



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

CHAPTER

THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 11 Number 3 Newsletter MARCH 1985

President: Wes Coleman Editor: Beth Read

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Monday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

The regular Board of Directors Meeting will be held on Monday, March 3, 1986 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Bob Carr, 2820 S.W. 38 Court, Miami. All voting members are welcome to attend.

REGULAR MARCH MEETING

Friday, March 21, 8:00 p.m.

The regular March Meeting will be held at the Audubon House, 5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami. The speaker will be member Bill Johnson who will talk about another aspect of his archaeological experiences in Alaska.

FIELD REPORT

Excavation continues at the Kendall-Coleman site. We were pleased to have eight or ten members of the Southwest Archaeological Society digging with us on Sunday, February 23. Five pits are opened and we welcome everyone to come work with us on this project. One of the pits is revealing a great deal of faunal bone. We are working on a 90 day deadline, so come and help if you can.

EXCAVATION DATES: Saturday, March 1, Sunday, March 9, Saturday, March 15, Sunday, March 23, Saturday, March 29, Sunday, April 6 and Saturday, March 12.

PRE-COLUMBIAN EXHIBIT

The exhibit of pre-Columbian ceramic and gold from private collections put together by the Broward County Archaeological Society is now open at the Ft. Lauderdale Branch Library, 1300 E. Sunrise Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale. This is a major exhibit and well worth your time and the short trip to Broward County. Tickets are \$3.00 and the hours are: Monday, Thursday, Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Closed Sunday and Friday.

DUES ARE DUE

It's that important and slightly unpleasant time of the year. Use the form enclosed to renew your membership if you have not already attended to that chore. The mailing list for the newsletter will be revised as of the April issue. So be sure to send you dues if you have not already done so. We want to keep the lines of communication open.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Members Bob Carr, Dennis Kennelly and Bill Johnson, et.al. continue to receive press coverage in connection with the Cutler Fossil Site which has attracted nationwide coverage. Bob Carr also was interviewed on national television at the Fossil site; with pictures of some of the exciting finds. The early hour, on a work day, however, forced many members to "miss the show."

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS CONTINUED.

Member Irving Eyster was quoted in the Miami Herald "Action Line" column on January 21, 1986 solving a mystery that I am sure has puzzled not only the writer to "Action Line" but also many travelers to the Keys:

"I've got a mystery for you. At Mile Marker 73, near Lower Matecumbe Key on the Gulf of Mexico side of the Overseas Highway, are three structures in the water. They're arch-shaped, flat on top and the sides slant at a sharp angle into the water. There are four flat structures next to them. For 13 years I've been trying to find out what they are. No one knows." --Lucille Bass, Miami

"They're bridge pilings." 'I've been trying for years to get a marker out there to let people know what those things are,' says Irving Eyster of Islamorada. He's an archaeologist and chairman of the Historic Keys Preservation Board. In the early 1930's work started on the bridges to link Lower Matecumbe Key with what's now known as Siesta Key. When the 1935 hurricane wiped out the railroad in the Keys, it took the work done on the linking bridges with it and left only the pilings behind."

Irving was also featured in the February 6, 1986 issue of the The Reporter published in Key Largo, Florida

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IRVING EYSTER



THE MAN BEHIND INDIAN KEY

Irving Eyster first heard about the small island when he was six or seven-years-old.

His grandfather, Dr. Jeremiah Reade, had convinced the local paper, the *Indianapolis Times*, to pay for several trips to Florida in return for several columns on the subject. It was on one of those trips, in 1883, that Reade had traveled to a bustling little shipbuilding center on a tiny island between Miami and Key West.

Reade told his grandson fascinating stories about how the island had been the county seat for a large area called Dade and how raiding Seminole Indians on August 7, 1840 burnt the town down after discovering its owner, Captain Jacob Housman, had offered to hunt them for bounty. Thirty years after the Indian raid, the island was rebuilt and during Reade's visit was a shipyard constructing 12-28 ton sailing schooners and sloops.

Eyster was listening to the lore of Indian Key, a tiny 11-acre coral speck just southeast of today's Islamorada. The isolated village, before the Indian raid, boasted a first-class hotel complete with bowling alley, a well-stocked store and bustling warehouses and wharves. It was the haunt of wreckers and rogues.

Eyster never lost his infatuation with the island and finally, following his move to Florida, in 1949, had his opportunity to visit Indian Key.

"The island back then was overgrown with sissal and tamarind trees," Eyster, 67, recalled. "Since I was interested in archeology I began several excavations. "But many of the historical artifacts were covered by hurricanes or raped by vandals and treasure hunters."

In the late 1960s Eyster and several historical societies began their campaign to preserve the island. Finally, in 1972 the state of Florida bought the island and declared it a historical site and park. Today, paths and streets (circa Housman's era) have been cleared and many of the cisterns and building foundations are visible.

Since 1972 Eyster has directed several other excavations and was an organizer of the annual Indian Key Festival, a festival in early August, that reminds Keys visitors and residents of the colorful history. In 1976, along with Darlene Brown, Eyster published a small paperback book on the colorful little island. He is, according to Islamorada Chamber of Commerce President Henry Rosenthal, the moving force that has brought prominence back to Indian Key.

"When people speak of Indian Key, they speak of Irving Eyster in the same breath," Rosenthal said. "He's the number one person that's been responsible for the 'resurrection' of the island."

NEW GEOLOGICAL THEORY

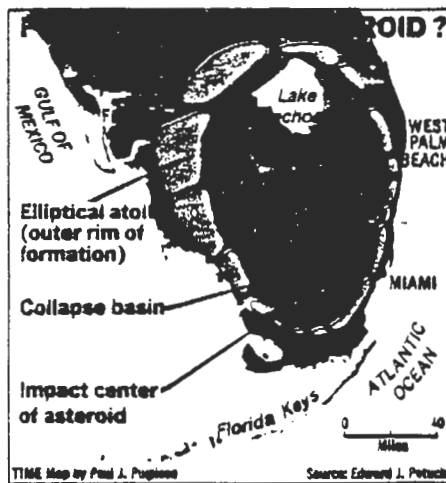
FIU geologist Ed Petuch, whom we have enjoyed as a guest speaker, has a new theory about the formation of the Everglades. Good press coverage of the theory appeared in Time Magazine on December 9, 1985.

Florida Bowl

An Everglades asteroid?

The swampy, semitropical wilderness in southern Florida called the Everglades lies in a peculiar bowl-shaped depression that was bound to arouse the curiosity of geologists. They concluded years ago that the distinctive cavity was probably formed over many aeons as ground water slowly dissolved a surface layer of limestone. Now Geologist Edward J. Petuch, 36, of Florida International University in Miami, has another idea. In a report to the Geological Society of America's national convention in Orlando, he suggested that the Everglades are the mud-filled remains of an impact crater left by an asteroid that struck the earth 38 million years ago and punched a hole in the ancient seabed, which then lay under 600 ft. of water.

Much of the evidence behind Petuch's hypothesis has been available to scientists for decades. As early as the 1940s, geologists noticed an extensive network of fractures that radiates outward in the layers of limestone beneath the Everglades like cracks around a bullet hole in a pane of shatterproof glass. Maps published by the



Florida Bureau of Geology in 1974 show a pit-like dip in the area's underground geological contours. Magnetic readings in the Everglades suggest the presence of a subterranean mass of metallic ore that could conceivably be the remains of an asteroid. Finally, scientific journals have noted that a commonly found rock stratum, called the Ocala formation, is suspiciously absent in southern Florida. Petuch suggests that it was hurled into the sky during impact.

That impact, he says, along with two other major hits by either comets or asteroids around the same time, threw enough soot (from the resulting conflagrations) and debris into the atmosphere to blot out the sun for months. It was this catastrophe 38 million years ago, he says, that may have caused the great Eocene-Oligocene extinction, which was similar to the one that many scientists believe killed the dinosaurs 27 million years earlier.

Citing evidence from bore samples taken in southern Florida, Petuch says that, after impact, coral began to grow on the raised rim of the crater, forming a circular atoll-like formation. Later, when the sea level rose, the atoll gradually elongated into an ellipse as the coral (which seeks warm waters) migrated toward the shallows north of the original crater. Some 1.8 million years ago, the atoll contained an inland sea continually replenished by ocean waters. But as the rising coral walls gradually closed out the ocean, newly deposited sediments piled up in the forming lagoon. The inland sea shrank, the basin filled with fresh water and, in the warm southern sun, soon became clogged with the rich grasses that formed the Everglades. Central Florida's Lake Okechobee, says Petuch, is the last remnant of that great, sediment-filled lake.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Objective:

To provide a formal means by which individuals and institutions interested in archaeological and anthropological studies in South Florida and related areas may come together for mutual benefits.

Code of Ethics:

1. Members of the society agree to promote archaeological site preservation and conservation, to excavate only endangered sites as part of a qualified research group, to not excavate archaeological sites for the unscientific collecting of artifacts.
2. All artifacts and material recovered from society projects are property of the society.

I hereby apply for membership in the Archaeological Society of Southern Florida:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Renewal ___ New Member ___ \$12.00 Individual ___ \$15.00 Family ___

Mail check or money order to: The Archaeological Society of Southern Florida
101 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130

Due: January 1, 1985

DATES TO REMEMBER:

March 3: Regular March Board of Directors Meeting, Bob Carr's home,
2820 S.W. 38 Court, Maimi, 7:30 p.m.
March 21: Regular March Meeting, Audubon House, 5530 Sunset Drive,
South Miami, 8:00 p.m.
April 18: Annual Meeting - Pot Luck Dinner and Election of Officers

EXCAVATION DATES:

Saturday, March 1, Sunday, March 9, Saturday, March 15, Sunday, March 23,
Saturday, March 29, Sunday, April 6 and Saturday, March 12.



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