

# DECEMBER-2025

PRESERVE ♦ EDUCATE ♦ RESEARCH ♦ INSPIRE

Dear Member:

**It's Party Time!** We hope you will join us for **the Annual Holiday Party on the 20<sup>th</sup>** at the Brown's home. Be sure to RSVP me at my email by the 15<sup>th</sup>. Food, conversation and Trivia.

Our Spring season starts on January 21 with the *"Year in Review: What's been Discovered & What's Being Talked About"*.

Also be sure to sign up for *"Landscape Character Assessment"*. Contact Dr. Uzi Baram to sign up and help with this project.

Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President  
hmsbeagle22@gmail.com

## Historical Trivia

*A shipwreck was recently found in downtown of what Florida city?*



Answer on page 5.



## Archaeologists You Should Know

### Gertrude Caton Thompson

#### Great Zimbabwe & Al-Fayyūm depression

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member; **Sources:** Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, and SciHi blog

Gertrude Caton Thompson was born in London, England on February 1, 1888. Her parents were William Caton Thompson and Ethel Page. She attended private schools in Paris and England. Caton Thompson attended the British School of Archaeology in Egypt; University College London; Newnham College, Cambridge.

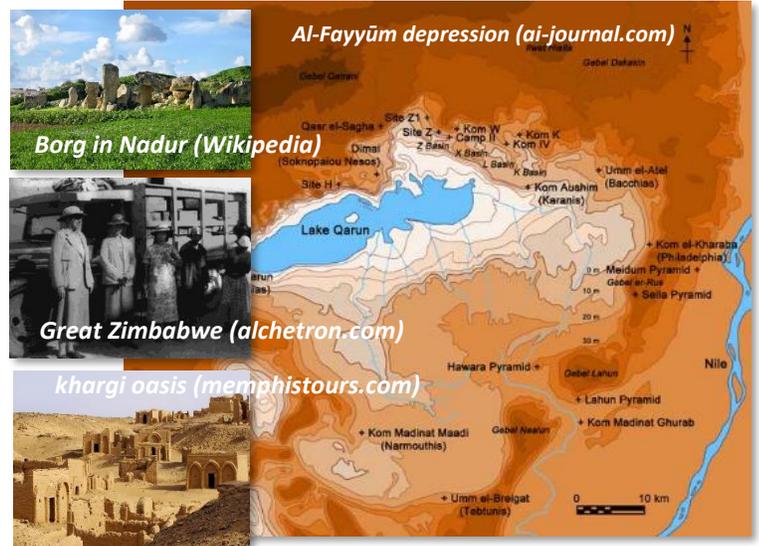
Caton Thompson was an English archaeologist when participation by women in the discipline was uncommon. She was one of a group including Kathleen Kenyon, Margaret Murray, Dorothy Garrod, Dorothea Bate, and Agatha Christie who were female pioneers in field.

Her interest in archaeology began in 1911, when she attended a lecture course on Ancient Greece, given by Sarah

Paterson at the British Museum. That same year she and her mother vacationed in Egypt.

An inheritance received in 1912 helped ensure her financial

independence and support for her later excavations. Caton Thompson's first experience in the field came in 1915 working as a bottle washer in an excavation in France. During WW I, she worked for the Government in the British Ministry. In 1921 she embarked on studies at University College London where she was taught by Margaret Murray, Flinders Petrie and Dorothea Bate, excavating in Upper Egypt during the winter of that year. The following year she began attending courses at



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## Thompson ...



Newnham College, Cambridge, before joining further excavations in Egypt with Petrie and Guy Brunton in 1924.

In 1921, along with Margaret Murray, she helped in the excavation of the megalithic temple of *Borg en Nadur* near St. George's Bay in Malta. Her task was to investigate the caves near the temple for Neanderthal skulls, hoping to find evidence for a land bridge between Malta and Africa. No evidence to support this theory was found but the excavation yielded other notable artifacts, such as Bronze Age pottery.

While a student at the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (1921–26), she and the geologist Elinor Wight Gardner began the first archaeological survey of the *Al-Fayyūm depression*. Their work in the Al-Fayyūm over the next two years for the Royal Anthropological Institute

included discovering two unknown Neolithic cultures at this site in Upper Egypt, the older dating to about 5000 BCE and the other to about 4500 BCE. Also, in Egypt she participated in excavations at Abydos, Badari, and Qau el Kebir. Her work was distinguished by its meticulousness. Caton Thompson used the new system of organizing the site into 10 x 30-foot intervals. She carefully excavated in arbitrary six-inch levels and recorded the exact position of each artifact. Along with her excavation techniques, she was also the first to use air surveys to locate archaeological sites. Such approaches to excavation were in many respects a generation ahead of her time.

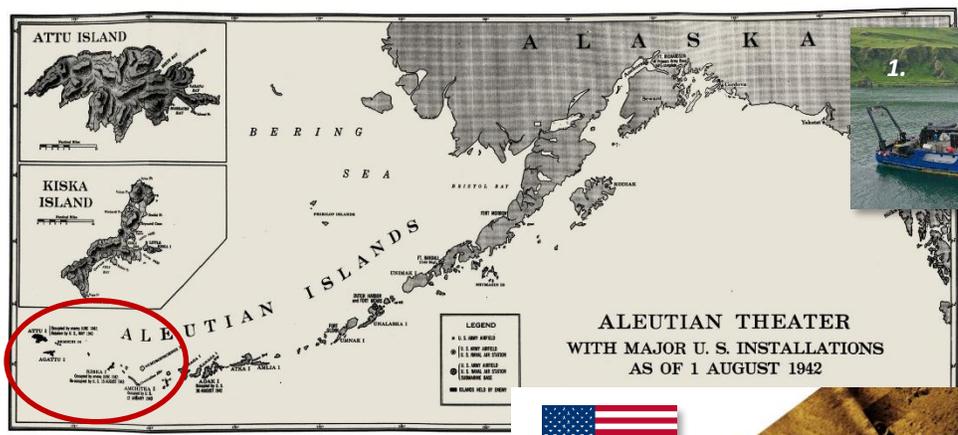
In 1928, the British Academy invited her to investigate the origins of ruins of *Great Zimbabwe* in southeastern Zimbabwe near Lake Mutirikwe. She assembled

the first of its kind *all-female expedition* for the Zimbabwe excavations. The site contained three sets of structures which contained multiple buildings that pointed to indigenous African design and construction during the time of the European Middle Ages. Her team's findings laid to rest the controversy as to whether the site was the work of Africans or of some other civilization. Caton Thompson used ceramics, similar to what modern villagers were using, and structures like terrace walls to determine who built the structures of the site. Working with Kathleen Kenyon, Caton Thompson's excavations led her to the unequivocal view that Zimbabwe was the product of a "native civilization". Today, modern archaeologists now

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# The Battle of Attu Shipwrecks

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. Sources: LiveScience, Smithsonian Magazine, and ATI (All That is Interesting).



In June 1942, the Japanese Army, Navy and Air Force captured the islands of Attu and Kiska, at the westernmost tip of Alaska's Aleutian Islands. The idea was to turn Attu into an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" for attacks on other American locations.

In response, the United States the US launched **Operation Landcrab** to retake the islands. They sent a force of almost 35,000 American and Canadian soldiers and spent roughly a year bombing the Japanese. The final stages of the invasion included *the Battle of Attu*, when over the course of 18 bloody days, American forces successfully expelled the invaders. This battle claimed the lives of 2,351 Japanese and 549 Allied troops.

82 years later, in August of 2024, during a five-day research trip, underwater archaeologists successfully located three World War II shipwrecks on the ocean floor near Attu. The wreck of the *SS Dellwood* and one of the Japanese freighters, *Kotohira Maru*, were located offshore at a depth of about 300 feet. The wreck of the other Japanese freighter, *Cheribon Maru*, was found in shallow water near the shore. Both freighters showed damage indicating that they were sunk by bombs from

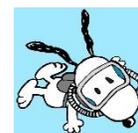
American warplanes. *The Dellwood* while laying cables, ran into an uncharted underwater pinnacle.

The team was on board the *Norseman II*, a scientific research ship that was equipped with a remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) that took video of the sunken ships. The wrecks were located by a sonar array towed behind the research ship; the array carried equipment for an advanced type of sonar called "synthetic aperture" sonar, which uses the reflections of sound pulses to locate objects underwater.

The expedition was headed by maritime archaeologist Dominic Bush, who was a doctoral student of East Carolina University at the time but now works as a researcher for the archaeological nonprofit Ships of Discovery. His team of 13 researchers, including

the project's co-leader, maritime archaeologist and historian Jason Raupp, have spent years researching the Aleutian Island for wrecks. They teamed up with several strategic partners, including the Japanese World Scan Project, which scans environmental and archaeological sites with drones and other robots, to find out as much as they could about the wrecks.

The researchers said they have no plans to recover any material from the wrecks. However, they are working with members of the Japanese government to figure out next steps for potentially repatriating any remains at the sites.





# Speakers for 2025/2026

All are at 5:45 PM live at the Selby Library  
1331 First St., Sarasota

Time Sifters Archaeology Society is pleased to announce our 2025 - 2026 Spring schedule of presentations. All lectures will start at 5:45 PM and are free. Each presentation will be about one hour with time for questions and answers. Please come and join us.

**January 21, 2026**  
**Year in Review: What's been Discovered & What's being Talked About**  
**Dr. David Miano**



**February 18**  
**“Overview of Tampa’s Heritage: 3D imaging of Five Historical Sites”**  
**Dr. Laura Harrison**



**March 18**  
**“The Military Orders of the Crusades: Knights Templar, Knights Hospitaller, & the Teutonic Knights”**  
**Dr. Matt King**

**April 15**  
**“Mithras Sanctuary in Ostia”**  
**Dr. Frederick Pirone**



**May 20**  
**“Royal Heads are Hunted: A Calusa Story”**  
**Will Granger**

Photos: Roman ports.com,  
Will Granger, Pinterest

Time Sifters Archaeology Society - A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society - P. O. Box 5283, Sarasota, FL 34277  
www.timesifters.org      President: Darwin “Smitty” Smith - HMSBeagle22@gmail.com

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## Thompson ...

agree that the city was the product of a Shona-speaking African civilization.

Returning to Egypt, she conducted excavations on prehistoric sites at Kharga Oasis with Elinor Gardner. There were three expeditions to the Kharga Oasis from 1930 to 1933.

Gardner did the surveying for many of the excavations. Since the Kharga Scarp contained many Paleolithic and Neolithic sites, Caton Thompson was able to excavate implements used by both civilizations.

In 1932, she employed Mary Leakey to illustrate her book "The Desert Fayum", greatly influencing her later career in paleoanthropology. Towards the end of 1937 Caton

Thompson and Elinor Gardner, accompanied by Freya Stark, initiated the first systematic excavation in the Yemen at Hadhramaut.

Caton Thompson retired from fieldwork after WWII in Broadway, Worcestershire, England. She published her memoirs entitled "Mixed Memoirs" in 1983. She passed away in 1985 at the age of 97 and is buried in Broadway.

### Honors and accolades

In 1934 Caton Thompson was the first woman to receive the Rivers Medal from the Royal Anthropological Institute. In 1938 she was offered the post of Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge but rejected the role. It was subsequently accepted by Dorothy Garrod. She was a

research fellow at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1923 and honorary fellow from 1934-45, receiving an honorary degree in 1954. She was the first female President of the Prehistoric Society (1940-1946). Elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1944. Vice President of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1944. She received the Huxley Medal from the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1946. In 1961 she was a founding member of the British School of History and Archaeology in East Africa and was made an honorary fellow after serving on the council for 10 years.

## Holiday Party



**December 20 - at 6:00 PM**

1353 Cottonwood Trail, Sarasota, FL  
34232 (The Lakes subdivision)  
941 915 4916



**Come celebrate good friends, yummy food, and archaeology-themed fun.**

**What to bring:** \$6 per person and a dish to share. Members are welcome to bring guests.

Email Smitty at [hmsbeagle22@gmail.com](mailto:hmsbeagle22@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

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*Historical Trivia: St. Augustine, FL.*