

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER -

Travis F. Doering, Editor

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FEBRUARY, 1987

- THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING of the SWFAS will be held on Thursday, February 19th at 7:30 p.m. at the annex of St. Ann's Church, 439-9th Avenue South, Naples. This will be a special joint meeting of SWFAS and The Archaeological and Historical Conservancy. Dade County Archaeologist, Robert Carr will host the meeting and discuss the latest findings at the now-famous Cutler Ridge Fossil Site.

- SITE FORM AND COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, February 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the Strader residence, 27564 Woodridge, Bonita Springs.

- SORTING SESSION - Thursday, February 12th at 5:30 p.m. at the Beriault's residence, 3550 Bolero Way, Naples. Sort dig materials.

- CHOKOLOSKEE ANALYSIS SESSION - Saturday, February 14th at 1:00 p.m. at B & B Bldrs., 3800 No. Tamiami Tr., Naples.

- NEW MEMBERS - Welcome to Alice Ash of Naples, Nicky Perkins of Bonita Springs, and Edith Asquith of Estero.

- ANNUAL DUES NOTICE - In accordance with our by-laws, annual dues are receivable January 1, 1987. Those who joined us after September 1, 1986 are excused until January 1, 1988.

Jack Thompson, Treasurer

- JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING - We would like to thank Mark Spier for his talk on the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). Mark, who is a National Park Ranger at Everglades National Park, is in charge of Resource Management and Visitor Protection in the Tamiami Subdistrict of the Park. His area of responsibility includes Shark Valley and the northern third of the mainland area of the park - a 200,000 acre area!

-Mark's education, experience, and dedication to the saving of archaeological artifacts and remains made his presentation extremely enjoyable and enlightening as to the latest methods of the present day, technologically advanced, looter and the efforts being made by the rangers to prevent a loss of our heritage.

- ARCHEOLOGICAL TRIP TO PUERTO RICO - Plans are being formulated to take a group to Puerto Rico for a firsthand look at the archeological remains on this beautiful tropical island. For more information, contact John Beriault. (Days 261-0082) (Eve. 261-0295)

- NEW OFFICERS - Elections for officers were held at the January meeting and our selection committee is to be commended for again choosing a slate of nominees that won in a complete landslide. This year's officers are: President-John Beriault; 1st Vice President-Art Lee; 2nd Vice President-Gary Susdorf; Treasurer-Jack Thompson; Recording

Secretary-Barbara Logie; Corresponding Secretary-Lynn Lee; and our Trustees-Keith Waterhouse, Eleanor Young, Mary Ruth Winchell, and Joe Long.

- MORE ON THE PATH OF DeSOTO - Researchers have long been able to estimate the exact route followed by explorer Hernando deSoto, but a rich archaeological site now under excavation is yielding some of the best evidence yet of the Spanish explorer's travels in Florida. The evidence near Central Florida's Withlacoochee River suggests that scholars who posted signs marking his route across Florida were on the right track.

- "We know from historical accounts that to get north, deSoto had to cross a big swamp and a river," said Jerald Milanich, curator of archaeology at the Florida State Museum on the Univ. of Florida campus. "We've found the swamp; we've found the river; and now we've found Spanish artifacts in an Indian burial mound that are almost surely from the deSoto expedition.

- "I don't think we're going to be taking any signs down", he said. Hernando deSoto landed in Florida in May of 1539 with a band of 700 men. In early summer, they began cutting a swath northward in search of conquest and gold. Almost 450 years later, Gov. Bob Graham asked a panel of scholars to help the state commemorate the route with historical markers.

- Using maps, diaries, court transcripts and other historical accounts, the archaeologists and historians determined that it was the Withlacoochee River that deSoto crossed in July of 1539.

- "I'd say that this site has yielded the best evidence yet of deSoto's presence in Florida," said Jeff Mitchem, field director of the excavation now in its third season. So far, the archaeological team has found Spanish armor fashioned by Indians into jewelry, Spanish beads, iron spikes and, perhaps most telling, Indians bones with sword marks on them.

- The graves of a hasty mass burial in the mound's top layer probably indicates that deSoto exposed the Indians to germs to which they were not immune.

- Beads dateable to deSoto's period suggest a period of trading between the natives and deSoto's men.

Ft. Myers Press

- MORE ON THE WINDOVER SITE - Archaeology buffs will get their last chance to visit the Windover dig site. After three years of headline-grabbing attention, work at the site is coming to a close. Digging will be completed Jan. 17 and the area will be returned to its original state, project spokeswoman Madeleine Carr said this week.

- "It will become once again the ancient pond it always was," she said. Project Director, Glen Doran said the third and final season of field work has been the most productive year ever. Doran, a Florida State Univ. anthropologist, said the two most exciting finds were the undisturbed burial sites and pieces of intricately woven fabric believed to be the oldest flexible materials ever found in the southeastern United States.

- "There's been an incredible number of implications about their lifestyle and technology that we didn't have before," Doran said.

- Among the other major discoveries this year: More than 55 intact human skulls with well-preserved brain tissue, the remains of more than 120 individuals, a necklace made from seeds, assorted bone and wood tools including a pestle, several stone projectile points and dozens of awls.

- All the bones and artifacts were found in peat 10 to 12 feet below the bottom of a shallow pond in the Windover Farms subdivision.

- Jim Swann, a partner in the company that owns the property -- EKS, Inc. of Cocoa -- announced earlier this year that the site would be

preserved. The National Park Service is considering a proposal to proclaim the site a National Historic Landmark, possibly as early as next summer.

- The burial site was found by accident in 1982 when a construction crew building a road through the area uncovered human bones. Since then, it has attracted worldwide attention. Earlier this month, a group of about 100 archaeologists toured the site as part of an international convention on wet-site archaeology.

- The site also will be featured in the March issue of National Geographic magazine.

- Artifacts and remains found over the last three years have been sent to 11 different universities in the United States and Canada where researchers are conducting a variety of tests to determine everything from the genetic makeup of ancient man to his diet.

- Doran and project co-director David Dickel said they hope to use the information to learn more about the environment and day-to-day life of the ancient Indian culture.

- "We hope to get a general picture of not only this location but of this area of Florida," Doran said.

News-Press, Jan. 1987

- MORE ON LOOTERS - In the loneliest reaches of America's wilderness, a bold new breed of thief is ransacking history with shovels, trowels and bulldozers. Tunneling carelessly through prehistoric Indian graves and villages, they plunder the past for artifacts that might fetch thousands of dollars on the black market and ultimately end up in private collections as far away as Japan.

- Despite tougher laws protecting archaeological ruins on public land, experts say the destruction continues at a pace that could obliterate such national historic sites within a few years. In the 11 months ending in September 1985, federal agencies reported 899 cases of archaeological vandalism. Tossing aside human bones, plowing through ancient walls, these pothunters destroy in a moment what has slumbered undisturbed for centuries as they cart off pottery, jewelry and tools for personal collections or profit.

- The pothunters' determination is shockingly evident at Poncho House Ruins, a spectacular chain of ancient Arizona cliff dwellings deep inside the Navajo reservation. Tucked 600 feet down a sheer sandstone wall, the ruins are difficult and dangerous to reach. By foot, it takes 40 minutes to hike down to the canyon floor on uncertain cliffside paths of slippery shale, then scramble up to the dwellings themselves.

- Navajo rangers suspect pothunters have flown into the canyon at least once, when they received a report of an unmarked black helicopter hovering over Poncho House. Poncho House was inhabited from as early as 100 A.D. to about 1300 A.D. It appears on the National Register of Historic Sites and, until this century, the magnificent ruins were undisturbed.

- But over the past decade or so, pothunters have systematically burrowed through the rooms, thought to have been part of a storage or granary complex. The digging has undermined the foundation and exposed the ruins to erosion.

- The damage and sometimes wholesale destruction of ruins particularly pains Indians, who decry the theft of funerary goods buried with ancestors, and archaeologists, who complain that pothunting destroys the research value of a site, hopelessly jumbling layers of history. What takes a pothunter 20 minutes to dig up an archaeologist might spend years excavating, and then piecing together the scientific clues to prehistoric people -- what they ate, what they wore, how they lived, how they died.

- Scientists believe modern man can learn from the mistakes, misfortunes and successes of early cultures. Soil clinging to Anasazi

SWFAS

only by our resources, imagination and enthusiasm!

- In order to bring this new facility to its new site and then do the renovations required, will take additional financial support and physical efforts of our friends and members. To contribute to this end, please send your tax-free donation to SWFAS, P. O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 33941.

- SPECIAL LECTURE - On Thursday, March 5, 1987, Dr. Robert Ballard, Senior Scientist of the Woodshole Oceanographic Institute, will be at The Registry Hotel to present his lecture on "The Discovery of the Titanic". More information regarding this exciting event will be given at next month's meeting.

- 9,750 YEAR-OLD NORTH AMERICAN STRUCTURE - Remains of what scientists believe could be the oldest structure ever found in North America have been carbon-dated to at least 9,750 years ago. The dating was made possible by the discovery of charcoal from a hearth found in the clay floor of what was once a 12-foot-long, oval-shaped residential building in the Sierra Nevada about 150 miles east of San Francisco, California. Miami Herald

- FLORIDA SETTLEMENT MAY BE FIRST BLACK REFUGE - Archaeologists plan to excavate a marshy area near St. Augustine that is believed to be the site of the first free black colony in North America. The virtually unknown Fort Mose settlement, experts say, was a refuge for fugitive slaves more than a century before the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. For Blacks and Hispanics, the site is going to provide a significant look at their heritage.

- \$100,000 has been appropriated for the dig. Kathleen Deagan, lead archaeologist, said a test project 10 years ago showed that artifacts from the early 18th century remain on the site.

- Founded by the Spaniards in 1736, the fort became a haven for runaway black slaves from English colonies in Georgia and South Carolina. Nearly 100 black settlers lived there.

- In an attempt to recapture the former slaves and take over St. Augustine, Georgia Gov. James Oglethorpe attacked the fort in 1743. The settlers fled, and the fort was abandoned for five years.

- After the fort was reestablished in 1748, the settlers lived there until 1763, the year Florida became an English colony. They then moved on to Cuba.

The Associated Press

- COMMENTS AND ARTICLES - Send any information or articles that you find archeologically interesting that would be appreciated by your fellow SWFAS members to SWFAS, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 33941.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

_____ Individual -- \$10.00/ _____ Family--\$15.00 / _____ Student--\$7.50 / _____ Contrib. \$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 _____

INTEREST & HOBBIES _____

Note: All dues & contributions are tax deductible.