

Artifact

OF THE MONTH

TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

JANUARY

2014

Mammoth Tooth
Pleistocene Era (ca. 10,000 years ago)
Permanent Archaeological Collections



The Mammoth roamed South Florida over 10,000 years ago and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office is fortunate enough to have a piece of evidence that captures a completely different landscape than what we are familiar with today.

This molar measures 30 inches long and weighs a 8 pounds. Unknown to many, both the Mammoth and the Mastodon made their home on the Florida peninsula during the last great ice age. And although they shared many characteristics, the Mammoth was known for their large, flat teeth which helped them to chew the majority of their diet consisting of leaves, stems and grasses.





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FEBRUARY 2014

Lea & Perrins Glass Bottle Stopper
1839-1944
2011.27.209, Permanent Archaeological Collections



In 1839 the first commercially sold condiment in the United States made quite a splash on the market: Lea & Perrins' Worcestershire Sauce. It became an instant favorite and can still be found on the shelves of supermarkets today. Glass stoppers with a cork sheath were used as closures for the bottles until 1956 and the beautiful aqua glass was discontinued by 1944. Our glass stopper was hand blown and measures 1.25 inches in length. Recovered on Big Cypress from a historic trading post that operated from 1901 to 1908, this artifact gives us a glimpse into early 20th century trading with the Seminoles.

"A bottle of Lea & Perrins' Sauce is one of the most useful items in every well-equipped kitchen. No other seasoning improves the flavor of so many different dishes."

--from a 1906 grocery advertisement





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MARCH 2014



Photo Credit: Brian Tietz



Russian Blue Bead
1800-1900
2011.12.219

Found during the 2011 Field School held at the Waxy Hadjo's Landing site on Big Cypress, this tiny glass bead (known as a Russian Blue) tells an epic tale of transatlantic trade. Though called Russian Blues, these beads actually originated in Bohemia, a historic country now located in the western half of today's Czechoslovakia.

Designed by Bohemians for use as inexpensive trade beads, they came in a variety of colors, though most commonly a "deep ultramarine" blue. The bead's most defining characteristic is its smooth facets that were created by harnessing the power of the fast mountain streams. By the mid-19th century, Bohemia was flooding the market with so many of these low-cost beads that they replaced Venetians as the trade beads of choice. Although they are most commonly found in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska where Russian fur traders traded them to local tribes, these beads also made their way to Florida where the Seminoles used them to create their beautiful beaded necklaces.





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APRIL 2014

State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Fishbaugh, W. A.



"Short and Good"

This Pee-Wee A soda bottle is a symbol of simpler days when you could purchase soda for just a few pennies. A popular drink among children with its signature small size of only 4 oz., it came in multiple flavors like orange, grape, lime, pineapple, and cherry. Pee-Wee A was manufactured by the Reed Glass Company which franchised and sold the soda in several New York cities and **Hialeah, Florida** (photo above). This bottle dates between 1947 and 1956.



Pee-Wee A Soda Bottle
1947-1956
2012.2.16

Recovered in 2011 from the Brighton Reservation amongst a cache of historic bottles, this soda bottle made the 240 mile journey from the Miami area to Brighton at some point during the mid-half of the 20th century. Although we don't know much more about the bottle, the possible stories that surround this artifact are endless. Perhaps it was purchased simply as a sugary treat to enjoy on a car trip back home to Brighton.





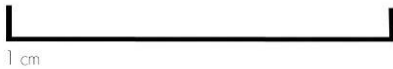
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MAY 2014



Decorated Bone Pin
A.D. 1000-1200
1994.9.381

Carved bone pins are found at archaeological sites all over Florida and archaeologists have been grouped them into five distinct categories based on their styles. Bone became a major resource for early Floridians who made use of every part of the animals they hunted. It was a very useful material for making tools; malleable enough to carve into pins, awls, hooks, and other tools, yet hard enough to resist breaking like wood. So what were these bone pins used for? The oldest bone pins found in Florida were simple, utilitarian tools used for sewing clothes or nets. As time moved on, different cultural groups developed more intricate designs used for adornment or pinning up hair.

The most well-known decorated pins are usually associated with the Calusa and their effigy carvings. Another well distributed type is the geometric style which is recognized for the rectilinear patterns and deep parallel and perpendicular grooves. Our artifact of the month most likely fits into this category. Eight vertical lines carved just below the head of the pin and a single line under those wraps around the circumference. Nine oval shaped grooves sit just below this line. The pin measures just over 3.5 cm and dates to between A.D. 1000-1200.





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JUNE 2014



Putnam Point
5000-3000 BCE
2010.52.602



Our artifact of the month for June is a very unique artifact within the collection. This projectile point is what archaeologists have named a Putnam point, the majority of which have been found throughout Putnam County, Florida. However, our point was found over 200 miles south at a site located on the Brighton Reservation.

South Florida did not provide good sources of lithic materials to make stone tools with, so alternative materials such as shell or bone were often used instead. Finding a Putnam point so far south from where they are normally found suggests trade relationships had likely been established between these areas. Many of the tools within our own collection are made from shell or animal bone, which is what makes this artifact so unique. This point may have passed through the hands of many hunters and traders before it finally ended up in Brighton.

Our Putnam point measures just over 2 inches long from tip to stem and would have been used for hunting deer and other prey. Characteristics include a thick blade, rounded shoulders, and a rounded stem. The point is made from a grey chert and dates to the Middle Archaic period with a date range of 5000-3000 BCE. Finding this artifact was truly a rare treat and its preservation ensures it will be enjoyed for many years to come!





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JULY 2014



July's Artifact of the Month is a pair of silver-alloy beads found at the Waxy Hadjo's Landing Site on the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation. These beads were handmade by Seminole craftsmen, most likely sometime during the late 18th or early 19th centuries when Seminole silver working was at its height. Early contact with British traders and military personnel resulted in a large influx of silver given as gifts and trade tokens. This silver, which usually arrived in the form of coins, was reworked into many different objects including earrings, gorgets, broaches, arm plates and wrist plates. With these particular beads it is possible to see how, after flattening a coin and then rounding it into the shape of the bead, a square shaped nail or object was used to punch a hole through the middle. Our pair of beads were found next to a long, square shaped metal spike. The Seminole silver worker had a small but varied toolkit, a good example of which can be seen on display at the Ah Tah Thi Ki Museum.





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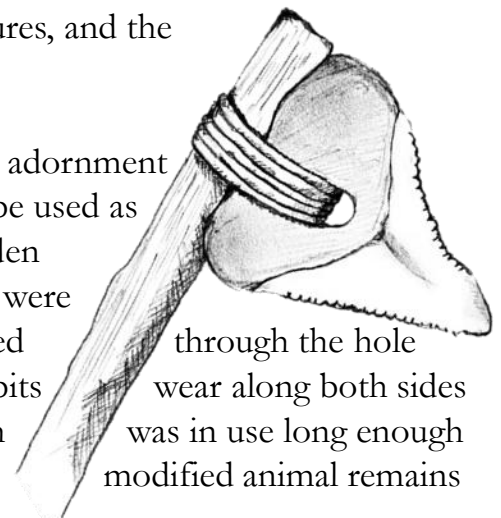


AUGUST 2014



Thousands upon thousands of shark teeth can be found littered up and down the beaches of Southwest Florida, but this Artifact of the Month is far more unique. Found at the Waxy Hadjo's Landing Site on the Big Cypress Reservation in 2011, these drilled bull shark teeth depict an impressive story of trade across the coasts of prehistoric Florida. Bull sharks are not native to the inlands of Florida, which indicates that these teeth traveled hundreds of miles from coastal communities in order to make their way to Big Cypress. Artifacts such as these can often be useful in understanding trade relationships between different prehistoric cultures, and the routes they may have traveled.

Shark teeth were used for many purposes ranging from simple body adornment to an advanced part of the prehistoric tool kit. Shark's teeth could be used as wood or bone working implements, as drills, or even hafted to wooden handles for use as knives or to process food. These particular teeth were drilled right through the center, often a sign that cordage was inserted and then hafted to a handle for tool use. The larger tooth also exhibits of the cusp and the tip is blunted, a further indication that the tooth to wear away the natural serrations of the tooth. This example of was a rare find, hopefully one of many more to come!





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SEPTEMBER 2014



2008.6.14

Ross's Belfast ginger ale bottle

In 2008 during fieldwork on the Big Cypress Reservation, this unique shaped, aqua glass bottle was recovered from a cache of historic bottles and glass fragments. Manufactured between 1865 and 1910, Ross's Belfast ginger ale bottles were an increasingly popular import into the United States from, you guessed it, Belfast, Ireland! Ross's Belfast was known for their aerated drinks like ginger ale and other tonic waters.

The distinctive bottle shape served a purpose-- to prevent the wired down cork from becoming dry which would have caused the contents to evaporate or lose carbonation. These rounded bottom bottles were forced to be stored on their side, allowing consumers to enjoy a refreshing, bubbly drink.

The question must be asked, "How did a bottle from Ireland end up here on Big Cypress?" Perhaps it was traded for from the nearby Browns Trading Post, which sold goods to the local Seminole communities between 1901 and 1908. However it ended up here, there's no doubt that this bottle has had a long and interesting history!





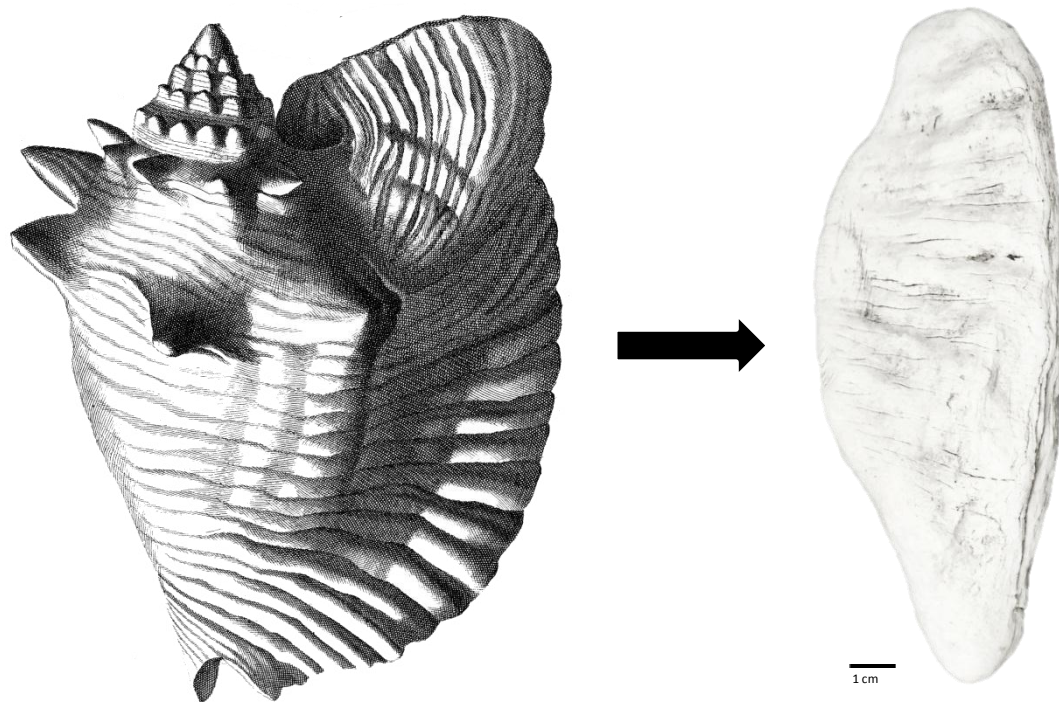
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OCTOBER 2014



Celt (s ' elt), *n.* a prehistoric stone or metal implement with a beveled cutting edge, used as a tool or weapon.

Celts are very versatile tools used for chopping, scraping, chipping, and splitting raw materials and can be placed into a few basic categories: blanks, scrapers, axes, or adzes. The celt pictured above (2005.23.20) is a blank, and would have likely been made into a tool for woodworking and the production of dugout canoes. Although usually made of stone or metal, the celts in the THPO collection are made of shell, particularly from the lip of the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*). Due to a lack of raw stone materials, shell use for tool production was very widespread among native groups of Florida.

This celt was found during archaeological excavations on the Seminole Hollywood Reservation. A cache of five celts were recovered together and it is thought they were intentionally buried for safe keeping. Radiocarbon analysis gives the celts a date range of 2010 BC - 1680 BC. Shell celts are an incredible example of resourcefulness and it is remarkable to think that this type of tool was used to carve canoes so long ago!





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NOVEMBER 2014



1 cm

Tucked away in the central western portion of the Big Cypress Reservation is a hammock similar to many others found in the area. But a closer look uncovers a rare glimpse into life a thousand years ago. Inhabited by cabbage palms and shady live oaks, this hammock also contains the site identified simply as Big Cypress No. 8. More often than not, sites discovered in hammocks throughout Big Cypress contain dense areas of animal bone with some small sherds of undecorated pottery. Big Cypress No. 8, on the other hand, tells a lot more. In addition to finding extremely dense layers of animal bone and a variety of tools, at least 14 different types of pottery have been identified, including our Artifact of the Month.

The pottery fragment above has been identified as Sanibel Incised. Sanibel Incised pottery is defined by “V” shapes underneath the rim which are comprised of incised diagonal dashes. Although small in size, the decoration on this pieces of pottery helps to date the sherd to A.D. 700-900. Geographically, Sanibel Incised is found in southern Florida particularly in the southwestern portion of the state. Its amazing how an artifact so small can reveal so much about the past!





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DECEMBER 2014



Red Barn Siding
Circa 1941
Brighton Reservation
22 3/4" x 7 1/4"

If These Walls Could Talk!

Not all museum artifacts tell a story. Some are only important because of their intrinsic value, others because they are beautiful or unique. And while those artifacts are wonderful in and of themselves, our favorite artifacts are the ones that help tell a story. Our artifact of the month is a piece of wall siding from the historic Red Barn on the Brighton Reservation that was collected during a restoration project. The Barn has been a landmark for the Seminoles since around 1941 and stands proudly as a reminder of the days when the cattle industry first brought an important source of income, democracy, and independence to the Tribe.

Although the red paint has faded and the environment has taken a toll on its physical structure, our artifact still tells the story of a common Red Barn that saw years of hard work, community growth, and success for the entire Seminole tribe.

This object will be on display in the exhibit entitled *A Past Worth Protecting: Our Tribal Register of Historic Places* from December 12th, 2014 – June 9th, 2015 at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Come and check it out!

