

Newsletter

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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JULY MEETING TO BE 14TH, AND AT COLLIER MUSEUM

July Meeting

OUND WITH SPANISH ARTIFACTS

SUBJECT OF SPECIAL JULY MEETING

Excavation of a major mound containing artifacts related to Spanish exploration of Florida -- and possibly to Hernando deSoto's 1539 expedition -- will be described Thursday, July 14, at the monthly meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society.

To accommodate the schedule of the speaker, Jeffrey M. Mitchem of the Florida State Museum, who directed the dig, the regular July meeting is being advanced a week to the 14th. Since the usual meeting place is not available on that day, the session will be held at the conference room of the Collier County Museum in the Governmental complex at the junction of Airport Road and U.S. Highway 41, east Naples, starting at 7:30 p.m.

This will be a one-time change, according to President John Beriault; the August and subsequent meetings will be held at the First Federal Savings and Loan of Fort Myers, and on the third Thursday of the month, as usual.

Since the Craighead laboratory building is next door to the Museum, Beriault suggested that those who have not seen the facility may wish to arrive early to look it over.

Mitchem, a graduate assistant at the State Museum, will be here in the course of a tour of western Florida sites gathering information for his doctoral dissertation which will deal with the Safety Harbor culture. Although that culture was centered farther north on the West coast, some pottery with its distinctive design has been recovered in this area.

The subject of his talk will be the Tatham site, located in Citrus county near Inverness. It was remarkable in several respects: the mound had been undisturbed; it could be nearly entirely excavated (more than 90 per cent of its volume was run through the screens); and it was nearly completely privately funded, the labor force having been recruited from college students and members of the Withlacoochee River Archaeology Council. Field work was done in three seasons, ending in December, 1986, under the general supervision of Jerald T. Milanich.

The Safety Harbor period mound yielded hundreds of early 16th century Spanish artifacts including beads, pieces of armor, tools, and ornaments. There are indications that the people interred there had had direct contact with the Spaniards. Further, the presence of the remains of 74 individuals apparently buried at about the same time gives rise to the possibility of an epidemic's having occurred shortly after the Spanish contact.

The mound also contained a prehistoric stratum with shell beads, stone celts and possibly ritual objects of copper. Some of the material found was not of local origin, giving rise to investigation of early trade routes.

The speaker received his B.A. degree from the University of Florida at Gainesville and a Master's degree at the University of South Florida at Tampa. He will be accompanied on the tour by Dale L. Hutchinson of the University of Illinois, who was osteologist on the dig.

"GREAT AMERICAN WASH-IN" SET FOR SATURDAY, JULY 23

It will be old haunts revisited, old acquaintances renewed Saturday, July 23, when SWFASers meet at the Craighead laboratory for what the board of directors has named "The Great American Wash-In".

The event has been scheduled to give members a chance to admire again the shell and bone tools and other artifacts they unearthed in digs the past few years and, incidentally, to get them and their accompanying food-shells ready for storing and analysis.

Processing of the materials was slowed the past year by complications encountered in getting use of the laboratory building and having them properly cared for has become urgent.

Members will meet at the lab at 9:30 a.m and are urged to bring their lunches for a picnic; soft drinks will be provided. The event will offer an opportunity for old-timers to re-live the discovery days at sites such as Chokoloskee, Hendon, and Strader, and for new members to see their artifacts for the first time.

The "wash-in" boosts an effort that has been going on since the lab went into operation in April. After the first weeks demonstrated that processing the backlog of materials takes a good deal of time, procedures were changed to provide washing, drying, and re-bagging with some minimal sorting, reserving analysis for later.

To date the artifacts salvaged from the Bonita Bay development this year, material from the two Pelican Bay digs and Helneken Hammock, the bulk of Horse Creek, and some Chokaloskee material are now cleaned, partially sorted, and shelved.

In the month of June 13 members worked a total of 168 hours 50 minutes at the lab, and nine attended the facility's second workshop, June 29, bringing to 187 hours 35 minutes the total man hours spent there in that period. The month held 26 days during which the museum was open: on 19 of those the lab was manned at least part of the working day.

Generally, there has been a hard core of a few lab workers, supplemented by members who attend on an irregular basis. On average, the lab was staffed three hours and 15 minutes on the days it was open. Most days it was visited by few museum-goers, the exception being Tuesday morning groups of about 30 youngsters on tours sponsored by the Conservancy.

THE POTSDERDS WE DIG

First noted by John Goggin about 1948, Cane Patch "jab and drag" has been found mostly in the eastern Everglades on "tree island" sites. It dates to the Glades IIa era, ca.A.D. 600-900. It is named for the Cane Patch site in Everglades National Park where it was originally identified.



THE TALE OF THE WHALE WAS AN EXCELLENT YARN

You could have heard a vertebra drop, so intent was the SWFAS audience May 19 as Dr. Robin Cotten Brown of Fort Myers, physician and surgeon and avocational paleontologist, told how he and a multitude of friends removed the fossilized skeleton of a whale from a creek behind his Alva, FL, vacation home.

Dr. Brown's light-hearted narration covered an enterprise that became increasingly involved as problems appeared, and were solved -- sometimes with the latest in technology -- as enormously heavy but fragile bones were found and removed from the bed of a flowing stream. Examples:

To get help, reward workers with all the sharks teeth they find (no great loss to science, since individual sharks shuck them off by the dozens);

To get a cast on an underwater bone so it can be moved, get the cooperation of the 3-M company and its new epoxy material that can set up wet.

The talk was illustrated by slides of high artistic quality. After the lecture, Dr. Brown autographed copies of his recently-published book Florida's Fossils, and showed tools unearthed by a bulldozer 20 years ago, made of bone and what appears to be ivory.

THE FINE SCREEN

It's a little complicated, but the address in the June Newsletter for the Strader's new home isn't what we said it was but rather 27655 Kent Road, Bonita Springs, 33923. The one you were given before was for the lot next door on which they had planned to build but didn't.

**LEE COUNTY MEMBERS URGED
TO MAKE VIEWS KNOWN ON PRESERVATION**

The Lee county board of commissioners is expected to meet in late July or early August on the question of amending the comprehensive plan to give further protection to historical structures and archaeological sites.

At the June SWFAS meeting, members from Lee county were urged to make their views on the proposals known to the commission via telephone calls, letters, or attendance at Commission meetings. To learn times of such meetings members may call 335-2443.

The proposals, among other things, would establish a trust fund of money from federal, state and local sources; provide a framework for administration of the fund; provide tax breaks, possible low-interest loans, and building code flexibility to aid in restoration of historic buildings; expand the Historic Preservation Commission to include an archaeologist, and support a staff position for a county or regional archaeologist.

Gloria M. Sajgo said that the proposed goals received a tie vote at a poorly attended meeting of the county planning commission.

DATEBOOK

*July 9. Washing and sorting of archaeological materials at Craighead lab, starting at 2 p.m. Similar sessions are scheduled for every Saturday.

*July 12. Cleaning, filing archaeological materials at the lab. Sessions are planned for every Tuesday starting at 10 a.m. Join in!

*July 13. Work session at the lab starting at 5:30 p.m. for the advantage of those who work. This is a re-instatement of an arrangement used in past years, and will be done on alternate Wednesdays.

*July 14. Laboratory session starting at 10 a.m. this day and every Thursday.

*July 14. Monthly meeting of SWFAS starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Collier County Museum on the Governmental Complex grounds, Junction of Airport road and U.S. Highway 41 in east Naples.

*July 20. Surveying in Archaeology: Use of the plane table; the second of a series of workshops by Joe Long. At the Craighead lab at 6:30 p.m. Wear walking shoes.

*July 24. "The Great American Wash-In" at the Craighead lab starting at 9:30 a.m.

*August 9. Board of directors meeting at the Craighead lab on the Collier County Museum grounds starting at 6:30 p.m. All members welcome.

*August 14. Excavation of test pit at Vinyards site. Meet at B&B Builders Supply, 3800 North Tamiami Trail at 8 a.m.

*August 18. Monthly meeting of SWFAS starting at 7:30 p.m. at the First Federal Savings and Loan of Fort Myers, 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples.

*August 21. Field trip to archaeological sites on Marco Island.

SECOND SESSION SET ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYING

Use of the plane table will be the subject of the second session of Joe Long's workshop on surveying in archaeology Wednesday, July 20, at the Craighead laboratory, starting at 6:30 p.m. Participants will have a chance to use the apparatus in surveying the Collier County Museum grounds. Attendance at the first session is not a prerequisite for the second phase.

At the first meeting June 29 Long discussed the origins of surveying, and explained the various methods of defining areas on the earth's surface, including the range-and-township system used in the identification of archaeological sites. He showed how elevations and locations can be transferred from known points to excavation sites.

Attendees will practice with the transit at the next session, set for August 3. Nine attended the first session.

BRILLIANTLY RECOVERED

Exploring Our Forgotten Century by Joseph Judge; National Geographic March, 1988.

Reviewed by Lindsey Williams, SMFAS member, deSoto scholar and author of Boldly Onward, which places landings of deSoto, Ponce deLeon and Panfilo Narvaez at places contrary to the consensus of most researchers. He has testified before the deSoto Trail Committee that deSoto landed on the north shore of Charlotte harbor, instead of the usually-accepted Tampa bay.

Author Judge condenses a hundred years of little-known history into an absorbing review of 16th Century events on the Atlantic coast from St. Augustine, FL, to Chesapeake bay. He concentrates on Santa Elena (now Parris Island, S.C.), St. Augustine and Fort Caroline (now Jacksonville, FL).

This area was explored by Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon in 1521, the same year that Ponce de Leon made his second visit to southwest Florida in a fatal attempt to plant the first colony on mainland America. Allyn started a colony of 500 in 1526 at San Miguel de Gualdape, believed to be near St. Catherines Island, Ga. It suffered Indian attacks and fevers, Allyn died, the 150 survivors mutinied and the venture was abandoned.

French Huguenots, fleeing persecution, established Fort Caroline in 1562 but it was wiped out by Pedro Menendez de Aviles three years later.

Menendez established a string of colonies and missions in La Florida, which then included all of southeast U.S., the first at St. Augustine, Sept. 15, 1565, which remains the oldest in mainland America.

The 15-year effort of Archaeologist Kathleen Degan to authenticate Menendez' presence there is recounted in the Geographic article, along with a photo of the many artifacts she has found in back yards and under floors of St. Augustine buildings. Her most important find is the site of Menendez' fort, luckily in an open field.

Menendez pushed northward to establish Santa Elena, which he made the capital of greater Florida. It was decimated during an Indian uprising in 1576 and abandoned in 1586 after Sir Francis Drake sacked St. Augustine, where the remaining 33 settlers were ordered.

Archaeologist Stanley South found the site of St. Elena at the Marine Corps golf course on Parris Island, and is continuing excavation. It was from there that Capt. Juan Pardo and 250 soldiers left to find an overland route to Mexico, to be recalled to defend St. Elena against an Indian attack after reaching eastern Tennessee.

Pardo's log was found recently by Historian Herbert Ketcham. With it and the known location of St. Elena, Historian Charles Hudson was able to relate Pardo's route with part of de Soto's trek through Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

The article fills in important details of the Menendez and de Soto explorations. Regretfully, the unsolved mysteries of the Florida adventures of Ponce de Leon, Panfilo Narvaez and Hernando de Soto are passed over rather perfunctorily. The extensive explorations and colonization efforts of Menendez on Florida's west coast are ignored. The disputed landings of Ponce at Charlotte Harbor and de Soto at Tampa Bay are repeated without question. However, Judge did warn "Soto's route, despite the best efforts of scholarship and presidential commission, has never been known with certainty."

Minor shortcomings notwithstanding, the article emphasizes the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach to early-contact studies.

BOARD SETS TWO ACTIVITIES

Excavation of a test pit and a look-see junket to Marco Island were set by the Board of Directors meeting at the Craighead lab July 6.

The test pit will be dug at the Vinyards site located near the junction of U.S. Highway 75 and Pine Ridge road; participants will meet at B&B Builders Supply, 3800 Tamiami Trail North, at 8 a.m. Sunday, August 14.

The area was explored by President John Beriault and Kate Muldoon and evidence was found of its having been a "corridor" site between the coastal and interior environments. It is expected to be shallow, not more than 40 cm. in depth.

The board also set Sunday, August 21, as the date for a tour of archaeological site on Marco Island.

THE WISHING WELL

The lab needs (call Art Lee at 261-4939):

A Water Pic, for squirting the dirt out of the crevices of shells (need not be new);

A Brisker, for removing moisture from soils samples we are saving, and bone;

A de-humidifier for cutting down the ambient humidity



SUNDAY
JULY 24

COME
ONE!

THE GREAT AMERICAN WASH-IN

THE TIME:
9:30 A.M. SUNDAY JULY 24

THE PLACE:
CRAIGHEAD LABORATORY ON COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM GROUNDS

THE REASON:
TO CLEAN MATERIALS FROM DIGS SO WE CAN GET ON WITH ANALYSIS
TO MEET AND GREET
TO HAVE SOME FUN

See the shells we dug! Clean the pottery we screened! Admire the bone
points we unearthed!

BRING YOUR LUNCH! FREE SOFT DRINKS!

EAT, WASH AND BE MERRY!

COME
ALL!

SUNDAY
JULY 24