



CALUSA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA PROJECT

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND PALEOENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

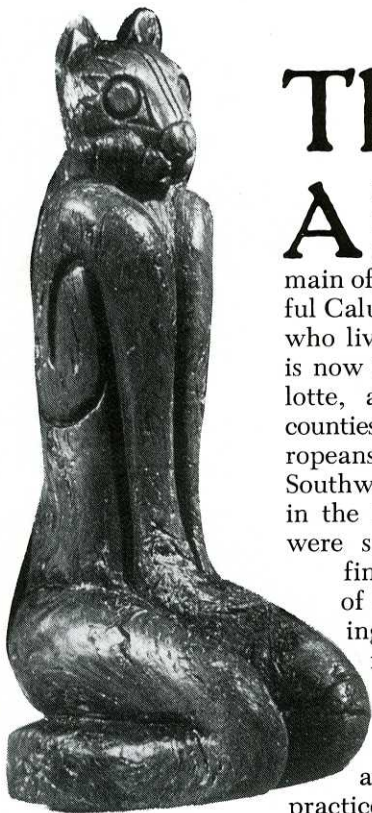
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Calusa News has been written and assembled by William H. Marquardt and the Southwest Florida Project team. The purpose of Calusa News is to promote an appreciation of Southwest Florida's past and the useful lessons that can be learned by preserving and studying ancient remains. We are very grateful to the Gannett Foundation for making this first issue of the newsletter possible.



The Kingdom of the Calusa

All of South Florida was once the domain of the powerful Calusa Indians, who lived in what is now Lee, Charlotte, and Collier counties. When Europeans arrived in Southwest Florida in the 1500s, they were surprised to find hundreds of Indians living in permanent towns.

The Indians built earthworks and temples, practiced a com-

plex religion, and traveled by canoe throughout South Florida and the Caribbean Sea.

Their head chief, or "king," was rich and powerful, and demanded payments of taxes, or tribute, from Indian groups as far away as Cape Canaveral,

The Calusa well understood the complex coastal environment and made ingenious use of South Florida's natural resources. The most advanced and powerful society in South Florida, they played an important role in both the prehistory and the subsequent Euro-

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Lake Okeechobee, Miami, and the Florida Keys. The works of Calusa artisans, who painted, carved, and engraved, rank with the very best Indian artwork in North America.

pean settlement of Florida. By the early 1700s, however, the once dominant Calusa had all but disappeared, the victims of European diseases, slavery, and

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