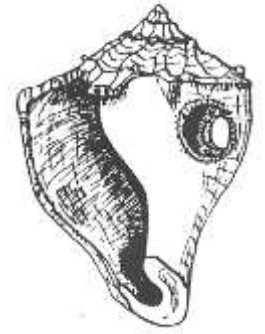


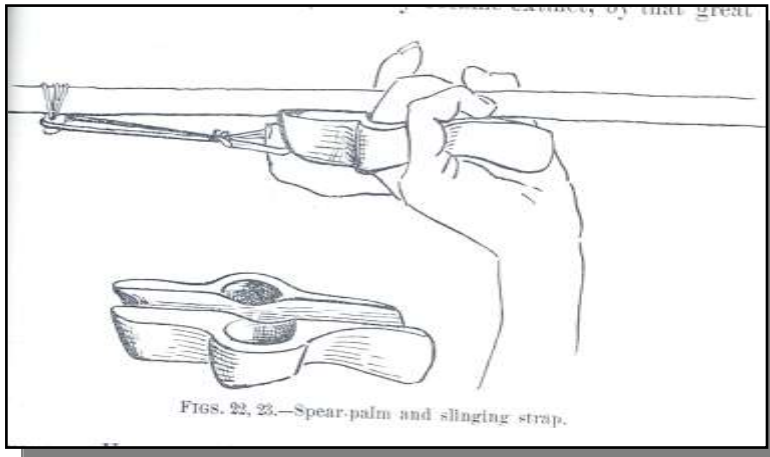
SWFAS

NEWSLETTER

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR VOLUME 18, NUMBER 11 NOVEMBER, 2002



The Arrow... Don't know how many of you are aware, but Frank Hamilton Cushing, discoverer of the Key Marco material, did several fine monographs in the course of his career. One was on the Arrow, with a lot of information about the atlatl. Above is one illustration from that work, published in 1896... seems like this technique would be rough on the old middle finger to me...

Laura Howard Talks About the Lamanai Project

SWFAS has heard and seen an excellent and detailed presentation by Laura Howard, an archaeologist and education director for a project at the site of Lamanai in northern Belize. Ms. Howard was one of the most "prepared" speakers we've had recently and brought some beautiful display materials,

including replica pieces of Mayan ceramic objects and craft items from Belizian Mayan artisans to her talk. Lamanai (which means "submerged crocodile") is one of the sites of longest continual occupation in the Maya area, with a chronology extending over 3000 years from roughly 1500 BC to 1700 AD. The site even has the remains of a unique mechanized sugar cane mill from the 1870s and

two Spanish colonial churches. Ms. Howard is endeavoring to encourage interested people in contacting her for travel to the site. Included will be tours of Tikal in neighboring Guatemala, seminars, visits to Altun Ha, Caracol, and other sites in Belize, and a chance to view some of the many things happening now at Lamanai, including studies being done on the tropical vegetation, animal, and bird communities. People who wish to contact Ms. Howard should contact Jack Thompson at 597-2269.

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 One...**
- 6 Paddling Our Own Canoe...Bud House to Speak...**

THE DATE BOOK

November 13th SWFAS Board Meeting – Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

November 20th SWFAS General Meeting 7:30 PM
Room 149, Reed Hall, Florida Gulf Coast University

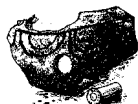
About SWFAS

The directorate: President Betsy Perdichizzi, first vice president Tom Franchino, second vice president Corbett Torrence, membership secretary Charlie Strader, treasurer Charlie Strader, recording secretary Jo Ann Grey, directors Steve Tutko, Sue Long, Dottie Thompson, Jo Ann Grey, Don Taggart, Jack Thompson, John Beriault, Charlie Strader, Theresa (Torrence) Schober, and Dr Susan Stans.

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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.



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

THE ORTONA ENIGMAS: CANOES, CANALS, COMMERCE, AND CONVEYANCE: I. "A WORK . . . TOO CONSIDERABLE"

This series of columns was initiated by the receipt of two newspaper articles, one from my brother Paul Gore, and the second from fellow SWFAS member Jody Brinton in Gulfport, 'FL. Both articles dealt with the recent re-examination of aboriginal canals around the Ortona Locks area west of Lake Okeechobee by Robert Carr, a name well-known to SWFAS members. Not wanting to be thought a Johnny-come-lately, the information which follows was actually compiled beginning in the mid- to late 1990s, and forms two chapters in my manuscript for a book dealing with Lake Okeechobee and its environs. Most of the recent data therein are based on

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studies by Drs. Ryan Wheeler (1995) and Robert S. Carr et al., (2002), which can be found in The Florida Anthropologist 48(4) and 55(1) respectively. Those who have not seen the two newspaper articles may refer to either the South Florida Sun Sentinel, 7 June, 2002, (the home town paper for Mr. Bob Carr, Executive Director of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy in nearby Davie, FL), or the New York Times (July 23, 2002). The latter gives a much better synopsis of the excavations. In this series of articles we will embark on a more detailed examination of some of the suppositions and conclusions, and offer some speculations of our own. But first . . . some background.

In 1839 Brigadier General Zachary Taylor published a "Map of the Seat of War in Florida." Drawn by Capt. John McKay and Lt. J. E. Blake, it depicted the known Indian trails and military expeditionary routes within the Lake Okeechobee area. On this map, between Fort Center on Fisheating Creek, and (then) Fort Thompson on the upper Caloosahatchee River, a set of small parallel lines had the legend "Old Canal." This was the first published cartographic reference to what 150 years later was called one of the most advanced engineering projects ever completed by aboriginals in the watershed. A manuscript map, presumably dating to before 1839, and used as a basis for the "Seat

of War" map, also has the words "old canal" just above Lake (Fort

during the Second Seminole Indian War.

PAGE THREE
Persifor Smith's military column

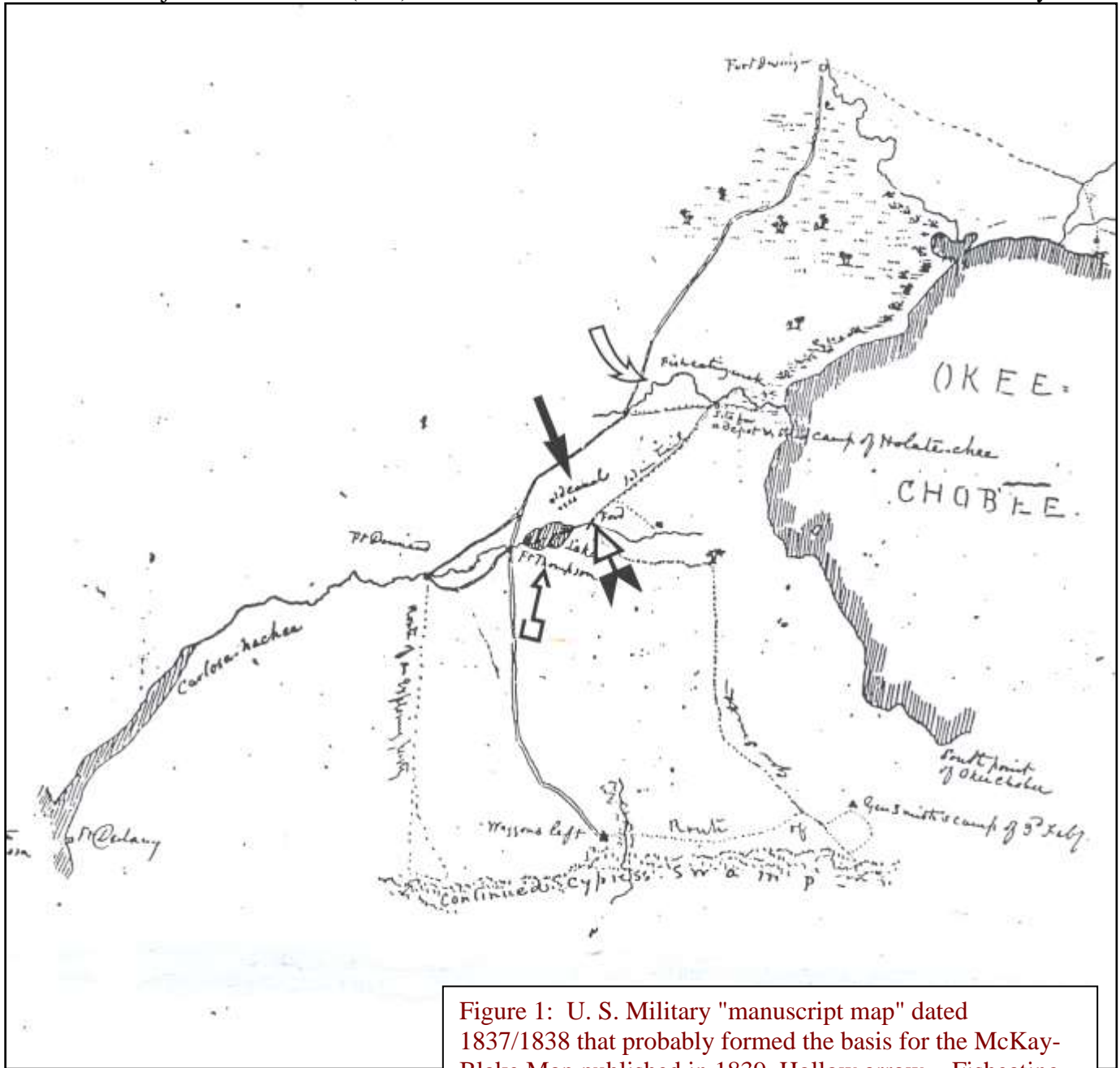
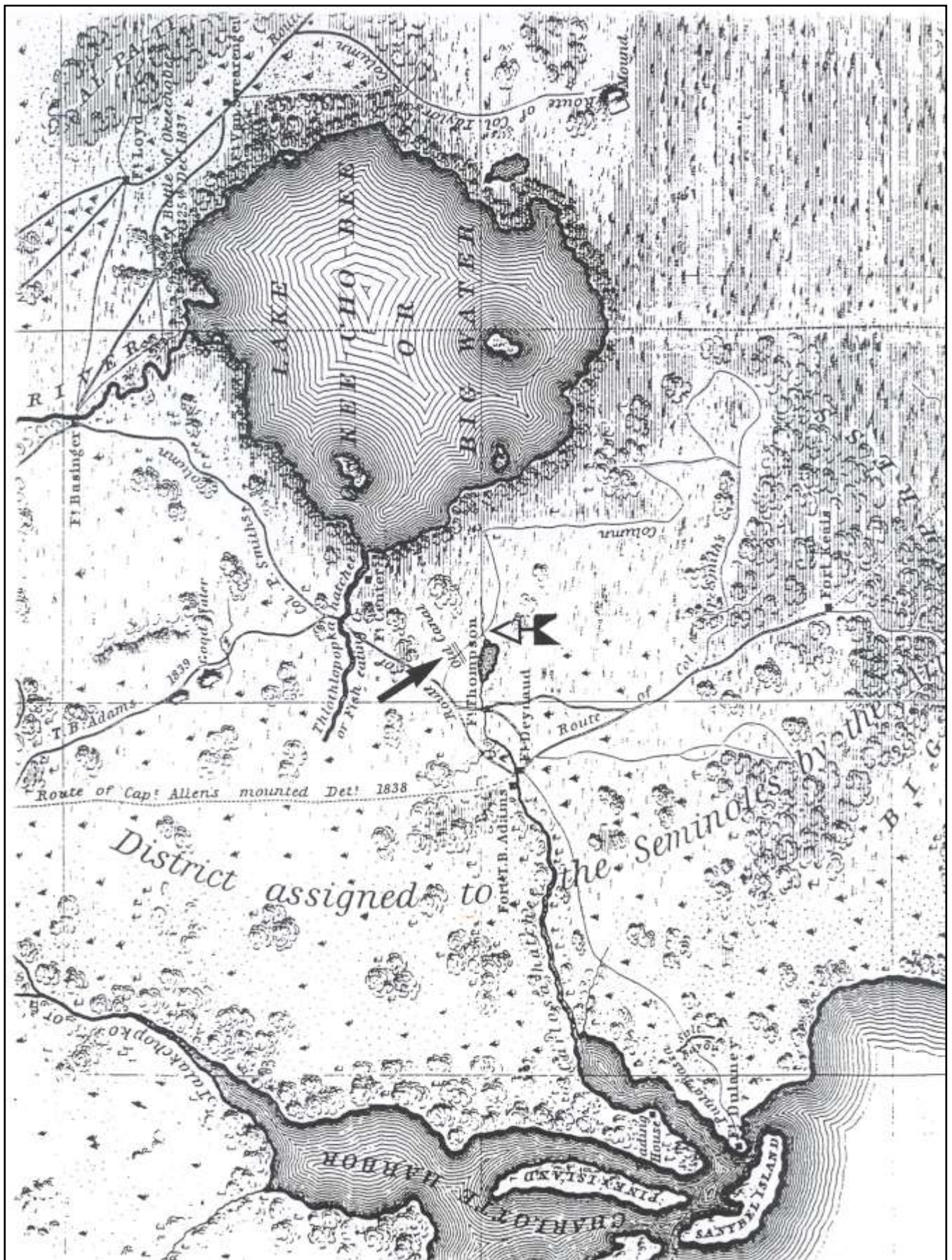


Figure 1: U. S. Military "manuscript map" dated 1837/1838 that probably formed the basis for the McKay-Blake Map published in 1839. Hollow arrow = Fishing Creek; Solid arrow = "Old Canal"; Flagged arrow = Ford, the narrow part of the "Carlosahachee" River lying almost directly below the "Old Canal"; Boxed arrow = Lake "Fort Thompson" (AKA Lake Flirt). Note that Lake Hicpochee is not illustrated.

Thompson. Three years later Lake Thompson was renamed "Lake Flirt" by Navy Lt. John T. McLaughlin, honoring his command vessel, the USS Flirt on which he had carried out earlier forays in the Cape Sable region

The "canal" near Lake Okeechobee had apparently been crossed by Militia Col.

when he reconnoitered the region during the early part of the 2nd Seminole War. A third map,



published by the Bureau of Topographical Engineers in 1846, also shows the words "Old Canal" diagonally above Lake Flirt, but exhibits some changes in previously existing topographic features (e.g. Lake Okeechobee), as well as illustrating some new ones (e.g. Lake Hiakpochee.)

In his 1848 report to Congress on the feasibility of draining the Everglades, the noted Washington lawyer and

explorer Buckingham Smith wrote:

"During the late war with the Seminoles a canal was found on the north-eastern border of Lake Flirt leading to the prairie of Lake Hicpochee and in the direction of Lake Okeechobee, a work it is supposed, too considerable to have been undertaken by the [Seminoles] Indians of Florida."

This canal, today located just east of the present town of Ortona, was apparently 20-30 feet wide and about two miles long, and may well have been the one alluded to some years later by a Dr. Kenworthy while he was at the source of the Caloosahatchee. First estimates had the canal presumably being built sometime between 2,000 and 500 years ago as part of a complex of waterways of conveyance in the region. In any case, Smith rightly dismissed, just as Kenworthy would do 25 years later, the canal-digging abilities of the Seminole Indians

who, at best, were primarily displaced woodland agriculturists and hunters who supplanted the original aborigines. Nor did they have the complex hierarchical chieftainships seen in the

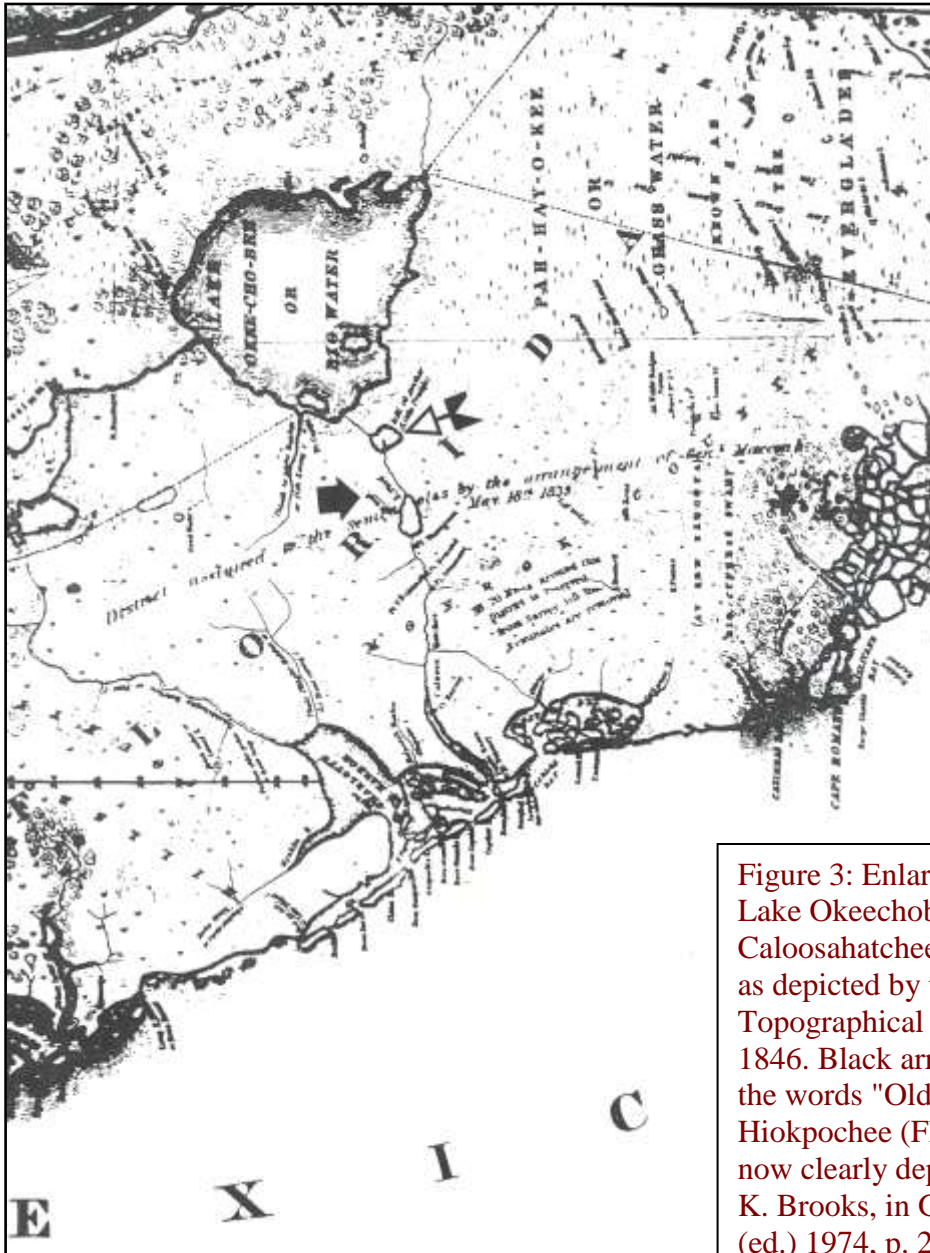


Figure 3: Enlarged map of the Lake Okeechobee-Caloosahatchee River region as depicted by the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, 1846. Black arrow indicates the words "Old Canal." Lake Hiakpochee (Flagged arrow) is now clearly depicted. From H. K. Brooks, in Gleason, P. J., (ed.) 1974, p. 271. [Note that the legends for Figures 3 and 4 in Brooks' paper were transposed].

Calusa and other southern peninsular aboriginal tribes, nor even the aptitude to build canals.

The canal Buckingham Smith described escaped the attention of Florida State Surveyor General John Wescott, who did not show it on his 1853 Plat Map; nor for that matter did it appear on the Ives and Humphreys Military Map of 1856. As it would turn out, the waterway was not examined in detail until nearly two decades later when the complex appeared on a U. S. Government Survey Plat Map by J. D. Tannehill, dated 1871, and on another from the U. S. Engineer Office (a derivative of the old U. S. Army Topographical Engineers, and a precursor of the future U. S. Army Corps of Engineers), dated 1879. Both plat maps showed the meander line of the Caloosahatchee River and the relationship of the canals to that stream. The canals were becoming at least notable if not very widely known.

Civilians got into the act when a brief mention of the canal and associated mound appeared in a sportsmen's journal in 1875. Then, in 1883, the second New Orleans Times-Democrat Expedition, mounted to explore the purportedly "unknown" Everglades, visited a well-known mound site near Coffee Mill Hammock. This mound, on the Caloosahatchee River near the future town of Ortona, had two "canals" associated with it. They roughly formed the lateral sides of a triangle whose base was formed by the nearby Caloosahatchee River. Archie Williams, a bombastic newspaper correspondent for the Times-Democrat, the newspaper

sponsoring the exploring party, made some erroneous speculations while on site:

"Why [the canals] were dug, or for what purpose, I shall leave to some one in the far future, better versed in Indian or ancient lore than I am. Two things are plain: first, that they were never dug for drainage, for they rise or begin in the high land and go toward the river, and the lands through which they pass really need no drainage; and, secondly, they, except at a time when the river is flooded, could not be used as a means of transportation, as they are perfectly dry, except at the time of some extraordinary flood. . ."

Williams, of course, was 1) writing some two thousand years after the probable factors that caused the canals first to be built; and 2) long after a previous short-term sea-level rise that occurred between 500-800 AD; and which 3) may have not only flooded the nearby coastal lands but concomitantly raised the river levels flowing outward from the peninsular interior. Thus, Williams "high land" that "really needed] no drainage" in 1883 may well have been periodically inundated two millennia earlier by freshwater outflow from much of the Greater Lake Okeechobee watershed.

More importantly, in regards to the canals' potential use and preservation, Hamilton Disston's dredges had already been hard at work in the region for two years prior, consistently lowering watertables before the Times-Democrat Expedition came on site. Williams thus arrived well after the area had once been flooded and had subsequently become dry. We shall return to Williams' hypothesis in a moment.

Meanwhile, the following year an account in the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution provided additional details on the canals. And, as the region underwent further development and settlement increased, civil engineers continued to notice the canals on their plats. Archaeological interest, however, was very tardy in getting underway, and (except for some perfunctory investigations) detailed examinations of the mound-canals complex did not really begin until the 1930s. Thereafter they continued intermittently through the war years until the 1950s. The most recent investigations began in 1992.

Let us return briefly to Archie Williams' hypothesis. If accepted uncritically then the Coffee Mill Hammock locality, the perceived non-necessity for drainage, and the periodic dry-downs in the region, might suggest that some of the "canals" were parallel raised berms or ramps that were part of what has been called the

Ortona Earthworks Complex. This consisted of at least 16 apparently associated mounds, lineaments, drainage ditches and canals, presumably constructed by some Okeechobean aboriginals, beginning perhaps as early as 3,800 years BP. The largest earth-works were made of parallel linear sand ridges that connected to a platform-mound sand structure along present-day Linden Pens Creek, which itself drained Linden Pens Marsh into Lake Flirt.

These earthworks were prominent enough that Conrad Menge, engineer on Hamilton Disston's Dredge No. 1, also rediscovered some of them in 1883. Disston's chief engineer, Col. James M. Kreamer, published in 1885 a map "Showing Completed Canal from Lake Okeechobee West" In his report to The Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company. Kreamer's "completed canal" was the one he had ordered dredged through what was then a long limestone shelf that formed a sort of shelved waterfall at its southeastern end. The rocky debris then became part of the Caloosahatchee River rapids until they, themselves, were later dynamited. However, on Kreamer's map, and adjacent and upland to these features, the Ortona Canals, labeled "Ancient Canals," were clearly poised like engineering dividers above Coffee Mill Hammock on the now "improved" Caloosahatchee River Channel.

But remember that Lake Okeechobee 4,000 years ago was smaller than present, and the

Everglades itself was only about 1,000 years old, so that environmental conditions were still substantially different than today, or even a century ago. Consequently, the purpose of the aboriginal canals must be viewed in the light of ecological and hydrological events that had begun to occur at least four millennia earlier. Even if the canals are dated to no earlier than 1,700 years ago, (based on radio-carbon dating), conditions then might still have been different than today. For example, sea levels at that time were dropping so interior waterways might be more isolated, or more distinct, owing to the decrease in overland flooding. This being so, we may ask: Were the "canals" actually meant to function more as intermittently flooded wharves? Or were they dugout canoe launching and retrieval ramps? Or, were they indeed points of origin for the more extensive aboriginal "canoe trails" left over from a land now becoming less inundated? Was the orientation of the berms meant as directional signposts in an otherwise water-flooded or stream-scattered landscape. Or were they, perhaps, all of these? We'll examine some of these questions next time.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bud House, a member of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society and former President, will discuss "The Pineland Canal" at the November 20th meeting. The Archaeology group will meet at Florida Gulf Coast University in Reed Hall, Room 149 at 7:30 P.M.

The subject of his talk will be the Pine Island Aboriginal Canal that traveled from the Pineland Archaeological Site, across Pine Island for about 2 1/2 miles and then crossed Indian Field Island. The canal was first discussed by Frank Hamilton Cushing who visited Pineland in 1895 and 1896. Aerial photographs will be shown, further delineating the canal's path and features.

Avocational and professional archaeologists as well as those interested in history are welcome to attend. For further information call 239-597-2269