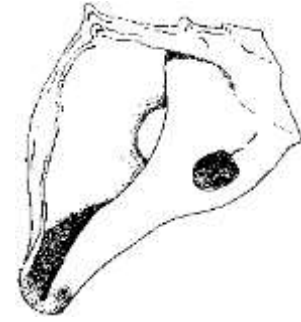


Southwest Florida Archaeological Society Newsletter



BETSY MCCARTHY, EDITOR

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SEPTEMBER SWFAS MEETING

The next meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeology Society will be on September 21st at 7:30 pm at the Bonita Springs Community Center. The Center is located at Old 41 and Reynolds Street. Guests are welcome.

Our speaker will be Archaeologist Steve Koski. His topic will be *Recent Discoveries and Preservation Initiatives at Little Salt Spring, North Port, Florida.*



Steve will discuss current underwater research, preservation initiatives, and exciting discoveries at Little Salt Spring, where he has assisted with research since 1992. This past June, students from the University of

Miami/Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science spent two weeks diving at the spring with director of research Dr. John Gifford. Research focused on a 2x2 meter excavation unit located 20-feet underwater, where late Paleo-Indian artifacts have been recovered and along the slope of the basin, where preserved wooden stakes have been identified.

This year, a project was initiated to locate and map the distribution of wooden stakes on the slope of the basin in an attempt to determine their age and function. During the investigation, several significant artifacts were identified related to the Middle Archaic occupation. Two of the artifacts are made from exotic material not found in Florida, demonstrating long distance trade as early as 6,000 years before present.

On the preservation front, Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society and Time Sifters Archaeological Society have been working to preserve five acres of land adjacent to Little Salt Spring, which contains a Middle Archaic habitation site and wetland cemetery. An update on this preservation initiative will be given.

Steve Koski has worked in Florida for 20 years. He has participated on or directed archaeological projects throughout the state. His main interests involve prehistoric coastal adaptations and settlement systems through time. He received his B.A. in anthropology from the University of Massachusetts, Boston and conducted his graduate studies in an M.A. program at Arizona State University. He is currently the resident archaeologist at Little Salt Spring.



When not diving, Koski is a project archaeologist for New South Associates of Stone Mountain, Georgia, where he conducts cultural resources assessment surveys throughout Florida for their contract with the Army Corps of Engineers. He looks for archaeological sites and evaluates the significance of sites on lands that may be impacted by the Corps work (such as dredging the Intracoastal waterway and restoring the Everglades), so that significant sites can be protected.

5.000 YEAR-OLD REMAINS FOUND

Archaeology students from the University of Central Lancashire, in Preston, found the remains of seven humans in the mouth of a cave near Wenvoe in southern Wales. Pottery and flint blades found with them date the remains to about 3,000 BC.



Dr. Rick Peterson, the course leader said "We went there hoping to find undisturbed evidence for whatever ritual took place 5000 years ago that led to peoples' bones being put in caves and we seem to have found it.

"At the moment our understanding of these rituals is that first the large pit was dug, probably to make the small cave mouth look much bigger and more impressive.

"Then the dead were placed in the pit with some of their possessions such as pottery and stone tools.

"Once the bodies had become skeletons it seems that most of the bones were then moved to other ritual sites.

WEBSITE REMINDER

Don't forget that the SWFAS newsletter can be found in conjunction with Charlie Strader's web site at <http://www.ExplorationsInc.com/swfl-archaeology/index.html>

GEOLOGY RULES

by Jack Harvey

This Month – Living Stones

Last time we looked at the famous Clovis point, central to some debates about how humans first arrived in North America. Although the widely used Clovis point is clearly of North American origin, some authorities suggest that precursors of this kind of tool were developed by cultures native to areas of France.

While this archaeological dispute is being resolved, it looks like South Florida is not involved. At the Craighead Laboratory we don't even have a tool code for Clovis points because we never see them in the material we analyze. While I am sure that occasionally a snowbird from up north five or ten thousand years ago brought a Clovis point down with her, it has never turned up in the Laboratory. These rarities were probably considered gifts suitable for royalty and may have ended up as grave goods, further distancing them from our eyes.

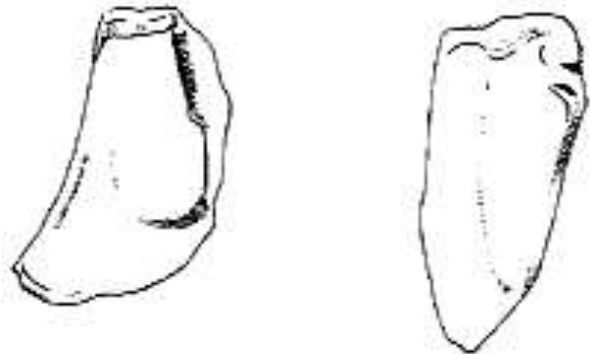
Clovis points and many related tool types are made of extremely hard stone that can be shaped by flaking off chips. The stone used doesn't shatter. Skillful flaking can produce a durable razor-sharp cutting edge on chert (flint).

Geologists find that the very hard stone needed to make Clovis points tends to be made by processes involving great heat or pressure deep in the earth. The main kinds are granites and basalts and typically have volcanic or deep magma flow origins. Others may originate as sediments but then are morphed into

far harder materials. Chert is one of these. Sometimes great pressure substitutes for great heat. And the processes often take hundreds of millions of years. So these kinds of rock usually (but not always) originate deep within the planet.

Soft rock such as limestone and sandstone tends to be made by mild surface processes such as precipitation, evaporation, sedimentation and cementation. Great heat or pressure isn't usually required to create them but these materials won't take a sharp edge and can't stand up to severe stresses.

And when man first came to South Florida perhaps ten thousand years ago, he found nothing with which to make the Clovis point and similar tools that were a mainstay of North American culture. Limestone was plentiful but it wouldn't hold a cutting edge and if he tried to use it for a hammer, it quickly crumbled. However, shellfish had solved the problem a few hundred million years earlier.



Shell Knife-Scrapers Tools

Shellfish use the same chemical (calcium carbonate) that constitutes limestone to make their shells or exoskeletons. We vertebrates also use

calcium carbonate to make bone and teeth.

So calcium carbonate has become an important material in physiology. Evolving biology has put the simple chemical together in ways that result in a very durable material. It's not just soft limestone when it appears in our teeth or the protective armor of shellfish. It has been reinforced by biological tissue inclusions that greatly increase its strength and durability. Animals make living stone.

You know the rest. Early man in South Florida learned to make good tools from the living stone shells of clams, conches and whelks. And that's *almost* the answer to why we don't have a Clovis point in the Craighead Laboratory tool code table.

But the real mystery is why there is no hard stone in South Florida. It is not simply rare; it just doesn't exist. Zero, zip, nada.

Is hard stone a northern phenomenon that fails to survive in the tropics?

No. Just ninety miles farther into the tropics, Cuba has plenty of hard stone. So do Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and just about all the islands of the Caribbean. These islands have had volcanoes in the distant past (some still do) and volcanoes make hard stone. But South Florida, so close, never had volcanoes. Not ever.

Why was South Florida cheated out of its rightful share of volcanoes?



The Grand Lost Sunniland Mountains?

To address that puzzler, we will look at plate tectonics next time.

ABOUT SWFAS

The Directorate:

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Recording Secretary – Jo Ann Grey

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To Join: Address your check to:

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society,

PO Box 9965,

Naples FL 34101.

Dues are:

Individual - \$20. Sustaining - \$50.

Family - \$35. Student - \$15.

QUESTIONS, comments or contributions to the newsletter: Betsy McCarthy, 909-8 Augusta Blvd., Naples, FL, 34113, or e-mail:

popismom@hotmail.com

or groucho@naples.net

Board meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM, Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs
All welcome