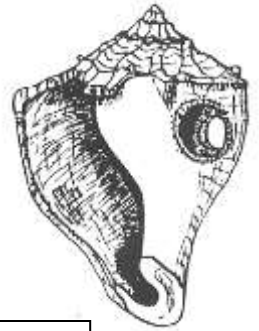


SWFAS

# NEWSLETTER

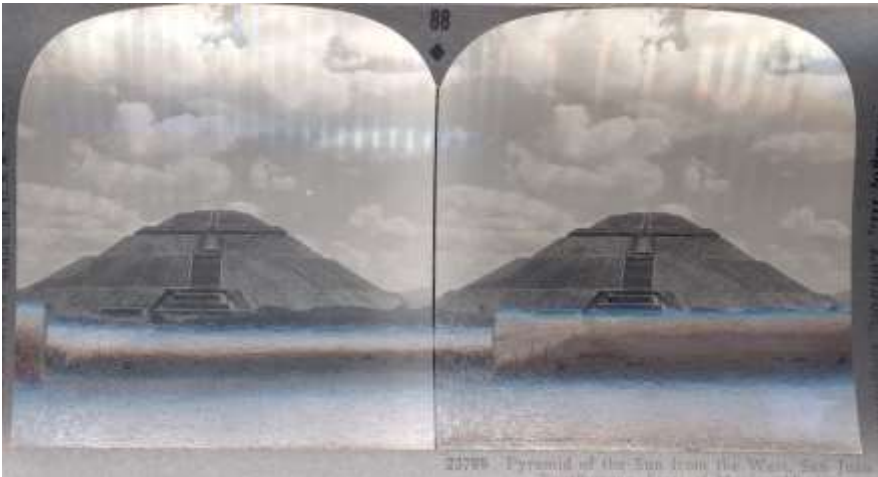
THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR

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**WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS, ANYMORE, TOTO: Thought I would vary things a little with this vintage Keystone stereo card from the early 1930's showing Teotihuacan right after restoration efforts. We need to be reminded that the prehistoric Florida Indian cultures were still in their "Formative" stage (as opposed to Classic, see above)!**

## ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER(S): ED MUELLER TELLS US ABOUT STEAMBOATIN' IN FLORIDA

We very much enjoyed the May 16<sup>th</sup> presentation of Ed Mueller, an expert on Florida steamboats provided us by the Florida Humanities Council. Mr. Mueller is an expert on steamboats, but not excruciatingly so, as his

excellent talk and slide presentation proved.

The Saint Johns, Ocklawaha, Suwanee and Caloosahatchee Rivers, Tampa Bay and other places had an amazing traffic in river boats that was generally ended when railways and good roads appeared by the 1920's.

One of the more fascinating things I personally learned was the presence into the 1960's of a few beached steamboats still surviving. The

Florida steamboats were created by shipyards and in "backyards" and owned by magnates like Henry B. Plant and individuals of lesser note.

There are several archaeological sites in Florida involving sunken riverboats. The Caloosahatchee River in our own area was a major river boat "highway" leading into Lake Okeechobee. This interesting period is something SWFAS needs to watch out for when we are working near a body of water that might have seen this activity. I hope we continue to seek speakers the like of Mr. Mueller whose fascinating fields of interest overlap with those archaeological concerns we routinely examine.

### *Inside this Newsletter*

**1 We are Moving! Florida Gulf Coast University will be the new site of our General Meetings**

**2 Splashdown – Part Five!**  
Read Dr. Robert  
Gore...

### THE DATE BOOK

**June 13th<sup>th</sup> SWFAS Board Meeting** – Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

**June 20th , 2001 General Meeting – HELD AT FGCU MAIN CAMPUS – TAKE EXITS 19 OR 20 EAST OF I-75**  
(see Map this issue)

### 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, Charlie Strader and Dr Michael McDonald.

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.

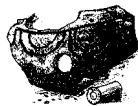
To Join: Address your check to the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 34101. Dues are: Individual \$20, Individual Sustaining \$50.00, Family \$35, Student \$15.

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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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. V.

Florida has been star-struck--not once but at least five separate times. Four of these fell in the Greater Lake Okeechobee Watershed, here defined as that historical area of the peninsula below an imaginary line extending from Cape Canaveral to Tampa Bay. The time of their arrival onto earth is not known, but the time of their individual

discovery, and the bizarre circumstances of their location or recovery, is. A one-pound stone was ploughed up 130

### PAGE TWO

miles north of Lake Okeechobee near the town of Eustis, itself about 30 miles northwest of Orlando. Two others, including a 92 pound specimen (the largest yet recovered), were unearthed near Bonita Springs. The latter was originally found in 1938 but was not recognized as being meteoritic until 1956. The fourth was hauled up by two catfishermen from Lake Okeechobee. The outlier was found near Grayton Beach, about 26 miles east of Fort Walton Beach, in the Florida Panhandle.

We will save our discussion of the Okeechobee meteorite for last. Meanwhile, let's look briefly at the two from Bonita Springs and the one from Grayton Beach. All three shared a common and most intriguing original repository--aboriginal burial mounds. This suggests at least three things. First, the prehistoric and archaic aboriginals must have been aware of the source of these falling stars, either from actually observing their descent and impact (especially if the descent was part of a meteoric swarm), or from coming upon them or their craters shortly thereafter. Second, observing and then finding such an object must have had spiritual significance, if not to say magical power. Third, even if

the meteorite was not seen to fall the aboriginals were apparently able to distinguish these stones as being something unusual or "out of place" among the everyday flints, cherts, and other

Florida is almost purely limestone in its surface layers, any "alien" rocks would presumably have been rather apparent in their compositional

differences to the practiced eye of the practiced flint hunter.

Even those pieces of meteorite not immediately noticeable among other stones, owing to the effects of, say, weathering, would probably eventually have been noticed. How many other meteorite



**composition can be seen A) in the numerous inclusions; B), a darkly speckled intrusionary layer; and C) what appears to be a fracture line running across the section. Photograph courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Scale line unavailable.**

**Bonita entary**

fragments, found by paleolithic or archaic flint hunters, still lie hidden in burial mounds?

indigenous rocks in their environment. Any of these situations could explain why the meteorites were interred. In sacred burial mounds, perhaps with the deceased finder, or possessor, or by the funereal shaman.

On the other hand, the most severe drawback to all of these proposals is that the original provenience can never be ascertained because the final resting site was not necessarily the location where the stones first fell. They might, for example, even have been trade objects or warpath souvenirs brought into Florida.

The two certainties offsetting these uncertainties are that: a) meteorites, whether stony, nickel-iron, or some conglomeration of each, are never made of biogenic limestone, At least none yet! And b) because

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Now let's turn to the Okeechobee meteorite. It was scientifically described first by Dr. George Merrill (USNM) in 1916.,I am also Indebted to Dr. Roy Clarke, Jr. and Ms Linda Schramm, both of the Department of Mineral Sciences, National Museum of Natural History (= USNM), Washington, DC, for the following information and photographs. As noted, the meteorite was hauled up In a catfish net before 1916. It was an unwitnessed fall, so the time of its arrival could range between 5,000 years BP (when Lake Okeechobee was still being formed) and anytime thereafter. Be- cause it fell into the Lake it (and any fragments?) was well- preserved. The meteorite was collected nearly due south of Ritta Island, about 3/4 mile off the eastern shore In the southeastern quadrant of the Lake that is now in Palm Beach County. However, actual locality data are confused. Owing to continued land development around the shoreline the recovery site may now apparently be dry land just southeast of the town of Lake Harbor!

The Okeechobee Meteorite is a fragment that apparently fractured off of a larger (and as yet undiscovered) parent body after it had entered the earth's atmosphere. Classified scientifically as an L-4 olivine-hypersthene chondrite,

it is clearly a stony meteorite (chondritic) composed of no more than about 7% of metals of various kinds intermixed in a predominant matrix of silicates (a type of quartz). Olivine is a composite group of heavy minerals high in Iron and magnesium. They usually appear dark-colored or greenish-black, hence the common name "olivine." Hypersthene is an Iron-magnesium silicate brownish-black in color. Both minerals are exceptionally interesting geologically and asteroidally.

continental landmass into the mantle, there to be remelted. Olivine is among the first minerals to be remade when the molten rock cools within the earth, and may, in fact, be the most abundant mineral in the earth's liquid mantle. Second, olivine is one of the most characteristic minerals found in meteorites. Even its gemstone, peridot, occurs In fallen stars and is therefore sometimes called a "celestial gem." Third, olivine can also

any case, olivine is definitely structural material for planets (earth), planetoids (asteroids/meteoroids), and ultimately meteorites.

Hypersthene, the other meteoritic mineral, belongs to a group called pyroxenes ("fire-strangers"). These commonly occur as Inclusions ("strangers") in rocks formed at high temperatures such as occur inside volcanoes, or under immense pressures deep within a planet. Taken together, the presence of olivine and hypersthene indicates that the Lake Okeechobee meteorite certainly had both volcanic fire and/or deep planetary compression In its background, and perhaps was additionally star-struck by other planetismals at some time during or after its formation before it finally fell to earth. Originally weighing about 1,100 grams, portions of the meteorite were sectioned off and sent to the Field Museum of Natural History In Chicago, and the Museum at Arizona State University in Tempe. The remnant object, now In the National Museum of Natural History, weighs 968 grams, or slightly less than two pounds.

Was the Okeechobee Meteorite the one seen by Father Mendoza Grajales from the deck of Pedro Menendez's galleon early on that August morning in 1565? There is no way of knowing. Although its

TABLE 3  
Meteorites of Florida

Location	Date of Find*	Type	Weight*	Depository
Grayton Beach Indian midden on beach	October 30, 1983	Chondrite Olivine- bronzite	11.3 kgs 25.7 lbs	NMNH, NMNV
Eustis Ploughed up	1918	Chondrite Olivine- bronzite	0.5 kg 1.1 lbs	NMNH
Lake Okeechobee Seined in catfish net 3/4 mile offshore	Before 1916	Chondrite Olivine- hypersthene	1.1 kgs 2.3 lbs	NMNH, FMNH U. Arizona
Bonita Springs Indian midden near Little Hickory Bay	Summer, 1938	Chondrite Olivine- bronzite	41.8 kg 95.1 lbs	NMNH, AMNH, FMNH, SAM, U. Arizona, Harvard U.
Bonita Springs 'Oak Knoll' near Imperial River	1990*	Fragment; Unconfirmed origin; may not be meteoric	Unknown	None

\* Data furnished by Department of Minerals, Smithsonian Institution, NMNH. Dates are date of discovery, not time of fall; weights are rounded off.

AMNH: American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY  
 FMNH: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL  
 NMNV: Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria  
 NMNH: National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC (=USNM)  
 SAM: South Australian Museum, Adelaide, MSW

U. Arizona: University of Arizona, Tempe, AZ  
 Harvard U.: Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

On earth olivine makes up a substantial portion of the sea-floor lithosphere as it descends (geologists say it "subducts") via seafloor spreading under a

be formed in, and as, sparks when two asteroidal fragments collide In space--which may be how the Okeechobee fragment was produced. In

general direction of travel as witnessed by the friar might have put it in the vicinity of the Lake, whether it fell into it can only be pointless conjecture. Well, then, is the Lake Okeechobee meteorite in any way related to the other meteorites known from Florida.

Again, the answer remains uncertain, but probably not. The Eustis, Grayton Beach, and the large Bonita Springs stone had similar compositions (olivine-bronzite) thus differing from that of the Lake Okeechobee stone. But there nonetheless remains two intriguing aspects about all of them.

The first is the relative proximity of their landing places to each other on the peninsula, viz. within a circle having a diameter of 380 miles. This suggests that they may all have been part of a meteoroid swarm, or parts of a larger object (perhaps even part of a comet) that broke up as it entered the earth's atmosphere. The fragments (and others?) may then have fallen throughout Florida and even onto the adjacent exposed or shallow-water continental limestone shelf of the peninsula at about the same time. But remember: Although meteorites can be fairly reliably

aged as to when they were born (using known rates of decay for radioactive minerals they may contain), the actual time of their demise on earth, unless actually witnessed, and their remains recovered, will be uncertain.



**Figure 7: Approximate present purported location of recovery of the Okeechobee Stone, based on latitude/longitude data of 26 degrees 41 minutes by 80 degrees 48 minutes (fide Smithsonian Institution), and plotted on U. S. Geological Survey, 30 X 60 minute quadrangle, West Palm Beach, Florida. Data courtesy of Dr. Roy Clarke, Jr. and Ms Linda Schramm, NMNH, Washington, DC.**

Finally, let's look briefly at Dr. George Merrill's scientific description of the "Okeechobee Stone." In a key sentence he wrote that the meteorite was: "Planly fragmental...its fragmental structure [is] its most pronounced feature."

Although phrased in the dry academic terminology of the specialist, these words provide three ponderable facts for philosophical contemplations on eternity, infinity, and the limits of our own human existence.

First, the Lake Okeechobee stone certainly came originally from somewhere in interplanetary space, i.e. within our own solar system. Second, the stone may range in age upwards of four billion years or so, or about the same age as our solar system. Third, the stone is an aggregate, a fusion if you will, of other stony particles. Was the Okeechobee Stone formed simultaneously at

the birth of the solar system? Again, we don't know--but it is a possibility. If so, the fragments came from still other pieces of existing interplanetary materials created in forever distant ages both before and beyond human ken.

The same silicate and iron particles in the meteorite may have been originally blown out from some unknown, unnamed, unlocated, exploded star--what astrophysicists call a supernova. Such stars, inherently unstable, still have

lifetimes numbering In multiple millions of years. In blowing themselves to bits, they scatter their internal and external fragments of heavy and light elements throughout the universe, like a many-spangled exploding party balloon. The stellar fragments might thus have already existed for untold millions of years before they began to be reassembled through the universal attraction of gravity. Eventually, after further amalgamation, or perhaps compression in some incompletely formed planetoid, they dispersed again--released by the collision, or gravitationally-induced breakup, of the parent planetismal.

All of this transpired eons before the stones ever entered the orbit of the newly assembled earth. Then, after the passage of another unknown period of time, the mystery and the wonder, and the origins, and the earth, all came together. There, and finally then, at some distant and unrecorded time in the stellar history of the third planet out from the sun, at least one small piece of the early universe, fully 25% as old as time itself, skipped into our atmosphere, caught fire, and fell hissing into Lake Okeechobee. Did someone at the village of Maya 'imi see it fall?

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## **CORBETT TORRENCE TO SPEAK JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>**

Corbett McP. Torrence will be the speaker at the June 20th meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society His topic will be "The Matriarchal Calusa – The Matrilineal Calusa? The Filipe Side of the Story.

>  
> Abstract: Over the years, researchers of Calusa social organization have referred to the Calusa as having a patrilineal inheritance and descent system. In conjunction with their status as a non-agricultural chiefdom, once again, this view of inheritance places the Calusa in an anomalous position, as all other tribes in the southeastern United States and along the eastern seaboard appear to have had a matrilineal descent system. This presentation provides a critical examination of the evidence and concludes that the Calusa practiced a matrilineal inheritance system, combined with an avunculocal residence pattern.

The group will meet at Florida Gulf Coast University in Building Academic III, Room 116 at 7:30P.M.

Torrence is field archaeologist of the Randell

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Research Institute at Pineland. He has had many years of experience in the archaeology of the northeastern United States, was director of the exploration of Mound Key, the ancient Calusa Capital, including surveying, assistant field director of explorations of Useppa Island and the mound complex at Pineland on Pine Island.

Avocational and professional archaeologists as well as those interested in history are welcome to attend. For further information call 941-597-2269.

Dorothy L. Thompson 576 Retreat Drive Apt. 202 Naples, FL. 34110

### **ITEMS OF NOTE: By Betsy Perdichizzi**

Jeanie Parks, Koreshan Unity Alliance, was named Honorary Member at the May 9 Board Meeting. We hope to work together for a great Archaeology Month observance in 2002. Welcome Mrs. Parks.

- A comprehensive organization plan for Archaeology Day (or special festival) was approved by the Board of Directors. It will be implemented in September.

- Garage Sale or Rummage Sale being planned for the fall, possibly at Bonita Springs Community Center.

When you do your summer house cleaning, think SWFAS Rummage Sale, save those items instead of discarding. "Some peoples trash is other peoples Treasure!" Some members have undergone moves recently and have items that need to be placed temporarily. If you have a storage closet, garage space available, or attic space, to house some of the items temporarily, please let us know. Call Betsy 941-394-6917.

- Summer Addresses Needed. If you go away for the summer and would like to have your SWFAS Newsletter please give us your summer address. Call Charlie Strader, Membership Secretary, phone 941-992-6143 or email [CESXplor@aol.com](mailto:CESXplor@aol.com).

- Speaker for June is Corbett Torrence, site manager of the Randall Research Center. (See Dorothy Thompson for bio)

### SO WHERE IS IT, ALREADY?

I've been asked to run again the map and directions where to find our "new" meeting site on the FGCU campus. Take I-75 north (or south) till you come to Exits 19 (or if you're coming from the north) Exit 20. Go east just a few short blocks to Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. Take the Parkway to the FGCU Campus Entrance. Go east about 2 blocks to the cross-street. Turn left (north) and go to the third parking lot (P4 on the map). Follow the elevated

boardway/walkway south to where it ends at Building AB3. Go through the front door into the lobby, turn right and the classroom 116 is about the second on your right. Look for some of the other members. Sounds tiresome, but finding us is easy, trust me!

