



# Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS)

## OUR 45th YEAR

### February 2025 Newsletter

<https://swflarchaeology.org/>

#### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER** By *John F. Furey M.A., RPA*, [jffurey@charter.net](mailto:jffurey@charter.net)



**BREAKING NEWS:** The site in Miami near the Miami Circle that is owned by the Related Group is attempting to give the artifacts away to institutions outside of Florida to avoid curating them and the company is refusing to speak with the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes. See article below.

#### **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

In February we recognize Black History Month and present related articles in the SWFAS Newsletter. Did you know that African Americans, known as “Black Pilgrims”, were present early in the Plymouth Massachusetts Plantation Colony that was founded in 1620. The earliest documented African American there was listed in 1643 as a “blackamore” and in 1653 an African American maidservant testified in court against a white man. By 1684 there were free African Americans owning property, by 1674 Black, Native American, and European slaves were being acquired, and by 1715 it was estimated that there were about 2,000 enslaved people in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Revolutionary War officially began in February 1775 when the British Parliament declared that Massachusetts was in rebellion. There were four noted African American Massachusetts veterans that fought the British with General Washington: Cato Howe, Quamany Quash, Plato Turner, and Prince Goodwin. At the Boston Massacre in 1770 British troops fired into a crowd that were harassing them and five men were killed; one was a Black man, Crispus Attacks. In 1780 the Massachusetts Constitution declared that “all men are born free and equal” and in early 1780 Massachusetts became the first to end slavery through judicial action, 160 years after its founding. It was not until February 6, 1788 that Massachusetts became a state.

The famous Clotilda slave ship was the last known slave ship to reach the U.S. shore. It arrived on July 9th 1860 and was burned and skuttled in Mobile Bay to hide the evidence. The state of Alabama is currently planning to preserve the ship underwater 165 years after she was sunk. Please see the article below.

The Homestead Act of 1862 was originally designed to offer free public farm land to recently liberated southern Blacks in ten southern states and it fueled a Black migration West. It specifically excluded Indians and Southerners who fought for the Confederacy and represented a way for former slaves to own land and leave the South. The use of the Homestead Act by blacks, despite the many roadblocks, is only a footnote compared to the massive white migration west by European immigrants and Eastern whites that used the Homestead Act to acquire free land after it was opened to whites. To learn more about the Black usage of the Homestead Act of 1862, see below.

The South Carolina House is deciding which statue of Robert Small (1839-1915) to erect at the statehouse. It will be the first monument to a Black Civil War hero in Columbia. Small was a slave imprisoned on the Confederate steamship the Planter and stole the ship loaded with other slaves and steamed past a Confederate fleet and to freedom in the North. Small became the first Black to pilot a ship for the U.S. Navy and was awarded prize money for the ship. After the war, Small served in the state legislature and five terms in the U.S. Congress.

For those of you that were unable to attend the SWFAS December Field Trip to Koreshan, plan to attend the SWFAS February 19th Meeting at the IMAG and hear docent Ron Westcott describe the life of the Koreshans and learn about the religious beliefs of Cyrus Teed who established this sect here in Southwest Florida.

## RECENT RESEARCH

### ***HUMAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY INCREASES BIODIVERSITY***



“The relationship between humans and ecosystems has always been much more complicated and complex and, that in addition to negative effects, there are also positive effects on biodiversity that follow certain rules.” Zooarchaeological data indicate that human activities, such as farming and animal husbandry, can lead to an increase in biodiversity, not just on a local level, and many plants and animals benefit from this biodiversity, while larger animals, such as predators, are forced to move to other areas. Increased diversity in human life forms has had an overall positive effect on biodiversity. Source: Shuman T. Hussain, et al., 2024 *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*.

### ***ANIMAL ISOLATION AND EVOLUTION***

In addition to human effects on animal ecosystems, there exist several other influencing factors. Peter Williams, a researcher at Michigan State University, recently noted that evolutionary forces influence modern biodiversity as well as geographic forces such as geographic isolation. Australian mammals are an example of geographic isolation. A little noted force is the geological convergence of landmasses such as the connection of North and South America and the evolutionary and isolation forces that it created. Birds and bats are another example of biographic influence. Birds can traverse vast distances and this has led to a homogenization of bird communities globally. Bats, on the other hand as the only flying mammal group, despite their ability to fly have maintained a higher degree of functional diversity across hemispheres. Source: *Nature Communications*.

## **JANUARY PRESENTATION - THE MOUND HOUSE BY THERESA SCHOBER**



The presentation on the Mound House by archaeologist Theresa Schober was an exceptional 2000 year prehistoric and historic story of the site and its early relationship to the surrounding Calusa sites and its capital at Mound Key. The site was an extensive Calusa shell midden on Fort Myers Beach (Estero Island), and the Calusa participated in the extensive trade network with the Hopewell and Mississippian societies in the Southeast and Midwest. The Calusa even allowed Cuban fishermen to establish “fishing rancheros” within their territory, a practice that continued even after the Calusa were gone. The William Case

family, an early settler, built their house atop the mound as it was the highest point on the island. A 14-acre parcel was acquired in 1951 by the last owners who bulldozed away a large portion of the shell mound, dredged canals and subdivided the property into lots. The house itself had several additions and modifications to it over the years and was acquired by the Town of Fort Myers Beach in the year 2000.

The tales of the conversion of the Mound House into today’s historical recreation of how the house was in the 1920s, the removal of the large trees that dominated the site, and the creation of the cut-away of the midden under where the swimming pool was located were fascinating. This story was enhanced because Schober was intimately involved in these decisions as the Director of Cultural Resources for the Town of Fort Myers Beach from 2002-2011. She worked to develop the Mound House, authoring grants that generated \$4.5 million to make it happen. The Q & A session was further enhanced by having members of the audience adding to the story as they were personally involved in the Mound House. Please plan to visit this local gem.

## WILLIAM C. LAZARUS MEMORIAL AWARD PRESENTATION TO JOHN FUREY



At the SWFAS January meeting at the IMAG Museum, John Furey, President of SWFAS, was presented with the 2024 Florida Anthropological Society William C. Lazarus Memorial Award. As stated in the Florida Anthropologist September 2024 issue:

John F. Furey was nominated by the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS) for the Lazarus Award. The award honors achievements by an individual who does not make a living doing archaeology. John meets criteria of the Lazarus Award by his scholarship, stewardship of archaeological data, public education, and bringing together people interested in Florida's cultural heritage.

In 2012, John contacted SWFAS, becoming a member and speaking at the January 2013 chapter meeting. In January 2016, John was elected President, a position he has held for 8 years and counting. He has revitalized this once very active FAS chapter, many of whose members had passed away.

John has built audiences through consistent, engaging public programs. He has contributed substantially to a regular, widely circulated newsletter, and forged relationships with area media. As a SWFAS promoter, he has set up and staffed tables at events. By 2019, John's "system" proved fruitful. SWFAS programs were attracting audiences of 100 people.

John was not a stranger to archaeology. He completed B.A. degrees in Anthropology and Geology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1970. At Florida Atlantic University (FAU), he earned an M.A. degree in Anthropology (Archaeology) in 1972. Studying under Dr. William Sears, John assisted with laboratory work on Fort Center (8GL13), archaeological surveys in Boca Raton, and salvage excavations at Boca Raton Inlet Midden (8PB6). His excavations at Boca Weir Site (8PB56) in Highland Beach, Palm Beach County, were the basis of his thesis titled "The Spanish River Complex: Settlement Patterning in the Eastern Okeechobee Subarea of Florida," the first major site report in that part of Florida. He published a portion of his work in The Florida Anthropologist in 1977. It focused on 175 shark tooth tools from Boca Weir, at the time the largest number from a Florida site, except Fort Center. He is currently compiling a statewide study of shark tooth tool distribution, frequency, and technological differences, as well as shark species variability. This work will provide a reference on shark utilization in all regions of Florida.

John restarted an internal award for SWFAS achievers in 2017, and has provided them to seven recipients. John also has been the driving force in recognizing long-time SWFAS contributors with FAS awards. He is a strong supporter of FAS, attending annual meetings and promoting FAS membership at each SWFAS meeting.

John has helped record SWFAS history, seeking help from Craighead Lab volunteers to scan records and newsletters housed there. With the launch of a new website ([swflarchaeology.org](http://swflarchaeology.org)), John populated its pages like an archive, writing a history, compiling monthly talks by speaker, title, and date. Eventually, records extended back into the 1980s.

John also preserved data held at Craighead Lab from past SWFAS excavations, scanning and routinely backing them up. Some artifacts and records were transferred to other repositories, such as the Marco Island Historical Society. Eventually, John hopes to publish some past work by SWFAS. In September 2021, John published an article in The Florida Anthropologist about the final public acquisition of Mound Key, in Estero Bay, by Lee County.

## SWFAS DUES REMINDER 2025



SWFAS dues for 2025 are due and your support of archaeology, history, preservation, and education in Southwest Florida is critical. Our sole source of income is your dues and your gifts, and SWFAS is a 501(c)(3) registered Florida non-profit organization. Thanks to everyone that has already renewed their 2025 tax deductible membership. If you have not done so, we have two ways, you can renew online electronically with a credit card at <https://swflarchaeology.org/>, go to Donate; or send a check to: Charlie Strader, SWFAS Treasurer, 27655 Kent Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34135.

## COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM SPRING PROGRAMS



Are you and your visitors looking for something to do that is free? Somewhere new to go? Somewhere interesting and educational? Something for adults and children? The five Collier County Museums have many diverse and interesting programs and exhibits such as: a Randy Wayne White exhibit, The Immokalee Cattle Drive, Calusa Coast programs, and many more. Check them out at: <https://colliermuseums.com/>.

## SOUTHWEST FLORIDA MUSEUMS AND PLACES TO VISIT

Please see the attached listing of places to visit and things to do in SW Florida in our local counties. It is updated each year but kindly call ahead to ensure the operating hours are still the same.

## THIS MONTH'S ARTICLES

**The Famous Clotilda Slave Ship**, see below.

**The 'Exodusters': The Roots of African American Homesteading**, see below.

### What Do the Arrangement of Bird Feathers Tell Us?

When did the ability to fly originate? Could dinosaurs fly? Two ornithologists from the Field Museum of Natural History have discovered a hidden factor in bird feathers that are predictors of flight and were never noticed before. See below.

### 5,000-Year-Old Neolithic Farming Community in Northern Morocco Discovered

Located inland from Rabat and about 200 km. southwest of the Straits of Gibraltar, the site of Oued Beht was an ancient large-scale farming community in an area that was thought to be inhabited only by pastoralists. This is a productive agricultural area that, until this discovery, was considered as 'desert'.

## FEBRUARY PRESENTATION: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025, 7:00 PM

### FORT MYERS, IMAG HISTORY & SCIENCE CENTER

#### TOPIC: THE KORESHANS



Ron Westcott, Koreshan State Park Docent, will start at the beginning with the birth of Cyrus Teed in 1839 and describe how he came to form the Koreshan Unity, moving from New York to Chicago and ultimately to Estero, Florida. He will discuss the Koreshans' accomplishments in Florida along with the conflict caused by their incorporation of the Town of Estero in 1904. The talk will conclude with the group's decline after Teed's death in 1908 and ultimate turning over of their community to the State of Florida to become Koreshan State Park in 1961.

Ron Westcott is a native of a small town in northeastern Pennsylvania, raised a family with his wife Joan in Rochester, NY and has been a Florida resident since 1996. In 2012 they sold their home in Jacksonville, FL and took to the road as fulltime RVers. Their first winter home was at Koreshan State Park as residential volunteer docents – living in the park and interpreting the park's rich history for the visitors.

Ron found the history of the Koreshan Unity fascinating and scheduled and trained docents and tour guides at Koreshan State Park for over 10 years. Ron is also a past president of the Friends of Koreshan, a citizen's support organization that assists the park in fund raising, historic preservation and interpretation.



**TO GO TO THE IMAG:**



**FROM THE SOUTH:** Take the 75 fwy North toward Ft. Myers, then take the FL-82 exit, EXIT 138, toward ML King Jr Blvd/Ft Myers/Immokalee. Turn left onto FL-82/State Road 82. Continue to follow FL-82. Go 3.60 miles, then turn left onto Cranford Ave. Go 0.09 miles, and the IMAG is on the right.

**SWFAS PRESENTATION SCHEDULE 2025**

**MARCH 2025**

**Newsletter**

**MARCH 19, 2025, 7:00 PM, FT. MYERS, IMAGINARIUM MUSEUM**

**Theresa Schober, Archaeologist & SWFAS Member**  
Archaeology of Mt. Elizabeth

**John Furey, RPA, Archaeologist & SWFAS Member**  
Shark Tooth Tools at Mt. Elizabeth

**APRIL 2025**

**Newsletter**

**APRIL 16, 2025, 7:00 PM, NAPLES, COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM AT GOVERNMENT CENTER**

**Bob Carr, Executive Director, The Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc.**

Topic The Miami Circles and the Rise of the Tequesta Chiefdom

**MAY 2025**

**Newsletter**

**MAY 9-11, 2025, GAINESVILLE Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) 77th Annual Meeting Meeting & Conference**

**JUNE-AUGUST 2025**

**Summer Sabbatical No Newsletters/Presentations**

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2025**

**Newsletters**

**NOVEMBER 2025**

**Newsletter**

**NOVEMBER 19, 2025, 7:00 PM, NAPLES, COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM AT GOVERNMENT CENTER**

**Jacob Winge, Local Historian**  
Topic: TBA

**DECEMBER 2025**

**Newsletter**

**DECEMBER 2025**

**Field Trip - TBA**

## ARTICLES

### **OUTCRY FROM NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES AFTER FLORIDA COMPANY TRIES TO GIVE ARTEFACTS AWAY**

By: The Guardian at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/29/native-american-artifacts-relics-florida>



Photograph: Matias J Ocnor/Miami Herald via Getty Images

Native American tribes in Florida have accused a development company of freezing them out of a discussion on the future of a trove of historical artefacts from a downtown Miami construction site, and hawking them around the US without their consent or knowledge. Representatives of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the American Indian Movement of Florida told the Guardian that they were angered by the Related Group’s approach to a number of out-of-state universities to see if they were interested in curating and housing the relics believed to be from an ancient Tequesta Indian village.

More than a million mostly fragmentary items that experts say date anywhere from 2,000 to 7,000 years ago are currently stored at Related’s office in the Brickell neighborhood where the company is building two residential tower blocks, and where they were uncovered in archaeological digs since 2021. The site is a stone’s throw from the Miami Circle national historic landmark, known as the city’s Stonehenge, which was discovered in 1998 along with similarly aged artefacts including pieces of pottery, tools, and animal bones and teeth. Some scattered human ancestral remains were recovered where Related was clearing land, and reburied off-site in consultation with local tribal leaders, but otherwise, the representatives say, they have not been listened to.

The tribes say Related has broken an agreement made with the city of Miami in 2023 to present an action plan to preserve, catalog and display significant parts of the collection locally in exchange for being allowed to press ahead with the development. They also feel betrayed by the company’s exploration of a possible new home for the artefacts by offering them to educational institutions far from their origin, including the University of California, Berkeley. That occurred, the tribes say, at the same time Related broke two deadlines to present a plan to deliver on a promise made to the city by the company’s founder, Jorge Pérez, two years ago of “doing the right thing for this community”.

“They won’t listen to the tribes, to the descendants of the ancestors, that we don’t want the artefacts displayed or shopped around to universities, but put back into the ground,” said Betty Osceola, an environmental activist and Miccosukee tribe member. “They haven’t had any meaningful discussion with the tribe. They’re looking more at it from an archeological standpoint, and not from the tribes’, or as an Indigenous person. In their mindset it’s OK to put these items on display, in our viewpoint we want them reburied somewhere, and there hasn’t been any type of discussion as to where that location would be.”

Osceola said another disappointment was how Related had “downplayed” the discoveries, at least until the 2023 agreement. “From the beginning we understood the importance of that area and how it’s connected to Miami Circle, which is protected, that it’s all interconnected with the sites on the north side of the Miami River as well. But there was some downplay of the significance, [they said] no, it wasn’t connected,” she said. “Now they realize the connection, they’re acknowledging the significance, but it’s frustrating they didn’t listen to us, not taking credence in what we had to say.”

Robert Rosa, chair of the American Indian Movement of Florida, said the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes were still waiting to see a promised full inventory of items in Related’s possession. “They said both tribes would be able to go through every artefact so they can determine what is a patrimonial item and a burial item, but that hasn’t happened,” he said. “They’re trying to be sly about it and send it away for ‘research’. Well, the tribes

don't want research. They want everything reinterred. You have all these archeologists here, all they want to do is dig and make a name for themselves and preach and tell the Native story without being Native.”

Related did not respond to the Guardian's request for comment. At a meeting of the city of Miami's historic and environmental preservation board earlier this month, the company's land-use lawyer, Iris Escarrá, said the approach to external institutions was exploratory and preliminary. “We were just asking for proposals to see what opportunities are available. This is nothing more than that,” she told members, according to the Miami Herald. Related, the newspaper said, promised to deliver a detailed plan, including proposals for exhibition spaces along Brickell's waterfront, at the next board meeting on 4 March. The company said it planned to link its site with the Miami Circle landmark via an educational pathway it intends to call the Tequesta Trail.

Meanwhile, the University of Miami (UM) and Florida International University say they are still waiting for a response to their joint proposal for a conservation and research center in the city. “The action plan is the guarantee the public has of access to some of the information from the capital of the Tequesta, the largest Indigenous pre-contact settlement in south Florida,” said Traci Ardren, professor of anthropology at UM. “What they showed at this last meeting was very disorganized. They're not speaking with museum curators, they're not speaking with scholars, they're not speaking with the archeological community, and most importantly they're not speaking with the local Indigenous population.

“It's extremely disappointing they would consider farming out the curation of the artefacts to an institution outside of south Florida. Reaching out to other universities and institutions is inappropriate for lots of reasons, but fundamentally it's about their unwillingness to fund this educational component. It costs money to do this work.”

## ***ALABAMA CHOOSES TO PRESERVE LAST KNOWN SLAVE SHIP***

*By Alander Rocha, Florida Phoenix*

*August 21, 2024*

*From The Miami Times at [https://www.miamitimesonline.com/news/world\\_national/alabama-chooses-to-preserve-last-known-slave-ship/article\\_ec5b3a2e-5f72-11ef-9d99-b3d1aa223aff.html](https://www.miamitimesonline.com/news/world_national/alabama-chooses-to-preserve-last-known-slave-ship/article_ec5b3a2e-5f72-11ef-9d99-b3d1aa223aff.html)*



Credit: Mobile.org

The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) plans to keep the last known vessel to transport enslaved Africans to the United States in its current location in the Mobile River, saying the ship is too deteriorated to be raised above water. The Clotilda transported 110 Africans from what is now Benin to Mobile, Alabama, in 1860, more than 50 years after the United States outlawed the international slave trade. The voyage was arranged by Mobile businessman Timothy Meaher, who made a bet that he could smuggle slaves into the country without being caught. After the ship's arrival, the captors set it ablaze to destroy evidence of their crime.

The AHC, which has been involved in efforts to identify and preserve the Clotilda since 1997, said it cannot be raised from underwater “using existing technology.” “This phase of the investigation was vital in determining the next steps for the Clotilda. With this report, the Alabama Historical Commission can continue with its preservation plan and continue preserving this tremendous artifact and its history,” said Alabama Historical Commission Chairman Eddie Griffith in the announcement.

The survivors of the Clotilda went on to establish Africatown, a community near Mobile, where many of their descendants still reside today. The wreck of the Clotilda remained hidden for over a century until its discovery in 2019.

Since the discovery of the ship, there had been talk about raising the remains and putting them on display, possibly in a museum. The study found that the Clotilda's structural integrity has been severely compromised by both natural and human activities over the past 164 years. Investigators concluded that corrosion, physical

damage, and biological factors have led to significant structural damage to the remains of the Clotilda. The report recommends “in situ preservation,” meaning they will keep the wreck in place and cover the exposed sections with sediment to slow down decay.

Jeremy Ellis, president of the Clotilda Descendants Association, said in a statement that they look forward to learning more about persevering Clotilda, its history, and how it affected survivors’ ancestors, but said the “site of Clotilda is a crime scene and should be treated as such.” “Until there is justice and accountability for this crime, any narrative or conversation regarding Clotilda and the site of Clotilda should be about the 110 survivors aboard Clotilda and the crime that was committed,” Ellis said, adding that “conversation that focuses on raising the ship is a distraction from the 110 survivors aboard Clotilda and the horrendous crime committed.”

In the announcement, the AHC said that while the “structural integrity” of the ship may have deteriorated significantly, the “archeological integrity” is still there. “Archeological integrity means that the vessel still has the ability to tell its story through careful scientific investigation. Structural integrity means that the structure of the vessel remains strong and intact,” said State Archaeologist Stacye Hathorn in AHC’s statement.

Ellis said they “look forward to learning more about persevering Clotilda and learning more about the final voyage of Clotilda and how it impacted our ancestors” and hopes to work with the organizations involved in the Clotilda wreck investigation to build a memorial to remember ancestors Africatown’s ancestors and across Alabama. “We also look forward to partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mobile District (USACE) and the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) on a memorial that honor the lives of the 110 aboard Clotilda and at the current site where it remains,” Ellis said.

## ***THE EXODUSTERS: THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HOMESTEADING***

*By Barbara Bamberger-Scott*

*February 8, 2024*

*From Homestead.Org at <https://www.homestead.org/homesteading/history/exodusters-the-roots-of-african-american-homesteading>*



History’s ironies never cease to amaze me. The same day that Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, on January 1, 1863, the Homestead Act went into effect; but there was no immediate connection between these two famous pieces of paper. One was law. The other was a use of the President’s war powers to foment rebellion, to give harm and discomfort to the enemy; it could be seen, in today’s terms, as the hostile intent of a terrorist state. Only time has told us that, in the long run, the two instruments did eventually connect, and the beneficiaries of that connection were America’s newly freed slaves.

The Emancipation Proclamation only freed the slaves in the ten Confederate states, serving the purpose of inciting those suffering souls to defect from their masters and their lives of hopeless bondage to flee to the welcoming arms of the Union armies, many there to assist in quelling for good and for all the upstart South, and reuniting the broken nation. However... despite the obvious yen of many ex-slaves to quit the South, they were not going to be allowed to claim land out West; the first requirement of the Homestead Act of 1863 for those who wanted to “prove a claim” was... citizenship. This was followed by the requirements that the claimant:

- Be 18 years old or older;
- Never have waged war against the United States (a clause both sensible on its face and also obviously intended to keep nearly all Southerners out of the game);
- Pay \$18 in fees;
- Promise to improve the land with buildings, wells, and crops over a five year period.



That being accomplished and duly witnessed, the settler would own the property outright. Ex-slaves were not made citizens until the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which declared:

“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States; and such citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude.....”

Then, and only then, could people of color assume the right to grab the land being snatched up by Whites, proffered by their rich Uncle Sam.

Former slaves would seem to have had plenty of incentive to leave Dixie after the Civil War was finally over, and, with it, the institution of slavery. If they didn't, it was probably because of the false hopes of Reconstruction, an idea that died on the vine in a few short years. It might have been because they were unaware of other options such as the Homestead Act, or fearful yet of what would happen to them if they removed themselves from known environs, since in former times, the punishment for such adventuring could get a Black person whipped, sold, or dead.

Nonetheless, there was a trickle of African-Americans westward; the migration, though short-lived, was remarkable for the numbers. The trek was labeled the “Great Exodus” and the wanderers were quickly dubbed Exodusters, an apt Biblical reference that would have resonated well with most Blacks at the time.

Inspired by racial separatists like Benjamin “Pap” Singleton, himself a former slave, African-Americans were encouraged to settle in Kansas, partly because of its rumored connection to the near-mythological figure of abolitionist John Brown, and in Oklahoma, which at one time was envisioned as an all-Black state. Pap, something of a self-promoter as well as a rabble-rouser, first exhorted ex-slaves to settle in Tennessee, but when locals refused to sell them land, they pushed on to Kansas, with Pap considering himself the Noah of this large migration. African-American enclaves in cities like Topeka offered safety in numbers, and Black men were quickly swallowed up into low-paid industrial jobs, their wives to domestic service. The Exoduster movement faded as quickly as it began, lasting only from 1879 to 1880, leaving its charming moniker blowing in the wind. Bad crops and fear of yellow fever along the Missouri River were two discouraging factors, especially as some locals blamed the outbreak of fever on the poor Black transients.

The Homestead Act allowed about one hundred thousand former slaves to seek claims west of the Mississippi. Despite the racial phobias that seemed to exist at all times, there was a more tolerant attitude towards every kind of strange, marvelous and scurrilous character in the wide-open spaces, where a man was judged, as one observer put it, “by how he sits in the saddle.” The Border States like New Mexico even then had a long history of accommodation to people of other races, and that made transitions for migrating Blacks less painful.

Farming was something in which many Blacks had experience, often forced under slavery's restraints to grow small garden plots for basic survival. So logically ex-slaves might refuse farm labor, having done so much, and in fact many preferred safe city life and a regular paycheck to the risk of alien landscapes and the vagaries of agriculture. But those who were motivated by the Homestead Act were cut from different cloth from the mainstream of ex-slaves.

One early Black homesteader to try farming life in Kansas was George Washington Carver. The great scientist and artist settled first at Fort Scott, but left after witnessing a lynching there. Lynching was at its height in the latter part of the 19th century, more prevalent in the Deep South but not confined to that region, as Whites were unnerved by Black influx and unwilling to share living space with their African American fellow citizens. Carver homesteaded a quarter plot near the town of Beeler, Kansas, and two monuments mark his tenure there. His sod house has reverted naturally to the unrelenting flat landscape. Carver went on to teach at Tuskegee Institute, under the administration of Booker T. Washington. Both men in their own ways encouraged racial and

personal self-sufficiency, and Carver's work with peanuts and other crops to replace cotton for Black farmers was nothing short of revolutionary.

African American Henry Boyer was a wagoner for the U.S. Army in the mid-1800s. He saw New Mexico while in the service, and never forgot its beauty and grandeur or the apparently endless expanses of land available for settlement, inciting fantasies of returning someday. His son Frank grew up in the early Reconstruction years, and was educated at Morehouse and Fiske Colleges where he was inculcated with the self-help ideology of Booker Washington and the more radical philosophy of W.E.B. Dubois. When the Homestead Act of 1893 was enacted, Boyer resolved to get a parcel in New Mexico.

Appalled at the way his fellow African Americans were treated in the East, threatened by the Ku Klux Klan as a radical trouble-maker, seeing Reconstruction being rapidly deconstructed, and egged on by his father's idealized memories of New Mexico, Frank went boldly forth: "Pursuing the dream of his father to establish a self-sustaining community, Frank Boyer and his student, Daniel Keyes, walked from Pellam, Georgia to New Mexico, stopping just long enough, to work for food, clothes, shelter, and other necessities they needed." The trek took six months, partly because the two Black men were refused rides in passing White wagon trains. The two eventually claimed parcels of land near the current town of Roswell, later known as the center of UFO activity. Boyer and Keyes sent for their wives and in 1901, started the town of Blackdom, a play on the word "kingdom." Boyer was a religious man and an intellectual visionary who believed that by banding together with like-minded people in a communal agrarian setting, he could attain the kind of physical, political and emotional self-sufficiency that earlier generations of his people could only dream of.

When Boyer and Keyes founded Blackdom, the region was fed with a number of artesian wells. It must have appeared like a kind of rocky paradise to land-starved Easterners. Boyer advertised for Black homesteaders who came from Kansas and Oklahoma as well as farther east. He and his wife personally helped the new arrivals build houses and plant crops. Eventually, the colony consisted of about 25 families, around 300 people, on 15,000 acres. The township had a post office, hotel, and a weekly newspaper. The center of the community was the Blackdom Baptist Church and Schoolhouse. The community maintained an "open door" policy so that Black cowhands passing through could enter any home and help themselves to bed and board. They sometimes repaid this kindness with sides of beef. In its way, Blackdom was a utopia for its residents and a sort of "over-ground railway" of generosity and assistance for the African-Americans of the area.

Sadly, changes came about, some wrought by indomitable natural forces: "worms appeared, there was an alkali buildup in the soil, and slowly the artesian wells dried up." It became increasingly arduous for the occupants to fulfill the requirements of the Homestead Act to "prove up" one's right to ownership. Racial bias among certain officials continued to plague the residents as they were mysteriously forbidden from digging for water and refused bank loans. By the early 1920s, Boyer's house had been foreclosed on, the lack of water drove all the families out to neighboring communities like Roswell, and Blackdom became a dusty ghost town. Today, it is evident only by a small monument in the trackless grasslands.

Myrtle Phillips of Albuquerque was the granddaughter of one of Blackdom's original residents: "She and her husband still visit Blackdom nearly every year. She keeps a notebook of laminated photographs and deeds of her grandfather's property in Blackdom. Also in the notebook are plot maps showing the location of the homestead. She has a box labeled 'artifacts' that is full of tin cans, pottery shards, and small pieces of adobe that she has collected from the property over the years. There is also a shiny blue piece of a plate that she finds pleasing. She has inherited her grandfather's property and will pass it on to her children. She remembers that once her grandfather left the homestead, no one in the family mentioned Blackdom again."

Robert Ball Anderson was born into slavery in 1843 on the Ball Plantation in Kentucky. In 1864 he escaped and joined the Union Army as part of the 125th Colored Infantry. The war ended soon after he joined up so he never

saw action in that conflict, but spent the rest of his enlistment, three years, out west, finally winding up in Nebraska.

Anderson filed a claim under the Homestead Law for 80 acres of land. Like so many others, Black and White, he was unable to “prove his claim” owing to low prices for farm produce, drought, and a plague of grasshoppers, so he drifted to Kansas where he got work as a farmhand, still determined to own his own land. In 1886 he was able to secure a forest parcel, and despite many further disasters, he proved the claim at last. By considerable: Anderson and his wife became owners of over 2,000 acres in Nebraska. Their story was little different from those of many of America’s first settlers who, fleeing oppression and risking all, won the right to the soil they stood on by dint of back-breaking toil and pure grit.

Landowners like Anderson would by-pass some of the uglier manifestations of racial bias. Their lonely outposts on the prairie were a kind of protection in themselves, and Anderson was especially known and regarded as a gentleman – being a former soldier and hardworking rancher earned him the respect of neighbors who were open-minded enough to see past his hue. Anderson and others like him made it easier for those Blacks who followed later in the twentieth century.

Though the Black families who migrated West after the Civil War had more barriers to overcome than their White counterparts, all the “provers” had to fight Mother Nature in arid, lonely lands. Only about 40% of all migrants who rushed for ownership under the Homestead Act succeeded.

On the National Parks website, historian Todd Arrington observes: “Between the earlier gradual migrations and the 1879 exodus, Kansas had gained nearly 27,000 Black residents in ten years. Though a far greater number of Blacks remained in the South, this number still represents 27,000 individual dreams of a better life and 27,000 people that acted on their desires and their rights to enjoy the freedoms to which they supposedly had been entitled since the Emancipation Proclamation. Though few found Kansas to be the Promised Land for which they hoped, they did find it a place that enabled them to live freely and with much less racial interference than in the South.”

## ***SCIENTISTS DISCOVER ANCIENT PATTERN HIDDEN IN THE FEATHERS OF BIRDS***

By: Tessa Koumoundouros

From MSN.Com at <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/scientists-discover-an-ancient-pattern-hidden-in-the-feathers-of-birds/ar-BB1iQDkM>



Provided by ScienceAlert

According to an analysis of hundreds of preserved bird specimens from museum collections around the globe, there's a specific set of feather rules behind the power of flight. These newly discovered rules allow scientists to better predict which dinosaurs could fly too. "Theropod dinosaurs, including birds, are one of the most successful vertebrate lineages on our planet," says Field Museum of Natural History paleontologist Jingmai O'Connor. "One of the reasons that they're so successful is their flight. One of the other reasons is

probably their feathers, because there's such versatile structures." Their new data could settle some old paleontological debates over whether flight evolved in dinosaurs on more than one occasion.

Examining wing feathers of 346 different species of birds from museums around the world, Field Museum of Natural History ornithologist Yosef Kiat discovered an interesting trend. From the tiniest hummingbird to the fiercest eagle, all flying birds had 9 to 11 asymmetrical flight feathers called primaries. But the number of primary feathers in flightless birds varied immensely. Emus lack them completely, while penguins fancy themselves up with 40. "It's really surprising, that with so many styles of flight we can find in modern birds, they all share this trait of having between nine and eleven primary feathers," says Kiat. "And I was surprised

that no one seems to have found this before." The number of primaries, along with feather symmetry and wing proportions accurately reflect the flight capacity of all known modern birds.

Looking at fossils up to 160-million-years-old the researchers identified which bird ancestors shared these traits, and were therefore likely to have been able to fly. Out of 35 different species of extinct birds, Kiat and O'Conner identified some that had the right feathers for flight, and others that did not. The likely flyers include Archeopteryx, considered to be one of the earliest bird-like animals. While there's debate over the true relationship between Archeopteryx and birds, tiny four-winged dinosaurs called Microraptors also had these features, despite not being directly related to birds at all. "It was only recently that scientists realized that birds are not the only flying dinosaurs," explains O'Connor.

Oddly, Caudipteryx possessed the correct number of primary feathers but they were almost completely symmetrical, "almost certainly" ruling out flight. The researchers speculate that Caudipteryx's ancestor was likely able to fly but the genus had since lost this ability. "Our results here seem to suggest that flight only evolved once in dinosaurs," states O'Connor. Their analysis indicates the anatomy required for flight evolved in a species ancestral to all these pennaraptoran groups before they diversified. Some, like Caudipteryx, became flightless early on. Those like Microraptors retained their flight but ended up part of an evolutionary dead end. Others went on to become modern birds.

Kiat and O'Connor point out claims suggesting flight evolved multiple times in dinosaurs were based on skeletal data alone. "We argue it is impossible to assess flight potential in non-avian pennaraptorans without examining the structure of the feathers forming the wing itself," they write in their paper. They believe we're still missing the earliest stages of wing evolution from our fossil records, so this is unlikely to be the final word in the debate.

### ***THE REMAINS OF A 5,000-YEAR-OLD FARMING COMMUNITY WERE UNCOVERED IN MOROCCO, AND THOUSANDS OF POTTERY FRAGMENTS AND STONE AXE HEADS SUGGEST HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE LIVED THERE***

By: Emily Chan

From MSN.Com at <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/the-remains-of-a-5-000-year-old-farming-community-were-uncovered-in-morocco-and-thousands-of-pottery-fragments-and-stone-axe-heads-suggest-hundreds-of-people-lived-there/ar-AA1rE1Dp>



The remains of an ancient farming community were discovered in Morocco. The society was 5,000 years old and is the oldest of its kind to be found in Africa outside the Nile Valley. Thousands of painted pottery fragments and stone axe heads were uncovered at the site, suggesting that hundreds of people lived there. The size of the community rivaled that of Bronze Age Troy. Oued Beht, the site where the previously unknown 5,000-year-old farming community was discovered, is located in northern Morocco. It was first found by French colonists in the 1930s. For 90 years, it was ignored until a Moroccan archaeologist named Youssef Bokbot decided to conduct excavations there.

Bokbot and colleagues analyzed samples of seeds and charcoal found around the site and dated the community back around 3400 B.C. to 2900 B.C. The groups that lived there likely had diverse genetic backgrounds, including traditional pastoralists from the Sahara and people originally from the Middle East and the Iberian Peninsula. "You really have Indigenous influxes all meeting in what we now realize is a melting pot," said Cyprian Broodbank, a co-author of the study and an archaeologist at the University of Cambridge.

The people who lived at the site farmed the land and traded with other societies across the Mediterranean. According to evidence of seeds from large pits, they grew wheat, barley, peas, pistachios, and olives. Some remains belonging to goats, sheep, pigs, and cattle were also unearthed. The pits pointed to advanced agricultural practices and the ability to store extra food. Furthermore, the significant quantity of pottery shards and stone axe heads at the site suggested that the community produced goods to trade with the other Bronze and Copper Age societies in the Iberian Peninsula and possibly Egypt and Mesopotamia that existed during this time. In addition, there has been evidence of ivory and ostrich eggs in Europe around this time, but archaeologists didn't know which societies in Africa could have supplied Europe with these goods until now.

For a long time, experts had assumed that North Africa was mostly inhabited by hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, nomadic people who moved around with their herds of livestock. The new discovery has shown that stationary farming communities existed in North Africa. Overall, the findings illustrate that the society at Oued Beht was highly organized, capable of large-scale farming, and existed simultaneously with other farming-based communities in the region. "What we're doing here is not plonking down a [single farming society] into a pastoral world," Broodbank said. "We're actually showing that this part of the world has gone fully Neolithic, that this is part of the big world of farming. We've just found the tip of the iceberg."

## **SWFAS OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2025**

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***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](http://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** \_\_\_\_\_

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**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](http://fasweb.org). *Membership is for one year.* SELECT LEVEL BELOW.

|                                   |      |                                        |       |
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\*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.

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

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Signature

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**Send Membership Form and Dues Payment to:**

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*You can join online or pay Membership dues renewals via PayPal on our website [fasweb.org](http://fasweb.org).*

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