



SPECIAL EDITION - 2020

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Dear Member:

We are excited to announce a major archaeological excavation right here in Bradenton at the Manatee Mineral Spring site in Old Manatee Village. Sherry Svekis, Uzi Baram and *Reflections of Manatee* are managing the excavation on the lot at 14th Street East, Bradenton.

Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President

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Notes from a Time Sifter By Sherry Svekis, Time Sifters Vice President

Uncovering History at Manatee Mineral Spring

Fences are up around the Manatee Mineral Spring Park as part of a major archaeological investigation project to recover the histories of the site before it is impacted by Bradenton's RiverWalk extension. The preservation group *Reflections of Manatee* applied to the City to carry out the project and the Council agreed to fund it.

Sherry Svekis is the project director; she is working with **Dr. Uzi Baram**, Professor of Anthropology at New College of Florida, who has created a research design that is best able to recover the nuanced history of this multi-component archaeological

site. They are leading a crew of trained archaeologists to look for any material remains of the 1810s Angola maroon settlement, the 1840s early settlement of Manatee, or Branch Fort, where settlers lived during the Third Seminole War. With a large site and limited time, a very skilled operator is using heavy equipment to remove the layers of fill that have been added over the years, letting the archaeologists work meticulously on the historic layers below. The area is fenced, so the public will have to watch from a safe distance. The park's informational

signs, picnic table, and the river-front are all still accessible. There will be an **"open house" on January 20th**, from 10:00am - 12:00pm with a chance to get in closer and also see some of what has been found. Reflections Visitors Center remains open Wednesday-Saturday 10:00 am -1:00 pm with displays and information.



A New Chapter in Revealing the Heritage of the Freedom-Seeking People of the Florida Gulf Coast

In the October 2013 Time Sifters Newsletter I started an essay with “In 2004, Time Sifters Archaeology Society helped to launch Looking for Angola, the search for material remains of an early 19th century maroon community in southern Tampa Bay”. Time Sifters volunteers have helped with public events, archaeological excavations, and the inventory and analysis of artifacts for the archaeological search for **Angola**, the name for a settlement that lasted from the late 18th century to 1821 on the Manatee River. The challenge of locating material evidence for people who sought freedom in southwest Florida was great, with many obstacles; some challenges radiate from the nature of the search and are others due to the specifics of archaeological research in Bradenton. But after years of public outreach, sustained research, and patient analysis, the results are surprisingly positive. In large measure, the success comes from Time Sifters’ partnership with *Looking For Angola* and then the *New College Public Archaeology Lab*, which was created in 2010. The partnership deserves acclaim...” I wrote Partners in Search of History (the essay can be found at http://www.timesifters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/oct2013_newsletter.pdf) to end a chapter in my public anthropology that Vickie Oldham launched and led with *Looking for Angola*; the next summer I submitted the final report on the archaeology to *Reflections of Manatee, Inc.* (which hosted the excavations); it is available to researchers at the Florida Master Site Files under the title *The Historical Archaeology of Looking for Angola at 8Ma103:Excavations and Public Outreach by the Manatee Mineral*



Photos 1 & 2 - the 2013 Excavation.
Photo 3 - the 2008 Excavation.
Photo 4 - Blue-edged Pearlware.



Spring, Manatee County, Florida. Time Sifters gave me the May 2016 lecture slot for *Rivers of Freedom, Landscapes of Liberty: An Update on “Looking for Angola” and the Archaeology of Maroons in Florida.* Public outreach through presentations, videos, interviews, and more; teaching materials for

school children and teachers’ workshops; visiting with the descendant community on Andros Island; undergraduate studies of the Tabby House Ruins at DeSoto National Memorial (by Sherry Robinson Svekis) and the Braden Castle (by Rachel Roach); remote sensing at the Reflections of Manatee property, controlled excavations, and laboratory analysis were the hallmarks of that chapter.

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A New Chapter ...

Angola is part of a larger history for people of African heritage finding freedom in **Spanish La Florida**. Starting in the late 17th century at Fort Mose by St. Augustine, people could self-emancipate from enslavement find liberty with the Spanish. When the Spanish left in 1763, some went into the interior. After the return of Spanish rule and with British support, Prospect Bluff came a citadel of freedom, though destroyed in 1816; that US naval attack and the **1818 Battle of Suwannee** sent survivors to the community by the Manatee River, a place historian Canter Brown Jr. recognized as Angola. Until 1821, the maroon community grew; survivors of a slave raid escaped to the Florida interior or to the British Bahamas, specifically **Andros Island** where generations found freedom.

The archaeology and history for Angola continues to inspire scholarly and community interest. But with the conclusion of the archaeology report, I moved on to other projects, most notably the Community Heritage Awareness and Management Program (CHAMP) at Phillippi Estate Park. For two years (2014-16), I focused the New College Public Archaeology Lab on that project. Just as that was finishing up with heritage interpretation signs being placed around the park, Daphney Towns noticed the heritage interpretation signs at *Reflections of Manatee*. Those signs, orchestrated by Sherry Svekis and produced with my scholarly input, told of the many histories by the Manatee

Mineral Spring. One of those signs told of Angola, including the destruction of the community in 1821 and how survivors reached liberty on Andros Island. That sign launched **Back to Angola**, with descendants coming from Red Bays in July 2018 to walk, dance, sing, and eat on the land where their ancestors had found freedom even if only temporarily. **The Bahamian Junkanoo** caught the local media's attention; a new celebratory chapter for the program began. In conjunction with an application to the **National Park Service** was approved in January 2019 and **the Manatee Mineral Spring is on the Network to Freedom**. With the second Back to Angola festival, the new chapter was moving forward. And getting so much public interest that River-Walk is expanding to the spring.

Thanks to community support, the City of Bradenton funded excavations but with a deadline: have to get the excavations done by the end of January. We have a new chapter in revealing the heritage of the freedom-seeking peoples of the Florida Gulf Coast.

Got a lot to do quickly and will be testing the previous work. There is the promise we will see more materials from the

lives of the maroons who lived for a while south of the Manatee River. The excavations will be using a 305 Caterpillar excavator with a 52" blade to remove the two feet of fill that previous excavations revealed so there won't be the opportunity for volunteers with the January 2020 excavations. Once the excavations are done, the findings will be brought to the **New College Public Archaeology Lab**. I have teaching responsibilities so am giving myself the semester plus the summer to organize the materials. Every single recovered object will be cleaned and then students and Time Sifters volunteers can help identify them; we will need to catalogue, photograph or draw selected belongings, and then work on analyzing and interpreting and ultimately representing and even exhibiting the materials. Reflections of Manatee has a Visitors Center (opened last spring).

So stay tuned and get involved – there's a lot to do.



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Membership

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Speakers & Events Calendar

Unless noted, all will be held at 6:00 PM
Selby Library, 1331 First St., Sarasota 34236

January 22, 2020

Archaeology Year in Review: *A look at what was talked about in 2019.*

Smitty Smith

January 31, 2020 - 9:30 to 3:00 at OLLI Life Long Learning

In-Depth Series ... Neanderthals & Early Humans: *An all day Workshop on our early Ancestors*

Dr. Edward Gonzalez-Tennant

See website for details and registration information.

February 19, 2020

Kolomoki Mounds: *One of the Largest earliest Woodland Period earthwork mound complexes in the SE USA*

Dr. Thomas Pluckhahn



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