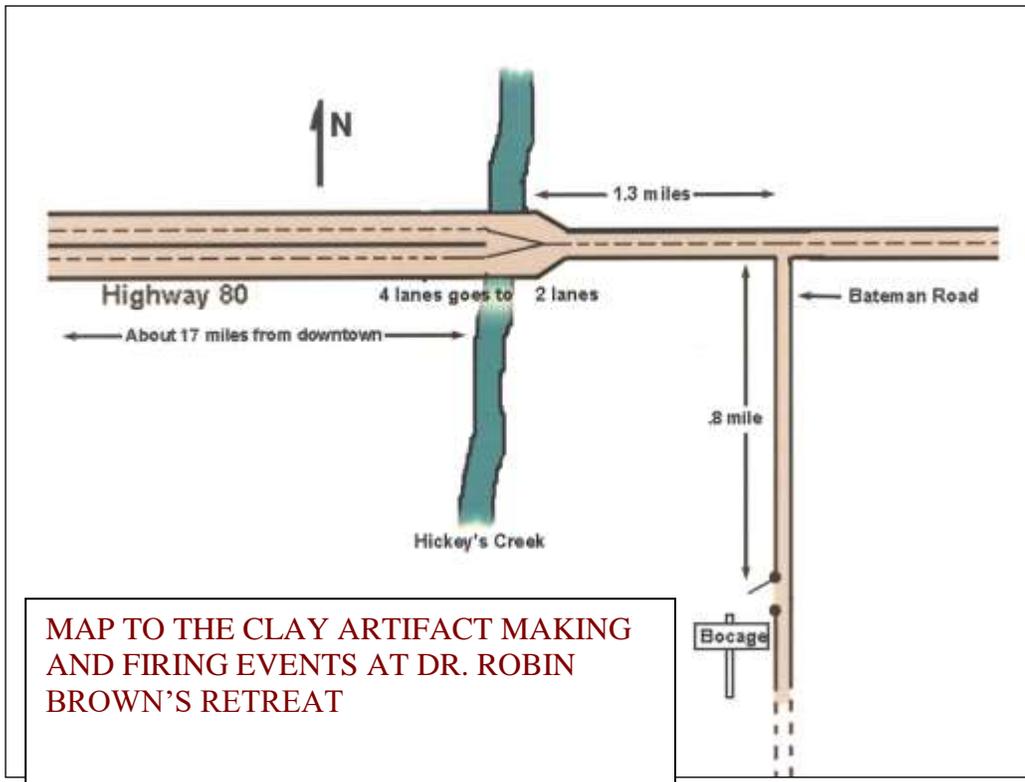
## **POTTERY MANUFACTURING AND FIRING EVENTS AT DR. ROBIN BROWN'S**

I feel remiss in my position as field director of SWFAS, and so, thanks to a kind offer by Dr. Robin Brown, I can provide us with an event that is not a "dig", but an exercise equally fascinating, a chance for you to make and fire an artifact (a pot, etc.) made of native clay. These events will be held on two successive Saturdays, April 5<sup>th</sup> and April 12<sup>th</sup>, at Dr. Brown's retreat on Hickey's Creek at East Fort Myers (see map) starting at 10:00 AM each day. Participants should bring a lunch and water for themselves, Dr. Brown will supply the clay and do the firing. The first weekend (April 5<sup>th</sup>) will be devoted to making the pieces. The second weekend will be the actual firing, which is

spectacular! Dr. Brown's retreat is about east of old exit 25 (Palm Beach Boulevard, State Road 80) on that street. Look for the point where Palm Beach Boulevard narrows to 2 lanes and crosses Hickey's Creek. Go 1.3 miles further then turn right (south) onto Bateman Road. Go south .8 mile, watch on the right (west) side of road for a gate and "Bocage" sign. Turn in there and proceed to the Brown cabin.

## **MESSAGE FROM STEVE MARTIN AS TO FAS ANNUAL MEETING IN TALLAHASSEE**

Dear FAS Chapter Presidents and Representatives:  
Florida Anthropological Society President Sheila Stewart has suggested that I contact you to encourage your Chapter members to attend the FAS Annual Meeting in Tallahassee this year. You may want to pass this announcement along to your Chapter's e-mail list. Chapter members may not be aware that the FAS Annual meeting is open to persons who are not members of FAS. The meeting provides outstanding opportunities to learn about Florida's fascinating archaeological resources



through the many papers that are presented. The meeting also features Dr. Irving Rouse who will be our Keynote speaker.

This year's meeting will be held May 9-11, 2003, in Tallahassee at the Museum of Florida History (R.A.Gray Building) and features the following activities:

Friday, May 9

8:30 AM - 12:00 p.m.

**Morning Workshop**

"Archaeological Resource Preservation Options for Landowners and Site Managers" Location: Holiday Inn Select, 316 West Tennessee Street

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. **Old FAS Board Meeting**

Open to all FAS members and prospective members

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. **Reception at the Museum of Florida History**

Location: R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street  
Saturday, May 10

8:00 AM - 5:00 p.m. **Paper Presentations**

Archaeological resources research papers on land and underwater sites.

Location: Museum of Florida History, R.A. Gray Building

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. **New FAS Board Meeting**

Location: Museum of Florida History, R.A. Gray Building

7:00 - 11:00 p.m. **Annual Banquet**

Casual banquet at the historic Nicholson Farmhouse Restaurant with Keynote Speaker Dr. Irving Rouse (Professor Emeritus, Peabody

Museum, Yale), Achievement Awards, and a live band and dancing.

Sunday, May 11

9:00a.m - 1:30 p.m. **Tour of Tallahassee-area Archaeological Sites**

Tour of Letchworth Mound (tallest in Florida), Lake Jackson Mounds (Mississippian), and the reconstructed Mission San Luis.

For further information about the FAS 55th Annual Meeting, visit the FAS website

(<http://web.usf.edu/~fas/>)

and click on the "Annual Meeting", where you will also find registration information. Note, the

conference early registration fee is only \$35 per person plus a separate banquet cost of \$25 until April 5, 2003, after which the registration fee is \$45, plus the \$25 cost of the banquet. Transportation to the banquet is included in the banquet fee. We hope to see you at the annual meeting in Tallahassee.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Martin, FAS Annual Meeting Chair, Panhandle Archaeological Society at Tallahassee (PAST).