

Time Sifters

January 2015



A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 21, 2014, 6:00 PM

Selby Library, Downtown Sarasota

Darwin “Smitty” Smith Archaeology and World Heritage: The 2014 Year in Review



Returning for the second year, Time Sifters board member “Smitty” Smith will present the 2014 archaeological year in review. Smitty has reviewed over 45 significant reports of archaeological discoveries before narrowing it down to 14 to present to us. He reminds us that there is more to archaeology than just the classical civilizations and his presentation tries to capture how large the field of discovery has become. From a 6,000 year-old temple unearthed in the Ukraine, 40,000 year-old cave art in Indonesia, 22,000 Roman coins found in England, 2 German U-boats found off the U.S. coast, and the archaeology of classical Egypt as found in a California desert - unearthing 15 foot tall sphinxes constructed by Cecil B. DeMille for his 1923 movie “The Ten Commandments”, the presentation covers areas throughout the world, on all the continents and

from many different time periods. He’ll also give us some highlights of new Unesco World Heritage Sites in Russia, France, South Korea, Turkey, China, and Louisiana!

President’s 2014 Year in Review - and 2015 Preview:

Thanks to all who came out to the Time Sifters holiday party. Despite technology glitches, it was a nice ending to a great year, time to hang out with old friends and connect to new ones, and I want to thank Marion and Dick Almy for sharing their beautiful home with us.

Time Sifters board members make everything we do possible. You’ll see them at our meetings, especially Rob Bopp who manages our raffle and always makes sure the room is set up for us. Karen Jensen, Sharon McConnell, and Alfonz Lengyel (before he got sick) are the friendly faces at the membership table. Felicia Silpa chaired our Student Grant committee and donated generously so we could expand the award the students received. Jim Meckler keeps our website up and current with the best in archaeological news stories from around the world and Evelyn Mangie provides valuable content for this newsletter each month. Our treasurer, Jack Brown, secretary, Valerie Jackson Bell, Gail Schnell, and Smitty Smith all give their time and talent as needed.

Our members are also crucial to the health of Time Sifters. Through your dues, donations, and attending meetings and events you support what we do and help define who we are. Thank you.

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Notes from a Time Sifter

War seems to be an inevitable part of civilization. Although it is massively destructive, sometimes it actually saves important artifacts as spoils of war, although not in their original setting. One example is the seven foot diorite stele (photo at left from teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu) containing Hammurabi's famous law code that was produced in Babylonia sometime between 1772-1750 B.C.E. but found in Persia because the Elamite army was victorious in their 12th century B.C.E. attack of Babylonia. The Elamites carried the four ton stele across the Zagros Mountains to Susa, their capital city at that time, where it was displayed to commemorate the victory. The stele now rests in the Louvre in Paris because it was found by French archaeologists. Similarly, 23,000 cultural artifacts were captured from China by the British army during the 19th century Opium War but are now in the British Museum in London (Daily Mail, Dec. 4, 2013); and the sixth century C.E. "Silver Bible" (Codex Argenteus), a translation of the Bible into the Gothic language and written with silver ink for the king of the Ostrogoths, was stolen from northwestern Italy by the Byzantine army during the Gothic War (535-554 C.E.) and ended up with the Benedictine monks in the Rhineland. In the late 16th century it was taken to the royal seat of the Holy Roman Emperor in Prague but was captured by the Swedish army during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and is now in the collection of the Swedish University of Uppsala (Munkhammar, The Silver Bible).



The ownership of these stolen artifacts is today in question and many nations are reclaiming their heritage, but at least these things were saved. Artifacts that war destroys are gone forever. That was brought to our attention with the needless destruction of the sixth century C.E. Bamayin Buddhas (photo at left from wtfarthistory.com) in Afghanistan in 2001 by the Taliban in a religious conflict.

Archaeologists worried about the possible destruction of valuable antiquities during the Gulf War in 2003, as war planes flew over the fragile clay ziggurats (photo to the right from bible-archaeology.info.com), and terrible looting and destruction of antiquities took place as Iraqis ransacked the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad as revenge for years of oppression (photo below from rt.com).



Three-thousand-year-old artworks were smashed or taken, along with thousands of not-yet-translated clay tablets, a major loss to scholarship. Although many of those artifacts have been recovered, thousands still remain lost and may never be recovered. Even worse are the accounts that now, in Syria, the Syrians are stealing ancient artifacts to sell on the black market to hoarders who will add them to their secret collections. The profits are used to buy guns and feed soldiers. Museums have been ravaged, and both the rebels and the Assad regime have destroyed with heavy artillery, ancient Roman cities, medieval fortresses and early mosques. All of the six UNESCO sites in Syria have been damaged and looted of works of art that represent the rich and diverse cultural history of Syria's Jews, Christians and Muslims, sometimes done purposely for propaganda or to justify their cause (Baker & Aysha, Time, 2011). Because of the chaos of civil war, there are no guards to patrol the ancient sites so scavengers freely dig for artifacts that will never be seen by modern scholars.



Devastation of war is not new: the Roman army leveled the great city of Carthage in 146 B.C.E., the European Crusaders destroyed parts of awesome Constantinople in 1204 C.E., and there are bullet holes from the 1897 Greco-Turkish War in the magnificent Parthenon at Athens. But today's ravages of antiquities in the Middle East are destroying massive quantities of history that will affect our understanding of the past.

Community Conscious Archaeology

Uzi Baram

Professor of Anthropology, New College of Florida

Sarasota Bay is a dominant feature of Sarasota's identity even though it is visible only from its shores, from high rise buildings, and from aerial views. For public enjoyment, there are public parks on the bayfront as well as Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, a marina complex, and a performing arts complex. How to use the bayfront is a continual community concern. One particular spot, an area with the performing arts center and several civic buildings but also large parking lots, is being debated these days. On November 13, 2014, 300 people came together to discuss the development of that property; Tom Tryon writing in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* noted that "there was a two-point consensus on what people most want the site to offer: 1. A place to enjoy a nice glass of wine. 2. A good view of the bay while sipping that wine"

The image of sipping wine by the bay is appealing; if that vision comes to pass, hopefully people will be able to reflect on the heritage for the location. History might have been discussed at the gathering but it did not come up in the newspaper or social media stories. When I look at the publicly-held area, I think of it as part of Yellow Bluffs. What was once an outcropping is where Sarasota began. There was an initial Anglo-American settlement by the Whitakers as well as pre-Columbian Native American mounds with their history that stretches back centuries. The heritage for the region matters but, with historic preservation and development usually pitched against each other, how could heritage, particularly archaeo-heritage, fit into the discussions over the bayfront, to meet community concerns for the property? Read the full article at www.Timesifters.org.

President's message continued...

2015 is shaping up to be an exciting year. This month, Time Sifters volunteers are assisting in a heritage project in partnership with students at New College. And we have some awesome programs scheduled for the spring including a presentation by one of the top scholars on Vikings in North America.

Of course, the biggest news is that we are organizing and hosting the 2015 Florida Anthropological Society meeting, which will be held May 28-31 at the Hyatt Regency on the Sarasota bayfront. The board is excited about showcasing Sarasota and Time Sifters to over 200 individuals from all over the state of Florida and beyond. The conference attracts archaeology professionals, students, academics, and general members of the other FAS chapters. I am hoping that many of you will take part in the conference and support it with your attendance. We will also be putting out periodic calls for volunteers as tasks crop up that need helping hands.

Registration is now open: [FAS 2015 registration form](#)

Consider a becoming a sponsor of FAS 2015. You and/or your company can receive several benefits as sponsors of this event:

- ◆ Company sponsorship or individual contributions will be listed in the program.
- ◆ Support a dynamic, high profile, community event.
- ◆ Corporate logos will appear on the event conference souvenir, a reusable tote bag.
- ◆ Opportunity to provide marketing materials, samples, coupons, etc. in the conference souvenir, a reusable tote bag.
- ◆ Your company will also have the opportunity to display advertising material.

For more information on sponsorship, contact Smitty Smith at hmsbeagle22@gmail.com



2015 MEETING CALENDAR

- January 21, 6pm:** Darwin “Smitty” Smith, *The Archaeological Year in Review*
- February 18, 6pm:** Dr. David Overstreet, *Northern Limits of Maize Cultivation as Evidenced from Menominee Indian Reservation Remains*
- March 18, 6pm:** Dr. Birgitta Wallace, *Vikings in North America*
- April 15, 6pm:** Student grant winners
- May 20, 6pm:** Dr. Gabrielle Vail
- May 28-31:** Florida Anthropological Society Conference, hosted by Time Sifters
Meetings are at Selby Library: downtown Sarasota, Central Ave and 2nd Street

FAS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS PREVIEW

Friday, May 29th, 6pm: Reception at the Charles Ringling Mansion on New College’s Bayfront Campus, hosted by our conference co-organizer, Professor Uzi Baram. Watch the sunset over the bay and enjoy drinks, hors d’oeuvres and entertainment.

Saturday, May 30th: Three concurrent sessions of paper presentations covering a broad range of topics pertaining to Florida anthropology and archaeology, and history.

Saturday, May 30th, 6:30pm: FAS Banquet at the Sarasota Hyatt with Keynote Speaker Dr. Jerald Milanich.

Sunday, May 31st, 9am: Morning cruise on Sarasota Bay with a fascinating narration by John McCarthy on the area’s prehistory and history.

Sunday, May 31st, 11:30am: Archaeology-focused guided tours of Historic Spanish Point, Manatee Mineral Spring, and Gamble Plantation.

For more information about Time Sifters, email ssvekis@gmail.com

Membership

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

Pay online at:
TimeSifters.org

Or mail checks to:
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Your renewal date is above; please remit if due.
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