

# Friends of the Randell Research Center

Vol. 2, No. 4

December 2003

## Cuban Parish Records Reveal Immigrant Calusa Indians

by John Worth

**As a follow-up** to my article in the December 2002 *Friends* newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 4), I'm pleased to report that during my most recent research trip to Cuba, I was finally able to examine ecclesiastical records that may shed light on the fate of Calusa and other Florida Indians after their migration to Cuba in the 18th century.

My trip was associated with an ongoing archaeological collaboration between archaeologists in Cienfuegos, Cuba, and in Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida relative to a remote Spanish-contact era Cuban Indian site along the Arimao River near the Bay of Jagua on Cuba's southern coast. As part of renewed fieldwork at this site, I will be exploring the ethnohistory of the earliest stages of the Spanish conquest of Cuba, which prompted the flight of at least one group of native Cuban Indians to South Florida, where the Calusa paramount chief permitted them to settle.

Also during this trip, I was allowed to conduct research in the original parish records of the church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in the community of Guanabacoa near Havana, where many immigrant Florida Indians, including some

Calusa people, settled during the 18th century. During my recent trip, I was able to examine all baptism, marriage, and death books for non-white individuals dating between 1679 and 1776, including some books dating as late as 1796 and 1807. I

learned that a number of Indian families lived in Guanabacoa during the late 17th and 18th centuries, including not just those from Florida, but also immigrant Mexican Indians and their descendants, and possible descendants of indigenous Cuban Indians, all of whom commonly intermarried with local individuals of African or mixed African ancestry.

Many "Keys Indians" or natives of "Cayo Hueso" (Key West) appeared in the parish records, presumably including Calusa refugees who fled to the Florida Keys by about 1710. However, only one

unmarried woman, named Leonor de Sayas, was specifically said to be a native of "Carlos," and thus presumably Calusa. Two of her infant daughters were baptized in Guanabacoa in 1729 and 1731. She died there in 1766, but there is presently no further trace of her daughters. It is possible that they survived and had children of their own.

More work will be needed to follow up on these and other discoveries in Cuba and elsewhere. Thanks are once again due to Dr. David Noble for his financial support of this second Cuba voyage.



Author and companions struggle to cross Arimao River at flood stage before hike to archaeological site. (Photo by Jim Knight)

## In Appreciation

by Bill Marquardt

**We** would like to thank our splendid corps of RRC volunteers who are always there when needed. In addition, we would like to recognize others who have contributed recently to the development of the RRC. Steve Tutko donated an American Optical Series 110 phase-star binocular microscope. Gary Wright and Ed Matias of Gulf Shore Cooling donated \$1,300 in maintenance work on the air conditioning system at our headquarters house. George Birmingham gave the RRC a 50% discount on recent repair work at the house. Mark Dean of PalmCo, Inc. provided free relocation of palm

trees at the Pineland site, and has volunteered to maintain the historic palm-lined roadway at Pineland at his own expense. Bob Repenning's stalwart crews from the Department of Environmental Protection's Charlotte Harbor Buffer Preserve cleared many invasive Brazilian peppers from the roadway next to the Old Mound at Pineland. Treeland Solutions, Inc. donated several thousand dollars worth of services in removing Australian pine trees on Waterfront Drive so we could begin construction of our new entrance and parking area.

*continued on page 4*



Volunteer Dick Maher puts the finishing touches on new sifter screens to be used in Pineland excavations. (Photo by Diane Maher)

# Photo Essay: Long-awaited RRC Visitor Facilities Begin To Take Shape

by John Worth

**During the late summer and fall**, the Randell Research Center has finally witnessed a flurry of activity associated with the construction of the teaching pavilion complex and parking area, as well as the relocation of a number of coconut palm trees to restore the old historic roadway to the early 20th-century packing house at Pineland. The photos below will update readers on our ongoing progress.



Australian pines along Waterfront Drive are removed by Treeland Solutions, Inc. of Pine Island. (Photo by Sydney Cosselman)



Coconut palms are removed from the front of Randell Mound to provide an unobstructed view of Pine Island Sound from atop the mound. Work donated by PalmCo, Inc. of Pine Island. (Photo by John Worth)

## Pavilion Partners Needed

Costs for the pavilion complex are \$577,000. So far, we have \$408,000. In order to complete and equip the classroom, where our school programs and public lectures will take place, we must raise an additional \$169,000. Please consider a special donation to the building fund. Make checks payable to Randell Research Center, and send to PO Box 608, Pineland, Florida 33945. Gifts in any amount are welcome, and are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by federal law. For more information, contact John Worth at (239) 283-2062.



Protective plastic barrier sheets are applied over archaeological sediments in the area of the new teaching pavilion complex. (Photo by Sydney Cosselman)





Wooden piles were driven for the teaching pavilion structure by Island Piling and were cut by Gatewood Custom Carpentry. (Photo by Sydney Cosselman)



First load of base dirt is dumped at new entranceway to the Pineland Site by Bill Mullen of Williams-Mullen Trucking. (Photo by Sydney Cosselman)



View of palm-lined roadway near RRC teaching pavilion construction site, restored by Mark Dean of PalmCo., Inc. (Photo by Sydney Cosselman)

## New and Renewing Friends of the RRC as of November 15, 2003

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any errors or omissions.  
Thank you for your support!)*

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# Utility Pole Artwork Focuses On Calusa Canal

by Diane Maher

**Keeping** with the unique tradition of adorning Pine Island's utility poles with artwork by local island artists, recently painted poles honor the Calusa Indians by depicting scenes from their culture. Located on Stringfellow Road, just north of the Pineland cut-off, two poles mark the Calusa canal that originated in Pineland and spanned the entire width of Pine Island to the Indian Fields area of Matlacha Pass.

One pole features images of Calusa Indian ceremonial masks and the other contains



a representation of Calusa men with a dugout canoe and paddles. A woodpecker painted above the men is thought to be speaking, as expressed by four circles that may represent the four directions.

RRC volunteers Diane and Dick Maher, Marty Kendall, and Debbie Cundall painted the poles.

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A second pole shows Calusa masks like those found at Key Marco in the 1890s. (Photo by Debbie Cundall)



RRC volunteers Marty Kendall and Diane Maher work on one of the utility poles at the canal crossing along Stringfellow Road.

(Photo by Debbie Cundall)

## In Appreciation *continued from page 1*

John Cauthen of Forestry Resources, Inc. donated additional services to haul off the debris. Ann Cordell donated a punchbowl, glasses, plates, cups, saucers, and a blender. Rosemary Squires donated a gas grill. Based on an original design by Louie Campbell, Dick Maher built sifter screens for our new archaeological excavation season. Dave Hurst refinished the library table that sits in the entryway of the headquarters house. Thank you, one and all, for your great support of the Randell Research Center.

**RRC**  
news

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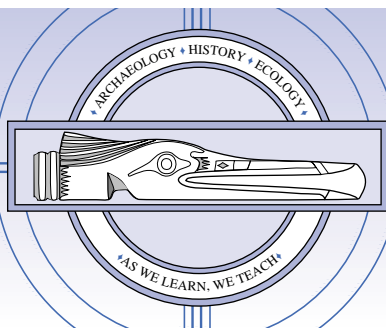


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# Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • December, 2003  
Phone (239) 283-2062 E-mail: johnneworth@comcast.net

## Dear Friend,

You are cordially invited to join, or renew your membership in, the RRC's support society, *Friends of the Randell Research Center*. (Current members can find out when their memberships expire by looking at the address label on their newsletter.)

All Friends of the RRC receive a quarterly newsletter. Supporters at higher levels are entitled to discounts on our books and merchandise, advance notice of programs, and special recognition. Your continuing support is vital to our mission. It means more research, more education, and continued site improvements at the Randell Research Center. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John E. Worth, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Research Programs and Services  
Randell Research Center

*Please check the membership level you prefer, and send this form, along with your check payable to Friends of the Randell Research Center, to:*

**Membership Coordinator • Randell Research Center • PO Box 608 • Pineland, Florida 33945**

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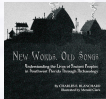
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