

Caribbean Archaeology

At the Florida Museum of Natural History



PARADISE PARK, 2001



We returned to Paradise Park in August to begin an extended period of fieldwork at the archaeological sites on the property. Between August 3 and 17 we spent one week excavating at the Ostionan site (Wes15a) and one week at the Meillacan site (Wes15b). We also dug two small test units at the site near the landscaped park. These tests demonstrated that this was a Meillacan (White Marl) site, although the site has been virtually destroyed by plowing in this field.

The materials from the Ostionan site, dated to the 9th century AD were similar to those recovered last year. We continue to find lots of sea turtle bones, along with the bones of large fish, pond turtles, and a variety of shellfish. The pottery continues to be exclusively Ostionan, and a variety of shell, stone, and coral tools were noted. Our efforts to demonstrate that this area was a house were unsuccessful, although we plan to continue to investigate this possibility when we return. Our work at the Meillacan site revealed some different materials from those recovered in 1998. For example, the bones and teeth of the cat-size rodent "hutia" were recovered for the first time. In addition, the pottery included red paste and red painted wares, which are unusual at Meillacan sites in Jamaica. This may be evidence for a transition in pottery making between the earlier Ostionan style and contact-era Meillacan style. More work at the site will tell.

The August 2001 team consisted of Bob Gezon, Ralph and Mary Lou Pax, Bill Rogers, Nadia Manning, Lorie, Dan, Lindsay and Caroline Keegan, and Leslie Gail Atkinson from the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. Special thanks to Tony and Busha Clarke for all of their assistance.



The view of Paradise Park from the Great House.



Miss Barbados -- Nadia Manning.



Ralph Pax checks his level.



Dan Keegan climbs the large Ceiba tree at the Meillacan site.