



**WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 21, No. 3 May/June 2010

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

The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society meets the second Wednesday of the month at the North Port Public Library in the Nello Juliano Room at 6:30 P.M. The meetings are free and open to the public. Next meeting after May 12 will be Wednesday, September 8, 2010

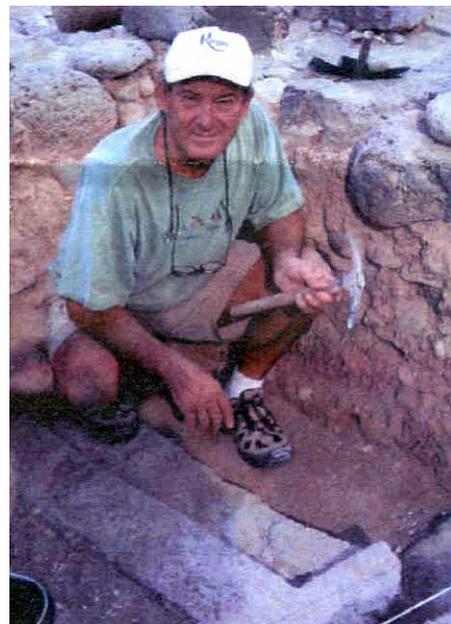
**BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY TOPIC OF MAY 12 MEETING**

Mr. Rance Williams will present a program on Excavations of Kursie-Gengesa on the Northern point of the Sea of Galilee, Israel, Wednesday, May 12. He will also include a short discussion on "Israel, Then and Now," along with pictures of Biblical Jerusalem.

Mr. Williams has traveled extensively throughout Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey, and has participated in archaeological excavations at ancient Gengesa with Dr. Vassilios Tzaferis, former Director of Israel's Department of Antiquities, and Dr. Charles Page, Dean of the Jerusalem Institute for Biblical Exploration. He has also participated on the Bethsaida Excavation Project with Dr. Rami Arv, from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

A retired sales manager for Ametek Corporation, Mr. Williams is a member of the Biblical Archaeology Society, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, and First Sarasota Baptist Church, where he is an adult-bible-studies teacher.

While not our typical meeting on Florida archaeology and history, this should prove to be an interesting presentation. See you there!



Rance Williams at Kursie-Gengesa, Israel

## MOUNT ELIZABETH IN MARTIN COUNTY TOPIC OF APRIL MEETING

By John and Judi Crescenzo

On April 14, Theresa Schober, Director of the Mound House on Ft. Myers Beach, presented "Getting to the Bottom of Mount Elizabeth: Recent Investigations at a Late Archaic Site in the East Okeechobee Region." Findings resulted from Theresa's 2008 participation in an excavation of the Mount Elizabeth Midden during the renovation of an adjacent mansion located in Martin County, overlooking the Indian River Lagoon. The mansion is on a 30-foot rise, which is part shell midden and part natural dune ridge.

The Mount Elizabeth property has been used in many ways over the years, and each contributed to its preservation. The property first appeared on an 1850 plat map. The mansion was built in the 1890s and included 100 acres. Eventually, a barn and tennis courts were added, and the property was used as a home, church, and yacht club until 1921, when the house burned down. In the 1930s, the Leach family purchased the property and built a 15,000-square-foot Mediterranean Revival Mansion, which today is part of Indian Riverside Park. The mansion has a full basement, which was dug into the 4,000-year-old shell mound. In 1950, the Leaches sold the property to the Catholic Church, and it became the "Sisters of St. Joseph." Eventually, the property became a four-year college owned by the Florida Institute of Technology. Martin County bought the property with county and grant funds in the late 1990s for county and public use.

There were several previous investigations of the property, starting in 1844, when Francis LeBaron from the Smithsonian Institute incorrectly stated the mound elevation at 60 feet instead of 30 feet. Further archaeological studies did not begin until 1994, when AHC completed a survey and shovel tests. At that time, a 1x1-meter square 9-10 feet deep was excavated, but the bottom of the mound was not found. In 1998, Janus Research conducted another investigation, including a 2x1-meter square with a depth of 1.4 meters. A 2.5-meter auger test reaching 12-13 feet deep also did not locate the bottom. However, St. John's and sand-tempered pottery were found in an elevated area and radiocarbon dated at 4,000 years old. These studies showed that the mound was constructed of dense shell with some black midden above it. Additional artifacts were also found when stabilizing the shoreline.

Theresa became involved in the project because the Southeast Florida Archaeological Society wanted to create an exhibit like the mound at Spanish Point, but with the midden in the basement. There are two main areas at the



Theresa Schober receives our world famous tee-shirt from President George Haag

Mount Elizabeth site: one is behind the garage and abuts the mound, and the other is in the basement of the 15,000-square-foot mansion. However, because the basement walls are so thick, viewers would not have a good look of the mound through the basement wall. To keep destruction of the mound to a minimum, sewer pipes were put underneath the mansion. Ground penetrating radar was used on the basement floor to see how much mound material was underneath. Radiowaves hit layers of different densities, and holes were dug to interpret these findings

Consequently, profiles were dug in various units. Unit 5 is next to the house and was found to contain black earth, fish bone, deer antlers, and fiber-tempered pottery, but no evidence of construction because there was no basement in this part of the house. Unit 3 revealed crushed shell and post holes, which are evidence of an early structure. Unit 17, which was further away, uncovered black earth. Unit A3 included fill sand and relocated materials. One area showed burned materials from the 1921 house fire. Also in Unit A2, but closer to the garage in more midden layers, were alternating dark earth layers 5-10 cm thick. Excavation down to the 6-foot (2m) depth was completed, followed by auger tests to determine the depth of the midden. Researchers hit orange sand at the bottom, proving that the midden is 15 feet (5m) deep. Fiber-tempered pottery was found down to a 2-meter depth.

The pottery assemblage included 251 samples of orange plain, two orange incised, one orange punctate, seven sand-tempered plain, and one fired-clay object in two pieces. All were located at a depth of 2 meters below the surface. Additional artifacts uncovered included bone implements and pins, drilled shark teeth, shark vertebrae, and a saw-tooth vertebra. Because igneous rocks are not native to Florida, 451 rocks were salvaged. Some of the

rocks may have been used for pounding or grinding, and 15 of them were modified in some way. Units 3, 5, and B near the mansion included deer bone and charcoal. The charcoal and plant remains are being analyzed and radiocarbon dated.

When an elevator was installed in the mansion into the basement, this allowed for a 10-meter excavation beneath the basement. A 1x1-meter unit was dug, and every 5 centimeters of sand in Unit A2 were bagged from top to bottom. Paleobotanical samples were sent for study, and a zooarchaeologist will look at the fish and animal remains. Interestingly, there were no fiber-tempered pottery remains found in this 1x1-meter unit, except for one sand-tempered plain piece from somewhere in the middle. It appears that the Mount Elizabeth Midden was not used after 3,900 years ago. Even though people were living there, they apparently used a separate site nearby.

### **AUTHOR MAC PERRY SPOKE ON TAMPA BAY PREHISTORY AT MARCH MEETING**

By Judi and John Crescenzo

On March 10, Mac Perry, author, historian, and avocational archaeologist, gave a riveting presentation on "The First 12,000 Years in Florida." Instead of the usual images projected on a screen, he supplemented his talk with a 12,000-year time line and replica artifacts from each era.

After explaining that humans have existed for a very short time, Perry described Florida and its early inhabitants at the end of the Ice Age about 12,000 years ago. Sea level was more than 100 lower than present, sinkholes were the main freshwater supply, and mega-fauna like camels, mastodons, and giant sloths roamed the area. A study of human coprolites (petrified feces) at Texas A & M University has revealed various seeds from flowers and berries that were eaten, providing a glimpse into the diet of early people. Paleo-Indians were migratory hunter-gatherers who lived in small family groups of about 12-18 people and reached old age at 32 years. While roaming across Florida, they chopped up roots, grasses, leaves, stems, flowers, and berries for food. Because Florida has no igneous rocks, silicified limestone and coral (silica fossilized limestone) called chert were used to make spear points and cutting tools. Sinew, which holds bone to muscle, was removed from deer and smashed, creating strong strips used for lashing and binding. Perry stated that Paleo-Indians were more likely gatherers than hunters



Mac Perry at the March Meeting.

because of the effort required to kill large game. He estimated that 90% of Paleo-Indians were gatherers, while only 10% were hunters.

Around 10,000 years ago, larger animals began to disappear; within 2,000 years they became extinct worldwide, possibly because of decreased reproduction caused by extinction of their food supply. Small chert tools became more prolific once large animals disappeared. As the climate warmed, humans began hunting deer, black bear, opossums, and snakes, along with gathering. They also made baskets and lined them with pitch or hides so they held water. Although no looms have been found, seven different weave patterns were discovered underwater in anaerobic conditions at the Windover Site, proving that weaving was common. Boomerangs, bolas, and rabbit sticks were used to kill small game. Every fall, 13-14-year-old boys would wait for rabbits to eat in the fields. After setting a fire, the boys moved in a circle and tossed rocks to scare the rabbits. The young hunters then threw sticks to stun their prey so they could be caught for food. Blowguns constructed of bamboo and gourds were also used to hunt small game.

Approximately 5,500 years ago, sea levels stabilized and current conditions prevailed, altering the available natural resources. Estuarine resources became established; sinkholes overflowed, forming creeks and rivers; and lakes began to form. The existence of an increase in seabirds, turtles, alligators, estuarine fish, and shellfish meant that people migrated less and became more settled. An increase in more permanent settlements resulted in population growth, with its socio-political implications. After time, gardening began, where land was cleared for a few years at a time. The first weeds that grew



Member Mary Williams presents Mac Perry with our world famous tee-shirt

were used as food by the natives, who ate everything to learn if it was edible, but always left a few plants behind. The shoreline was similar to today—Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor, which had once been prairies, had formed. The water was shallow, so sea grasses grew readily, stopping some of the clays and silts washing down from the rivers. The availability of clay led to the manufacture of pottery. Shellfish also appeared in the bays, creating another new industry. Natives became fishermen and made shell tools, such as whelk hammers and hand-held pounders, along with knives made of serrated shells. Fossilized shark teeth were very sharp, and, when tied onto bamboo with sinew, they made excellent knives for cutting hides. Awls were manufactured from columella shells and were used to punch holes into hides.

By about 2,000 years ago, people were more organized and groups were larger, but there were still no chiefs. When Manasota Culture began in Pinellas County, it was egalitarian and had no hierarchy. Villages were located about five miles apart along the coast. The Indians made plain pottery, but by 800-1200 AD began to decorate it when they adopted Weeden Island Culture, including pottery designs and burial practices. Manatee society boiled their dead, then took them apart, and kept the bones wrapped in deer hide on a platform until the chief died.

Upon the chief's death, trenches were dug and a bonfire started for a burial ceremony. Natives drank "black drink," which was a strong tea made of yaupon holly berries (*ilex vomitoria*) that has a high concentration of caffeine.

The strong drink purged the natives by making them vomit. The burial pits were then filled with sand, remains of the chief, broken pottery, bundled burials, and more sand,

creating conical burial mounds beginning about 4,000 years ago. At that time, shamans ran villages; they were doctors, military leaders and preachers. Around 2,000 years ago (near the birth of Christ), Shamanism emphasized spirituality. Various substances were smoked or drunk for hallucinogenic effects; rattles, drums, flutes, and animal symbols helped natives to enter the spiritual world. Fishing nets were also employed by Manatee culture; natives knew when and where fish would migrate and made various-sized nets to catch them. Fishing nets were weighted down by shells, kept afloat by gourds along the top, and held in place by bamboo poles. A trotline, which had a row of briars as fishhooks along the top, could also be used to catch fish. Adult men went to sea to catch dolphins and sharks for food, while younger members of the community hunted and fished for small animals.

About 1,000 years ago (600-700 AD), corn arrived in Florida, and for the first time there was enough food to cause a population explosion. This created organizational problems and led to the need for chiefs and a hierarchy. The chief ruled until his sons took his place. The hierarchy included nobles who were relatives of the chief, advisors, commoners (hunters and fishermen), slaves (captive warriors), and berdache (neutered men who did menial labor, such as caring for the sick and gathering dead from battle). When people came from outlying, subservient villages to town for spiritual healing or trade, they paid tribute or taxes. The Safety Harbor Temple Mound was the main ceremonial mound in this area, with 29 subsidiary villages paying tribute when Spanish explorer Menendez visited the region in the 16th century.

Arrival of the Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese changed native culture drastically. Europeans brought horses, which natives learned to ride to increase their territory. Metal pots and pans supplanted native pottery. Newly introduced foods included oranges, pineapples, and rice, which meant the natives stopped foraging and gardening and accepted handouts from European missionaries when they attended church. Glass beads were popular trade items with the natives, as were brass belt buckles. The introduction of guns brought another major change, as Indians could now hunt from horseback. About 12-15 different diseases were introduced to Florida by Europeans and, because the natives had no immunity, entire villages died off. By the late 1700s, natives had disappeared and the last Calusa left Florida.

Perry ended his informative and intriguing presentation by inviting everyone to experience history and archaeology at the Bayshore Village near St. Petersburg, which has an outdoor museum and open excavation pit; a

field trip could include a side trip to sacred lands.

## MEMBERS ENJOYED TRIP TO SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM

By George Haag

On Sunday, March 7, five members of the Society traveled to Bradenton and spent the afternoon at the South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium. The first thing one sees upon entering is the skeletal remains of a mastodon, which fills the room; really magnificent specimen. Other marine and mammal fossils are represented, as well as extensive archaeological materials representing the earliest Paleo-Indian inhabitants of Florida and later Archaic and pre-contact cultures. The museum also houses an extensive variety of Florida Indian artifacts from the Montague Tallant collection. Another of these exhibits was a model of the mouth of a prehistoric shark, so large a man could easily stand up in it, though it is doubtful anyone would want to do this. Its teeth were huge—great prizes for our monthly raffle.

As the scheduled time was near, we entered the planetarium, where we were shown "Two Small Pieces of Glass," a film on the story of the telescope.

Following the film, we toured the museum, where we were fortunate to see the last day of the Seminole-Miccosukee exhibit containing arts and crafts from 1825 to 1980. The exhibit contained artifacts, clothing, basketry, and other items on loan from the Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, and the from the private collection of I.S.K. Reeves and Sara Reeves. The museum also has many permanent exhibits of ship building, workshops, auto repair, guns, seashells, historic photographs, and pictures of the Bradenton area. All were beautifully presented and designed to hold one's interest.

Surprisingly, the Museum holds a large seawater tank, the home of four manatees. The largest of these animals, Snooty, was born in 1948; hard to believe they can survive so long even in this controlled environment. I believe that anyone in our group would highly recommend visiting the South Florida Museum.

Interested in visiting the South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium? Visit their website at <http://www.southfloridamuseum.org/>.

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULED TO MOUND HOUSE ON FT. MYERS BEACH MAY 22

On Saturday, May 22, members are invited on a field trip to The Mound House, located on Ft. Myers Beach at the Estero site, a large shell mound and historic site owned

by the town of Ft. Myers Beach. This is a trip we have been awaiting with enthusiasm for quite a while, as it celebrates the completion of the shell-mound exhibit. Mound House Director Theresa Schober will host a tour of the site and the recently opened exhibit. The shell-mound exhibit, partially funded by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, was a former pool area that had been removed and excavated through 12 feet of shell to sterile sand. Once covered, the exhibit was built around the east and south profile walls. So, in essence, you are inside a shell mound and can observe the centuries of mound-building episodes and black-dirt living surfaces. Similar to the Window to the Past exhibit at Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, it is quite spectacular.

We will meet at the North Port Library at 8:15 AM for an 8:30 departure. Allow 1.5 hours travel time.

The Mound House is located at 289 Connecticut Street, Fort Myers Beach. Call 239-765-0865 or go online to [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

Take I-75 south to Daniels Parkway exit and go west, following signs to beaches. Cross US 41 on Gladiolus Drive and take a left at Summerlin. Follow signs to Ft. Myers Beach. Once on the island, take a left, go approximately three miles to Connecticut Street, and take another left. The Mound House is at the end of the road. For more information, go to <http://www.moundhouse.org/>.

## ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH EXHIBIT AND EVENTS WELL RECEIVED

Our small exhibit set up for Florida Archaeology Month at the North Port Library in the double-sided cases was quite a success. Librarian Janis Russell informed us that numerous people commented on how informative it was and how nice it looked.

The theme was Florida's Mounds, Legacy Building, and the exhibit included a stratigraphic profile of a shell mound made inside a 10-gallon aquarium. It depicted the sandy level representing the pre-occupation surface; a dark layer depicting initial occupation with dietary bone, shell and an intrusive hearth; a midden or mound-building episode of various species of marine shell; another black-dirt occupation level; and surface with shell, charcoal, and artifacts representing the time of abandonment. Steve Koski drew the profile on graph paper to represent an illustrated profile wall of an excavation unit. It looked pretty cool.

Thanks to Judith for the idea, and to Carol Myers, Ann Hanson, Hilda Boron, and Steve Koski, who assisted its creation. Other items in the two-sided case included the



Exhibit at the North Port Library for Florida Archaeology Month.



Florida's Mounds: Legacy Building Theme of FAM 2010.

double-sided Florida Archaeology Month Poster (given away at our meetings), artifacts, and reproductions of artifacts from the southwest Florida mound-building period, with tools of the archaeologist and more.

Other events WMS/LSS participated in during FAM included North Port's Nature Festival held March 20 at Garden of the Five Senses, put on by North Port Parks and Recreation Department, and Archaeology Fest at Pioneer

Park in Sarasota, put on by Time Sifters and attended by Florida Public Archaeology Network, GeeWiz Museum of Sarasota, and WMS/LSSAS.

More than 200 volunteer hours were turned in to contribute to the matching FAM \$11,000 grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources for expenses such as the poster and bookmarks. If you missed your FAS poster, more will be available at the May 12 meeting. Another reason to attend, right!



Idealized stratigraphic profile of a shell midden/mound on exhibit through March at the North Port Library.



Hilda Boron, Mary Williams, Kate Cattran, Steve Koski, George Haag, and Judith Ribarik at Archaeology Fest at Pioneer Park, Sarasota.

## HAPPY FACES WIN RAFFLE AT MEETINGS

Every once and a while we have an item to raffle: tickets to Historic Spanish Point, South Florida Museum, Warm Mineral Springs, or a book from one of our speakers. It helps offset the cost of our speaker's dinner, motel and honorarium. The last couple of raffles we were delighted to offer two large sharks teeth donated by Gary Rowe, who found them diving off Venice Beach. Thank you Gary for the happy faces and to Hilda for donating her Spanish Point tickets.



Lucky raffle winners Dave Deronde with sharks tooth donated by diver Gary Rowe and Carol Myers with tickets to Historic Spanish Point.



Friends of North Port Library volunteer Norbert Schneider displays his three-inch shark's tooth he won during February's raffle. And he was in the book store!

## RANCHO REGATTA COMING TO INDIAN MOUND PARK IN ENGLEWOOD JUNE 19

The Florida Public Archaeology Network, in partnership with the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association, invites you to mess about in boats and learn more about the diverse fisher folk from long ago. The next event will be held Saturday, May 15, at the Weeden Island Preserve, and on June 19, FPAN, TSCA, and Friends of Lemon Bay Park will sponsor a Rancho Regatta at Indian Mound Park, located at 210 Winson Ave. in Englewood. Winson Ave. is off Green Street, just south of Dearborn, west of SR776. Events include sculling, fiber-net rigging, sailing traditional watercraft, and more. As time approaches, info will be posted at [www.experiencearchaeology.org](http://www.experiencearchaeology.org). There is a \$10 registration fee for events. Several of our members are planning to attend.

To learn more about the Regatta and registration or activities, go on line to <http://experiencearchaeology.org/>.

## WARM MINERAL SPRINGS CLEANING HELD APRIL 24

The first annual Earth Day "Springs Cleaning" event was held at Warm Mineral Springs Saturday, April 24. Hosted by Warm Mineral Springs Spa, the North Port Sun, and Sarasota County, the event was created to clean up the community of Warm Mineral Springs. WMS/LSSAS members Hilda Boron, George Haag, Sandra Heacock, and Steve Koski participated, as did more than 70 other local citizens. Folks met at the Springs at 7:00 PM, broke up into small groups, and hit the creek, vacant lots, and streets. An estimated three tons of refuse was recovered from along the spring run and neighborhood streets. About 20 tires and numerous TV sets and other appliances, as well as dozens of plastic bags of trash, were collected from 8:00 AM to noon.

After the event, Springs Manager Gene Vaccaro and Spa Manger Jennifer Graham invited all volunteers back to the Springs for an appreciation awards ceremony and old-fashioned barbeque. All participants got a nice T-shirt and a free pass for a later visit to Warm Mineral Springs. More than \$300 in certificates to the Springs was awarded at the ceremony and, after the event, volunteers were welcomed to spend the day swimming in what has been billed as the "Original Fountain of Youth." One 85-year-old volunteer and long-time patron was so happy she did back flips to the water. Seriously, many folks swear by the therapeutic value of the springs and miraculous stories are plentiful. Who can refute that?

### FAS MEETING IN FT. MYERS MAY 7-9!

It's still not too late to go to the annual FAS meeting in Ft. Myers, beginning Friday, May 7, with paper presentations Saturday, May 8. See the March/April newsletter for details or go to [www.fasweb](http://www.fasweb) for all activities.

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

May 12 is our last meeting until September 8, 2010. The speaker series will be announced in the September-October newsletter.

I want to thank board members Judi and John Crescenzo and President George Haag for their contributions to the Society and this newsletter. ESPECIALLY the two comprehensive speaker articles. A huge help!

Also, thanks to all volunteers who helped during FAM on all the events.

A special thanks to goes to newsletter proofreader, Valerie Grey of Grey Matter Consulting, who has proof read almost every newsletter since the incipience of my editorship in 1992 (yikes) and formatted many before I started doing it a could years ago. Of course, any errors are do to my messing around with it after I get it back.

This month's dinner with the speaker will be at the Evergreen Café at Warm Mineral Springs at 5:00 PM. The restaurant normally closes at 5:00 PM, so we'll have the place to ourselves. Thanks, Ted! Beginning in September, we will alternate dinners prior to the meetings between Café Evergreen and Old World Restaurant. Come to the dinner at 5:00 and hope to see you at the May meeting!

### "TRACES OF OUR PAST" SPEAKER SERIES AT NEW COLLEGE CONTINUES!

One presentation remains from the five speaker-lecture series "Traces of Our Past." The series was sponsored by New College Public Archaeology Laboratory

and Time Sifters Archaeological Society, with funding from the Florida Humanities Council. The remaining speaker is:

**May 19:** William Lees, Ph.D., Florida Public Archaeology Network, will present "Discovering Civil War Florida."

The free presentation will be held at the Mildred Sainer Pavilion, New College of Florida, 5313 Bayshore Road, Sarasota. Reservations for the events are recommended, so make sure you call if you are interested.

For more information and reservations, call New College Events Hotline at 941-487-4888 or go to [www.ncf.edu/mediaevents](http://www.ncf.edu/mediaevents). These will be exciting programs to conclude the series!

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For a color pdf copy of the newsletter, send a request to the editor at the above email address! See them all at [www.wmslssas.org](http://www.wmslssas.org) (Corrected by removing slash between wms and lss).

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