

Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

January 2016



1 cm

THPO 2014.8.233

We start 2016 off with a collection mystery. Our January artifact of the month was recovered from the Big Cypress Reservation and has provided us little insight into what it is or what it is made of. What we do know is that this object has been modified by a person. Three vertical lines have been etched into the polished surface and the lower corner has been rounded. At first glance, the object appears to be stone (a rare find in south Florida), but further analysis lends another possibility: petrified wood.

Many times collection staff wear a detective hat, trying to answer long standing questions or solve small mysteries such as this one. A running joke in archaeology is that if you don't know what it is, the object is likely to be "ceremonial". While we won't label our object with such a function, we do hope that future conversations within our community and additional research and analysis will lead us to understand its original purpose. So until then, our artifact will simply be appreciated for its uniqueness!



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

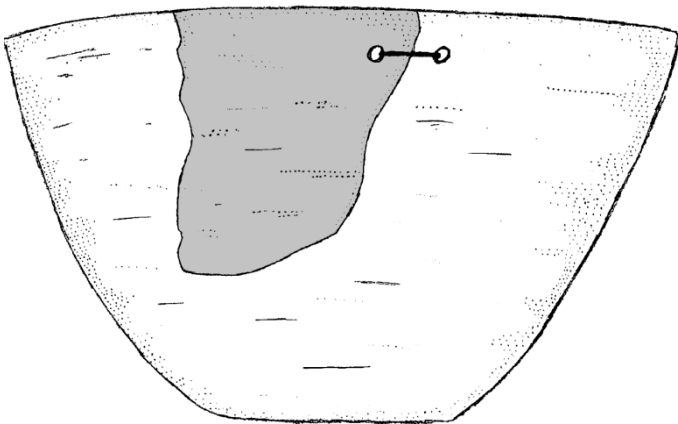
February 2016

R-e-c-y-c-l-e, recycle! It's not the first thing that comes to mind when we consider the archaeological record, but reusing or repairing broken items was an important part of life hundreds of years ago. This artifact of the month is a fragment of Belle Glade pottery, with a prominent mend hole near the rim. Mend holes were made when a vessel became damaged; holes were drilled along both sides of the crack, and twine or sinew was used to bind the two sides together. As the binding material dried out, the two sides of the crack were pulled tightly together, stabilizing the vessel's damage.



Belle Glade pottery
A.D. 500-1200
2013.14.128

While we can't say exactly why this piece of pottery was mended, archaeologists speculate that the greater the vessel's cultural value, the more likely it would have undergone repairs if damaged. For example, vessels that were used for ceremonial purposes or pottery with elaborate decoration. It may also be useful to consider the time and resources necessary to construct an entirely new vessel. Those valuable raw materials may not have been easily available at the time, encouraging the repair and reuse of the object, rather than replacement. Why do you think this object was repaired?



Hypothetical reconstruction of a whole vessel with repaired damage



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January 2016

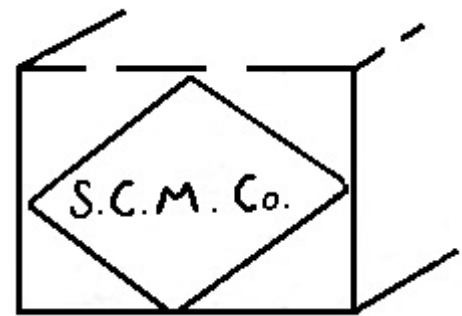


S.C.M. Co. Brick
(1902-1937)
2015.2.4

Upon first glance, this hunk of brick is nothing special. However, the information that can be gathered from this piece of building material is invaluable! This Artifact of the Month is the end piece of a brick that was manufactured by the Southern Clay Manufacturing Company between 1902 and 1937. If the brick was complete, the original stamp on the end of this brick would have read: "S.C.M. Co.".

This brick was found on the Brighton Reservation last year at a possible historic homestead. Historic homestead sites are characterized by the recovery of historic trash and structural remains that generally pre-date the mid-1930s, before the Brighton Reservation was established.

The Southern Clay Manufacturing Company operated from 1902 to 1933. Located in Robbins, Tennessee, the company produced bricks that could be found all along the eastern United States. Towards the end of its operation, the company catered to Florida communities in Miami, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine. The buildings and plant that once made up the Southern Clay Manufacturing Company can still be found today, slowly deteriorating back into the wilderness.



Finds like this brick are very important to historic archaeology. As a subset of archaeology, historic archaeology studies the material remains of groups that also left behind documentary or oral histories. In broader terms, historic archaeology studies the emergence, transformation, and nature of the modern world. When artifacts like this brick are used in conjunction with historic documents and information, we at the THPO are able to create a more complete story about a particular location of interest.



Artifact of the Month

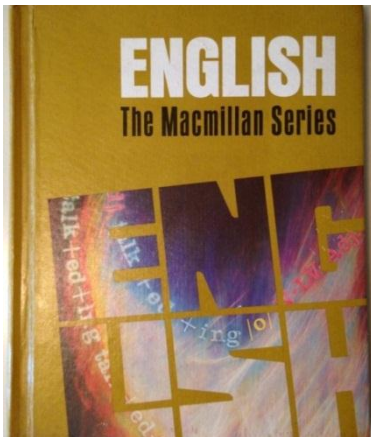
Tribal Historic Preservation Office

April 2016

What was your favorite subject in school? If it was English, then you are in luck. The artifact of the month is a 1973 English textbook cover that was discovered at the Old Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) complex on the Big Cypress Reservation. Today, the Frank Billie Field Office now occupies the land, but there was once a residential camp and forestry office within the same vicinity. The book was printed by Macmillan Publishers, a renowned publishing company that prints educational textbooks for all school grade levels.



MacMillan English Book
c. 1974
2013.15.13



In archaeology, dates are extremely important as they provide contextual information on when something was made or when something was used. In this case, we were able to find the textbook's published dates by researching the publisher and the authors. What is extremely fascinating about this artifact is that we can observe the preservation and rate of deterioration of specific artifacts as they are exposed to the natural elements.

Although this textbook is not old, at least by archaeological standards, it still provides us with information that links us to a past and history less than 50 years ago. Education on Big Cypress did not serve all grade levels until 1966 with the construction of an education building that would become Ahfachkee School. Prior to Ahfachkee, students would travel 2-2.5 hours by bus to nearby towns such as Clewiston or Immokalee to attend school. There was a BIA school on Big Cypress but it only served grades 1-4. Big Cypress received its first high school graduates in 1965. From this textbook cover, we are shown a glimpse into the recent history of education on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

May 2016

When we open up our tool boxes at home, we don't often think to reach for a shell. But before you could make a quick trip down to the hardware store, people used to manufacture their own tools!

This month's featured artifact is a hammer or pounder made from a lightning whelk (*Busycon*) shell. In order to transform a shell into a useful tool, first the exterior of the shell (whorl) had to be carefully removed. Next, once the whorl had been broken away, the central column of the shell (or columella) could be gripped like a pestle to hammer objects, like oysters!



Busycon hammer/pounder
2015.4.400

We know this hammer was in use for an extended period of time because of the significant wear along the rounded bottom of the shell. This tells us that these weren't single use objects that were casually disposed of. Rather, these hammers were part of a vital tool kit that was in use over multiple seasons, perhaps even years!



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

June 2016



2011.6.12

The collection of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office contains a wide variety of artifacts that fall under its care. From a mammoth tooth to a delicate bone pin to a historic Coca-Cola bottle, the collections of the THPO span a large expanse of time that includes objects from prehistoric times up to 40 years ago. This artifact of the month is a 20mm shell casing belonging to a round for a M61A1 Vulcan 6-Barrel Gatling Cannon. This weapon is a common armament of US military aircraft. While conducting survey work for a potential home site on the Brighton Reservation in 2011, tribal archaeologists came across an Archaic Period temporary camp site (the Camo Site) and the remains of aircraft wreckage that occurred in 1976!

The plane wreckage rediscovered by tribal archaeologists was a result of a mid-air collision involving a Cessna 414 and a McDonnell-Douglas F-4E Phantom II jet fighter belonging to the US military. The collision occurred at 12,500 feet, when the F-4 Phantom crashed into the back of the Cessna 414. The Phantom was one of three planes headed to the Avon Park Airforce Range for training exercises. The Cessna 414 held Ruel Insurance Corporation employees and was headed to Tallahassee, Florida. Both planes crash-landed onto the Brighton Reservation. The collision was blamed on the inattentiveness of the pilot of the F-4 Phantom. Unfortunately, the collision resulted in 5 fatalities: the pilot of the F-4 Phantom and all passengers on board the Cessna 414.

The recovery of this spent ammunition casing in close proximity to an Archaic Period site gives us an extraordinary occurrence of two historic time periods coming together in one location. This is a common finding at many archaeological locations due to human tendency to revisit or occupy the same area over an extended period of time. The only difference here is that evidence fell right out of the sky!



Unused 20mm round



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

July 2016

Not native to the Southeast, this month's artifact of the month comes from the Southwest and is a 1940s "Pretty Girl" Split Shank Navajo-style tourist bracelet. From the 1900s to early 1950s, Southwestern jewelry was a popular tourist item and jewelry from that era is identified as "Fred Harvey Jewelry" or "Railroad Jewelry" which was sold along the Santa Fe railroad lines, hotels, and nearby retail shops in New Mexico and Arizona. The "Pretty Girl" bracelets were machine-made and mass-produced lightweight jewelry that was made to the Anglo tourist's taste with smaller design elements and less stones. Whereas, Navajo made jewelry was bulkier and heavier with lots of Sterling Silver and large turquoise stones.



"Pretty Girl" Split Shank Navajo-style Bracelet
c. 1940s
1994.9.1

2353 INDIAN SYMBOLS—EXPLAINING THE MARKINGS USED BY THE INDIANS ON THEIR HANDICRAFT SUCH AS SILVER, RUGS, POTTERY, ETC.,...			
THUNDER	SACRED BEARER OF HAPPINESS UNLIMITED	DAYS AND NIGHTS	TIME
SWASTIKA	GOOD LUCK	MORNING STARS	GUIDANCE
ARROW	PROTECTION ALL WAYS	SUN SYMBOLS	HAPPINESS
CROSSED ARROWS	FRIENDSHIP	RUNNING WATER	CONSTANT LIFE
ARROWHEAD	ALERTNESS	RAINDROP RAIN	PLENTIFUL CROPS
4 AGES	INFANCY, YOUTH, MIDDLE AND OLD AGE	HOGAN	PERMANENT HOME
CACTUS	SIGN OF THE DESERT	TEPEE	TEMPORARY HOME
GILA MONSTER	SIGN OF THE DESERT	SKY BAND	LEADING TO HAPPINESS
CACTUS FLOWER	COURTESY	MEDICINE MAN'S EYE	WISE—WATCHFUL
HORSE	JOURNEY	WARDING OFF EVIL SPIRITS	
SADDLE BAGS	JOURNEY	PEACE	
BIRD	CAREFREE—LIGHTHEARTED	BIG MOUNTAIN	ABUNDANCE
SNAKE	DEFIANCE, WISDOM	LASO	CAPTIVITY
THUNDERBIRD TRACK	BRIGHT PROSPECTS	FENCE	GUARDING GOOD LUCK
DEER TRACK	PLENTY GAME	ENCLOSURE FOR CEREMONIAL DANCES	
BEAR TRACK	GOOD OMEN	EAGLE FEATHERS	CHIEF
RATTLESNAKE JAW	STRENGTH	TRAILS CROSSING	
© CURT TEICH & CO., INC.		18-1497	

In 1909, Fred Harvey (entrepreneur) copyrighted the "Thunderbird" design and his company assigned their own interpretative meaning to the design. Although the Harvey Company didn't make Southwestern jewelry, they provided the market for it. As a result, tourists associate designs such as arrows, lightening (zig-zag), crosses, animal tracks, and animals with Native American culture. Referring to the Indian Symbols and Meanings chart (left), which is still used today, the design elements on the THPO Collection's bracelet are the Thunderbird (Sacred Bearer of Happiness Unlimited), Rattlesnake Jaw (Strength), Hogan (Permanent Home), Lightning (Swiftiness), and Bear Track (Good Omen).

So how did this bracelet end up in the Southeast and on the Brighton Reservation? Since this was a tourist item, the bracelet could have been an item sold in a nearby trading post, or given as a gift by a person who travelled to the Southwest, or someone from the Brighton Reservation could have visited New Mexico. However this bracelet found its way to the Brighton Reservation is a mystery, just like all things in archaeology, but it opens our eyes to the extensive networks that are still in place even in the 1940s.



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

August 2016



This month's artifact comes from the Big Cypress Wetlands Survey. This collection is in the beginning stages of artifact processing- many of the artifacts are still being washed! While artifact washing can seem mundane, it gives us a peek into the collections so we know what to expect when cataloging and accessioning the items. During washing we noticed a silver-plated spoon that was remarkably well-preserved.

After cleaning and inspecting the spoon, we were able to find a maker's mark along the handle which stated, "ONEIDA COMMUNITY RESILANCE PLATE." Through research we determined the spoon was manufactured by the Oneida Community, one of the earliest joint-stock companies in the United States. The pattern was called "Bridal Rose" and was mass-produced in New York in 1911. The spoon was likely ordered as a set during the early 1900s by someone living on the reservation.



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

September 2016



We all recognize this tasty soft drink, but did you know it's been around for over fifty years? This month's artifact is a Sprite bottle made in 1966, collected from an historic camp site on the Brighton Reservation.

In 1966, the Coca Cola Corporation agreed to participate in a special promotion with the National Park Service to help increase awareness of America's national parks. If you

look closely at the embossing on the base of the bottle (above), it reads "MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK." 36 different parks were featured on the base of Sprite bottles in hope it would encourage more Americans to come out and visit! In fact, Florida's very own Everglades National Park was one of the lucky parks to make the cut.

Not only is this an interesting part of American history, but it helps us define the archaeological record of the Brighton Reservation, where this bottle was found. We know these bottles were only manufactured in 1966, giving THPO Collection staff an incredibly accurate tool to determine when this site was in use.

So the next time you find an old bottle, take a look at the base. It may be old, but you may learn something new!



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

October 2016

Do you ever wonder where your trash goes? Of course not! Most archaeologists, on the other hand, are enthusiastic about historic, prehistoric, and sometimes modern trash because they can retrieve, process, and interpret information that can give clues to how people lived in the past. Archaeologists refer to areas where trash was discarded as *middens*. A midden on-reservation more than likely has a significant amount of faunal bones. So, why is this important?

The presence of faunal material helps archaeologists identify and interpret the diet of past societies. The artifact of the month is a leg or arm bone fragment of a deer that has a straight cut mark on one end of the bone. Archaeologists examine and observe the presence of cut marks on bones to determine if the animal was processed for consumption and utilitarian use. This bone was probably cut to get at the marrow.

When an animal was hunted generally most parts of the animal was used and this included the skin, shell, and sometimes bones. Middens on the reservation generally consist of snakes, turtles, fish, shellfish, snails, bobcat, turkey, alligator, opossum, rabbit, raccoon, and deer. This is just a short list of the different types of animals hunted, but it's this type of information that provides archaeologists with an idea of what was on the menu.



Deer metapodial fragment cut along shaft
2016.6.1



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

November 2016

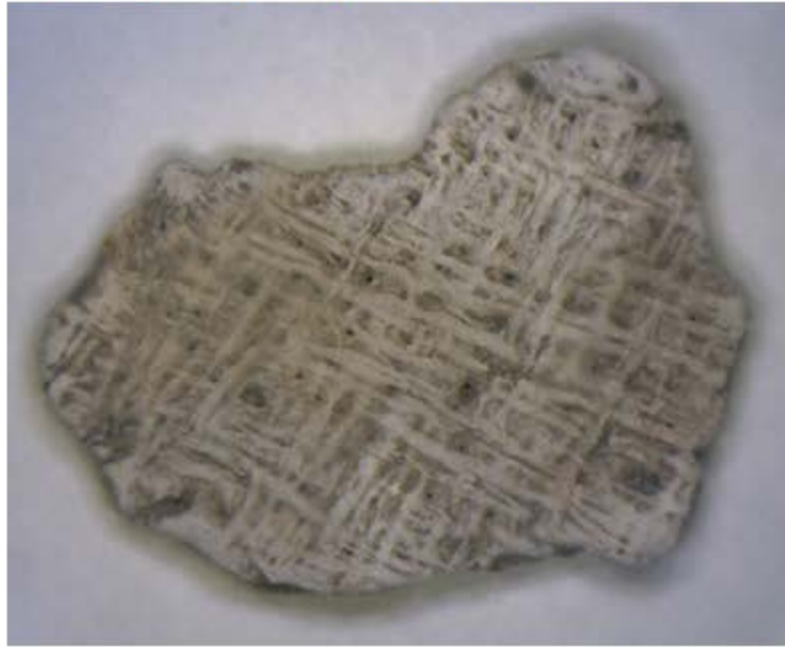


Figure 1: Textile impression preserved in raw clay. Both sides have the textile impression. Textile had a very fine weave. Fiber source unknown. (THPO 2016.1.843)

Basketry has been an important Seminole craft for hundreds of years. Due to the lack of natural clay in Florida, sweetgrass (*Muhlenbergia filipes*) and Palmetto fibers collected from the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp were used to create baskets. Once collected, these materials were dried and sewn together, and were used for a variety of tasks such as shifting flour and storing items.

Over the years the baskets have changed not only in functionality but in shape and color as well. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has several baskets in their collection whose manufacturing dates range from the late 1800s all the way through the present.

The Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) has recently unearthed a raw clay fragment that has a possible textile impression- the first of its kind in our collection! This artifact was found while researching the emergence of tree islands, or hammocks, in south Florida. The impressed raw clay shows the continuation of an important tradition and the presence of Seminole ancestors in Florida before the arrival of Europeans.



Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

December 2016



As you prepare to celebrate the holidays this season, take a moment to consider the preparation of your special feast. Will you prepare a ham? Perhaps a festive Tofurky? All of these delectable delights will likely come from your local grocery store, but what if you had to prepare everything from scratch, and only with tools you could make for yourself!

The object pictured above is a shell adze made from the thick outer shell of a lightning whelk. The shell was cut down to fit the hand, and the natural contours of the whelk were exaggerated to accommodate a comfortable grip. The edge was sharpened, and used to scrape animal hides, work with wood, and other food preparation activities. This adze was found on the Brighton Reservation, and was likely a prized tool that was brought inland all the way from the coast. Though we can't date this specific tool, we know that ones like it have been in use for hundreds of years! What kinds of activities might you find an adze useful for?

Remember to join us in 2017 as we continue our sneak-peek at special artifacts from the collection. From all of us with the THPO Collections staff, have a happy holidays and a prosperous New Year!

