

# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER -

Travis F. Doering, Editor

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- THE APRIL MONTHLY MEETING of the SWFAS will be held on Thursday, April 16th, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Federal Savings and Loan of Fort Myers, (Community Room), 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, Florida.

- Our guest speaker at this month's meeting will be SWFAS member Gina Understahl. Gina's topic will be the archaeological data recovered from Chokoloskee Island. This will be a preview of Gina's paper that she will be giving at this year's FAS meeting (see below).

- Over the past 12 months, SWFAS has done a great deal of work surveying, mapping, and excavating various sites on Chokoloskee Island. Much of this material has been intensively studied and analysed by Gina, and she now presents her findings on two specific areas. She looks into the so-called "Plaza Area" and the residential area in a high-status precinct. In addition, Ms. Understahl will review the history of SWFAS' investigation into Chokoloskee Island, and compare various information and results.

- Gina has put a tremendous amount of research time and hard work into this project, so be sure to attend this meeting to see the results.

- SITE FORM MEETING - Tuesday, April 7th at 6:30 p.m. at the Strader residence, 27564 Woodridge, Bonita Springs, FL.

- CRAIGHEAD LABORATORY MOVING-IN DAY - We will meet at B & B Builders at 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, April 11th. ----- We will be transferring all of our equipment, supplies, and excavation material to our new building next to the new Collier County Museum. We will need volunteers to assist in cleaning the building as well as moving the material. For more information, call John Beriault at 261-0295 or 261-0082. (B & B Bldrs., 3800 Tamiami Tr. No., Naples, FL)

- DATE CORRECTION - FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY's annual meeting will be held on May 8, 9, & 10th in Clearwater, Florida. SWFAS members Gina Understahl-Chokoloskee Island, and John Beriault-The Beachwalk Site, will be giving papers at this year's meeting. Call John Beriault for more information, 261-0295 or 261-0082.

- NEW MEMBERS - We would like to welcome new member Ruth Jensen of Savannah, Georgia.

- THANKS goes to SWFAS member Al Felsberg, for his presentation on Island Arawaks and their archaeology at the March monthly meeting. Your artifact collection is quite a display!

- MOVING THE CRAIGHEAD LABORATORY - Local historians are the first to admit that the cheaply built, 15-yr. old shack moved March 23rd,

to the Collier County Museum grounds is intrinsically without historical or architectural value. Yet, they consider it a treasure to be restored and given equal ranking with the museum's prehistoric and turn-of-the-century collections.

- It's the man - naturalist Dr. Frank C. Craighead - who built and used it in his research of the Everglades that gives it importance.

- The 16-by-24 foot structure could just as easily have ended up as a tool shed for the county road and bridges department, according to museum director Ron Jamro, except for the efforts of the local archeological society. It will now be the first of several out-buildings to be developed alongside the museum.

- Craighead was an eminent botanist, entomologist and ecologist whose work in Southwest Florida is as highly regarded as that of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the Everglades chronicler, and Charlton Tebeau, the Collier County historian.

- John Beriault, president of SWFAS, said that the building will be renovated to give it a more South Floridian look. The exterior plywood facade, aluminum-framed windows and windowsill air conditioner, will probably be removed, and a tin roof and porch installed. "I don't think we'll be violating any architectural canons, given that it was the work that went on there, not the building that is important", Beriault said.

- Once the Craighead building is put back in service, it will be the home to both the archeological society and the Naples Chapter of the Native Plant Society, of which Beriault also is president.

- Jamro said other outside displays will include a Copeland logging locomotive due to arrive next week, a Seminole Indian camp, a pioneer homestead and a Model A swampbuggy. Jamro said the museum is seeking a financial sponsor for the \$15,000 needed to construct the homestead. The museum is midway in its expansion program, and will be closed to the public until next fall. Naples Daily News, 3/24/87

- SACRED BURIAL MOUNDS - The following article deals with the areas and problems discussed by our January speaker, Mark Spier, enforcement ranger in Everglades National Park:

- Deep in the swamps and hardwood hammocks of the Big Cypress National Preserve, Miccosukee Indians still bury their dead in the way of their ancestors -- above ground, wrapped in shroud, covered with fronds. Inside the coffin are placed favored possessions accumulated during life -- jewelry, clothing, perhaps a gun or a knife.

- "Like the Egyptians, the Indian was preparing to go into another world, and he took with him things that could be used there," says Colley Billie of the Miccosukee tribe.

- The locations of most of these sacred places are known only to the Indians. But that hasn't kept them safe. Sometimes the grave robbers visit.

- Recently, one new burial site was invaded and the treasured possessions of the dead Miccosukee stolen, said Fred Fagergren, superintendent of the Big Cypress National Preserve.

- It's unlikely that another Indian desecrated the site, because of the tribe's strong religious beliefs.

- The invasion of recent burial sites, while especially ghoulish, is only a part of a broader, more persistent problem. Archaeological sites - at least 395 in the Big Cypress National Preserve and hundreds more in the Everglades National Park - are being systematically looted by artifact hunters.

- Who are the grave robbers? Robert Carr, archeologist of Dade County, mentioned two different groups he was aware of who knew better.

One group is comprised of several Dade County schoolteachers who have actively dug in the mound over a several-year period. He is concerned about them because they have knowingly broken the law and have actually instructed several of their students that they were to keep the operation secret. Some treasure hunters have displayed impressive determination. Last year, one signed on with the park service as a volunteer, claiming to be an entomologist, or insect expert. He worked late a lot, park service rangers said. It wasn't until later the rangers discovered that the entomologist had a record as an artifact thief, and while working late, had access to documents pinpointing the location of numerous archaeological sites.

- The problem has been at its worst in the half million acre Big Cypress National Park, where hunting and off-road vehicles such as swamp buggies and airboats are allowed.

- In the Everglades National Park, access to remote areas is much more difficult, because no mechanized vehicles other than boats are allowed.

- Federal officials at both the Big Cypress and Everglades National Parks can't remember the last time anyone was prosecuted for raiding archaeological sites. They know it's going on, but they have to be able to prove it, they say. And, the park service lacks the personnel to know what's going on everywhere in the combined 2-million acres of both the preserve and the park.

- Florida law prohibits disturbing burial sites, but it requires proof that the disturbance was "wanton and malicious." It's difficult to convict because it's hard to prove that state of mind. Archaeologists are supporting a bill to change the wording to "willfully and knowingly".

- People who would not conceive of digging up an old church or homestead cemetery don't think twice about digging up an Indian burial ground. How would people feel if we went into Arlington National Cemetery and exhumed your national heroes and took the rings off their fingers?  
St. Petersburg, 1/87

- INDIANS VICTIMIZED BY SPANIARDS - The atrocities Spanish conquistadors committed against Florida Indians are widely known, but a Univ. of Florida researcher points out that Roman Catholic priests protested the cruelty to Indians.

- "In their fight to protect the human and civil rights of the Indians, Franciscan priests in 1657 managed to convince the Spanish government to arrest the governor of Florida, whom they accused of abusing the Indians," said Michael Gannon, director of UF's Institute for Early Contact Period Studies. "In 1648, they went directly to the king of Spain with their protests about the way the governor of Florida was treating the Indians," said Gannon.

- But defending the rights of Native Americans was not the primary task of Roman Catholic priests in some 50 missions in Florida. They were here to convert Indians, and by 1655 the Franciscans claimed they had persuaded 26,000 Indians to adopt Christianity.

- Another function of these missions, which gave them the support of the Spanish king, Gannon said, was helping extend Spain's power in North America, where hostile French and English forces prowled.

- Gannon is head of the Spanish Mission Trail Committee, recently formed to search for lost mission sites, comb archives for their history, and place highway markers along the Mission Trail. In the mid 1600's the Spanish mission trail stretched across North Florida from Tallahassee through Gainesville to St. Augustine, and north along the Atlantic coast of Georgia.

- "As we approach the 500th anniversary of the European discovery of the New World, we have an important opportunity to make a lasting

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contribution to Florida's history and heritage," said Florida Secretary of State George Firestone, who appointed members of the committee.

- The Franciscan missions were important to Spain's colonies in Florida, Gannon said, since they served as bases to supply the Spanish settlement and garrison at St. Augustine with food.

- "The Spanish established large ranches near these missions, where they raised cattle and grew corn and wheat", Gannon said.

- To get the food from the ranches to St. Augustine, Gannon said, Spaniards loaded Indians down like pack animals. "The priests protested this to defend the civil and human rights of the Indians," he said.

Naples Daily News, 2/87

- RESORT MAY GIVE INDIAN MOUND BACK TO CREEK TRIBE - Creek Indians may regain possession of a shell mound, built by their ancestors in the Florida Panhandle, and up to 12 acres of surrounding land in the form of a gift from the Sandestin Beach Resort.

- Tom Patton, V.Pres. of development for the resort, said Sandestin wants to give the land to the state or the Florida Tribe of Eastern Creeks to satisfy a Walton County public recreation ordinance.

- It requires developers to set aside 5 percent of their property or pay 5% of their land value to the county for recreational use.

- The property once was the site of a Creek village and contains more than 100 Indian trash heaps and artifacts dating back 2,000 years as well as the principal shell mound on Choctawhatchee Bay, said Don Sharon, leader of the tribe.

- Also found on the site have been some mysterious clay balls, about the size and shape of duck eggs, some with grooves carved in them.

- One theory holds they were used like charcoal but their purpose hasn't been pinned down. Further evidence of the village emerged last summer when bulldozers plowed a firebreak through the area to contain a wildfire. Thousands of shells were dug up and scattered by the plowing.

- Walton County commissioners have agreed to the deal, but Patton said he wanted to get together with the state and county officials and the Indians before completing it. Sharon said he would prefer that the Creeks control the property.

Ft. Myers News Press, 3/87

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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 and contributions are tax deductible.