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SOUTH BREVARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 1064
Melbourne, FL 32902-1064



South Brevard Historical Society, Inc.

Founded 1966

P.O. Box 1064, Melbourne, Florida, 32902-1064

www.southbrevardhistory.org

April 2010

ARCHEOLOGIST GREGG HARDING RETURNS FOR

A SECOND PRESENTATION

Saturday, April 10, 2010

3:00 P M

Melbourne Public Library

540 E. Fee Avenue, Melbourne

Life in Prehistoric Florida

‘Life in Prehistoric Florida’ will describe the day-to-day struggle for survival of Florida’s Native Americans—how they used flora and fauna for subsistence and medicinal purposes, their food-gathering techniques, and the methods of protection these indigenous tribes used in their confrontation with a hostile environment.

This session will focus on the Ais Indians that occupied the Florida coastline throughout the length of Brevard County. This large tribe of hunter/gatherers lived a semi-nomadic existence, setting up villages near plentiful food sources and moving when food became scarce.

Large ‘middens’ of discarded shellfish, tools and weapons were left behind as the villages relocated to new areas. Gregg has excavated many of these middens in Brevard and will bring artifacts found during those digs.

An invaluable source of information on the Ais is found in the recorded memories of Quaker Jonathon Dickinson, a survivor of a 1696 shipwreck on the Florida east coast. We present a summary of some of the “Dickenson’s experience” on page 3. You can purchase an edition of “Jonathon Dickenson’s Journal” at the bookstore of the Florida Historical Society in Cocoa Beach.

Dear Members and Friends...

During my term as president, I've been touting our goal as a "reorganization" of the SBHS. However, due to this wonderful break through of spring like weather and in honor of "spring housecleaning" (perhaps an historic concept in itself) I offer you a revised goal: REINVENTION.

Reinvention has a much fresher and creative sound. Things have changed so much since the founding of the Society in 1966. We have more historical resources in our community and communication has drastically changed.

Our mission hasn't changed but the ways we can accomplish it have. In coming editions, I'll pose questions and expect that you'll respond with answers and ideas. Stay tuned!

Carol Andren
President, SBHS
(321) 725-4115

PS:

If your Newsletter mailing label has a red dot it's because we haven't received your 2010 dues. Hopefully you just forgot...or if you paid and have a red dot please call me and we'll check it out. ...THANKS.

Out of the Past.....



Report from the "collection":

Melbourne's fire siren controller built in 1933 by Bob Blackabee and Don E. Beaujean. In service until May 1955.

The SBHS thanks **AAA Malabar Mini-Storage**, located across the street from the Malabar Town Hall, for their generous donation of air-conditioned secure storage for the Society's collections and archives.

SBHS CALENDAR

May 8th

Learn history and share memories and conversation with several Brevard "Old Timers". Moderated by Diane Barile.

June 12th

In 1955 the little town of Melbourne and the nation were stunned by the brutal murder of Patricia Van Eeghen and her daughter Phylis. Philip Van Eeghen was soon charged and later he would be the suspect in the "accident" of his son, Rodger, one year earlier.

Learn the details of this sensational murder and all the twists and turns that followed.

July and August

We take a summer break from programs but will resume in September.

Around South Brevard

Melbourne Beach

Coming in May to the Old Town Hall History Center
"The Facets of Florida Art"

An exhibit of Florida themed art by 20 local artists.

The Center is open Saturdays from 11 - 3 and will be open Mothers Day, Sunday May 9th from 11 - 3.

Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy this fascinating, intimate look at our home state.

The History Center is located at 2373 Oak St, Melbourne Beach across from Spessard Holland Golf Course.

Admission is free.

For more information, call 676-0660

Historic Rossetter House Museum & Gardens

Saturday, April 24th

Free Public Archaeology Day

10am - 3pm

Join the Rossetter House staff and FPAN to survey the Historic Houston Cemetery using ground-penetrating radar.

View Displays and Demonstrations

For more information go to: rossetterhousemuseum.org

or phone: 321-254-9855

Florida Historical Society

The FHS is located at 435 Brevard Avenue in Cocoa Village.

For information on their programs and the Spring Florida History Film Festival go to: www.myfloridahistory.org

or phone: [321-690-1971](tel:321-690-1971).

Jonathan Dickinson meets the Ais Indians

(a brief summary of the account)

On August 23, 1696 a fleet of 13 ships left Port Royal, Jamaica for the American colonies. Among the ships was the 'Reformation' owned by Englishman Jonathan Dickinson a wealthy merchant from Port Royal. The Reformation carried 24 passengers including Dickinson's wife and infant son.

During a storm the Reformation was shipwrecked on the east Florida coast near Hobe Sound. Soon the local Indian tribe, the 'Jaegas' discovered the wreck, captured the passengers and plundered the ship. The Jaegas freed the captives on Sept. 28 allowing them to take a small boat and meager supplies.

The castaways set out to reach St. Augustine. The small boat held the injured and weak with men to row while the rest of the party walked along the beach. On Sept. 30 they entered Ais Indian territory. The Ais lived in villages along the shores of the 'Rio de Ais' now known as the Indian River. The Ais had befriended the Spanish but were hostile to the English. The Dickinson party spent a month with the Ais trying to convince them that all of the castaways were Spanish.

Dickinson gave brief descriptions of the Ais in his journal. For clothing, the men wore a woven triangle of palm fronds secured around the waist with a palm frond belt secured in the back with native grass that resembled a horse tail. The women wore, if anything, deer skins or grass skirts. The Ais did not farm and gathered what edible plants were available. They caught fish and served it boiled. The fish was gutted but the head and scales remained. The fish was gutted but the head and scales remained. The fish was served on palmetto fronds. Clams were also roasted and offered to the Dickinson group.

IN HONOR OF CIVIL WAR VETERANS

SUNDAY, April 25th

2:00 PM

Melbourne City Cemetery, Hibiscus Street

The Henry Patrick Gradick Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Camp 1387, Sons of Confederate Veterans will hold their annual ceremony to honor veterans of the Union and the Confederate armies. Members will gather under the shade trees in the northeast corner of the cemetery. The public is invited to participate. If you plan to attend this event, please bring a chair. For further information: 723-6068.

Civil War veterans buried in the Melbourne Cemetery are:

Confederacy

Albert L. Cocklin, J.A. Hoke, John A. Houchins, Frank Huddleston, M.A. Martin, Ezekiel J. Nesbitt, Green Rodes, A.J. West, and Robert N. West.

Union

Rubin Anderson, Rufus Beaujean, Lewis Dawson, Richard W. Goode, Alphius Henley, Montravillie Horton, John Phillips, Vanness Pierce, Uriah Pohtius, and Henry Whiting.