

Fossil Club of Lee County

May, 2009

Message from the President



It is the time of the year when many of our members go north to their summer homes. Enjoy your time away, but hurry back--we miss you.

We have some great speakers lined up for the spring and summer meetings. Our May presenter is from the Randell Research Center and will tell us about the Calusa Indian culture and their encounters with the first Europeans to explore the west coast of Florida. He will bring in some of the artifacts that were found in the shell middens on Pine Island. Coincidentally, our club has just purchased an excellent book entitled "Shell Artifacts" by Frank and Nancy Hoff. The book will be available at our next meeting for your viewing.

While we are on the subject of books, we want to thank Barbara Fite, one of our members, for donating several books and magazines for our next auction or for door prizes. Also, regarding our auction, I met and thanked several vendors at the Venice Shark Tooth Festival for their donations. Some of the vendors asked if we planned to have a Fossil Show this year and I told them our club would make a decision at our May meeting. As all of you know putting on a good show is a lot of work, but it is a good opportunity to "give back to the community" as well as a way to raise money for scholarships/etc.

It is the time of year when our club reviews our financial status and proposes scholarship grants for further pursuits of degrees in paleontology. Our Board of Directors has selected grants for the University of Florida, the University of South Florida, and for our host, the Calusa Nature Center. There are also funds available to purchase a projector system for our speaker presentations. The Board will also get quotes for a wireless microphone system and plans to make that purchase this year as well.

Many of us are still hunting the river and pits, and making dive trips so bring in your Show and Tell items/ We are planning a river trip/ club picnic this month and will announce the date and time at the meeting. I look forward to seeing you on the 21st. Bill

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on May 21, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd.

Officers

Bill Shaver, President (239)834-0694 /
billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com

Al Govin, Vice President (239)245-7560 and cell 910-2339

Ray Seguin, Treasurer, 939-1921 or 936-5019

Sharon Drake, Secretary, (239) 823-9052

Board Members

Director—Louis Stieffel, 458-9818

Michael Orchin, 574-6318

Sandy Schwartz, 772-8015

Trip Director, Bill Shaver

Dive Trip Director, Mike Siciliano, 980-1406

Committees

Newsletter: Cheryl Mitchell

Speakers: Bill Shaver

\$1.00 Raffle: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

Specialized Points or Tools

By Frank and Nancy Hoff
Published by Pasttime Artifacts
Article can be republished
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While most seek to find the perfect point, my wife and I have always concentrated finding the unusual and/or have a specific use. Two points (A & B), found in two different places, have unclear use yet may have been made by the same person. These two unusual archaic period points (knife blades?) are separate finds located about 90 miles apart. The first (A) was found by myself in a field adjacent to our property in Dade City, Florida located 30 miles inland from the west coast of Florida while the other (B) was found by a friend in Cedar Keys located 100+ miles northwest along the Gulf of Mexico.

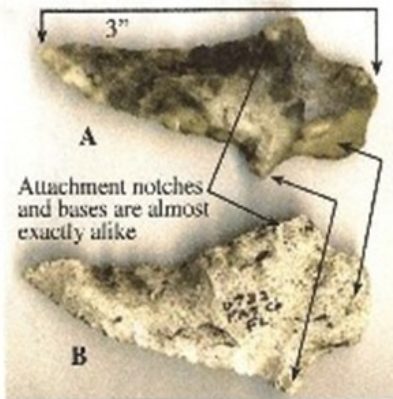


Figure 1 - Same tool maker? Extreme upward curvature of the blade and distinct attachment knobs. From locations 100+ miles apart.

Upward curving blades are common on points utilized as knives. However, the extreme unusual curvature of examples (A and B) make them very unique and curious. Although shaped in a "sword-like" form you first feel that this is just caused from continuous sharpening during use. In addition, I was also offered another point like these from around our property but thought it was a reproduction and now believe otherwise. Points (C and D) were also found in the vicinity of our property. Point (C) shows that same attachment knob as (A and B) but is shaped more like a typical knife blade. All three,

(A, B and C), are crudely constructed and have the same shaped upper attachment knob. Example (D) also came from the vicinity of our property in Dade City, is fairly well made and is the classical shape of a knife blade. All four, (A, B, C and D), appear to be Kirk types which would place them about in the Middle Archaic (5000 to 4000 B.C.).

They are obviously not your typical knife blade indicating they may have been created for a specific use. Can't be for oyster shucking tool since we do not have oysters in Dade City. Irregardless of their use and age, blades (A and B) and perhaps (C) appear to be made by the same person. Blade (A) is made of a gray/black chert, (B) is made of hard white limestone and (C) is made of yellow/brown agatized coral chert. Finer secondary chipping is mainly found bottom edge and at the tip of all three blades. Since (A and B) and the questionable blade that was offered all came from Dade City it is likely that the maker of all three blades may have resided in the Dade City area. Blade (A) that was found in Cedar Key may have been traded or the maker may have also have resided in Cedar Keys at one period in time?

Two additional points (D and E), are constructed,

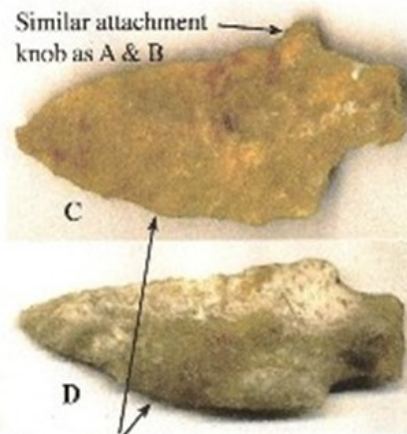


Figure 2 - Typical upward curved blade of a knife.

or should we say may have been reconstructed, from a normal point and appear to be redone after being broken. Location of point (D) was inland in Dade City, Florida and (E) was found along the Gulf Coast in St. Petersburg, Florida about 50 miles away. Point (E) was used as an drill or awl and has smooth edges from considerable grinding. Point (D) appears as if it was broken perhaps during initial construction and then reformed into an awl

Minutes

DATE OF MEETING: April 16, 2009

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 62

Presided by: Bill Shaver, President

Bill welcomed new members and then discussed club elections. All current officers volunteered to stay in office for another year, except for secretary Leslie Stieffel. These include:

Bill Shaver President

Al Govin Vice President

Ray Seguin Treasurer

Mike Siciliano Director / Dollar Raffle

Louis Stieffel Director

Sandy Schwartz Director

Michael Orchin Director

Club member Sharon Drake accepted the position of secretary. Bill asked if anyone had objections, none were made. All officers were voted in by acclamation, with new offices starting in May.

A brief discussion was held about purchasing a projector. We had two great speakers this month from the University of Florida: Elvis Nunez who talked about Ancient Tropics in the desert of Sonora, Mexico and Catalina Pimiento, her topic was Giant Shark Babies from Panama. Ray Seguin gave a treasurer's report, including that we raised \$2600.00 at last month's auction.

At the next board meeting the board will discuss where to donate some of this money.

Al Govin suggested that we are outgrowing this building and that we should consider a different location.

A brief discussion was held and Bill said that the board will discuss this further.

Upcoming speakers: May: Michael Wylde from the Randall Research Center. June: Dr. Jose Real from the Bailey Matthews museum.

Upcoming field trips were discussed. Many members participated in show and tell.

Bill thanked the refreshment team of Leslie & Louis Stieffel and Pat, Don and Rodney Legree, who brought several tasty cakes.

May refreshments: Al Govin and Stefani Crandell

By: Leslie Stieffel, Secretary

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium
3450 Ortiz Av, Fort Myers
Tel 239-275-3435
www.calusanature.com

Imaginarium
200 Cranford Av, Fort Myers
www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium

Southwest Florida Museum of History
2300 Peck St., Fort Myers
www.swflmuseumofhistory.com

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum
3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL
www.shellmuseum.org

Randell Research Center
PO Box 608, Pineland, FL
(on Pine Island)
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/

Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve
Six Mile Cypress Drive (Between Daniels and Colonial)
www.leeparks.org/fos

REFRESHMENTS FOR CLUB MEETINGS

AL GOVIN and STEFANI CRANDELL are providing the refreshments for May. Need volunteers for June. The refreshments need not be lavish, but preferred to be kept simple except on special occasions. Drinks, crackers, cookies, and chips are all that is necessary. The club provides the drink cooler and reimburse you for what you spent. Figure on about 50 attending each summer meeting. member and -- take a turn at refreshments. Every-

So be a strong club step up to the plate doing the refresh-one will appreciate



or drill. It does not show much used but was found by a "turtle-back" hide scrapper made from the same material which may help indicate the specific use of this strange point. Both were made from agatized coral.

Anyone who can provide more information on this type of blade and/or it's use would be of value to all who appreciate this great hobby.

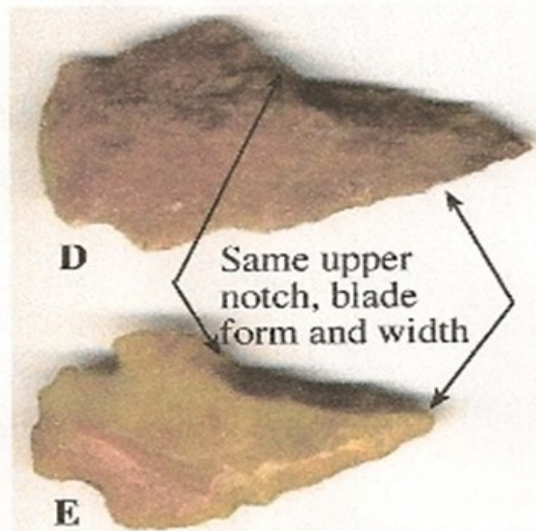


Figure 3 - Similar drills or awls from locations 50 miles apart.

Dive Trip : Mike Sicilano, Director

Mike Sicilano is planning a dive trip for Tuesday, May, 2009. The cost of the trip is \$65.00, air included, with cookie and service for a two tank dive. Please contact Michael about specifics at (239) 980-1406 and leave a message. He will get back with you. Do not respond to Sandy Schwartz or Cheryl Mitchell. We know nothing.....!!!!!!

Speaker for May 21st— Michael Wylde

My talk will be a general overview of the Calusa Indians and the Pineland Site including a brief summary of recent and ongoing research.

I've lived in SWFL for 20 years, and involved with the Randall Research Center for 5 years. I've worked and done research in Florida, Mexico, Honduras, and Bali. And for 5 years I have been involved in the Canada Alamosa Archaeological Project in Southwestern New Mexico, where I will be working in June. I am currently conducting a dig on Mound 5 of the Brown's Mound Complex at the Pine Island Site.

Clovis-era Tool Cache 13,000 Years Old

Shows Evidence Of Camel, Horse Butchering

ScienceDaily (Feb. 26, 2009)

Adapted from materials provided by University of Colorado at Boulder

— More than 80 stone implements were discovered together in Boulder city limits by landscapers. A biochemical analysis of a rare Clovis-era stone tool cache recently unearthed in the city limits of Boulder, Colo., indicates some of the implements were used to butcher ice-age camels and horses that roamed North America until their extinction about 13,000 years ago, according to a University of Colorado at Boulder study.

The study is the first to identify protein residue from extinct camels on North American stone tools and only the second to identify horse protein residue on a Clovis-age tool, said CU-Boulder Anthropology Professor Douglas Bamforth, who led the study. The cache is one of only a handful of Clovis-age artifact caches that have been unearthed in North America, said Bamforth, who studies Paleolithic culture and tools.

The Clovis culture is believed by many archaeologists to coincide with the time the first Americans arrived on the continent from Asia via the Bering Land Bridge about 13,000 to 13,500 years ago, Bamforth said.

Named the Mahaffy Cache after Boulder resident and landowner Patrick Mahaffy, the collection is one of only two Clovis caches — the other is from Washington state — that have been analyzed for protein residue from ice-age mammals, said Bamforth. In addition to the camel and horse residue on the artifacts, a third item from the Mahaffy Cache is the first Clovis tool ever to test positive for sheep, and a fourth tested positive for bear.

Dozens of species of North American mammals went extinct by the end of the Pleistocene, including American camels, American horses, woolly mammoth, dire wolves, short-faced bears, saber-toothed cats, woolly rhinos and giant ground sloths. While some scientists speculate ice-age mammals disappeared as a result of overhunting, climate change or even the explosion of a wayward asteroid, the reasons are still unresolved, Bamforth said.

The Mahaffy Cache consists of 83 stone implements

ranging from salad plate-sized, elegantly crafted bifacial knives and a unique tool resembling a double-bitted axe to small blades and flint scraps. Discovered in May 2008 by Brant Turney — head of a landscaping crew working on the Mahaffy property — the cache was unearthed with a shovel under about 18 inches of soil and was packed tightly into a hole about the size of a large shoebox. It appeared to have been untouched for thousands of years, Bamforth said.

Although the surface of the house lot had been lowered by construction work over the years, an analysis of photos from the Mahaffy Cache excavation site by CU-Boulder geological sciences Emeritus Professor Peter Birkeland confirmed the approximate age of sediment layer containing the Clovis implements. The site appears to be on the edge of an ancient drainage that ran northeast from Boulder's foothills, said Bamforth.

"The idea that these Clovis-age tools essentially fell out of someone's yard in Boulder is astonishing," he said. "But the evidence I've seen gives me no reason to believe the cache has been disturbed since the items were placed there for storage about 13,000 years ago."

All 83 artifacts were shipped to the anthropology Professor Robert Yohe of the Laboratory of Archaeological Science at California State, Bakersfield for protein residue tests that were funded by Mahaffy. The protein residue on the artifacts was tested against various animal antisera, a procedure similar to standard allergy tests and which can narrow positive reactions down to specific mammalian families, but not to genera or species.

"I was somewhat surprised to find mammal protein residues on these tools, in part because we initially suspected that the Mahaffy Cache might be ritualistic rather than a utilitarian," said Yohe. "There are so few Clovis-age tool caches that have been discovered that we really don't know very much about them."

While the quality and patterns on several of the artifacts resemble Clovis stonework, "It was the camel and horse protein results that were the clincher for me," said Bam-

forth. "We haven't had camels or horses around here since the late Pleistocene." The artifacts that showed animal protein residues were each tested three times to ensure accuracy.

The artifacts were buried in a coarse, sandy sediment overlain by dark, clay-like soil and appear to have been cached on the edge of an ancient stream, said Bamforth. "It looks like someone gathered together some of their most spectacular tools and other ordinary scraps of potentially useful material and stuck them all into a small hole in the ground, fully expecting to come back at a later date and retrieve them."

Bamforth said he knew immediately that much of the stone used to craft the tools in the cache originated from Colorado's Western Slope and perhaps as far north as southern Wyoming. The stone appears to have come from at least four distinct regions, including sites in Colorado's Middle Park south of Steamboat Springs, he said.

Bamforth believes the type of people who buried the Mahaffy Cache "lived in small groups and forged relationships over large areas." "I'm skeptical that they wandered widely, and they may have been bound together by a larger human network." A single individual could have easily carried all of the Mahaffy Cache tools a significant distance, he said.

One of the tools, a stunning, oval-shaped bifacial knife that had been sharpened all the way around, is almost exactly the same shape, size and width of an obsidian knife found in a Clovis cache known as the Fenn Cache from south of Yellowstone National Park, said Bamforth. "Except for the raw material, they are almost identical," he said. "I wouldn't stake my reputation on it, but I could almost imagine the same person making both tools."

Climatic evidence indicates the Boulder area was cooler and wetter in the late Pleistocene and receding glaciers would have been prominent along the Front Range of Colorado, he said. "The kind of animals that were wandering around present-day Boulder at the end of the last ice age -- elephants, camels, huge bears and ground sloths -- are creatures we would expect to see in a zoo today."

A 2008 study led by the University of Oregon offers evidence that a cadre of comets exploded over North America about 12,900 years ago, triggering massive fires that caused the extinction of ice-age mammals and perhaps even the Clovis people. The evidence is based on a thin layer of microscopic diamonds found in ancient soil layers



Douglas Bamforth, Anthropology professor for the University of Colorado at Boulder places his hand on one of more than 80 artifacts unearthed about two feet below Boulder resident Patrick Mahaffy's front yard during a landscaping project this past summer. The artifacts, which may have been made during the Clovis period nearly 13,000 years ago, were neatly arranged in a cache near where this portrait was taken, suggesting that the users of these instruments may have intended to reuse them. (Credit: Photo by Glenn J. Asakawa/University of Colorado)

that could only have been created by searing heat and pressure transforming carbon on Earth's surface.

Mahaffy, who initially thought the stone tools were just a few hundred years old, called the CU-Boulder anthropology department the day of the discovery, and Bamforth came to the examine the cache the following day. "I think it's safe to say Doug got pretty excited based on his background and knowledge of the area," said Mahaffy, a Boulder biotechnology entrepreneur. The high-tech tests that confirmed the antiquity of the tools "are a nice marriage between modern biotechnology and anthropology," Mahaffy said.

"There is a magic to these artifacts," said Mahaffy. "One of the things you don't get from just looking at them is how incredible they feel in your hand --they are almost ergonomically perfect and you can feel how they were used. It is a wonderful connection to the people who shared this same land a long, long time ago." Mahaffy said the artifacts will likely wind up in a museum except for a few of the smaller pieces, which will be reburied at the cache site.

Beneath this Tree

Beneath this tree a story lies
It tells of people but denies
Their names that we shall never know
For in the wind they ever blow.
As I kneel here they may have knelt
Warmth of a fire they may have felt.
Near by the fire where they dined
Pieces of shards do I now find
Remnants are they of scattered lives,
To pieces cut, as with sharp knives.
And time has dispersed their remains
And taken with it all their names.

The hurricane that felled this tree
Unearthed the shards that I now see.
I hold one in my hand and feel
A tragedy that time can't heal.
For time has dispersed their remains
And taken with it all their names.

Imagine living in this place
When fragile was the human race.
Survival was a daily strife,
Heroic must have been their life.
But time has dispersed their remains
And taken with it all their names

No matter how much time I spend,
I know that I can never mend
The scattered fragments of their tale,
Only their presence could unveil.
And time has dispersed their remains
And taken with it all their names
That once again we'll never know
For in the wind they'll always blow.

Maurice Guy

FOSSIL FIELD TRIPS

Lots of activity! Several members have been diving and finding some nice specimens. Mike Siciliano, our Dive Trip Director is ready to set up a trip so contact him for details. Gunther Lobish, our Pit Trip Director has been taking us into the Quality on Sundays and we are still finding fossils. Gunther is considering another trip to the Vulcan, so if you are interested, call him. We had a good trip to CF Industries in late April and each of us had some nice finds---several three-toed horse, shark vertebra, and of course some megs. We hope to set up another trip, perhaps after there are some heavy rains to wash down the landscape. And there is always old faithful for finding fossils---the Peace River. Several club members have been out recently so we should have some Show and Tell items at the May meeting. We plan to have a Club Trip/Picnic at the Orange River site, perhaps later in May---Ray is working on it! We should have the details at our May meeting. Until then, good hunting and see you on May 21st. Incidentally, our newsletter editor, Cheryl Mitchell is always looking for pictures from our trips so if you have some, please send them to her.

I found this recent boar skull in a Goethe State Park Forest Stream next to a sizeable gator on the mud bank. I chase the gator away into the stream and recovered the skull. Charles O'Connor.

