



Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS)

OUR 42nd YEAR

February 2022 Newsletter

<https://swflarchaeology.org/>

PRESIDENT'S CORNER *By John F. Furey M.A., RPA*



February is Black History Month, and if we were having in person meetings, I had Dr. Uzi Bahram from the New College in Sarasota scheduled to present his current archaeological excavations and discoveries at the Angola site of the Maroons near Bradenton. Hopefully next year we can hear his presentation. This month we combine history and archaeology and examine new information on the founding of Sarasota, the homestead of Harriet Tubman's father, and Jim Crow explained.

In 1884, twenty years after the end of the Civil War, black settlers Lewis and his wife Irene Colson, who were former slaves, were the first blacks to arrive in Sarasota, Florida. Lewis was 40 years old and was a part of the survey crew that laid out the town that he and Irene would later help build. Read their story in two articles below.

Archaeologists have discovered the home site of Ben Ross, Harriet Tubman's father, near Church Creek, Maryland. Tubman, was born Araminta Ross, and after escaping slavery in Maryland she became a leading abolitionist and helped slaves escape via the Underground Railroad. The homesite is being protected as a part of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.



To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Harriet Tubman, a 9-foot-tall bronze sculpture of her by Wesley Wofford was unveiled in the northeast corner of Philadelphia City Hall on Tuesday January 11, 2022. The sculpture will reside there until the end of March when the city will celebrate the anniversary of her birth in March of 1822. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said "Harriet Tubman's incredible legacy of heroism, resilience, hope, and activism is a story we can all learn from as individuals as well as a community".

Randy Jaye of the Ormond Beach Historical Society wrote an interesting article about the Jim Crow laws and its effects in the Ormond Beach region of northeast coastal Florida and beyond. It was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Fair Housing Act) finally banned the Jim Crow laws 100 years after the Civil War. Enforcement of these laws has been a problem and we still see today voting rights being disenfranchised from both black, brown, and white Americans around the country and civil rights laws lacking enforcement in many states.

In local archaeological news, a new apartment complex at the corner of First and Fowler is required to provide an archaeological assessment of the property prior to construction. See below.

IN PERSON ACTIVITY

Looking for an outdoor venue where you can learn about the Calusa and get in some walking? Visit the Randall Research Center on Pine Island to see the Calusa mounds and learn how they lived. Self-Guided Tours daily, sunup to sundown, Guided Tours: 10 am and 1pm Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday 10 am only. Private Guided Tours available. Donations are suggested. Restrooms, book and gift shop and classroom open Mon-Sat 10 am – 4 pm. For more information go to <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/rrc/>. Contact the Randall Research Center at 239-283-2062.

PREHISTORIC CANOES

With the dry season approaching, if you find an exposed Native American canoe do not attempt to remove it. It takes a specialist to do this without destroying the canoe. Please call the Bureau of Archaeological Research at 850-245-6336 to report your find.

MARCH IS ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH AND CALUSA COAST 2022 MONTH!

Join us in celebrating Archaeology Month and Calusa Coast 2022 during the 4 Saturdays of the month of March. Put these events in your calendar and plan to attend and celebrate with us.

Saturday March 5, 2022 Randall Research Center, Pine Island, FL
13810 Waterfront Drive, Pineland, FL 33922

Saturday March 12, 2022 The Marco Island Historical Museum
180 S Heathwood Drive, Marco Island, FL

Saturday March 19, 2022 There are three venues:
Košeshan State Park, Estero, FL
3800 Corkscrew Road, Estero, FL 33928

Lovers Key State Park,
8771 Estero Blvd. Fort Myers Beach, FL

The Mound House, Ft. Myers Beach
451 Connecticut Street, Fort Myers Beach, FL

Saturday March 26, 2022 The Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium.
3450 Ortiz Avenue, Ft. Myers
Dr. William Marquardt is the featured speaker

SWFAS 2022 NEWSLETTER and ZOOM SCHEDULE

February – May 2022: Zoom and SWFAS Newsletters Monthly

May 6-8, 2022 FAS 74th Annual Meeting, Miami Florida.

“Good bye to the Year of the Ox and welcome the Year of the Tiger” Happy Chinese New Year!

ARTICLES

LEWIS COLSON

By Jeff Lahurd, Herald-Tribune

April 16, 2014

From the Herald Tribune at <http://newtown100.heraldtribune.com/2014/04/16/lewis-colson>



A former slave, Lewis Colson came to Sarasota in 1884 with the surveying crew hired by the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company to plat the town of Sara Sota. It was Colson who drove the stake in the center of 5 Points with the surveying supervisor announcing, “We will lay out the town of Sarasota from this hub.” In 1897, Colson and his wife, Irene, who was the midwife for the black community, donated land for the area’s first African American Church, the Bethlehem Baptist Church. Colson became its first minister, serving as pastor from 1899 to 1915.

In those days the black community was chiefly in an area known as Overtown, which grew into a thriving community as more and more African-Americans came to Sarasota. The Colson Hotel and Colson Street were named in his honor. Born in 1844, he died in 1922. He and Irene are the only African-Americans buried in Rosemary Cemetery.

SARASOTA, FLORIDA: FIRST BLACK COMMUNITY AND SETTLERS ARRIVED IN 1884

By Jae Jones

January 26, 2020

From *Black First* at <https://blackthen.com/sarasota-florida-first-black-community-and-settlers-arrived-in-1884/>



The first Black community in Sarasota, Florida, was located at Southeast Corner Central Ave. and Blvd. of the Arts (6th Street). Black settlers Lewis and Irene Colson arrived in 1884. Lewis Colson assisted in surveying the town of Sarasota and contributed to the development of the community in many ways. By 1886, other black families had arrived and settled in the town.

In 1899, Lewis and Irene Colson worked to organize the Bethlehem Baptist Church, which was followed by F.H. Haynes, C.H. Murphy, and Leonard Reid, who organized the A.M.E Church. The community had their very own public school, which was established in 1912 by Wright Bush, Henry Clark, Elbert Clark, John Woods and J.H. Glover, who served as trustees. Emma Booker served as the principal of the school for several years.

The community grew with people of different types of professions who called the town home. There were farmers, businessmen, physicians, nurses, and teachers working together for the better of the community. From the time when the black community was found, the black residents living and working played a vital role in the development of both the city and the county of Sarasota. By the 1920s, the community was thriving with many businesses.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS: SITE OF HARRIET TUBMAN'S FATHER'S HOME FOUND

By Brian Witte, Associated Press

April 20, 2021

From *Associated Press* at <https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2021-04-20/archaeologists-site-of-harriet-tubmans-fathers-home-found>



The Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Archaeologists in Maryland say they believe they have found the homesite of famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman's father. The homesite of Ben Ross was found on property acquired last year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an addition to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, officials said Tuesday. An archaeology team led by the State Highway Administration conducted research that led to the find.

Archaeologist Julie Schablitsky described the finding as a connection to Tubman. "She would've spent time here as a child, but also she would've come back and been living here with her father in her teenage years, working alongside him," Schablitsky said in a news release. "This was the opportunity she had to learn about how to navigate and survive in the wetlands and the woods. We believe this experience was able to benefit her when she began to move people to freedom."

Tubman was born Araminta Ross in March 1822 on the Thompson Farm near Cambridge, Maryland, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. She escaped from slavery to become a leading abolitionist who helped slaves escape through the Underground Railroad. "This discovery adds another puzzle piece to the story of Harriet Tubman, the state of Maryland, and our nation," said Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford, who attended a news conference at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center at Church Creek, Maryland.

The archaeology team began searching for evidence linked to her father in November. When they returned in March to continue their search, Schablitsky and her team found artifacts dating to the 1800s, including nails,

glass, dish fragments and even a button. On Tuesday, they announced confirmation that the artifacts were evidence of Ross's cabin.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bought the 2,600-acre Peter's Neck property for \$6 million last year. The property contains 10 acres bequeathed to Ross by Anthony Thompson in the 1800s. As outlined in Thompson's will, Ross was to be freed five years after Thompson's death in 1836. Ben Ross was freed from slavery and received the land in the early 1840s. "When we protect vulnerable habitats, we help preserve the stories of those who came before us, like Harriet Tubman's father, Ben Ross," said USFWS Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System Cynthia Martinez. "Acquiring Peter's Neck last year was a critical addition to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, as the area is predicted to naturally convert to marsh by 2100 because of sea-level rise."

The Ben Ross home site will be highlighted on the historic Thompson Farm, where Ross and his family were enslaved. It will be added as a new point of interest to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The byway is a 125-mile, self-guided scenic drive that includes more than 30 sites related to Harriet Tubman's life and legacy.

JIM CROW LAWS

By Randy Jaye, Ormond Beach Historical Society

March 27, 2021

From the Ormond Beach Historical Society Newsletter (information at <https://www.ormondhistory.org/>)



Black History Month makes me think of Jim Crow laws and how they enabled the enforcement of racial segregation from 1877 all the way into the late 1960s throughout the Deep South and other states such as West Virginia, Oklahoma, Maryland and Kansas. During a recent and on-going oral history project focusing on Jim Crow, Racial Segregation and the Civil Rights Era, I interviewed Erlene Turner, member of the Ormond Beach Historical Society's Board of Directors, and asked her the question "When you hear the words 'Jim Crow' what images or thoughts come to mind?" She replied, "Not equality – separate but not equal." Her answer now seems to be a common theme when discussing the Jim Crow Era with anyone who remembers

those days, or has researched that era.

Jim Crow laws were passed with the intent to keep white and black people separate (racial segregation) in all public places including public transportation, restaurants, parks, laundromats, waiting rooms, schools and even establishments such as billiard halls. They also intended to limit the advancement of blacks and guarantee the continuation of white control of the business, political and educational sectors of society. Jim Crow ultimately had the effect of giving blacks the status of second-class citizenship.

The Ormond Beach area, being located in the Deep South, enforced Jim Crow laws until the federal government banned them through three important pieces of legislation: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act). Before the federal government forced change everywhere that enforced Jim Crow laws, signs existed that were both physical and intimidating. A local examples was the sign at the former Florida East Coast Railway station on Granada Blvd., which had a separate office for "Colored Intrastate" as seen on a 1961 photograph.

A local example of intimidation was banning colored people on the beaches in towns such as Flagler Beach, Daytona Beach and Ormond Beach. Although most local beach towns did not display physical signs, people of

color knew they were not welcome on the beaches, had to be out of town by sundown, and could only enter after sunrise. Such areas (or places) were referred to as “Sundown Towns.”

During the Jim Crow Era black Americans were largely limited to menial jobs such as operators of the human-powered “Afromobiles,” so-named because they were operated exclusively by African-Americans. These vehicles were popular in high class hotels mainly in the Palm Beach area in the early 1900s. Blacks were hired by these hotels to transport wealthy whites around hotel grounds, nature trails and parks. The Ormond Hotel also had “Afromobiles” that were used to take white guests on tours of its ground and the nearby Santa Lucia Plantation as seen in a 1905 photograph.



— Originally the Ormond Colored School, then renamed to the Rigby Elementary School, was relocated to 208 Central Avenue in 1924. It has been the PACE School for Girls – Volusia-Flagler since 1996.
Source: Photograph by Randy Joyce (February 2021).

All this began to change in 1954 with the unanimous (9-0) landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, which determined state laws that established racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional, even if segregated schools were equal in quality (rarely the case in reality). It took over fifteen years for local school boards to comply with federal mandates and completely desegregate public schools, and this only happened after federal court orders. For example, the Ormond Colored School built in 1911, renamed Rigby Elementary School in its later years, enrolled only black children, mainly from the predominantly black “Liberia” and “Sudan” neighborhoods of Ormond Beach. It was forced to close by a federal court order in 1969. This building itself, now at 208 Central Avenue, has been the PACE Center for Girls – Volusia-Flagler since 1996.

Fortunately, the Jim Crow era is in the past and as a society we are much better off. The nation has made considerable progress by outlawing immoral Jim Crow laws and voting restrictions, which eliminated racial segregation in education, public transportation, public facilities and accommodations, and allowed for equal voting rights.

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This progress includes an important change in attitudes by the vast majority of the nation’s citizenry regarding race relations and the acknowledgement of racial equality. Benefits of integrated classrooms include the preparation of students to become better citizens and leaders in a country that is growing diversity. Psychological and sociological studies have discovered that integrated classrooms indoctrinate students with more tolerance and inclusionary behaviors with all races of people, which prepares them for the increasing complexity of the social and cultural aspects of modern globalization.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS CALLED TO INVESTIGATE FORT MYERS CONSTRUCTION SITE AHEAD OF GROUND BREAKING

By Justin Kase, Matthew Seaver

January 26, 2022

From Wink News at <https://www.winknews.com/2022/01/26/archaeologists-called-to-investigate-fort-myers-construction-site-ahead-of-ground-breaking/>



A new apartment complex is getting ready to be built in Fort Myers, but it may face some obstacles. The city has asked the project developers at the corner of First and Fowler Street to hire an archaeological firm to take a look at the grounds before construction begins. Finding old burial sites or skeletal remains could halt construction while more archaeologists are called in. A plaque right across the street from where the apartment building will be going up identifies burial sites that have been identified

in the area. So, as a precaution, the city asked the developers to have this site investigated before breaking ground.

Sara Ayers-Rigsby, regional director for the Florida Public Archaeological Network, said, “Fort Myers, as its name would imply, was actually a fort, right. And this is an area that would have been in use during the Seminole War.” Ayers-Rigsby says military, civilian, or any other burial site has a chance of being found. “When we think about the city we live in today, we’re just a very recent part of this really rich and deep time period,” said Ayers-Rigsby.

Ayers-Rigsby pointed out a nearby archaeological investigation that did uncover military burials, and that’s one reason why the city asked for this site to be investigated. “Earlier archaeological work in the area that was conducted when Second Street was expanded back in the early ’90s did find evidence for military burials and potentially, again, civilian and other burials in the area.” Finding any remnants of a burial site would halt construction. Ayers-Rigsby says it’s essential to do this before breaking ground if it’s in a location close to where others have been found.

“It’s going to be better for the project if something like this is documented ahead of time, rather than having workers out on-site and having people be surprised in the middle of a project, right. That’s just going to cause lost time because then you have to bring archaeologists to document it in the middle of the construction project.” The developers said the archaeological firm has been using ground radar and sonar and will be digging down if they find any anomalies. So far, nothing has been found at this site, but the developers said they would stop and notify the proper authorities if they do find something.

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE 2022 CALENDAR YEAR

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First Vice-President: Jim Oswald
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Tiffany Bannworth

Find us on Facebook at Southwest Florida Archaeological Society!

Check out our website at <http://swflarchaeology.org/>

SWFAS AND FAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

We encourage those interested in Florida archaeology to become members of The Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) and The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS). Annual dues are due in January and membership applications to both organizations are attached. Membership in the FAS provides you with four annual volumes of *The Florida Anthropologist* and occasional newsletters on anthropological events in Florida in addition to the annual statewide meeting. More information on FAS can be found online at: www.fasweb.org. Membership in SWFAS offers you a local series of talks on archaeological and anthropological subjects that you can attend. The SWFAS monthly newsletter keeps you up to date on local events as well as other important archaeological topics. We urge you to support both with your membership. All of the SWFAS Lecture Series are open to the public at no charge.



JOIN US!

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society

<http://swflarchaeology.org/>

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS) was founded in 1980 as a not-for profit corporation to provide a meeting place for people interested in the area's past.

Our goals are to:

- Learn more of the area's history
- Create a place for sharing of this information
- Advocate for preservation of cultural resources

Its members include professional and amateur archaeologists and interested members of the general public. Members come from all walks of life and age groups. They share a lively curiosity, a respect for the people who preceded them here, and a feeling of responsibility for the conservation of the places and objects they left behind.

The Society holds monthly meetings between October and April, attracting speakers who are in the forefront of archaeological and historical research. Occasionally members join in trips to historical and archaeological sites.

A monthly newsletter, Facebook page, and website keep members abreast of our events and happenings.

The organization is a chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society, a statewide organization that publishes quarterly newsletters and a journal, *The Florida Anthropologist*, and holds an annual conference.

I want to help The Southwest Florida Archaeology Society preserve and interpret Florida's heritage!

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check One:

Individual (\$20) _____ Sustaining Individual (\$50) _____ Family (\$35) _____

Student (\$5) _____ Life (\$500) _____

Donation to Support SWFAS Speakers and Programs _____

Skills, training, interests: _____

I hereby agree to abide by the rules and bylaws of the Southwest Archaeological Society. I further release from any and all liability due to accident and injury to myself, dependents and any property owners cooperating with the society.

Signature: _____ Date _____

Please make your check out to SWFAS and mail to:

Charlie Strader
SWFAS Treasurer
27655 Kent Road
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

REV. 12052017

FAS Membership Categories

Membership in the Society is open to all interested individuals who are willing to abide by the Florida Anthropological Society Statement of Ethical Responsibilities, which can be found on our website fasweb.org. *Membership is for one year.*

Student *	\$15	Sustaining	\$100
Regular	\$30	Patron	\$1,000
Family	\$35	Benefactor	\$2,500
Institutional	\$30		

*Student membership is open to graduate, undergraduate and high school students. A photocopy of your student ID must accompany payment. **Add \$25 for foreign addresses.

Send Membership Form and Dues Payment to:

Florida Anthropological Society, P O Box 1561 Boynton Beach, FL 33425

You can join online or pay Membership dues renewals via PayPal on our website fasweb.org.

THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC. IS A TAX-EXEMPT 501C3 ORGANIZATION. TAX ID#59-1084419.

Name: _____

Membership Category: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

FAS Chapter: _____

I wish to make a donation to:

\$ _____ Dot Moore/FAS Student Grant Fund \$ _____ Florida Archaeology Month Account

\$ _____ Florida Anthropologist Monograph Fund \$ _____ Florida Anthropologist Endowment Fund

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

_____ I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of the Florida Anthropological Society.

Signature

Date