



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 at 7:00 PM (except June, July and August). **We will meet in person March 14th and April 11th** at the North Port Community United Church, located at 3450 S. Biscayne Blvd. (see article on page 2 for the new building location on the church property) Face masks are optional. **For those who cannot make the in-person March 14 meeting (please try), you can join via Zoom! We will meet in person for the April meeting, but the speaker will be joining us via Zoom. Please try and make the in-person meetings!**

Join our March Meeting Via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81312168544?pwd=RkFMbnhTNVFDDeEIFQ2UvUURDemx5UT09>

Join our April Meeting Via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82077744600?pwd=TkVEb1ZUN01EQVUvRGIWWGxFMWNOQT09>

THE MILL COVE COMPLEX: DAILY LIFE, FEASTING, AND FARAWAY CONNECTIONS TOPIC OF MARCH 14 MEETING

by Dr. Keith Ashley

Located near the mouth of the St. Johns River in northeastern Florida, the Mill Cove Complex was one of the most significant Indigenous communities in Florida 1,000 years ago. While daily life centered around the exploitation of estuarine resources, these fisher-hunter-gatherers also engaged in long-distance interactions that resulted in the acquisition of copper, stone and other minerals. This presentation reviews the results of excavations at Mill Cove by the University of North Florida since 1999 and contextualizes the site within northeastern Florida and beyond.

Dr. Keith Ashley is archaeologist and associate professor of Anthropology at the University of North Florida. He is actively involved in archaeological excavations with UNF students throughout northeastern Florida. Presently, he is exploring the involvement of St. Johns fisher-hunter-gatherers in (cont. on p.2)



March speaker Dr.Keith Ashley

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTATION OF PENSACOLA'S SUBMERGED HISTORY (AND OTHER WORTHY PURSUITS)

by Dr. John Bratten

For more than 460 years, Pensacola's waterways have been navigated by Spanish colonization ships, British warships, Civil War schooners, and numerous fishing and lumber vessels. Hurricane activity, warfare, and intentional abandonment sent many of these ships to the bottom of the Pensacola Bay and its nearby rivers. Many of these vessels have been documented by University of West Florida maritime archaeologists and students. Several others are being sought through the efforts of historical research and remote sensing techniques. These vessels, along with an update about our documentation of Cuban refugee boats in Key West, Florida, will be the subject of this presentation. John R. Bratten is a nautical archaeologist and conservator for the University of West Florida. A graduate of the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University, he has experience in the analysis and conservation of artifacts from diverse



April speaker Dr. John Bratten

sources including those from the sunken 17th-century town of Port Royal, Jamaica, to Revolutionary War munitions recovered from Lake Champlain. Following his employment with the University of West Florida in 1996, Bratten has served as principal investigator for numerous underwater archaeology projects including the 2006 and 2016 discoveries of the second and third shipwrecks from the 1559 Spanish colonization fleet of Don Tristán de Luna y Arellano.

THE MILL COVE COMPLEX (cont. from p.1)

the broader world of farmers throughout the Southeast during the tenth through thirteenth centuries CE. He is also researching the 16th and 17th century social landscape of the Indigenous Timucua-speaking Mocama.

MOVEMENT OF LIGHTNING WHELK DURING THE ARCHAIC TOPIC OF JAN 10 MEETING

by Judi and John Crescenzo

On January 10, 2023, Michelle Calhoun presented “The Anthropogenic Movement of Lightning Whelk During the Archaic: A Well-Traveled Mollusk.” Calhoun earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from New College of Florida in 2021 and has since been working as an independent researcher focusing on shell tools and trade networks. She has explored the inland transport of lightning whelks, how they were moved to these locations, and reasons why this occurred.

Studies show that 82% of lightning whelks are found in Southwest Florida. During the Archaic period (8,000 to 1,000 BCE, or ca. 10,000 to 3000 B.P.), whelks were used to create gorgets (necklace pendants) and tools. The fact that whelk shells and gorgets have been found in burials with Native peoples in distant locations in the United States proves that whelks were highly valued. Whelks breed in the warm water of the Gulf Coast where they have plenty of food and are not subject to the turbulence of the Atlantic coast. The lightning whelk is the only large gastropod with sinistral (leftward)-coiling inner columella. Native peoples see this shell as an earthly representation of the Milky Way. They believe that stars are ancestral campfires and that upon death, dogs will lead people to the Upper World. The numerous burials of dogs with humans show the value of dogs to Archaic Native Peoples. During the Archaic Period, people transitioned from hunter-gatherers to a more settled way of life. Shell middens and burial mounds, which were prominent on the landscape, may have acted as guiding posts, while whelk shell artifacts may have aided in celestial navigation.

Similar groups of objects at distant sites also appear to show patterns across eastern non-Arctic North America. For example, Archaic lithic types found in Vermont are repeated at sites from there to Texas. Other items found in sites along with whelks include hematite, galena, mica, greenstone, and copper, many of which are also not local to where they were found.

According to Dr. L. Bloch’s article in the *American Anthropologist*, an interview with a Muscogee Talwa elder explained the importance of the whelk to his people. Bloch stated that *esnesv* (iss-NEE-suh), acted as “travelers, traders,

diplomats, and acolytes,” who traveled along specific routes established prior to 1540 A.D., in order to exchange items, coordinate trade, settle conflicts, and spread news. The elder stated that these paths were like a “white road” that was safe from attack, which is how the Milky Way was also described. The 1500s account of Cabeza de Vaca shows his identity as an *esnesv* being used to offer food and safety if the Native Peoples agreed to convert.

The *esnesv* carried seven trade items with symbolic meaning, which connected people to the stars and Milky Way. These items included lightning whelk, mica, garfish teeth and scales, yaupon holly leaves, freshwater pearls, and greenstone/soapstone (a combined category), which could all be found between the Gulf Coast and Appalachian Mountains. The items represented the Upper and Lower Worlds, but people from diverse places could substitute local items. The Talwa note that greenstone dust creates swirls when wet, and resembles the Milky Way. Anthropologist Patricia Crown of the University of New Mexico explained that Yaupon holly grows mainly on the coast between Florida and Texas. The leaves were used to make the “black drink,” consumed in a ritual using a whelk as a cup. The fact that a ceramic whelk effigy was found in Illinois suggests the possibility that the whelk cup was a necessary part of this ritual, whether or not the whelk itself was available. There are also similarities between artifacts from Tick Island, FL and those found in KY and MI. Because FL whelks are the most easily accessible and often the largest, they were likely preferred. In an early issue of *The Florida Anthropologist*, Dr. John Griffin noted that the “shield” gorget may have once held freshwater pearls, but further research is needed to confirm this. An article on this gorget type will soon be published in the *Florida Anthropologist* by Calhoun. Salt may have been another item carried by the *esnesv* and transported to Native Peoples, although a Muscogee elder indicated that *esnesv* may have also carried seeds.

Future research is being conducted into whether Florida whelk were used in the manufacture of Texas sandal-sole gorgets. Mapping may reveal patterns and answer new questions that have arisen about the relationships between interred people, and perhaps future strontium isotope testing of teeth, if permitted, will provide additional information on the movement of people during the Archaic.

CENTURY: A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY TOPIC OF FEBRUARY 14 MEETING. SPEAKER JAMES ABRAHAM

by Judi and John Crescenzo

On February 14, 2023, James Abraham, former journalist and current book editor, publisher, and author of *Century: A People's History of Charlotte County*, presented a history of Charlotte County. Abraham graduated from Oberlin College and is a Florida Humanities Scholar. He uses history and journalism to uncover layers of “truth and experience to find answers and meaning” that apply to the past and present and influence the future.

Abraham’s presentation focused on the town of El Jobean in Charlotte County. During the 1920s, hurricanes hit the area and were followed by the Great Depression. Only a few people

came to live there in small fishing villages. In the late 1930s, notoriety arrived with Leo "Suicide" Simon, who performed a circus act where he lit himself on fire and dove into a pit of water. MGM also visited El Jobean to film a jungle movie with the original roaring Leo the Lion used on the MGM logo.

The town of El Jobean was named for Joel Bean, who changed the name to "El Jobe-an" to make it sound more Spanish. It was marketed around the country as the "city of destiny." Bean encouraged people to move to Florida to grow citrus. Today's Grove City and Lemon Bay were part of this plan. Tamiami Trail did not exist at the time, but was named on a map. The town was to be "the city beautiful" and was designed with roads like radiating wheel spokes. Similarly, John Nolen planned the town of Venice in 1926, but his plans were successful.



February 14 speaker James Abraham receives a thank you card from President Kathy Gerace, holding a copy of Mr. Abrahams book.

The Southland Railroad Station in El Jobean greeted convicts who arrived to work in turpentine camps. By 1910, the Southland Trail Cemetery was being used to bury convict laborers, mostly Blacks and often in unmarked graves. Pines were slashed to tap pine resin, which was distilled to make turpentine. This was important in WWI because wooden ships required thick turpentine for caulking.

News broke out about a North Dakota man in a turpentine camp who didn't receive bail in time to save him from a beating that cost his life. His parents investigated and showed the abuse in turpentine camps. In 1923, headlines told of "forced labor by the poor, usually black men." The sheriff worked with the turpentine companies. When men were released from jail, they were forced to work in the rural, isolated turpentine camps. Armed guards patrolled the fenced-in area.

Blacks in Charlotte County later became picking labor working in gladiolus fields near Fort Myers. Black children worked the gladiolus fields, and gang labor began to leave Charlotte County. At that time, Boca Grande was a deep-water industrial port where Blacks unloaded phosphate, but when that industry waned, they left the area.

El Jobean was a planned paradise that was never achieved. In the 1950s, home sites there cost only \$495. Florida land baron A.C. Frizzell sold the land through brochures. He also ran a cattle ranch, owned turpentine camps, and

harvested lumber. A photo shows the El Jobean Hotel with a group of carnival workers sitting on the steps. There were also model homes and a combination railroad station and post office. In short, Frizzell created Charlotte County.

Further Charlotte County history can be found in Abrahams' recent book *Layers of El Jobean*, along with the biography *A. C. Frizzell* by his granddaughter, Cheryl Frizzell.

January and February meetings were a wealth of information for those who attended. Thanks to our speakers for sharing their knowledge!

FROM THE WMS/LSSAS PRESIDENT, KATHY GERACE

Greetings members and friends! Please join us at the March 14 meeting for another in-person meeting with a notable Florida archaeologist from the University of North Florida, Dr. Keith Ashley, who is making a special trip to join us from Jacksonville, Florida. We look forward to a strong showing of support for our speaker!

Face masks are optional and social distancing should not be a problem for those who still have concerns, and we will also provide the meeting via Zoom. Please see the cover page for Zoom link to the March and April meetings and the article below for the address and directions to the new building location.

Directions to the March 14 and April 11 meeting room, same address next building: The main meeting room at the North Port Community United Church, located at 3450 S. Biscayne Blvd. North Port Community United Church is still under repair, so we will be meeting in the adjacent building to the left as you enter the parking lot. You can park in the same location and walk around to the right to the side entrance of Fellowship Hall. Hope to see you there! Cookies and ice tea, as well as other snacks, will be served.

WMS/LSSAS ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MARCH 14 GENERAL MEETING

At the beginning of our March 14 general meeting, we will hold a brief annual meeting where we will vote in our 2023 directors and board members. All officers have agreed to stay on another year, and board members have agreed to another term: President, Kathy Gerace; Vice President, Steve Koski, Treasurer, Marion Pierce; Secretary, Lisa Shavers. Board of Directors who have agreed for another term include: Bill Goetz, Thalia Lewis, Linda Massey, Betty Nugent, and Joan San Lwin. Directors Michelle Calhoun and Amy Dwyer are still in their three-year term. Thank you all for your great service to the WMS/LSSAS!

BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Please renew your 2023 membership or consider joining the organization! The membership and an ethics statement are on our web site at www.wmslss.org. Please print and join today! With Covid and then Hurricane Ian, we have gone through quite a bit with more than two years before returning to in-person meetings, Help us get back on our feet so we can continue to have quality programs, plan events, and support worthy preservation-minded causes!

JOIN US FOR HISTORY DAY AT PHILLIPPI ESTATE PARK ON MARCH 25, 2023

On Saturday, March 25, from 10 am – 5 pm the WMS/LSSAS and other historic preservation-minded organizations will participate at “History Day at Phillippi Estate Park.” Located at the beautiful 60-acre County-owned park on Phillippi Creek. The park, home to the 1916 Edson Keith Mansion, Farm House, and three archaeological sites, is located at 5500 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. The event is sponsored by Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources, and the History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County.

Numerous historical groups will participate, including Sarasota County History Center. This should be a fun day for all who attend. Donations and proceeds will help fund restoration of the Keith Farmhouse. The house will eventually be opened, free to the public, as the Interpretive Center on Life on the Creek. To learn more about the HPCOSC, visit: <https://historicpreservationsarasota.com/>.

HELP THATCH THE CHICKEE-STYLE TIKI HUT AT LSS!

By Steve Koski

In the mid 1970's, LSS researcher Carl Clausen constructed a Seminole-style Chickee at LSS. With cypress poles from Big Cypress, he built an open-sided, elevated hut and thatched it with palm fronds. We are not sure who did the original thatching. I recall the thatched roof in early 1992, during the University of Miami's initial research conducted by Dr. John Gifford. The thatch was in such disrepair we had to remove it and reroofed with corrugated plastic. Hurricane Ian took care of that when most of the plastic was ripped off and went to Oz.

We would like to re-thatch the LSS Chickee-style hut at LSS, but need your help! An estimate was obtained for palm thatching the roof from Seminole Tiki Huts for \$3,200, plus approximately \$300 to repair portions of the damaged hut. We would like to raise a minimum of \$2000 to help offset the difference in cost of repairing it with a cheaper plastic roof. Any amount is welcome! The WMS/LSSAS is a 501(c)3 not for profit corporation. Please make a tax deductible donation to the WMS/LSSAS to P.O. Box 7797 North Port, Florida 34290, and reference “Tiki Hut repair.”



The spring-side Chickee-style Tiki Hut at LSS needs our help

When completed, there will be a small event held on-site to see the newly restored tiki hut. Thank you for your consideration!

THE SACOILA ORCHIDS OF LITTLE SALT SPRING

The rare variety of the Fakahatchee beaked orchids, *Sacoila lanceolata* var. *paludicola*, are blooming again at LSS! Research assistant and New College of Florida graduate Michelle Calhoun and Steve Koski have initiated the recording of the 2023 bloom, with a record number of blooms since the latest recording episode began in 2018. The study is collaboration between Selby Botanical Gardens and the University of Miami, and the project was initiated by the Friends of Little Salt Spring, who have supported the initial DNA study with a gift of \$3,500 as a start, with another \$5,500 to raise. The study is under the direction of orchid research botanist Dr. Tatiana Arias. This important study of these orchids, including DNA studies, could help determine if the variety, *paludicola*, could in fact be its own species as some have suggested! A thorough report on the 2023 bloom by Calhoun and Koski will be in the WMS/LSSAS May/June Newsletter.



A new *Sacoila lanceolata* var. *paludicola* bloom at LSS

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