



WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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A 501(c)3 Corporation and Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society meets the second Tuesday of the month (except June, July and August) at 7:00 pm. Our November 9 meeting will be held via Zoom, and we are contemplating a live/Zoom December 14 meeting if arrangements can be made (to be announced). For our November meeting, go to the Zoom link at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87476297701?pwd=eU1rc3AyK04zTnFuUUZtSzRDVEh1dz09> Meeting ID: 874 7629 7701 Password: 033667 Join with Google Meet , go to: meet.google.com/xka-ahcp-jyi

FRANK HAMILTON CUSHING AND THE KEY MARCO ATLATLS TOPIC OF NOVEMBER 9 MEETING BY ARCHAEOLOGIST JOHN WHITAKER

Florida excavations in 1895 by a pioneering archaeologist produced famous finds of prehistoric art, and an early recognition of a forgotten weapon, the atlatl or spearthrower. We know a lot more about atlatls today, and re-examining Cushing's finds shows some of the problems and promises of reconstruction and experimental archaeology.

John Whittaker teaches anthropology and archaeology at Grinnell College in Iowa. Much of his work has been in the American Southwest, but experiments with prehistoric technology are a favorite source of archaeological information, contact with the public, and fun. He is the author of two books on making and understanding stone tools and modern flintknappers, and coaches the Grinnell College Raging Cows, the world's first collegiate atlatl team.



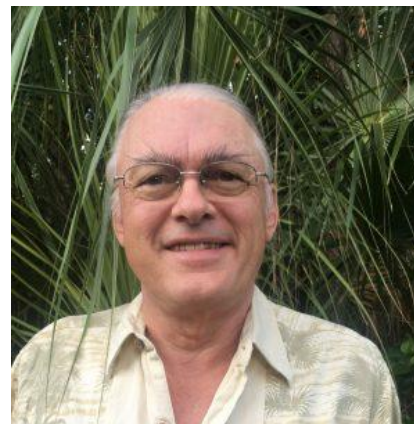
November 9 speaker, John Whittaker takes aim

THE HISTORY AND USE OF THE FLORIDA CABBAGE PALM TOPIC OF DECEMBER 11 MEETING

Jono Miller will be the speaker at the December 14 meeting of the WMS/LSSAS. His topic will follow the title of his new book, *The Palmetto, Histories and Mysteries of the Cabbage Palm*.

In his discussion, Jono will address some basic questions about our state tree, basically, everything you always wanted to know about our state tree, such as: Are cabbage palm trees? How long do they live? What is their natural range? How did early Europeans use the cabbage palm and how did Florida Indians and other Southeast Native American groups use cabbage palm?

A charred cabbage frond fragment was found on the 27 m ledge at Little Salt Spring in 2008, which dated to 12,300 rcbp, which is almost 14,000 years old! And they go back tens, if not hundreds of millennia.



December 14 speaker, Jono Miller

Jono Miller is the retired former Director of the New College of Florida Environmental Studies Program, his undergraduate alma mater. He is a natural historian and activist with 49 years experience in Southwest Florida. Since 1982, he has exhibited a particular interest in our state tree, the cabbage palm, which resulted in his Master's thesis: *A Humble Vulgar Tree: Explorations of the Natural and Cultural History of the Cabbage Palm, Sabal Palmetto*.

This should be a fascinating presentation and we look forward to Jono's presentation, and reading his book!

We are considering a live meeting, possible live/Zoom meeting in December. Some of us are anxious to get back to live meetings again, while others are still reluctant. If we can provide a hybrid meeting with both live and Zoom, that may be a perfect situation. We will inform all members as the date approaches on a live, Zoom, or both December meeting.

SPOOKY ARCHAEOLOGY TOPIC OF OCTOBER MEETING

By Judi and John Crescenzo

On October 12, 2021, Archaeologist Dr. Jeb Card from Miami University, Ohio, gave a Zoom presentation titled, "Spooky Archaeology: Myth and Science of the Past," based on his 2018 publication of a book by the same title. Through numerous examples, he showed how people in the past attempted to understand mysterious artifacts and myths and how these thoughts remain in the portrayal of archaeology by modern media.

The origins of Antiquarianism (the study of rare old items) are found in Avebury, England, where modern archaeology began. The Henge Shop sells skulls and witchcraft items. The site is larger than Stonehenge and has columns but not three-part structures. When Chapman University in Orange, CA, studied the paranormal, they found that 58% of people believed in haunting and spirits in 2018. Archaeology is popular because it provides a cross-cultural way to perceive time, from the ancient and mystic to recent science.

Early hieroglyphics are shown in ceramics from Copán, Honduras. The 15,000-year-old Bad Durrenberg shaman from Germany, a mythic superhuman figure, is still depicted today in toys, movies, musical performances, and television. The Neolithic House of the Fairies, a tomb in France, houses an elf's arrow pendant once worn as protection against fairies at night. Other examples of the supernatural include Jinn (a spirit in Arabian mythology) and a 9th century Syrian glass beaker, *The Luck of Eden Hall*, which is now in the London Museum. The 1893 publication of *Friars, Fairies, and Picts* suggested that fairy stories were about early humans.

The Classical world viewed Egypt as a source of mysticism and science. Alchemy and chemistry began in Egypt. In the Biblical tradition, pyramids held secrets brought to humans by fallen angels. Papyrus related the story of Setne Khamwaset, who tried to steal the book of Thoth, an Egyptian god. The 1932 Boris Karloff movie *The Mummy* depicted Egyptian use of forbidden magic, and archaeologists who were cursed because they resurrected a mummy. The movie was written by John Baldwin, an amateur Egyptologist, reporter, and screenwriter. It

was based on actual history, people of the 3rd century, and the story of Setne Khamwaset.

The idea that Egypt is a place of magic still exists. People want to explore and use magic, becoming characters in history. Theosophy (belief in reincarnation, astrology, and spiritual energy in objects) led to today's New Age following. Early archaeologists sought ancient origins, sources of knowledge, the sacred world, and early religions. Part of 19th-20th century Spiritualism (contact with the deceased) was a reaction to discoveries about evolution, science, the age of earth, and geology. Alchemists left Europe to find Shambhala (mythical Buddhist paradise, also called Shangri-la) and used spiritual Quija boards to attempt to locate the isle of Atlantis.

Fake stones from the lost continent of Mu were sold to museums in the 1920s by mineralogist William Niven. The idea of Mu came from Maya archaeology and hieroglyphics in a 16th century report. In the 1950s, when archaeologist Brasseur de Bourbourg first deciphered hieroglyphics of the Maya, people believed they were digging up their reincarnated selves. Ideas from Blavatsky, the founder of theosophy, were combined with the writings of Margaret Murray, an Egyptologist who inspired Wicca (witchcraft). America's Stonehenge, known as Pattee's Caves in the 1970s, turned out to be a colonial cider press.

In 1928, H.P. Lovecraft wrote a fiction story of ancient aliens. Stories of archaeologists with supernatural powers exploded in the 1920s, leading to the recent character of Indiana Jones. Pompeii was used as a model in Count Byron de Prorok's stories from Africa. In the 1940s, a pulp fiction magazine told of mind-bending aliens who had arrived on earth in weird spacecraft. Readers believed this was real, which strengthened interest in UFOs in 1947. A more recent book, *Chariots of the Gods* by Erich von Daniken, was taken from 1920s stories about archaeology. Ancient mummies in Peru were altered, creating elongated fingers and heads so that they would appear to be extraterrestrial. DNA testing has since proven that these mummies are human. Further fact checking is needed to resolve the problem of such inaccuracies in the portrayal of archaeology.

This was quite an interesting twist from our past meetings and we appreciate the diversity of the topics at this appropriate time of year. See the September-October Newsletter for more information on our October speaker.

MOUND KEY TOPIC OF SEPTEMBER 14 MEETING

By Judi and John Crescenzo

Our Zoom speaker on September 14, 2021, was archaeologist Dr. Victor Thompson from the University of Georgia. Although he has worked all over the world, he has focused on Florida and Georgia over the past decade.

In 2014, Thompson's Big Mound Key studies at Estero Bay in Lee County Florida were published in *Archaeology Magazine*. His research, completed in collaboration with others, intertwines the environment, ecology, climate change, institutions that mediate challenges, collective government, cooperation, resources, and what it means to be human.

Mound Key was the Calusa capital before and after European contact. Southwest Florida presented the Spanish

with a different environment and challenges than they had encountered elsewhere. The Calusa were well-adapted to their environment. They cooperated to gather resources and were able to feed a large population through technology, infrastructure, and the productivity of the estuarine environment; all without agriculture.

In the 16th century, when the Spanish arrived, Mound Key had an estimated population of 20,000, and was known as *Calus*. Spanish documents show that the kingdom was comprised of 50-60 named communities that paid tribute to the capital on Mound Key. Social stratification included an elite and military, which is unusual for a non-agricultural society. Evidence suggests horticultural practices included chili peppers and domesticated squash, so cooperation at Mound Key was needed to gather all the resources the environment could provide.

Lidar topographic maps show that Mound Key has a planned appearance, with a main canal and water courts covering about 125 acres. Mound Key was made of constructed mounds. Excavations reveal “reversals,” meaning that younger dated shell appears below older dated material. This indicates that the mounds were repurposed and mined out of old midden material.

The Spanish connection began with brief encounters by Ponce de Leon in 1513 and 1521, but the main occupation started with Pedro de Menendez de Aviles in the 16th century. At that time, there was conflict with the Tocabaga from the Tampa Bay area to the north. Calus, the leader of the Calusa on Mound Key, urged the Spanish to attack the Tocabaga, but they refused. Instead, Calus was assassinated. The Calusa unsuccessfully attempted to remove the Spanish under their leader Felipe, and in 1697, Franciscans tried to colonize the area but were forced out after three months.

Thompson's efforts included proving that Mound Key was the capital of the Calusa. Ground penetrating radar (GPR) located a fort. Excavations of the fort yielded posts and Spanish olive jars fragments, along with a bullet mold, glass beads, and one gilded gold-like bead from Europe. Dense tabby-like shell was placed around posts to create square posts. These were not built by the Calusa but were part of a Spanish fort wall. The tabby used was a Moorish invention brought to the New World by the Spanish, but the Calusa probably helped build the fort. Supplies from Havana were insufficient, so the Calusa must have also provided food. Documents show that the Spanish had to stay inside the fort for safety.

Estuaries provided the main source of food for the large population. The Calusa understood species behavior and manipulated their environment by building canals. Lidar shows large shell works with water courts, like fish weirs. A 1566 Spanish account mentions 20 men, a chief, and 500 nobles in a massive house. By 1697, there were 16 houses and 1,000 people. The vast mullet population provided the necessary food. Two large water courts and a central canal were described in the 19th century. A ramp led to Mound #1, where the public king's house was located.

Thompson conducted excavations along the shorelines of the water courts. Charcoal and small posts were found, which

may indicate where fish were preserved by smoking. The Calusa probably kept live fish in the water courts until they were smoked. The fish may have been caught in seine nets, trapped in courts, or gathered from canoes. This was a collective effort by many families to feed a large population. Radiocarbon dating has placed water court construction at 1350. Sediment studies show that the courts did not completely drain.

Chief Carlos's big house, visited by Menendez, was constructed on top of the largest mound. It predates the water courts and was located by radar. From 1300-1400, water courts were a collective public works project. Of the 16 houses, one had a powerful lineage, and 16th century Calusa may have descended from this family. Large platforms indicate how authority was passed down.

Mound Key differs from other sites because it was constructed of 500,000 cubic meters of shells, made entirely of discarded oysters which had been eaten. There is still much more to learn about Mound Key, despite what has been and what will be lost.

We thank Dr. Thompson for another fascinating and informative presentation! See the September-October Newsletter for more information on our October speaker.

THREE GRACES FOUNTAIN ANNUAL CLEANING

Sarasota County Fleet Maintenance team Terry Frank and Kevin Bustle made a visit to the Three Graces Fountain on Saturday, September 18, 2021, to inspect and clean the statue/fountain. WMS/LSS Archaeological Society Vice President Steve Koski assisted with the cleaning, which included washing with a mild detergent using a soft cloth and applying three coats of bowling wax as a protectant. Some of the drive-by comments were interesting. A pool company monitors the water chemistry and cleans the basin on a monthly basis.



WMS/LSSAS VP Steve Koski, Kevin Bustle and Terry Frank (photographer) with SC Fleet Maintenance give the sculpture a bi-annual cleaning.

The statue was designed by artist Sophie Johnstone in 1958, and it is one of the oldest examples of contemporary outdoor public art that has been continually on display in its original location in Sarasota County. The fountain has served as

a welcoming gateway to Warm Mineral Springs at US 41 and Ortiz Blvd. since it was installed more than 60 years ago.

Sarasota County took responsibility of, and rehabilitated the fountain in 2019, made traffic and landscaping improvements, replaced the plumbing, refurbished the basin, and North Port assisted in hooking up the fountain to city water. Multicolored lights illuminate the statue at night.

The ladies look great, drive by and take a look!

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCIENCE DIVERS RETURN TO LITTLE SALT SPRING FOR ADVANCED TRAINING

For two weekends in October and two weekends in November, University of Miami Science Diving students will be conducting advanced science diver training at Little Salt Spring. Students involved in marine sciences, who may use diving in their careers, learn technical diving skills by world class instructors from the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science campus. Director of dive programming, Jason Nunn, and Dive Safety officer Jessica Keller, with three additional staff and 12 students, visited LSS October 21-24, and October 28-31, to experience and learn techniques of diving a Florida spring. Some of these students will take Dr. Hanselmann's underwater archaeology class this fall and visit LSS in late 2021/early 2022 to conduct underwater archaeological research. This will be the first underwater archaeology class to visit LSS since January 2013, the year Dr. Gifford retired, so this is huge!



University of Miami science diver class photos, October 24, 2021.



UM science diver students make their first LSS dive on October 29
For some of the students, this is their first dive in a Florida

spring, and all were very excited to dive at such a notable and significant spring. Learning the skills of underwater navigation, night diving, advanced buoyancy control, and protecting sediments is critical for conducting any science underwater. Little Salt Spring is only one of the many dive sites the students will experience during the class, and we look forward to the resurrection of underwater training and research at LSS!

During the April-May science dive class, the Friends of Little Salt Spring donated a six-burner grill for the students and staff to use, and this session, the WMS/LSSAS donated a four-wheel 600 lb capacity cart for carrying dive tanks and gear. One way of demonstrating our local support!

OLDEST FLORIDA TIMUCUA LETTER TOPIC OF DISCUSSION ON NOVEMBER 18 AT THE ELLING EIDE CENTER

On November 18, at 11:00 AM, a live *and* virtual event will be held at the Elling Eide Center, located at 8000 S. Tamiami Tr.

George Aaron Broadwell, Elling Eide Professor of Anthropology, University of Florida, will present, "A New Translation of the Oldest Native American Letter from Florida." An excerpt from the invitation states, "This talk discusses one of two surviving letters written in Timucua, the Native language of much of North Florida. The Jesus Maria letter was written in 1651 and is the oldest letter in a Native American language of the United States. This letter was never translated due to lack of sufficient knowledge of the Timucua language. However, using modern linguistic technology, it has recently become possible to translate the Jesus Maria letter for the first time. The Jesus Maria letter is a protest against the oppressive land and labor practices of 17th century Florida and it details the mistreatment of Native people, the broken promises, and the attempt to take Native land without compensation." To register, go to www.ellingoeide.org/news-events/. A donation is requested.

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