
Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society

A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2005



Editor: David Burns

Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center

Presents

Rainforest Masks of the Borucan Indians of Costa Rica



This exhibit featuring remarkable ceremonial masks hand-carved by Borucan Indians will be available for viewing until December 18, 2005. Two of the master carvers, **Bernardo Gonzalez Morales** and **Francisco Rojas Morales**, were present for the opening and stayed for a couple of days showing visitors how they carved the masks. The detail on them is extraordinary and must be seen to be appreciated. These works of art reflect the rich cultural history of their ancestral rainforest habitat. While the masks are central to the Borucan's annual, three-day *El Juego de Los Diabólicos* celebration, the Borucan's find carving, painting and weaving a viable option for meeting their basic economical needs as well as reinvigorating their culture. This exhibit was made possible through the assistance of Mariposa Indigenous Art, a Fair Trade Federation member represented by **Lauren Jawer**, Friends of Weedon Island, and Pinellas County Government.

The masks are for sale and other smaller masks and related items are available at the new gift shop. If you do purchase a mask displayed on the wall, please be aware that you will not be able to take them home until after the exhibit is over.

Archaeology Project at Camp Wai Lani

Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society (CGCAS) and area Girl Scout troops have agreed to conduct an archaeological survey of Camp Wai Lani over the next six months. Camp Wai Lani is located just south and adjacent to Wall Springs Park in northern Pinellas County.

Participating Girl Scouts would perform the shovel testing, screening, sorting of artifacts, cataloging and lab evaluation of recovered artifacts. All artifacts would be collected and evaluated with the results being provided in a report prepared by CGCAS with the support of the participating Girl Scouts. The resulting benefit will be that each Girl Scout would receive education credit leading to an Archaeology Merit badge.

The Camp Wai Lani Archaeological Survey is a wonderful opportunity for cooperative activity on a potentially important archaeological site benefiting both CGCAS and the Girl Scouts of Pinellas County.

Did You Really Find An Arrowhead?

Most likely not, although it is quite common for the average person to refer to most stone projectile points as *arrowheads*. Surprising as it may seem, most of the stone points commonly found along waterways or farmer's fields probably never saw the end of an arrow. The simple reason is that the bow and arrow was a rather recent invention and came into general use by Native Americans only about 1,600 to 1,100 years ago. Consider also that some archaeologist believe that the first Americans may have arrived at least 14,000 years ago or even earlier.

The true arrowhead is actually a very small point, seldom more than 1½ inches long, such as the Pinellas projectile point shown here.



Although sometimes referred to as “bird points,” they were used to kill not only birds but large animals as well, such as deer. The other projectile points we find are either too large to be arrowheads or were manufactured before the bow and arrow came into use. They are most likely tools such as scrapers and knives, spear points, or dart points used along with the atlatl for thousands of years before the bow and arrow. It's possible that the first Americans may have brought the atlatl with them as they made their way into the Americas. This important innovation consisted of a spear mounted on a throwing stick. Inserted at the end of the spear was a dart tipped with a stone or bone point. With the atlatl, a hunter could throw a spear with much greater speed and distance than with the arm alone. Upon impact, the dart remained imbedded in the target as the spear bounced back and separated from the spear.

Further information on Florida projectile point types is readily available in *Florida's First People* by Robin Brown; *Florida's Prehistoric Stone Technology* by Barbara Purdy;

and *A Guide to the Identification of Florida Projectile Points* by Ripley P. Bullen.

H.W. “Pete” Peterson

(This article first appeared in *The Ozarks Mountaineer* in Missouri and later in an issue of the Missouri Archeological Society *Quarterly*. Pete has rewritten his original article to make it suitable for the CGCAS News Letter. David Burns provided Florida arrowhead picture and point type source material.)

In Print

IN SEARCH OF ICE AGE AMERICANS

By Kenneth Tankersley, Forward by Douglas Preston, 2002, Gibbs Smith, Publisher, Layton, Utah, 23 + 208 pp., 46 color plates, 41 b/w pictures and illustrations, preface, index, \$24.95 (hard cover) ISBN 1-58685-021-0 reviewed by H.W. “Pete” Peterson

The author draws on more than two decades of field work and associations with some of the most recognized experts in archaeology to provide up-to-date insights on where the first Americans may come from, when they may have arrived, and how they survived the rigors of the Ice Age. He shares his excitement of finding ancient sites and evidence of human habitation, such as projectile points and tools made not only of stone but split bones and ivory. During the course of the book, it becomes apparent why the Clovis point may have been one of the most successful hunting weapon in the cultural history of the Western Hemisphere. What also makes the book particularly enjoyable is its easy reading style, very little technical jargon, and a fund of interesting behind the scenes information not usually found in text books. In addition, the color plates of artifacts are outstanding.

While emphasizing the need for professionals and non-professionals to work together, he makes the point early on that amateurs find most of the sites, including many very important ones. For example, the book describes how the bone pit that later became the Folsom site was found in New Mexico by a Black American cowboy and former slave named George McJunkin in 1908. It describes how the Blackwater Draw site containing Clovis points was found by a Native American teenage cowboy named James Whiteman in 1929, also in New Mexico. The author then goes on to note the importance of these sites, as in describing the astonishing cultural stratification found during later Blackwater Draw excavations.

The author provides a summary of what is currently known about Clovis, America's oldest recognized culture. He describes the kind of archaeological sites and artifacts that have been found, the Ice Age climate, environments and resources, and how the Clovis people made a living hunting wild animals and gathering wild plant foods. He provides a glimpse into their social structure and belief systems.

The book also dwells on what the author calls the “Thieves of Time,” which is about non-professional and professional people who deliberately set out to rob us of the truth about the past. It is fascinating to learn how fake

artifacts are detected and the impact these fakes can have among collections, including those in some museums.

The question of whether the Clovis people were the first Americans is examined. He notes more recent discoveries that may eventually identify cultures that preceded the Clovis people, as well as groundbreaking discoveries from studies of linguistics and genetics. Possible routes of entry into the Americas, overland or by sea, from the Far East or Western Europe, are discussed along with the pros and cons of each hypothesis.

Radiocarbon dating is explained in a manner that can be understood by amateurs. How and when Willard Libby first discovered carbon dating is discussed, and the impact it had upon archaeology and archaeologists. For instance, when the concept of radio carbon dating was first presented by Libby at a meeting of about thirty archaeologists in New York city, the author tells of "journalists who later reported that you could have heard a pin drop at the end of Libby's presentation. The archaeologists were stunned! Aside from sheer disbelief, most of them were uncomfortable because their published speculations about antiquity were about to be put to test." The author thoughtfully includes a table which translates up to 16,000 years of radiocarbon time to calendar time.

The author addresses the lack of evidence of ancient cave activity in America compared to cave activity elsewhere in the world, and then describes how this mystery was solved by an amateur archaeologist during excavations in Sheriden Cave, a deeply buried Ice Age American site in northwestern Ohio.

The book appropriately closes with a story of the planning phase for the greatest Ice Age American conference of the twentieth century, "Clovis and Beyond," which was held in Santa Fe, NM in 1999 and attended by more than fourteen hundred people from many walks of life.

The twenty-three page Forward by Douglas Preston is also fascinating and a perfect opener for the book. Preston provides additional interesting insights into the life of George McJunkin and James Whiteman. He adds his comments on cultural changes through time, including the controversy brought about by discovery of the Kennewick Man and discovery of half a dozen other Kennewick-like skeletons of similar age. He notes how this small but growing body of evidence suggests that at least one early group of inhabitants in the New World might have been Caucasoid people from Europe, who may have then been displaced by Asiatic emigrants. In Preston's words, "To call this theory controversial would be an understatement."

Meet Pete Peterson

Pete Peterson has provided a number of articles for use in the CGCAS newsletter, although for the last 20 years he was only a winter resident in Florida. Pete was known earlier for his participation in the Narvaez/Anderson dig. In Missouri where he has spent his summer months, he was very active in the Missouri Archaeological Society, served on the MAS board of directors in various capacities, and most recently as its president. Pete is now living full time in Florida and has indicated he wants to become re-involved in the CGCAS and continue offering articles for the newsletter.

We welcome Pete and Shirley back to the CGCAS fold. As many of us know, having worked with Pete on the Narvaez/Anderson excavation, he is known for his love of arrowheads as his article above shows but also his sense of humor. We were never let down during lunch or break as Pete always offered to give you a kiss (Hershey's of course). Glad to have you back.

CGCAS and FAS Code of Ethics

An unfortunate incident occurred earlier this year when a member of a FAS chapter was intercepted removing over a hundred artifacts from the Portavent Mound at Emerson Point Park in Bradenton, Florida. The individual's arrest and legal process has recently concluded with this person receiving significant fines, court costs along with 100 hours of community service. This event offers a convenient reminder regarding the archaeological code of ethics that we need to follow "*A member must be keenly aware that an archaeological site contains evidence of specific human activities and is a unique source of data about past socio-cultural behavior.*" All sites deserve professional quality excavation, analysis, and publication." Let us all remind ourselves that our interest in Florida archaeology and membership in FAS and its chapters comes with a public trust to conserve and preserve the few remaining ancient Native American sites and their associated artifacts for research and study for future generations.

Apocalypto

Mel Gibson is ready to start shooting his next movie titled *Apocalypto*, an action-adventure set in Central America before the Europeans arrived, with a cast of unknowns and all dialogue in Mayan.

The cast includes indigenous Mayan-speaking people from the Yucatan but no well-known actors we have heard of. The script, written by Gibson, was done after he read books about Mayan history and culture. He said he made up much of the story that is about a Mayan man and "civilizations and what undermines them". He did have historians and archaeologists check it for outrageousness and he said he wasn't that far wrong.

The movie is scheduled for summer release.

King Tut Exhibit

This exhibit features 50 major artifacts from Tutankhamen's tomb including his royal diadem and more than 70 artifacts from other royal graves from the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. This exhibit will only be available in four cities in the United States.

You will be able to visit it in Fort Lauderdale from December 15, 2005 until April 23, 2006. Further information about the exhibit can be found online at <http://kingtut.org/venues.html/>.

Tickets cost is \$25 for adults or \$22.50 for seniors (65+). Also, there is an audio accompaniment for \$7 that must be ordered with the tickets, as the audio headsets will not be available for rental separately. Tickets may be ordered by calling 877-787-7711.

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The Society

Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society (CGCAS) is an association of amateur and professional archaeologists and concerned citizens dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Florida's great cultural heritage. CGCAS is a chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) and is a state chartered non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Visit our web site at www.cgcas.org.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone with a sincere interest in the cultural past of Florida and who is dedicated to the understanding and preservation of that heritage

Amateurs, professionals and concerned citizens are welcomed as members. Membership is yearly and begins in the month of dues receipt. Contact Membership Secretary, CGCAS, P.O. Box 9507, Treasure Island, FL 33740.

Dues	
Regular	\$15.00
Student	10.00
Family	20.00
Life	150.00



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