

# The Archaeological Society of Southern Florida

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Newsletter of the Society

February 2001

President: Barbara Tansey

Editor: Lisa Weier

## Memories of Chapman Field

Please join us to hear Donna Dowling Gilbert discuss her book, Growing up on Chapman Field: The Inside Story 1923-1947. In this book Donna has written down the memories of her mother, Lola Hayes Dowling. Her grandfather (her mother's father) worked for the USDA and lived with his family in Chapman Field for 24 years.

Chapman Field originally encompassed 850 acres between Biscayne Bay and what would become S.W. 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue, bounded now by S.W. 144<sup>th</sup> Street and Old Culter Road. It was a small airbase used by military reservist through the 1930's, taken over by the Embry-Riddle Corp. to train pilots for war. Named for Victor Chapman, the first U.S. flier to be killed in France in WW1, the air base offered gunnery training to military pilots before it was deactivated just a few months after the war ended. Development was stalled by the creation of a federal plant garden and a county nature preserve.

In 1923 Dr. David Fairchild was able to acquire a portion of the property and moved the U.S. Department of Agriculture's plant introduction garden from its seven acres on Brickell Avenue.

Donna's mother, Lola Hayes, lived with her parents and three sisters inside an old army mess hall. It had electricity and indoor plumbing at a time when many in Miami still used outhouses. Palmetto and pine scrub, snakes, raccoons, possums, panther, and lots of insects surrounded her house. Over the years, the air force base was transformed into a tropical garden under the care of David Fairchild.

Although most of her memories were very pleasant, the one frightening aspect of the time was tropical storms and hurricanes – especially in 1926 and 1945.

Please mark you calendars for Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m., Atlantic Radio Telephone, 2495 NW 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Call Barbara Tansey at (305) 633-9636 for directions.

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New web page:

## Tekesta Taino Tribal Band of Bimini Florida

*Excerpted from web page: <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/Tekesta/index.html>*



The Tekesta Indians lived in what is now Dade and Broward Counties, southeast Florida, and had a capitol town, probably also called Tekesta, in Miami. Although their social structure was collapsing when their manner of life was first recorded, there is some indication that before contact with Europeans and before the hegemony of the better known Calusa Indians, they had developed a paramount chiefdom or state-level society.

They were preceded in Florida by paleoindian big game hunters, but the Tekesta and other Taino peoples who settled Bimini (the Taino name for Florida) after 8000 B.C. were quite different, representing a tropical marine adaptation imported from the Caribbean and ultimately Amazonia.

The Native American population of the Caribbean was complex, but in the course of time it came to share a sense of common heritage based on genetic and geographic origin, a common language, environment, and some shared culture. The term Taino refers to this sense of common heritage that is shared by modern tribes such as the Jatibonicu of Boriken and also the historical tribes of Bimini, such as the Calusa, Timucua, Tekesta, Ais, and Jaega.

Today those who are aware of their Taino heritage are struggling to define themselves in terms of it. This web page, which is sponsored by the Tekesta's fellow Arawak-speaking Taino, aims to help them toward that goal.

- **Mailing address:**

Tekesta Taino Tribal Band of Bimini Florida  
8902 North Military Trail # 315  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

- **Contact Person:**

Chief Tati Ussery  
e-mail: [TekestaTainos@aol.com](mailto:TekestaTainos@aol.com)

## The passing of Wes Coleman

By ASSF member Jim Lord

Wes Coleman and I go way back. Over the years we've spent lots of time tracking down sites and digging together all over South Florida.

Wes was a pioneer South Florida avocational archaeologist. He was a Board Member and past president of ASSF, and a Board Member of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy. He was also a very active participant in living history and historical reenactments events.

Wes had a real knack for locating elusive sites that provided much information for Tequesta Indian papers that he published in FAS journals.

Wes was a wealth of information on local history and prehistoric sites that may never be known again. When Wes dug on a site he did things his way. Wes's signature style was to dig with a Bowie knife, wielding it with the finesse of a trowel.

On one occasion Bill and I found some objects by the side of the road during a dig. When silver dollars and a candelabra were unearthed, everyone took out their Bowie knives and silver dollars went flying everywhere.

Although his methods were a bit unorthodox, in the process Wes made history, and sometimes he wrote history. He will be dearly missed.

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### FAS 2001 Annual Meeting

**Where:** St. Augustine

**When:** Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> through Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup>, Radisson Ponce de Leon Conference Resort, (904) 824-2821.

**Cost:** early registration (until April 1<sup>st</sup>) \$25. \$30 thereafter.

The Friday night reception will be hosted at the St. Augustine Lighthouse.

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### In our Thoughts...

Our thoughts go out to Bill Lyons who has been under the weather lately. Hope

## New Publications



Treasure of the Calusa, The Johnson/Willcox Collection from Mound Key, Florida, by Ryan Wheeler. Focuses on artifacts found on Mound Key over 100 years ago. Archaeologists believe that Mound Key, located to the south of Fort Myers, is *Calos*, the ancient capital of the Calusa Indians. This site has over 125 acres of shell mounds, shell ridges, sunken watercourts, and canoe canals, covered with lush tropical foliage and surrounded by mangroves and the waters of Estero Bay.

Frank Johnson made his home here in the late nineteenth century, and while farming on one of the shell mounds, he and his sons found a veritable treasure of Indian and Spanish artifacts, including glass and crystal beads; silver, copper, and gold ornaments; as well as items of shell, bone and stone. \$29.95, ISBN 0-9701550-0-X, email Ryan at [rjwl100@juno.com](mailto:rjwl100@juno.com) to purchase a copy.

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## Conferences

National Rendezvous and Living History Foundation 20<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Rendezvous. March 23-April 1 in Troy, Alabama. Call 334-762-3111, web address [www.nrlhf.org](http://www.nrlhf.org) for more details. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Alifia River Rendezvous, sponsored by The Florida Frontiersmen, Inc. Pre-1840's encampment, shooting competition, hawk & knife, archery and more. January 26-27, just East of Tampa. Call 813-654-2829, web address [www.floridafrontiersmen.org](http://www.floridafrontiersmen.org).

## Expedition

Mongolia 2001, A Dinosaur Odyssey. July 30 - Aug. 12, and Aug. 12 - 28<sup>th</sup>. Cost: \$4,700 plus airfare and visa. This expedition is in cooperation and participation with the University of Ulanbataar. Call 201-641-4727, email [henkellang@aol.com](mailto:henkellang@aol.com).

**Florida Anthropological Society**  
**FAS membership application/renewal form**

YES, I want to join **FAS**. I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- INDIVIDUAL, \$25    FAMILY, \$30    INSTITUTIONAL, \$25  
 SUSTAINING, \$40 OR MORE    PATRON, \$100    LIFE, \$500

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:      FAS Membership  
                 Terry Simpsons, CGCAS  
                 P.O. Box 82255  
                 Tampa, Florida 33682

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**  
**ASSF membership application/renewal form**

I have read and will abide by the Objectives and Code of Ethics of ASSF listed below, and I wish to apply for membership.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK ONE:**    New Member    Renewal

**CHECK ONE:**    Individual (\$20)    Family (\$25)

Mail to: Barbara Tansey  
                 ASSF Membership  
                 2495 N.W. 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
                 Miami, FL 33142

**ASSF 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 the property of the Society.

**ASSF 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 benefit.

**RETURN ADDRESS:**

The Archaeological Society of Southern Florida  
Barbara Tansey, President  
2495 NW 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33142

**FIRST CLASS**

PLACE STAMP  
HERE

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

Mailing Address

**SPEAKER:**

Donna Gilbert, Author

**OFFICERS:**

Barbara Tansey, President; Jim Lord, Vice President;  
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comments, submissions or (oops!) corrections.