

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER -

Travis F. Doering, Editor

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April, 1986

- THE APRIL MONTHLY MEETING of the SWFAS will be held at the First Federal Savings and Loan of Ft. Myers, (Community Room), 3201 Tamiami Tr. North, Naples, Florida at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 17, 1986.

- Two areas will be covered at this meeting. Slides, actual artifacts and the latest findings from the Strader Site Investigation (ID#8LL709) will be presented along with a session on note-taking by John Beriault. Proper procedures and hints about how to take reliable and informative notes for archeological work and other areas of interest will be covered.

- Be sure to bring a friend and see our work on a stratified archeological excavation on the shores of the Imperial River under the huge and noble oaks that was once an area enjoyed by the Calusa Indians and others from 400 to 1400 A.D.

- ANALYSIS SESSION - Sunday, April 6th at 10:00 a.m. at John Beriault's home, 3550 Bolero Way, Naples, FL. Your chance to examine and categorize artifacts from past digs. (Call J. Beriault, 261-0295)

- SITE FORM MEETING - Tuesday, April 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the Strader residence (992-6133). Completion of site forms and discuss future SWFAS activities.

- SORTING SESSION - Tuesday, April 15th at 5:30 p.m. at B & B Builders, 3800 No. Tamiami Tr., Naples, FL. Your chance to help sort and classify materials from past digs.

- FAS ANNUAL MEETING - April 11 & 12 will be held in conjunction with the Florida Academy of Sciences. The meetings will take place in the Reitz Union Building on Museum Rd. on the Univ. of Florida campus in Gainesville. Registration fees for FAS members is \$10; non-members is \$12. This year a banquet (\$12) will be held on Friday night April 11th at 7:00 p.m. On Saturday, SWFAS President John Beriault will be giving a paper entitled "Preliminary Analysis of Certain Shell Tools and Materials from Addison Key".

- CLAY FORMING PARTY - aka The Great Glades Grittyware Party II will be held on Sunday, April 27th at the Strader residence on Edgewater Dr. in Bonita Springs, FL. Come out to this SW Florida paradise to mold and form clay in the age-old manner of the area's prehistoric inhabitants. A fee of \$7.00 will cover all your expenses for the clay, etc. All you will need to bring is a lawn chair and your own refreshments. Last year this was a great get-together, so bring the whole family. More details at the April meeting or call Charlie Strader (992-6133), for reservations.

- MARCH MONTHLY MEETING - Many thanks go to Jose Munoz for his talk and slide presentation on the Archaeology of Puerto Rico. Mr. Munoz gave us an informative session that showed more of the culture that developed in the Caribbean before Spanish contact. Thanks for an excellent talk.

- WELCOME NEW MEMBERS - Linda Robinson, Willard Schade, Arnold and Bev Glazier.

- APALACHEE INDIAN SITE FOUND - Archeologists excavating near an exclusive residential area found that the ridgetop has been a prime building spot for hundreds of years.

- They found the remnants of a large, round structure that served as the 17th century council house for the Apalachee, the mysterious 10,000-member tribe which vanished in the early 18th century.

- The recent discovery at the San Luis Archeological and Historical Site, located on a ridgetop overlooking Tallahassee, also includes artifacts such as beads and arrowheads. But the exciting aspect of the find is the building outlines. The archeological site is located on 50 acres in a residential area inside the city limits. In 1983, the state bought the property from the family of James Messer and excavation began shortly afterward.

- It was common knowledge that an Indian village and a fort had existed on San Luis Ridge at one point, but no one knew the extent of the village remains, said Marsha Chance, program director at the site.

- From 1656 to 1704, the village and Spanish mission served as a sort of "capital city" for the tribe, which lived in many tiny villages in a 50-mile stretch.

- NEW EGYPTIAN TOMB UNCOVERED - Excavating an ancient general's tomb, two members of a British-Dutch expedition stumbled onto the 3,300 year old tomb of Maya, an official under Pharaoh Tutankhamen, in Cairo, Egypt.

- A controversy quickly developed over the importance of the find after the British Broadcasting Corp., in reporting it, said it was "the most important discovery since Tutankhamen's tomb was opened in 1922". But two Egyptian experts said the find was routine and of no great significance.

- Archeologist Geoffrey Martin, field director of the Anglo-Dutch Egyptian Exploration Society, said he and Dutch colleague Jacobus van Dijk found the tomb while working in the adjacent tomb of the general Ramose at Sakkara, 37½ miles south of Cairo and the site of Egypt's ancient capital.

- Martin said reliefs and inscriptions in the tiny anteroom they saw are in excellent condition, but the tomb itself remains buried under thousands of years of debris. He told The Associated Press they squeezed through a hole in the tomb's wall that grave robbers knocked out "in remote antiquity" and found the anteroom, about 6½ feet square.

- "The rest of the chambers are choked with debris. We have not even thought of excavating the tomb itself or the burial chamber. It may be two or three years before the monument is revealed."

- Martin indicated it is much too early to compare the tomb with Tutankhamen's. "King Tut" was a minor pharaoh of ancient Egypt's 18th Dynasty whose significance is due to his tomb's undisturbed state when English archeologist Howard Carter opened it. "Tutankhamen is a magical word, and people run amok," said Martin. "Instantly people say a discovery is the most marvelous since Tutankhamen. "But from a scientific point of view, I find this one very interesting." He said the antechamber leading to the burial chamber was filled with brightly painted inscriptions showing "Maya and his wife adoring the gods." The colors have retained their vibrancy over the millenia.

- A 14TH CENTURY "MADISON AVE." DISCOVERED - Competition was stiff in the arts and crafts business in 14th century China, based on two 680-year-old advertising leaflets discovered in a Chinese tomb in the southern province of Hunan.

- The official news agency Xinhua reported that archeologists uncovered identical ads, printed on two sheets of handkerchief-sized paper, in a dressing box in a tomb dated to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The tomb

was excavated last August. "A variety of paints and paint brushes are available," read the ad for a materials store. "Come try our goods. You can find our store by the eye-catching sign with red characters hanging above our door." Archeologists found the bodies of a couple in the tomb, including a man who lived between 1228 and 1305, according to Xinhua.

- Silk and linen clothes as well as gold, silver, bronze and lacquer ware were also part of the tomb trove, the news agency said.

- SPECIAL SERIES - The following is the first installment of a series that will describe the formations, uses, and remains of the Indian shell mounds found in S.W. Florida.

***Give 'Em Shell: Comments on Shell Mounds (Part I) ***

By John G. Beriault

- Shell mounds created by prehistoric peoples are a world-wide occurrence. They can be found from Scandinavia to South Africa and from the South Pacific to the lower coasts of South America.

- Shell mounds are not strictly a marine-coastal phenomena. Sites with a heavy deposition of fresh water univalve ("snail") and bivalve ("clam") shells can be found along several freshwater river systems, such as the Tennessee and St. Johns Rivers in the United States, and along the shorelines of large shallow lakes. Shell mounds can occur wherever there was a sufficient quantity of mollusks to exploit and sufficient human ingenuity to do the exploiting.

- In certain freshwater contexts, such as along the St. Johns River, many small gastropod snails were efficiently collected (perhaps by straining or sieving them), boiled in toto in large cooking vessels and the resultant "broth" poured off and consumed.

- In our own area, the southwest Florida coast, it is more likely the Indians concentrated on the larger marine shells. The small intact gastropods found here are more likely to have been "fellow travellers", riding in on the larger shells collected by Indian gatherers along the coast and in the back bays. The smaller shells are none the less important to us (if not to the Indians) because they provide valuable clues by their presence (or absence) as to the specific environments the Indians were exploiting.

- Coastal southwest Florida shell mounds can vary in size from small thin deposits of a few cubic meters size to sites of nearly 40 hectares (100 acres) containing shell mounds approaching 35 feet high. The shells and other deposits in these sites are hardly uniform either by size or composition. Very simply expressed, they are combinations of marine shell, "Black" midden "dirt", ash layers and lenses, and sand or marine marls.

- Shell is found in some proportion or percentage throughout these coastal sites. Sand may make up much of the deposit or be nearly absent. Black midden soil and ash deposits often occur as strata or in discrete areas of the sites as a "mantle" or "cap" over culturally "sterile" shell substrates. This last phenomena probably indicates habitation or domiciliary areas. Conversely, areas of "pure" shell containing little or no cultural material may represent "dumps" away from immediate house site/village areas on the shell mound.

- The shell "dumping" areas may accrete at a relatively rapid rate as anyone who shucks their own oysters can attest. The accumulation may have been as rapid as one meter per 50-100 years. Conversely, midden soil accrues at a much slower rate, perhaps as little as one meter per 500-1000 years, or 1/10th as fast as the shell.

- Not all shell on large coastal sites may be still in its initial deposition. There is some evidence to suggest intentional rearrangement of some of this material by Indians to create the distinctive structures or shapes we moderns call "playas", "ramps", "canals", "terraces", "temple

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mounds", etc. Whether these names and all their connotations are totally appropriate to the actual uses the Indians put these features to, we may never know with certainty. Radio-carbon dates, that "infallible" indicant of relative age, does reveal older material piled on newer deposits showing deliberate repositioning for some purpose. Perhaps future research will help point to what that purpose might have been.

NEXT: BIRTH OF A SHELL MOUND

- SWFAS TRIBUTE - Many thanks to Art and Lynn Lee for their continued support of SWFAS over the years. They have been responsible for such aspects of SWFAS as: a new lightweight, easily-portable sifter, sorting box sprinkler system, new Society pamphlets-membership cards, soil phosphate testing, pollen analysis, shell dating techniques, storage facilities and many others. Lately they put forth the effort to locate and then transport from Lakeland, Florida, 300 much-needed plastic storage trays. We are indeed fortunate to have members like Art and Lynn Lee, who can be counted on to support the Society's endeavors. (C. Strader)

- SWFAS EDUCATION KIT - The SWFAS Education Kit is fast becoming a reality. In this regard, copies of Lindsey Williams' excellent "script", which he recently has presented to students and other groups in Fort Myers, will be made available at the next monthly meeting. An important part of the "kit" is the "hands on" materials. An idea that has come up due to need is the manufacturing of replica artifacts out of clay, shell and wood. Let's be ready to discuss various ways to make contributing productive and enjoyable. (C. Strader)

- FLORIDA HISTORICAL CONFEDERATION - The 12th Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Confederation will be held at the Holiday Inn Riverfront in Bradenton on May 1, 1986.

- ECOLOGY EXPO - Thanks go to the SWFAS members who contributed their time and effort to our booth at the Ecology Expo which was held last month at The Conservancy Nature Center. Thanks for your assistance.

- SWFAS LIBRARY - Mexico and Central America buffs will enjoy lusting over offerings in the latest list of Harvard's Peabody Museum publications, just placed in the SWFAS Library. -- Forthcoming books noted include A Ceramic Sequence From the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, Mexico by Robert E. Smith, two volumes in the Museum's Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions series, and a third book from Gordon R. Willey's excavations at Seibal, Guatemala, this one, by Gair Tourtellot III, Settlement and Community Patterns. In all, the list has more than 40 titles dealing with Middle and South America. (A. Lee)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mail to: SWFAS, P.O.Box 9965, Naples, FL 33941

___ Individual—\$10.00 ___ Family—\$15.00 ___ Student—\$7.50 ___ Contributing—\$25.00

Yes! I want to support the SWFAS in their work of preserving and interpreting the prehistoric heritage of Southwest Florida.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

INTERESTS & HOBBIES _____

I hereby agree to abide by the rules and bylaws of the Southwest Florida Archeological Society. I further release from any and all liability due to accident and injury to myself, dependents, and property, the SWFAS, its officers, members, and any property owners cooperating with the Society.

Note: All dues & contributions are tax deductible.