



WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 36, No.5 November/December 2025

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

We meet at the North Port Public Library, 13800 Tamiami Trail at 6:30 PM in the Veranda Room (in the back, children's section).

Our speakers for November and December will be in-person. We will meet for dinner prior to the meeting at Alvaro's Family Restaurant (14512 Tamiami Trl, North Port, FL 34287) at 4:30 PM. **For November Zoom Access go to:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8583871128?pwd=VFJmVkF4MjRlRmVhR1dmpDMnZMYkRQUT09&omn=89878410991>

Meeting ID: 858 387 1128 Passcode: iBFa2B **For December Zoom meeting access go to:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81884875930?pwd=Uo8bub82gLYHYUtg4tM52n6dl6ab8W.1>

Meeting ID: 818 8487 5930 Passcode: 472140

ARTIFACTS TELL THE STORY OF THE LUNA SETTLEMENT IN PENSACOLA (1559-1561), TOPIC OF NOVEMBER 12 MEETING BY JANET LLOYD

In 2015, a local Pensacola history buff with archaeological training noticed interesting artifacts in the disturbed soil where an older house was being torn down to make room for a new one. He brought these artifacts to the lab and, with one look, I called Dr. John Worth to come and check them out. These artifacts included sherds of 16th century Spanish ceramics.

Since that time, the University of West Florida (UWF), under the direction of Dr. John Worth, has systematically shovel-tested the entire area and excavated units and blocks in particular lots during summer field schools. These excavations have proven this site to be the 16th century settlement site of Tristan de Luna. This was the first multiyear site in the US, covering part of a neighborhood overlooking Pensacola Bay.



November 12th speaker, Janet Lloyd

RANCHOS OF THE FLORIDA GULF COAST, TOPIC OF DECEMBER 9 MEETING BY DR. MARANDA KLES

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, Spanish fishermen, operating out of Regla and Havana, Cuba, began to establish fishing camps, or *ranchos*, along the Gulf coast of Florida. These were often seasonal camps, but some became permanent over time. Palmetto-thatched huts became wooden structures with thatched roofs. The fishermen married the Native women and traveled back and forth to Cuba with their catches and their families, their children being baptized in Cuba and viewed as Spanish citizens. These "Spanish Indians" came to be viewed with suspicion as tensions rose between the settlers and the Seminole. Many were ultimately rounded up and sent to the reservations in Oklahoma, despite their protestations and Spanish heritage.

Her presentation will focus on Phillippi Bermudaz, who



December 9th speaker, Maranda Kles

operated a *rancho* which was once located in present-day Cherokee Park. He is the namesake for Phillippi Creek. His house can be seen on the 1857 Follett sketch map, created for the U.S. Army. On the 1850 census, he was listed as “Phillipp Bermudas, age 45, a fisherman, originally from Spain.”

Bermudaz, in particular, was hard-hit by the removal of the Seminole by the government, as his first Native wives and children were deported early in the conflicts. His subsequent Seminole wife, Polly, was enticed by a large payment to travel to Oklahoma during the Third Seminole War. Some of the other *ranchos* along the Gulf coast will also be briefly discussed.

Dr. Kles is the President of Archaeological Consultants, Inc., a cultural resources management firm in Sarasota, and is also the President of the Florida Archaeological Society. She is a forensic anthropologist and bioarchaeologist, specializing in biological distance analysis and Southeastern archaeology. She was born and raised in Sarasota and received her MA and her Ph.D from the University of Florida (UF).

LUNA SETTLEMENT [cont. from pg. 1]

Excavations at this 1559 site have been scattered across the neighborhood where residents have given permission to Dr. Worth and hundreds of students to dig over the last 10 years.

We are also very privileged to have the shipwrecks associated with the Luna settlement in the bay where they sank during a hurricane that destroyed the settlement only 5 months after the colonists arrived. Although tragic, this single component site gives archaeologists a chance to study the big picture. The artifacts recovered from the 1559 de Luna Settlement, both in the terrestrial area and the shipwrecks, will be the topic of this presentation.

After teaching high school Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, and Advanced Biology in the International Baccalaureate Program for 30 years, Jan took a second degree in Anthropology in 1985 from the University of West Florida (UWF). While still teaching, as time allowed, she worked for Dr. Judy Bense at UWF from 1980-1991 on many prehistoric and colonial/ territorial local sites. After retiring from teaching in 1998, Jan worked more consistently with Dr. Bense at UWF from 1999-2023. During these years Jan worked on some well-known sites along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in Northwest Florida. These projects included everything from full-scale excavations to monitoring utilities replacement through the Historic District in downtown Pensacola.

In 2002, Jan accepted the position of Lab Director for the Archaeology Institute at UWF and remained in that position until retiring in 2023. During this time, UWF excavated a number of noteworthy sites including Santa Rosa Pensacola (1722-1754), British (1763-1781) and Spanish (1754-1763) colonial sites in downtown Pensacola and the Tristan de Luna Settlement site (1559-1561) to name a few. During her tenure at UWF, Jan taught Archaeological Lab Methods classes and ran the field school lab during major excavations. The lab instructional manual developed by Jan is still in use at UWF, as well as becoming the basis for the many CRM and other professionals produced by UWF.

After retiring from UWF in 2023, Jan enjoyed a leisurely five months before Wiregrass Archaeological Consulting and the University of South Alabama approached her about stepping in as the new lab director to finish up the new I-10 Mobile River Bridge project (began in 2021). Jan agreed and is still working on that project, processing artifacts from 15 city blocks which were excavated along Mobile Bay (Mobile, Alabama). Training incoming employees at both University of South Alabama and Wiregrass has been a very important part of the job and teaching is still one of Jan’s favorite things to do. Jan’s other passions are a lifetime of travel, birdwatching, and horses.

OCTOBER PRESENTATION: TIM COSTIN ON PONCE DE LEON

WMS/LSSAS Board Member Tim Costin presented his research on Juan Ponce de León and his expeditions to Cuba, Puerto Rico and Florida. Ponce de León was a Spanish conquistador who led expeditions to seek out new lands for Spain. He first traveled to the “New World” at the age of 19 on Columbus’ second voyage in 1493, as a “gentleman volunteer.”

He found his way to Cuba (Hispaniola) and was ordered by the governor to crush the Taino rebellion in 1504. Being successful, he was placed in control of a frontier province and given a large land grant and estate. He was ordered to crush and subjugate the remaining Tainos on the island, forcing them into the gold mines.

In 1508, Puerto Rico was discovered on one of his expeditions, and along with it, more gold. The Taino people were pressed into service to mine the gold and Ponce de León was made governor in 1509. He became very rich from this venture, but he lost the governorship of Puerto Rico to Diego Colón, the son of Columbus, in the courts in 1511. Undeterred, supported by the Spanish Crown and funded by the gold of Puerto Rico, he set off on another expedition.



October speaker Tim Costin receives our world famous tee-shirt from board member Steve Koski

On this voyage, in 1513, he encountered Florida on its east coast. He sailed south, mapping the coast and the Keys, eventually venturing up the Gulf coast. While myth states that

he was searching for the Fountain of Youth, his initial focus was gold. After reporting back to Spain, he was permitted to fund and lead an expedition of colonists to settle Florida, which was undertaken in 1521. However, the local residents, the Calusa, resisted these attempts. The Calusa used arrows which were designed to cause death. According to several sources, Juan Ponce de León was struck in the thigh and died a few, likely agonizing, days or months later (duration of his suffering depended on the source).

Post-presentation research into what substance may have been used on the arrows led to a description of the Seminole using arrows which were coated with rotten organic matter and rattlesnake venom. This type of venom destroys skin tissues and blood cells, causing internal hemorrhaging. Left untreated, death usually ensues within 2-3 days from organ failure.

Wikipedia claims that they had coated the arrows with the sap from the manchineel tree. Every part of the tree is toxic and ingestion of the fruit is fatal. Standing under a manchineel tree during a rain storm will result in skin blistering and ingestion is said to cause severe gastroenteritis with bleeding, shock, and bacterial superinfection. Whichever substance it was on those arrows, it certainly was not a pleasant way to die. We thank Tim for his presentation and for all his hard work and dedication to the society!

SEPTEMBER PRESENTATION: MICHELLE CALHOUN ON ELZUARDI'S POND

Calhoun discussed the history of the Indian Beach neighborhood at our September meeting. In April, she discovered a site which produced a copious amount of artifacts. Most were ceramic, glass, and metal artifacts from the late 1800s to the 1930s, but there were also artifacts from earlier periods, such as Spanish Olive Jar, a majolica sherd, and pottery contemporaneous with Fort Armistead. The fort was in operation from October 1840 to May 1841 and was situated somewhere along the coast just north of Whitaker Bayou.

The artifacts were noted by a long-time resident to have been dumped onto the lot in order to fill in a marshy area. This was a common practice in early Sarasota; to dispose of refuse in low-lying, marshy areas to build up the lots, as there are several instances in the local newspapers between 1900 and 1928 which discussed the practice. The City of Sarasota built its incinerator in 1928. Much of the glass and ceramics appear to have been burnt, which could indicate that the artifacts were dumped there after having gone through the incinerator (on or about 950 Cocoanut Avenue) or they could have been from one of the late 1800s/early 1900s houses which were once located along the shoreline of Indian Beach.

She discussed the history of these early houses, including The Palms Hotel/Palms Villa, originally named The Tarpon Club, which was built in 1891 and which burned down in 1927. Its neighbors were Alzartie House (home of the John Helveston family) to the north, and Hollywood (home of the William Adams family) to the south. All are now gone, replaced with mini mansions, though the old farmhouse once owned by local architect Frank Folsom Smith still sits on the bluff known as Boylston Mound.

Calhoun also discussed several fishing camps or *ranchos* which were once located along the Gulf coast. She noted the locations of the *ranchos* of Perico Pompon (at Cayo Pelau), Phillippi Bermudez (around today's Cherokee Park neighborhood in Sarasota), José Maria Caldez (on Useppa Island), Antonio Maximo Hernandez (at Maximo Point), William Bunce (at Palm Island in the mouth of Tampa Bay and at the mouth of the Manatee River), Joseph Woodruff (at Fishery Point, present-day tip of Siesta Key), and the sites at Fisherman's Key and Estero Island, south of Sarasota County.

However, her primary focus, with regards to *ranchos*, was the *rancho* which was once operated by Antonio Pacheco, and then by his wife Quintana and their trusted slave Luis Pacheco after Antonio's death. Luis was later loaned to the U.S. Army to lead Dade's column which ultimately met a dark fate. The saga of Luis' capture by the Seminole and his subsequent return to "civilization," and then to his original place of enslavement, once freed, could be a presentation in and of itself!

Quintana ran into difficulty without Luis' trusted council and appears to have turned the *rancho* over to Hillsborough Clerk of the Court Manuel Olivella. Her neighbor to the north, José Elzuardi, claimed that land and lived in a palmetto shack when he was in Sarasota. He was power of attorney for Quintana Pacheco and attempted to rectify the Army's failure to pay Luis' lost wages and return him from his incarceration after his return, but he was ultimately unsuccessful.



September speaker Michelle Calhoun receives our world famous tee-shirt from board member Steve Koski

The Army received orders to establish Fort Armistead on the then-Olivella *rancho* to attempt to coerce those Seminole living around the Peas (Peace) River to leave for Oklahoma. The fort was only in operation from October 1840 to May 1841 and was closed due to rampant disease and the deaths of at least 12 troops. It is unknown how many captured Seminole and camp followers and civilians (such as carpenters, blacksmiths, guides, cooks, etc.) died as a result of the disease outbreaks. A cemetery has never been located and it has been speculated

by some that the bodies may have been transported to Tampa for burial in the post cemetery.

Archival research continues to try and match troop rolls at Fort Armistead to graves at Fort Brooke to determine where the bodies may have been interred. Olivella later claimed the land of the Pacheco *rancho* under the Armed Occupation Act of 1842, but both his claim and that of José Elzuardi were unsuccessful, as were most of the *rancho* claims under that Act.

The artifacts are still being analyzed and our November speaker, Janet Lloyd, has kindly agreed to come down the day before her presentation and help to identify some of the more problematic artifacts. Stay tuned for more information about this potentially very important site!

BLOOMING ORCHIDS OF LITTLE SALT SPRING: PART TWO

by Steve Koski and Michelle Calhoun

This month, we feature the wild coco orchid (*Eulophia alta*), and the African spotted orchid (*Oeceoclades maculata*) which can be found blooming at LSS during this time of the year. The following descriptions are from Paul Martin Brown's 2002 book, *Wild Orchids of Florida* and Dr. Carlyle Luer's *Native Orchids of Florida* (1972).

Eulophia alta- wild coco orchid.

(blooms July-December); Over 200 species of *Eulophia* exist, but only three are reportedly found in Florida, including this orchid and the *E. graminea*. The other, the giant orchid, *E. ecristata* has not been found at LSS. *E. alta* is also found in Georgia. It is widespread throughout the West Indies, and Central and South America. Several of these orchids can be found at LSS and are known to bloom from August to December. Like all other orchids at LSS, it is terrestrial, and this orchid is always found in damp to wet ground.

This orchid can reach between 50-150 cm tall, generally has 4-6 large leaves, and can have between 20-50 flowers per stalk. They are highly variable in color, according to Brown, who noted them in pale pink, maroon, and green, as well as deep rich burgundy, and light green, with the lip usually being of a deeper shade than the rest of the bloom. Each flower has a pair of prominent crests and the flowers are generally 3.5 to 4.5 cm large. They are often found in open, lightly wooded swamps, wet woodlands, roadside ditches, and riverbanks.

Brown described them as "*the largest and one of the showiest of the terrestrial orchids in Florida.*" The flowering specimen in the adjacent photo that is now in seed pod at LSS is 48-inches tall and had over 25 blooms. Dr. Carlyle Luer wrote that this orchid was first discovered along the Caloosahatchee River in Fort Myers in 1875. He noted that those in the shade often do not produce stalks, but those in full sun frequently do. The blooms last about two weeks, but some have been known to last more than three weeks at LSS. They are quite stunning and rather rare on the property, with only 20 or so individuals identified over the years.

For more information, see:

https://www.flawildflowers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/eulophia_alta.pdf



Eulophia alta in bloom at LSS, September 20, 2025
(photo S. Koski)



Side by side *Eulophia alta*; one with seed pods, one blooming
(photo by S. Koski)

***Oeceoclades maculata*-African spotted orchid**

(blooms August-November); is a widespread naturalized non-native species. The African spotted orchid, also known as the monk orchid, is native to Africa and Madagascar, but has become naturalized in Florida and is widespread, having arrived in 1974. It is known to bloom from August to November. It has also colonized parts of South America and the Caribbean. The UF website noted that the “*monk orchid has a variety of traits which contribute to its ability to invade natural areas. It tolerates a wide range of environmental factors, reproduces efficiently, and grows rapidly. It is able to inhabit dry and wet forests, as well as coastal forests and disturbed areas. Each fruit produced by this plant can produce thousands to millions of small seeds. This fast-growing species is capable of growing from seedling to reproductive stage in approximately one year.*”

Many can be found spread across the LSS property, often emerging from piles of brush or along paths. Paul Martin Brown wrote that it does not seem to displace native species, but the State of Florida has declared it a Category II invasive species, posing a threat to native ecosystems. They make lovely house plants so long as you keep them indoors.



Oeceoclades maculata in bloom

Brown described it as having “*strikingly patterned leaves with their rich, dark green base and silver mottlings...*” The stalk erupts from a pseudobulb and usually has between 5 to 15 flowers, which have a white lip with purple markings. It can be found in shady hammocks, cultivated gardens, and Brown noted that it is often associated with eucalyptus mulch. This orchid was first noted in Miami-Dade County and has spread steadily north. They are believed to be self-fertile, similarly to *Sacoila paludicola*, many of the flowers do not completely open, but still set seed.

For more information, see:

<https://plant-directory.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/oeceoclades-maculata/>

More information about *S. paludicola* and *S. lanceolata* can be found in the newest issue of *Orchids* 94(11); “Is it One Species, Two or Many?” by Tatiana Arias, Bethany Simpson, John Gange, Fernando Rocha Vento, Sarah Wetterer, Michelle Calhoun, and Steve Koski.



Oeceoclades maculata leaves

“FRIENDS FEST 2025” HELD ON OCTOBER 26, 2025, AT SARASOTA FARM BUREAU PARK, AT THE CELERY FIELDS
by Steve Koski

On Sunday, October 26, several members and friends attended a historical event, the first annual “Friends Fest,” hosted by the Friends of Sarasota County History Center. This event was held at the Sarasota Farm Bureau Park, off Palmer Road, just east of the Celery Fields. The Englewood Museum and WMS/LSSAS shared space under a 10 x 10 tent with three tables of display items which provided information on the Englewood Museum and Sarasota’s rich prehistory. The Englewood Museum is located at 604 W. Perry Street in Englewood, in the 1928 Lampp House, which is owned by WMS/LSSAS board member Betty Dailey-Nugent. The building is listed on the Sarasota County Register of Historic Places.



Board member Karen Malesky speaks with attendees at the WMS/LSSAS table on early Sarasota County prehistory

The WMS/LSSAS set up two of the tables with display items and information on the early peoples of Florida and Sarasota County, including a cast of a saber cat similar to the one found at Warm Mineral Springs. Those remains were in association with evidence of people who had visited the site more than 10,000 years ago.



From left to right: Shelly Babington, Patrick Mostyn, Steve Koski, and Betty Dailey-Nugent



The Englewood Museum (1928 Lamm House)

Also on the tables were reproductions of stone and bone tools, a poster of Little Salt Spring which represented the Paleoindian and Archaic periods, (14,000 to 3,000 years ago). Later coastal peoples who lived between 3000 to 500 years ago, when shell middens and mounds began to take shape along our shores in Sarasota County, were represented by a shell midden profile, ceramic reproductions, shell tools, and later period Seminole baskets, Seminole-made dolls in traditional clothing, and Seminole beads. Plan a local visit to the Englewood Museum at the Historic Lamm House, and you'll be glad you did!

For more information on the museum, go to: <https://www.Englewoodmuseum.org>.

For information on the Friends of Sarasota County History Center, go to: <https://friendssarasotahistorycenter.org>

INDIAN BEACH INVESTIGATIONS ONGOING

Archival investigations continue to take place regarding Indian Beach. Their target is Fort Armistead. This Seminole War fort was in operation from October 1840 to May 1841 and

was closed due to rampant tropical, sanitation-related, and water-borne diseases which were prevalent. Its position was last recorded in 1857 by Lieutenant Frederick M. Follett, when he mapped the area between Tampa and the Peace River. Several properties have produced military buttons as residents have disturbed the soil for landscaping over the years.

The Archaeological and Historical Conservancy excavated a couple lots in the neighborhood, finding evidence of the fort, including more period military buttons. It is speculated that there must have been a cemetery at the fort, unless they wrapped the dead and transported them to Fort Brooke via steamer. As noted previously, the troop rolls are being sought from Fort Armistead in order to compare them to the graves register from Fort Brooke. If none of the names of the Fort Armistead dead appear on the graves register, it can be surmised that they were buried on-site at Fort Armistead and could still lie undisturbed somewhere just to the north of Whitaker Bayou. Several wood-frame buildings once existed at Fort Armistead and it is hoped that some evidence of these structures will be located very soon. Stay tuned for future updates!

[A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE, Refer To: DTN3938713]

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PRESIDENTMichelle Calhoun, mlcalhoun35@gmail.com
 VICE PRESIDENT.....Kathy Gerace, dtgerace@gmail.com
 RECORDING SECRETARY..Steve Koski, skoski1044@aol.com
 TREASURERTim Costin, tcostin@protonmail.com

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Warm Mineral Springs / Little Salt Spring
 Archaeological Society
 P. O. Box 7797, North Port, Florida 34290
 Visit: www.wmsslss.org for Society info and past newsletters

