

SEPTEMBER-2026

PRESERVE ♦ EDUCATE ♦ RESEARCH ♦ INSPIRE

Dear Member:

This starts our 40th season. The article below tells a little of our history. We are planning a celebration at our Holiday Party in December.

The first lecture this season is *"Crusader Castles: Evolving Frontiers in the Holy Land"* by Dr. Matt King. Please join us on September 16 at 5:45.

Marion Almy, one of the founding members and a current Board member is stepping down. We will miss her contributions. With that in mind we are looking for a new board member. If you are interested in joining the Board, ask any Board member what is required.

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

Historical Trivia

What great African city did
Gertrude Thompson excavate?



Answer on page 5



By Sherry Svekis, Time Sifters Board Member.

In October 1986, a dozen people who had taken an adult education course on Florida Archaeology taught by Marion Almy (a current board member), suggested that a club be formed to pursue the goals of "preservation by education."

Marion, a professional archaeologist, had inspired them to learn about the area's early indigenous inhabitants and the urgent need to educate government agencies as well as individuals about the importance of preserving

Time Sifters Founded During Exciting Times for Florida Archaeology



Spanish Point Excavations: George Luer and Dan Oker;
Lea Schrock and George Luer; Laura Dean, Evelyn Uhlinger,
Cornelia Futor.



archaeological and historical sites in this area. Time Sifters Archaeology Society was organized around the table in her small office and the society's first newsletter was

published 40 years ago, in December 1986.

Continued on page 5 ...

Time Sifters Presents

"Crusader Castles: Evolving Frontiers in the Holy Land"

September 16, 5:45 PM

Selby Library, 1331 First St., Sarasota



Siege of Tyre



Dr. Matt King

*Associate Professor of Medieval History
& Digital Humanities, USF*



One of the most enduring markers of the medieval Crusades are castles that still dot the landscape of the modern Middle East. Some of them lie in ruins, while others remain fortifications of incredible importance – prominent among them *Krak des Chevaliers*, which briefly served as a stronghold for rebels during the Syrian Civil War (2011-2024). This talk will consider the construction, maintenance, and evolving purpose of castles over the course of the crusading era (c. 1095-1281). It will show that these castles were never static, monolithic creations onto which we can easily project questions about a quintessential “European” or “Islamic” form of architecture. Rather, crusader castles were products of the time in which they were constructed and had defensive capabilities that reflected the relative military strength of those that inhabited them.

Dr. Matt King specializes in the history of the medieval Mediterranean during the age of the Crusades. His first book was

Kerak Castle



Akko/Acre



Sidon Sea Castle

Photos: Wikipedia

Dynasties Intertwined: The Zirids of Ifriqiya and the Normans of Sicily, which used Latin and Arabic texts to consider the relationship between these two states in the center of the Great Sea. He then had a post-tenure existential crisis and used that to write his second book, *A History of Goblins*, which is an admitted departure from his expertise. He has recently regained his sanity and is researching the construction of merchant and military ships in North Africa during the age of the Crusades.

In The News

Excavation of Celtic Oppidum of Manching in Bavaria, Germany.

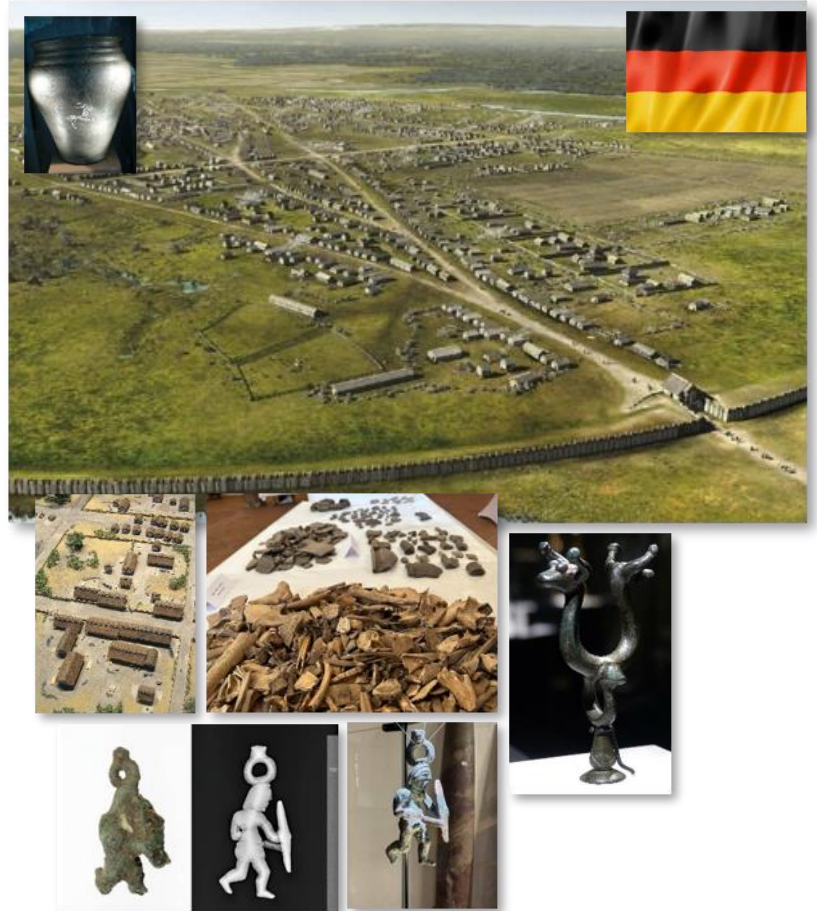
By Smitty. Sources: Ancient Origins, Archaeology News online, & The Greek Reporter.

The results from a three-year excavation project are starting to be released. The uncovering of *Celtic Oppidum of Manching in Bavaria, Germany*, was conducted by the Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation in collaboration with Pro Arch Prospektion und Archäologie GmbH.

Founded in the 3rd century BCE and abandoned by the mid-1st century BCE, the Oppidum (Iron Age town) functioned as a political and economic center in Central Europe. It covered over 988 acres and may have supported up to 10,000 people. Excavations have revealed evidence of structured city planning, including streets, public squares, workshops, and residential areas. In addition to domestic tools, ceramics, and metal items, remains of fish, livestock, and grains indicate a varied diet. The excavations also documented 1,300 archaeological features and more than 15,000 metal objects.

One of the most interesting pieces uncovered was *the small bronze figure of a warrior*. Just 2.95 inches tall and weighing 1.94 ounces, it depicts a Celtic soldier wearing chest armor while remaining unclothed from the waist down. The warrior stands with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other, in a lunging pose. A loop on the top of the figure's head suggests it may have been worn as a pendant. Experts remain unsure whether it served a decorative, ceremonial, or spiritual role. However, its high level of detail and preservation suggest it was highly valued. Despite its small size, the figure is extremely complex, having been made through the lost-wax casting technique. X-rays from the Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation (BLfD) confirmed the solid bronze casting, revealing details beneath the corrosion. The fact that it was constructed of metal indicates just how skilled Celtic metalworkers were.

The excavation also recovered a ritual



Photos: Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation; wolfgang sauger wikipedia

deposit inside a box dating from as early as 120 to 60 BCE. The deposit contained remains of at least three people, animal remains, 32 metal objects, and fragments of more than 50 ceramic containers.

Only around 12 percent of the site has been explored, leaving about 88 percent of the Oppidum still unexcavated. Archaeologists believe future digs could bring even more insights into Celtic civilization. Prof. Mathias Pfeil, General Conservator of the Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation, emphasized the settlement's significance: "*The richness of finds from the latest excavation tells us how the late Iron Age settlement was organized, how people lived, worked, and ate, with whom they had trade relations, and what technical skills they had developed.*"

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

#275 - Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis (Argentina & Brazil)

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. Sources: UNESCO, World of History & Wikipedia.

Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis include:

San Ignacio Mini (Argentina)

Santa Ana (Argentina)

Nuestra Señora de Loreto (Argentina)

Santa Maria Mayor (Argentina)

Sao Miguel das Missoes (Brazil)

These ruins are the impressive remains of five Jesuit missions, built in the land of the Guaranis people during the 17th and 18th centuries. Each is characterized by a specific layout and a different state of conservation. In Brazil, the ruins of the *São Miguel Arcanjo* church constitute the most intact and complete structure among this period's designated heritage properties. In Argentina, the four Jesuit-Guarani Missions are located in the southern Misiones province. The missions are often called collectively the Río de la Plata missions.

The Jesuit Order of the Catholic Church developed among the Guaraní peoples a type of settlement called *reducciones*, or "reductions," in which indigenous people were settled in organized communities that combined Christian teachings with economic self-sufficiency. The goal was to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity, but the Jesuits pursued a distinctive approach, combining religious conversion with the protection of Indigenous communities from the worst abuses of colonial rule, such as enslavement and forced labor. The Jesuits attempted to create a "state within a state" in which the native peoples, guided by the Jesuits, would remain autonomous and isolated from Spanish colonists and Spanish rule.



Photos: TripAdvisor, UNESCO, fotopaíses, ministério de turismo, & regionitoral.

The Guarani were a group of indigenous people living in the region that today includes parts of Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia. They were seminomadic and practiced agriculture, hunting, and fishing. The Guarani were receptive to the Jesuits, partly because the missions provided a degree of protection from European slave traders and rival Indigenous groups.

Each reduction typically consisted of a church, school, workshops, and agricultural lands. The Guarani were taught European farming techniques, craftsmanship, and trades, as well as reading, writing, and music, all framed within a Christian religious

education. Jesuit priests ran the settlements, but Guarani leaders were often appointed to help manage day-to-day affairs.

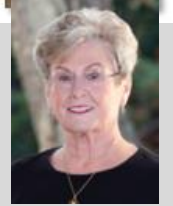
The Jesuit Río de la Plata communities reached a maximum population of 141,182 in 1732 in 30 missions in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. The Jesuit Missions of Chiquitos was founded in 1691 in eastern Bolivia and reached a maximum population of 25,000 in 1766. The community in the Llanos de Moxos also in Bolivia was founded in 1682, reached a population of about 30,000 in 1720.

Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1982 as site #275.

The 2026/2027 Time Sifters Officers & Board

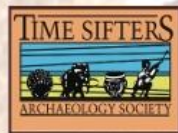


Two long time serving members have had to step down. **Mary Maisel** who has been our Secretary for the last four years has moved to Vermont to chase her dream. *FYI she was a Futor Student Grant winner in 2019!* Good luck Mary we will miss you.



Marion Almy, founder and former President of Time Sifters and retired CEO of ACI Consultants will be backing away this season. She has been a key driver to the Futor Student Grant program. She said she will be showing up for the cookies and lectures just to keep us honest.

We welcome our newest member to the Board, **Wallace Schroeder**. He will be our new Secretary. Taking notes at the Board Meetings and keeping us on track and remind us of what each commit to. Welcome Wallace.



The 2026/2027 Time Sifters Officers and Board

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Smitty Smith



Vice President
Sherry Svekis



Treasurer
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Wallace
Schroeder



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Continued from page 1...

40 Seasons ...

Those were heady days for archaeology in Florida and headlines of new discoveries around the state were prominently featured in the Sarasota paper. In Tallahassee, excavations begun at the site of Spain's Mission San Luis also turned up an Apalachee Indian council House, 90 feet across. Underwater research was ongoing at Little Salt Spring and Warm Mineral Springs. The Windover site in Titusville had revealed a peat bog burial pond that included the skeletal remains of 168 individuals, including remarkably well-preserved brain tissue with intact DNA, and artifacts including 86 pieces of fabric with seven different textile weaves. At the same time, the looting of local Indian mounds also made headlines.

Time Sifters' early members were eager to become active participants in ongoing research. They took field trips to many archaeological and historic sites around the state. Members logged

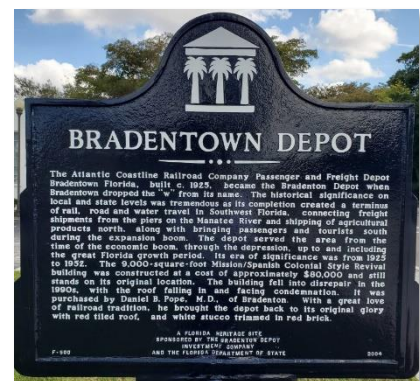
hundreds of hours volunteering on excavations taking place on the southwest coast, volunteering with Dr. William Marquardt at the Calusa Indian site on Pine Island, Dr. George Luer at Manasota Key, and Marion Almy at Spanish Point. They helped in the search for the site of the Seminole War era Fort Armistead, located in the Indian Beach area of north Sarasota, and assisted in the creation of *the Window to the Past* exhibit at Spanish Point.

In addition to "getting their hands dirty," Time Sifters members carried through on their "preservation through education" goals. Outreach displays at area events inspired more people to learn about archaeology and attracted new members. The society was recognized on numerous years with *Public Information Merit Awards from the Sarasota Herald Tribune*.

Time Sifters also received kudos statewide for writing and designing two brochures. "Offenses

Concerning Dead Bodies and Graves" explaining Florida Statutes 872.02 to 872.05 was distributed to developers, contractors, and interested individuals throughout the state. "Protecting the Past for the Future," an educational brochure about the urgent need to protect and preserve important archaeological heritage, was also distributed throughout the state.

Although the days of extensive excavations into Florida's ancient past are mostly over, some of Time Sifters' current members continue to lend a hand when given the opportunity. They have volunteered at Phillippi Estate Park, an archaic midden site, and in Bradenton at the Manatee Mineral Spring excavations looking for the more recent site of the Angola maroon community. The goals of Time Sifters' founders continue to be expressed in our mission of "Preservation, Education, Research, Inspire."



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Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President
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Historical Trivia: Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe.