

Time Sifters

September 2013



A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, September 18, 2013, 6:00 PM

Selby Library, Downtown Sarasota

Marvin Mills, M.A.

Temple Mount in Jerusalem



Three religions have historically shared the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, one of the most sacred areas on earth. September's lecture will feature Marvin Mills' analysis of the origin and morphology of the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque and the Wailing Wall.

Mr. Mills, an architect, professor, and historian, will question established beliefs about the architecture and suggest a whole new approach to understanding the site and its buildings. The main structures that he will try to explain the provenance of are: the Wailing Wall, the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque. His hypothesis is that these supreme sacred sites have never been properly analyzed as to who built them, when they were built and what purposes they served. His view is that the Wailing Wall as part of the Temple Mount dates to 9500 BC or earlier; that it was not built by Solomon about 1000 BC but by an earlier people; that the Temple of



Solomon was not built by Solomon but originated at the time of the Wailing Wall around 9500 BC as a temple devoted to earlier people; that the Dome of the Rock was not built by Islam in the 7thc AD but was part of an original temple; and that the Aqsa Mosque was not built by Islam in the 7thc AD but was also part of the original Temple of 9500 BC. Mr Mills cites evidence for these remarkable beliefs as the orientation of the structures; the Cyclopean stone work embedded in the Temple Mount wall whose astounding size and weight relates to stonework in the Temple of Jupiter at Baalbek; the failure of the Aqsa Mosque to face Mecca; and the unlikely sophistication of the architecture of the Dome of the Rock at such an early phase of Islamic history.

Mr. Mills is a long-time member of Time Sifters and a popular previous lecturer. He holds three masters degrees from Columbia University in Philosophy, Architecture, and History of Architecture. He is a registered architect, an architectural historian and lecturer, an author of the book *The Origin of the Mosque of Cordoba*, and an instructor at LifeLongLearning at USF.

Notes from a Time Sifter

Archaeology, by its own nature, is destructive. Each layer of a site is destroyed so that the layer below can be examined. The material removed from each of these layers is, of course, examined closely for artifacts and the dirt is then dumped nearby. Early archaeologists were less careful than modern excavators but even now, some artifacts still are inadvertently tossed out with the site debris. Recently, archaeologists have gone back to old digs to look again at the piles of debris left by earlier excavations and, using wet-sifting, have had great success.



(picture source: Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2013).

Wet-sifting is a process that is very much like panning for gold and is not new. It is done by dumping debris onto fine screens then hosing it down. That cleans the dirt from tiny objects that can then be examined for potential importance. This method is not exclusive to archaeology but is used, for example, in the search for diamonds in places where tourists play at mines like the diamond mine at Murfeesboro, Arkansas. Archaeologists find wet-sifting useful for separating very small artifacts from the soil, but it is a tedious process so is not often used. It gained popularity after 2004 when Israeli archaeologists got permission to examine the dirt being removed from mosque construction by the Wakf, the Jordanian authority in charge of Muslim holy sites. Some of the dirt came from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and was being dumped haphazardly in the Kidron Valley just east of the city. Archaeologists worried that ancient artifacts were contained in the dirt and would be forever lost, so they petitioned the High Court of Justice who granted archaeologists the right to examine all debris before any more was removed. But damage was already done, so archaeologists began what is now called the Temple Mount Sifting Project, searching

through the dumped material for any important artifacts. The search was carefully done by wet-sifting and uncovered hundreds of artifacts dating from the Egyptian occupation in the 15th century B.C.E. through Nebuchadnezzar's attack in 586 B.C.E. It is not easy to date artifacts without being able to identify the layer from which it came, but most artifacts can be dated through comparative dating, that is, comparing material to objects found at other sites. This project was so successful that wet-sifting is now being used at many other sites such as Megiddo, with its huge excavation dumps left from digs during the 1950s. Already, sifters have found a clay tablet there containing part of the Epic of Gilgamesh dating to the 15-13th centuries, B.C.E. At another site seal impressions, tiny and often missed by excavators, were found in a refuse pit as authorities prepared a site for a mass to be said during the Pope's visit; and from under Robinson's Arch near the western wall was found a Second Temple period token inscribed with the name of the Israelite god. These finds have been fantastic, but wet-sifting needs lots of workers and most is done by volunteers. Fortunately, many people yearn for such an opportunity and it is available at templemount.wordpress.com/volunteer-information/ or digs.bib-arch.org/digs/temple-mount.asp. The success of these projects will ensure a need for volunteers for a long time. (see "Wet-Sift the Megiddo Dumps!", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April 2013, vol. 39 no. 2)

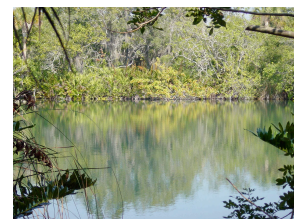
Two Springs in North Port by Dr. Uzi Baram, New College of Florida

Within the city of North Port, Sarasota County, are two springs which are two of the most important archaeological sites in North America. Little Salt Spring and Warm Mineral Springs are both known to the scholarly archaeological community and they have much in common geologically and historically but, while the two springs are about five miles apart, they seem to inhabit different worlds.

There is nearly 14,000 years of documented history at Little Salt Spring, and the reasonable expectation that Warm Mineral Springs contains a similar deep antiquity. Coincidentally at the end of June 2013, the University of Miami closed the research facility at Little Salt Spring and Cypress Landings closed the doors to the spa at Warm Mineral Springs. So 2013 might prove to be the most important year in the history of both springs.

This article discusses the history, the politics, and the potential futures of these two sites, and the intersection of archaeology, heritage tourism, and economic development.

For more of the story go to www.timesifters.org



Time Sifters is honored by Florida Anthropology Society



President Sherry Svekis, Board member Gail Schnell, and FAS Board member (and Time Sifters member) George Luer.

The Florida Anthropological Society gave Time Sifters a great award of recognition at their annual conference. The Arthur R. Lee FAS Chapter Award was presented to Time Sifters Archaeology Society for "Public Outreach and Education, Cooperation with New College, and Site Preservation.

The full text of the award is a great chapter history: I am pleased to present this award to Time Sifters Archaeology Society, based in the Sarasota-Bradenton area. Time Sifters is the ninth FAS chapter to receive this prestigious honor. The plaques are inscribed as follows: "for Public Outreach and Education, Cooperation with New College, and Site Preservation, May 11, 2013.

Time Sifters works hard to promote archaeology, education, and public outreach. Chapter meetings and lectures are held in downtown Sarasota's public library or at New College. Time Sifters' website attracts over 3000 hits each month; its

newsletter is sent by hardcopy or email to 90 members and by email to 150 other interested people.

In 2009 through 2013, Time Sifters presented four series of public lectures that featured distinguished researchers of Florida's past. The series, Florida's History through Archaeology, Dialogues with Florida Archaeology, Archaeology of Spanish La Florida, and Voices of Native Florida were in collaboration with the New College Public Archaeology Laboratory, with support from the Florida Humanities Council.

In 2009, Time Sifters created an annual Student Grant Competition, and some recipients have been New College anthropology students. In March, 2011, Time Sifters inaugurated its annual celebration of Florida Archaeology month with "Archaeology Fest!" It was held at New College, and more than 150 visitors enjoyed demonstrations and lectures. Also in March, chapter members volunteer at Gamble Plantation's Open House, where they promote archaeology. Time Sifters also participates in an event called "Pioneer Picnic" in Manatee County, which is held in conjunction with National Archaeology Day.

Time Sifters members have worked in the field with Dr. Uzi Baram of New College. They have helped to excavate at Manatee Spring Park, located in Bradenton just north of Manatee Village Historical Park. They have assisted Baram and New College students in documenting the Woodlawn/Galilee Cemetery, also called Oaklands Cemetery, which was formerly Sarasota's only cemetery for people of color, located north of Gillespie park and south of 12th Street in the City of Sarasota.

In recent years this close relationship with New College developed because Time Sifters president Sherry Svekis was an alum and had previously worked closely with Dr. Baram on other research and educational endeavors. Sherry also has served as an FAS Director. Time Sifters vice president, Felica Silpa, is also a New College alum; she has studied the Gamble Plantation and presented a paper at an FAS Annual Meeting about her work. Other board members have worked in the past with New College archaeology students, providing internship opportunities or mentoring.

Time Sifters has worked with another FAS chapter, the Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society. Recently, the members of the two chapters held a joint public outreach event on Venice Beach for Florida Archaeology Month. Earlier, in 2002 and 2007, the two chapters worked together to help preserve Little Salt Spring Midden and Slough, in cooperation with Sarasota County, the City of North Port, the Archaeological Conservancy, and interested citizens.

Time Sifters history of accomplishment goes back to the 1980s and 1990s. Founded in 1986, the chapter quickly achieved success by creating informative brochures that were distributed around the state. Time Sifters volunteered many hours in assisting professional archaeologists at Historic Spanish Point's Archaic-period Hill Cottage Midden in 1987, at the Manasota Key Cemetery in 1988 and 1989, at Pineland in 1989, and in "A Window to the Past" Exhibition at Historic Spanish Point in 1990 and 1991. Time Sifters members, such as Cornelia Futor, George Luer, Marion Almy and others, have served as FAS officers. In 1996, Time Sifters hosted the FAS 48th Annual Meeting, in Sarasota. They plan on hosting it again in 2014.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

October 19th

National Archaeology Day Celebration and Pioneer Picnic 11am - 3pm

Manatee Mineral Spring Park 1312 2nd Ave. East, Bradenton

11:30 - Speakers and the dedication of a new walking path with interpretive signs that tell the history of the peoples who have used the Manatee Mineral Spring over the centuries.

12:00 - Pioneer Picnic featuring smoked turkey and mullet, cornbread, fruit cobbler and much more. Donation requested.

1:00 - Heritage games - Frying pan toss and atlatl throwing competition.

Membership

Individual:	\$20
Family:	\$30
Sustaining:	\$50
Student:	\$10

Pay online at:

TimeSifters.org

Or mail checks to:

Time Sifters, Inc.
PO Box 5283
Sarasota, FL. 34277

2013 MEETING CALENDAR

September 18, 6pm: Marvin Mills: The Temple Mount, a new interpretation **Selby**

October 16, 6pm: Sherry Svekis: The History Beneath our Feet - Archaeology and the Manatee River Communities **Selby**

November 20, 6pm: Julie Langford, Roman Imperial Women as Propaganda **Selby**

December 4, 6pm: Holiday pot-luck and party

Selby Library: downtown Sarasota, Central Ave and 2nd Street

Go to www.TimeSifters.org
for more information!

We're on the Web!

www.TimeSifters.org

Your renewal date is above; please remit if due.
Please contact us if you think there is an error.