

Early Spanish Visits to Southwest Florida *A Busy Decade after First Contact*

by John Worth

The official discovery and naming of “La Florida” in 1513 by former Puerto Rican governor Juan Ponce de León marked only the beginning of Spanish visitation to Southwest Florida, and indeed the first decade after contact seems to have been a busy one. Although he was named Adelantado of Florida in September of 1514, news of Ponce de León’s discovery seems to have spurred additional visits by other Spaniards.

In 1517, the returning expedition of Francisco Hernández de Cordoba visited the southern coastline of Florida in route to Cuba to take on fresh water following a disastrous battle in Yucatan where dozens of soldiers were killed and the expedition’s leader mortally wounded. Led by Ponce de León’s earlier pilot Antón de Alaminos, some 20 of the healthiest sailors went ashore somewhere in the vicinity of Ponce’s earlier expedition, finding fresh water in several holes they dug on a broad beach. As recounted later by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, almost immediately they were attacked by Indians, “who came straight at the Spaniards, shooting arrows at them, and with the surprise they wounded six, but they responded so quickly with the guns, crossbows, and swords that [the Indians] left them and went to help those who were in canoes who were attacking the rowboat and fighting with the soldiers.” Twenty-two Indian attackers were killed, and three wounded prisoners later died on the ships in route to Havana. Hernández de Cordoba himself died only days later in central Cuba.

A royal order issued in Spain during that same month of July, 1517 provides additional insight into the attack against the Spanish sailors, because it reveals an ongoing lawsuit by Juan Ponce de León against Cuban governor Diego Velázquez for the illegal capture of 300 Florida Indian slaves for transport to Cuba. Ponce de León alleged that Velázquez had sponsored or permitted a slave raid into Florida, which, after 1514, should have been Ponce de León’s exclusive slaving territory.

Slaving of this sort is known to have occurred along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of greater



Closeup of Freducci map of 1514-1515, showing Ponce de León’s Florida just north of Cuba.



Tomb of Juan Ponce de León in San Juan, Puerto Rico (photo by J. Worth)

Spanish Florida during the era from 1514 and 1516, including documented expeditions by Diego de Miruelo and Pedro de Salazar. Hence it is entirely possible that the Indians were even more predisposed to attack than was originally the case during Ponce de León’s 1513 voyage. It is no surprise, therefore, that Ponce’s ill-advised 1521 attempt to establish a colony along the coast of Southwest Florida ultimately resulted in his own mortal wound by a Calusa arrow, which led to his death in Havana and subsequent burial in San Juan. The Calusa executed many more Spanish shipwreck survivors than they ever assimilated during the 16th century. If slaving were the norm for early Spanish contact in the first years after Ponce de León’s discovery, then it is no wonder that the Calusa were hostile towards Europeans.

Ask the Archaeologist

Were the Calusa Really Seven Feet Tall?

by Bill Marquardt

Question:

A friend's daughter has told me some things about the Calusa that I have not been able to verify. One thing she said is that the Calusa were very tall, and in fact she said that most were about 7 feet tall. Do you know if that is true? Also, my friend told me that the reason the Calusa did not practice agriculture is because their fierce nature and size intimidated other tribes into doing many things for them, including their farming.

Sincerely,

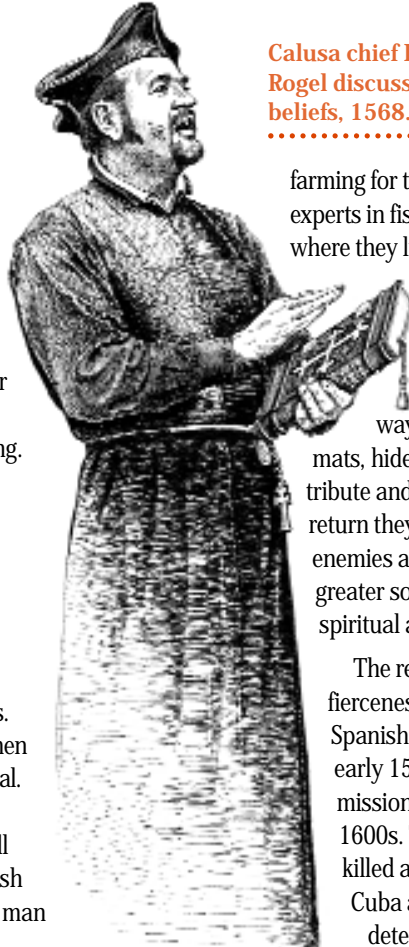
Christy R. Sackett

Answer:

Dear Christy,

Neither assertion can be supported by the facts. Calusa men were perhaps 5'6" to 5'8" tall, the women shorter. A six-foot Calusa would have been exceptional. The reason the Calusa had a reputation for being tall is because the Spaniards described them as tall people, especially the chief. But the average Spanish man was 5'2" at the time, so a 5'8" Native Florida man would have towered over him.

The Calusa grew no corn, manioc, or other staple crops. They did have some gardens, and raised chile peppers and squashes, probably papaya too. The Calusa did not prosper because they terrified their neighbors into



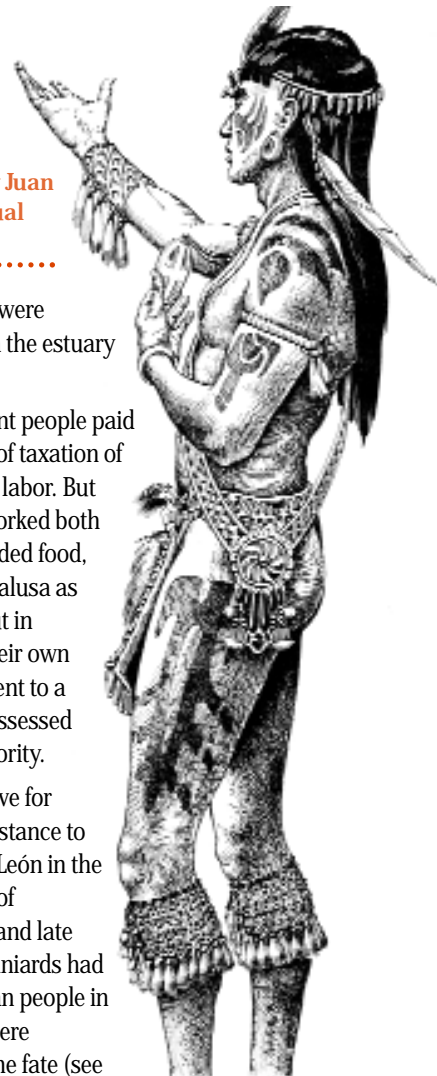
Calusa chief Felipe and missionary Juan Rogel discuss their differing spiritual beliefs, 1568. (Art by Merald Clark.)

farming for them, but because they were experts in fishing and shellfishing in the estuary where they lived.

It is true that distant people paid them tribute – a kind of taxation of goods and sometimes labor. But the tributary system worked both ways. Distant people provided food, mats, hides, and feathers to the Calusa as tribute and as a sign of respect, but in return they got protection from their own enemies and a feeling of attachment to a greater society whose leaders possessed spiritual as well as political authority.

The reputation the Calusa have for fierceness comes from their resistance to Spanish invasions by Ponce de León in the early 1500s and their defiance of missionaries in the mid 1500s and late 1600s. They knew that the Spaniards had killed and enslaved other Indian people in Cuba and Florida, and they were determined to resist the same fate (see John Worth's article on page 1). Also, their own belief system was important to them, and they did not want to give it up.

Bill Marquardt



New and Renewing Friends of the RRC through November 6, 2006

(Please let us know of any errors or omissions. Thank you for your support!)

Sustaining Members (\$5,000 - \$19,999)

Charles B. Edwards
& Robert A. Wells, Jr.

Supporting Members (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

John & Gretchen Coyle
Anina Hills Glaize
José Langone (in-kind gift)
Victoria & William Winterer

Sponsoring Members (\$500 - \$999)

Anne & Bob Boomer
Mark Dean

Joyce C. Mutz
Tropic Star of Pine Island

Contributing Members (\$100 - \$499)

Anne M. Allan
Sally & Peter Bergsten
Robin C. Brown
Ann Cordell
Gatewood Custom
Carpentry
The Hendry Law Firm
Darcie MacMahon
Jerald T. Milanich

Randy Mote
Dan & Linda O'Connell
John Paeno
Darbee & David Percival
Phillips Electronics
(matching gift)

Family Members

Pete & Phyllis Kolianos
Abraham & Cynthia Ofer
D. S. & Katharine Van Riper
Warm Mineral Springs/
Little Salt Spring
Archaeological Society

Individual Members

Beverly H. Brazill
John Berninger
Jenna Wallace Coplin
Donald Hall
Elise V. LeCompte
Bonnie McEwan
Michael E. Moseley
Regina Poppell
Ethan Rouse
Kathy VandeRee
J. P. Vann-Hexner
Randal L. Walker

In the Florida Museum Lab – Analysis and Curation

Digging it up is only the beginning

by *Bill Marquardt and Karen Walker*

Discovering new knowledge from archaeological findings is always a thrill, for everyone from the new volunteer to the seasoned professional. As our Randell Research Center volunteers know, however, finding something is only the first step.

First, there is careful documentation at the site. We take notes, make sketches, and sometimes take photos. The findings are washed, allowed to dry, and then catalogued and re-bagged. We place catalog numbers on each artifact, and package special samples for storage until time for analysis. Fragile materials receive extra care, and may be packaged separately or stored under special environmental conditions.

In the laboratory, we examine the materials more closely and identify them based on previous studies that have been done on similar materials.

Sometimes we weigh or measure objects, to help compare them with other such materials found elsewhere. In addition to pottery, stone, shell, and bone artifacts, archaeologists also study animal bones, shells, seeds, wood, and even samples of the soil itself for clues to what people ate and how their environment affected them. Sometimes the bones, shells, seeds, wood, and sediments can help us track environmental changes that occurred during the lives of past people. Finally, when all the studies are done, books and articles are published and public talks are given, so that everyone can benefit from the knowledge.

But what happens to all those artifacts and samples, not to mention the field notes and sketches, the photographs, and even the weights and measurements recorded in the lab? Quite simply, we keep it all. We refer to this accumulation of various materials as “collections” and collections are kept by museums such as the Florida Museum of Natural History, the parent organization of the RRC.

We keep all this stuff for a very simple reason – in the future we might want to look at it again. Or someone else might want to look at it. Our collections are similar to a library’s, except instead of book collections we keep archaeological collections. Here again, the word “collections” may bring to mind artifacts, such as pottery sherds, shell tools, and other objects. But there is so much more. All kinds of samples (e.g., shells, bones, charcoal, sediments) and specimens (e.g., seeds, wood) are also parts of collections. Another large and very important component consists of a great variety of records associated with the excavations. Even when a collection like Pineland’s has been intensively studied for years, it still has great potential for future research and use in education and exhibits.

Sometimes we use the word “curation” to refer to the way we keep our archaeological collections. “Curation” comes from a Latin word meaning “to care for,” and that is what we do – we care for the collections by making sure they are safe from damage, and stored where they will not get lost or



Jack Stoetzel (above) prepares samples in the Florida Museum lab.

Working with collections in the Florida Museum lab are (left to right) Andrea Cohen, Krista Church, Amanda Willingham, and Rachel Kirby. (Photo by K. Walker)



deteriorate. In October, we submitted a grant proposal for funding the final curation of the major archaeological collection that resulted from excavations at Pineland during the 1988-1995 time span. Our goal is to curate the collection following national standards so that it can be easily managed while at the same time be highly accessible for use. The curation project will take place in Gainesville, where the collection will always be housed.

Because the Pineland collection is so vast, we began a pilot project last fall (2005), curating a smaller collection, one produced in 1994 from Mound Key. All but the computerization of the collection is complete. As a result, this past summer, research began on this important and now accessible collection. Archaeologist Ann Cordell is analyzing the pottery. Zooarchaeologist Irv Quitmyer has prepared selected surf-clam shell specimens for microsampling, with the goal of detecting an environmental signal for the Little Ice Age. UF Anthropology senior Jack Stoetzel is sectioning and analyzing selected fish otoliths from the collection for his University Scholars Project. UF student interns recently assisted in sorting otoliths from the collection.

By now, you will have realized that archaeologists – especially those connected with museums, as we are – are involved with collections for a long time after that initial moment of discovery at the site. It’s a lot of work, but we think it’s worth it. If we do our job as curators properly, Pineland’s collections will be available to answer new questions for many years to come.

FPAN Update

by Kara Bridgman Sweeney

Hi, everyone! This is my first update since beginning my role as FPAN (Florida Public Archaeology Network) archaeologist here at the Randell Research Center. The last two months have been quite busy. I have met many interesting folks at local museums and planning agencies, and have been offering my assistance with whatever they are doing or planning.

Also, I have started a program where I visit classrooms and talk to local students about archaeology and about some of the kinds of artifacts that have been found here at the Pineland site. This program is being done on a pilot basis in coordination with the Lee County Environmental Education department. Students will see me once during a pre-visit, and then again during their field trip to the Calusa Heritage Trail.

Next, I plan to bring this program out to the surrounding counties, so that students in each county can get a good sense of the work that has been done here, and they can also learn a bit about archaeology. Especially when students cannot plan to come here for a field trip, it is my pleasure to share what I can about archaeology in their local classrooms or media centers.

I have also arranged to give lectures at various libraries throughout the region. Please watch this space and also check for updates to the web site (www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC) for archaeological activities in the coming months.



Kara Bridgman Sweeney (left) discusses Calusa artifact replicas with members of the Sierra Club.

RRC
news

Editor:
William Marquardt

Writers:
William Marquardt
Kara Bridgman Sweeney
Karen Walker
John Worth

Production:
GBS Productions

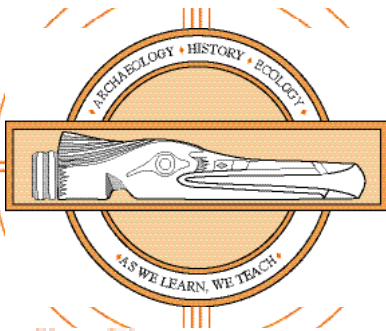
Send questions or comments to:
John Worth
Randell Research Center
PO Box 608
Pineland FL 33945-0608
Telephone (239) 283-2062
Fax (239) 283-2080
Email: randellcenter@comcast.net
Website: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/



RANDELL RESEARCH CENTER
PO Box 608
PINELAND, FL 33945-0608

Forwarding Service Requested

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pineland, FL
33945
Permit No. 26



Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • December, 2006
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 and free admission to the Calusa Heritage Trail at Pineland. 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.
Assistant Director
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

- Individual (\$30) and Student (\$15):** quarterly Newsletter and free admission to Calusa Heritage Trail
- Family (\$50):** The above + advance notice and 10% discount on children's programs
- Contributor (\$100-\$499):** The above + annual honor roll listing in newsletter + 20% discount on RRC publications and merchandise
- Sponsor (\$500-\$999):** The above + invitation to annual Director's tour and reception
- Supporter (\$1,000-\$4,999):** The above + listing on annual donor plaque at Pineland site
- Sustaining Members (\$5,000-\$19,999), Benefactors (\$20,000-\$99,999), and Patrons (\$100,000 and above)** receive all of the above + complimentary RRC publications and special briefings from the Director.
- Please use my gift** to obtain matching funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Permanent Address

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zipcode _____

Seasonal Address (so we can send you your newsletter while you are away)

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zipcode _____

Use my seasonal address from _____ (date) to _____ (date).



Books, Videos and RRC Gear



BOOKS ON SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY

The Calusa and Their Legacy: South Florida People and Their Environments

by Darcie A. MacMahon and William H. Marquardt
U. Press of Florida, hardcover \$39.95

NUMBER ORDERED _____ COST \$ _____

Culture and Environment in the Domain of the Calusa

edited by William H. Marquardt; Monograph 1, softcover \$25.00

_____ \$ _____

Sharks and Shark Products in Prehistoric South Florida

by Laura Kozuch; Monograph 2, softcover \$5.00

_____ \$ _____

The Archaeology of Useppa Island

edited by William H. Marquardt; Monograph 3, hardcover \$35.00, softcover \$20.00

_____ \$ _____

New Words, Old Songs: Understanding the Lives of Ancient Peoples in Southwest Florida Through Archaeology

by Charles Blanchard, illustrated by Merald Clark; hardcover \$19.95, softcover \$9.95

_____ \$ _____

Fisherfolk of Charlotte Harbor, Florida

by Robert F. Edic; hardcover \$35.00

_____ \$ _____

Dearest Daught and Popsy Wells: Two Artists Named Sawyer

by Marion S. Gilliland, hardcover \$20.00, softcover \$8.00

_____ \$ _____

AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARIES FROM THE FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Domain of the Calusa: Archaeology and Adventure in the Discovery of South Florida's Past

VHS video \$19.95

_____ \$ _____

Expedition Florida: Three-program Set

(From Exploration to Exhibition; The Wild Heart of Florida; Wild Alachua)

DVD video, \$24.95

_____ \$ _____

RANDELL RESEARCH CENTER GEAR

RRC logo Hat

(specify color: bone, charcoal, or blue) \$20.00

_____ \$ _____

RRC logo short-sleeve cotton staff shirt

(specify size: S, M, L, XL) \$35.00

_____ \$ _____

RRC logo short-sleeve cotton T-shirt

(specify Adult size: S, M, L, XL) \$15.00

(specify Child size: XS, S, M) \$12.00

_____ \$ _____

RRC logo tote bag

\$10.00

_____ \$ _____

RRC logo coffee mug

\$10.00

_____ \$ _____



Total for items ordered: _____ \$ _____

Friends of the RRC who give at the \$100 level or above may deduct 20% Discount: _____

Florida residents add sales tax: _____ + _____

Shipping: Add \$2.00 for first item, \$0.50 for each additional item: _____ + _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____ \$ _____

To place order, make check payable to: **Randell Research Center** and mail to:

Randell Research Center / PO Box 608 / Pineland FL 33945.

Check or money order only. Sorry, no credit cards.

Inquiries and Questions? 239-283-2062 / E-mail: randellcenter@comcast.net