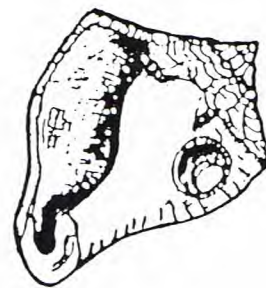


Newsletter

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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Arthur R. Lee, Editor

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July meeting

COMMUNITY ROOM TO BECOME ART GALLERY FOR EVENING

The Community room of the First Federal bank of Fort Myers, 3201 9th Street North, will become an art gallery the evening of July 16 when SWFAS holds its regular monthly meeting.

The speaker will be Dr. Joseph Booth, artist, educator and pre-Columbian student, whose subject will be Some Stones I Have Known; with "fantastic and curious" stones he has encountered in his travels and studies serving as departure points to exploration of his eventful careers.

Booth holds a PhD in education; was director of education at Dragerton, Utah, for five years, and was an art teacher for 27 years. As an artist, he is represented in a number of museum collections, especially in the West; as a photographer he has had studios in Utah and New York.

Dr. Booth has been around the world three times, and is past president of these organizations: Anchor Artists Association, Long Island Art Teachers Association, and the Pre-Columbian Society of the University of Pennsylvania Museum. He was assistant curator of the Pre-Columbian collection of FAMILY museum, Long Island, N.Y.

He has studied and photographed Mayan, Aztec, Olmec, Zapotec and Toltec cultures in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras over a period of many years.

More than 100 photographic prints will be displayed in the meeting room, and his presentation will be based on slides.

Dr. Booth and his wife, Maxine, make their home in Sarasota and are members of Time Sifters, which organization gives us a hand from time to time.

July field trip

PAST IS PRESERVED, PRESENT IMPROVED BY RESPONSIBLE SITE DEVELOPMENT

When an archaeological site is found on real estate scheduled for development, the owners have a number of alternatives; they can:

Ignore ethics and the law and turn the bulldozers loose;

Call in an archaeologist and have the site destroyed after salvage excavation;

Or incorporate the site into the development itself.

It was the last solution that was elected by developers of a planned residential project on Tidy Island, Manatee County, an area to be visited by SWFAS members July 26.

Two sites on the island, including a coastal shell midden and two interior sand burial mounds, had been explored by C.B. Moore (1900) and W.M. Tallant (1937). In 1982 Archaeologist Bill Burger investigated the sites and found evidence of aboriginal occupations from the Perico Island to the Safety Harbor periods, and historical use by Cuban fishermen and homesteaders.

At first a salvage operation had been planned, but renegotiation led to preservation of the majority of the sites and the construction of a homestead reproduction to serve as a museum for display of site artifacts. The result is an archaeological park which adds to the personality of the exclusive residential/condominium development; it is open to the public for group tours.

The project has been acclaimed by the American Planners Association and the Manatee County Historical Commission.

SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRY UNEARTHED IN BELIZE

A sophisticated lithic industry, involving division of labor and standardization of products and methods, has been revealed by excavations at the Colha Mayan site in Belize, Marilyn Masson told SWFAS members and visitors at the June monthly meeting.

The Colha site has been dug since 1979 under the direction of Dr. Thomas Hester of the University of Texas. Its seven square kilometers encompass more than 100 individual mounds, made up in good part of debitage from the manufacture of millions of stone tools, and involve two cultural periods, the Late Pre-Classic (ca. 300 B.C.-A.D.200) and the Late Classic (ca.A.D. 600-900) with a lightly populated time between.

Despite the hiatus, Mrs. Masson told her audience, both periods showed evidence of large-scale manufacturing exploiting a deposit of chert. At the quarry the cortex was removed and blanks were carried to processing areas. Though not completely understood, she said, these appear to have been communities centered on ceremonial sites. Work on settlement patterns has been carried out by Eleanor King of the University of Pennsylvania.

During the Late Pre-Classic period principal products were large oval bi-faces apparently used as hoes or axes and narrow triangular bi-faces called tranchet bit tools employed as gouges or adzes. In the Late Classic period products of the area were smaller oval bi-faces and stemmed blades. In both periods the tools were of uniform sizes and the flakes were removed in a

DIG "BLUE-COLLAR ARCHAEOLOGY"

Digging out fragments of a manufacturing past is a switch from usual Mayan archaeology, which deals with evidences of royalty and priesthoods. Colha's industrial concentration and the science devoted to exploring it have been dubbed "blue-collar archaeology", Masson noted.

stylized pattern. All were made using hammer stones and not until the end of the Late Classic period were softer flaking tools employed.

There is evidence that the tools were exported to a large surrounding area, and of a sophisticated supporting agriculture. Judging from the rarity of broken or imperfect tools, workmanship was of a very high standard. That the tools were of considerable value in the areas in which they were used is evidenced by specimens having been found greatly reduced in size by repeated flaking to sharpen their edges, she reported.

Mrs. Masson currently is a field director for the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy at projects in the Bonita Bay and Okeechobee areas. At the Colha site she has served variously as technician, crew chief and camp manager.

PELICAN BAY SURVEY COMPLETED

A SWFAS crew June 20 and 21 excavated a second nine square meter test area to a depth of 12-15 cm., completing a survey of the Pelican Bay project except for a possible investigation of a knoll feature.

Six to eight thousand shell were plotted, including a couple possible tools, and their distribution led President John Beriault to the conjecture that the area studied may have been a segment of a larger circular debris scatter.

THE FINE SCREEN

June 14 several SWFAS families joined members of the Bonita Bay Historical Society in a picnic at a Bonita Bay Development park. Present were Al and Isabelle Felsberg, Doug Messineo and his daughter Barbara; Art and Lynn Lee and Charlie and Gail Strader who boated over from their home.

Incidentally, Doug has learned that he has won world ranking in the 200-meter breast stroke. His time was 3:15:42 in an Orlando meet, but he just recently was notified that that time gave him a standing of seventh in the world 45-49 age group. A member of Swim Florida Masters, Messineo practices four to five times a week at a Fort Myers pool.

The Journals

DID THIS POINT

EXTERMINATE THE MAMMOTH?

The American Blitzkrieg: A Mammoth Undertaking; Jared Diamond; Discover June 1987, pp 82-88.

Points of Order; Alan L. Bryan; Natural History; June 1987, pp 6-11.

Some 12,000-11,000 years ago skilled big-game hunters moved across the Bering land bridge from Asia into North America, slaughtering and finally exterminating the herds of mammoth they encountered -- easy game that had not learned to fear man.

That scenario, current for many years, has had a resurgence with the repeated discovery of dateable kill sites containing the distinctive Clovis point. An Arizona geoscientist, Paul Martin, a prominent advocate of the theory, coined the "blitzkrieg" tag for the overkill.

This school notes that a later point, the Folsom, smaller and more finely made than the Clovis, is found with giant bison but never with mammoth. Their explanation: there were no mammoth left. Nor mastodons, camels, horses, giant sloth nor big mammals of at least a dozen other types. North America lost 73 per cent and South America 80 per cent of their big mammal genera at that time.

Others argue that extinctions at that rate and involving the vast herds of animals present could not have been done by man in his presumed numbers in the required time. Bryan, professor of anthropology at the University of

Alberta, holds that Clovis kill sites have been found only on the High Plains and similar areas of North America and that the specialized situation there cannot be extrapolated to other regions with more diverse resources.

Many paleontologists add that there is no surviving evidence of mass slaughter, only the fossilized bones of scattered butchered carcasses. They attribute the extinctions to changes in climate and habitat at the end of the ice age.

To this the blitzkrieg proponents point out that ice-free habitats for mammals expanded rather than contracted in the time concerned and that large American mammals already had survived other ends-of-glaciations without extinction. Further, they contend that opposite effects could be expected on species preferring hot and cold climates during such a period of change but that a ground sloth and a mountain goat, habitants of warm and cool climates, respectively, vanished within a century of each other in one locale.

As to size of the hunter population, there are modern instances of colonists in an uninhabited land expanding in numbers at a rate of 3.4 per cent per year. At such a rate, 100 hunters could multiply to 10 million within a thousand-year period. And to reach the tip of the Southern hemisphere in the 1,000-year estimated time would have required a movement of only eight miles a year.

Diamond, who teaches physiology at UCLA Medical School, points to our present extermination of plants and animals at a rate that will see half the species now extant extinct by the end of the next century. "Clovis hunters," he writes, "couldn't have learned from history about the risk of exterminating their prey. We can."



SPANISH CEMETERY, OLD COIN, FOUND NEAR STATE CAPITOL

At Tallahassee, archaeologists say they have found a cemetery used about 300 years ago by Spanish missionaries and their converts at the state-owned San Luis de Talimali site. Meanwhile, the Nature Conservancy says it will purchase four acres of a site three miles away where -- 100 years earlier, 1539 -- Hernando de Soto camped.

A copper coin found at the camp site has been confirmed as having been minted in Spain between 1504 and 1517, making it among the oldest coins found in North America, excepting Viking coins dating to A.D. 1,000, turned up in the Northeast. The find was announced by the head of the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, Jim Miller.



Broodable . . .

"When we busy ourselves with archaeology, life as a whole has become our subject. For life is not an occasional affair, but a constant balancing on the point of the intersection where past and future meet." C.W. Ceram in Gods, Graves & Scholars

WAS MAN IN SOUTH AMERICA 300,000 YEARS AGO?

An international expedition has unearthed apparent evidence that man may have lived in remote northeastern Brazil 300,000 years ago, 10 times as far back as previously thought.

In May a group of United States and French researchers found, three feet below the floor of a cave in the Serra Negra mountains, heaps of broken bones and a stone chopper. The bones were too old for dating by the Carbon 14 method; uranium-thorium testing gave a date of 300,000 years. Current theory has held that man entered the Americas from Asia 30,000 years ago at earliest.

Marie-Antoinette de Lumley of the Institute of Human Paleontology in Paris commented: "It is an excellent beginning but now we need more proof."

A nearby cave has paintings of stars and a possible supernova, and a notch to direct the sun's rays at winter solstice to a red sun painted on the ceiling -- at 10,000 years possibly the oldest astronomical observatory in the Americas and perhaps the world. (Associated Press)

SCHIZOPHRENIC GAUGE

As demonstrated at the recent FAS annual meeting, authors of scientific papers are making heavy use of the two-way gauge, showing inches on one side and centimeters on the other. Increased democratization? Or recognition that the U.S. simply can't make up its mind?



LINKEAGE TO WINDOVER BAND SOUGHT

Orlando - Archaeologists excavating a 7,200-square-meter site near here are looking for evidence that Indians who once lived on it were related to those of the Windover area that recently yielded skulls with brain matter.

A team from Arizona State University and Rollins College in Winter Park has turned up chert points which may have been made of stone from near Tampa, 70 miles distant, and tentatively dated at 5,000 years B.P. The Windover remains were deposited some 7,000 years ago. (Associated Press)

WE'RE PAYING MORE DUES, TRIENNIAL REPORT SHOWS

Treasurer Jack Thompson has run his books for the past three years through the graduated screens and has found that -- at least from the standpoint of dues-paying -- we're better than we were.

Total income rose from less than \$658 in 1984 to nearly \$1,207 in 1986, with an increase in dues-payments accounting for most of the difference, other sources such as donations having remained about constant in the \$200-\$300 range.

Expenses follow the income curve very closely, with 1985 showing a surplus of \$76 and 1986 \$191. The Society went in the hole to the tune of \$117 in 1984.

DATEBOOK

* July 26. Field trip to Tidy Island, Manatee County. Rendezvous at 7 a.m. at B&B Builders, 3800 N.Tamiami Trail. For details, call John Beriault at 261-0082.

* August 11. Site form meeting at the Strader residence, 6:30 p.m.

* August 20. Regular monthly meeting at First Federal Bank; 7:30 p.m.

HONOR ROLL

Contributors to this Newsletter: Isabelle Felsberg, Anne Waterhouse.