



Archaeological and Historical Tours of The Mound House are offered every Wednesday and Saturday between 10 and 2, October through May. The Archaeology Laboratory, volunteer opportunities, and group tours are available year round.

Directions from the North - Take I-75 to Exit 131 Daniels Parkway (also Southwest Florida International Airport exit). Follow Daniels Parkway west. Turn left on Six Mile Cypress. This road becomes Gladiolus Drive at U.S.41. From Gladiolus, turn left on Summerlin Road (869) and left on San Carlos Boulevard (865). San Carlos Boulevard becomes Estero Boulevard on Fort Myers Beach. Follow Estero Boulevard to the left down the island approximately 3 miles. Turn left on Connecticut Street. The Mound House is located at the end of Connecticut Street on the left hand side.

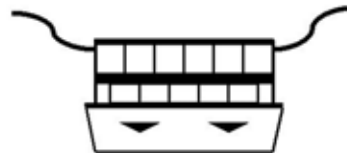
Directions from the South - Take I-75 to Exit 116 Bonita Beach Road (865). Bonita Beach Road becomes Estero Boulevard when you are on Fort Myers Beach. Follow Estero Boulevard up the island approximately 3 miles. Turn right on Connecticut Street. The Mound House is located at the end of Connecticut Street on the left hand side.

Purchased with funds from Florida Communities Trust and operated by the Town of Fort Myers Beach
 Phone: (239) 765-0865 Fax: (239) 765-0841 Website: www.moundhouse.org E-mail: MoundHouse@fmbeach.org



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The Mound House
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The Mound House Happenings

Volume 2 Number 1 Spring/Summer 2004

Circa 1921 Historic Garage Renovation Begins!

By Theresa Schober

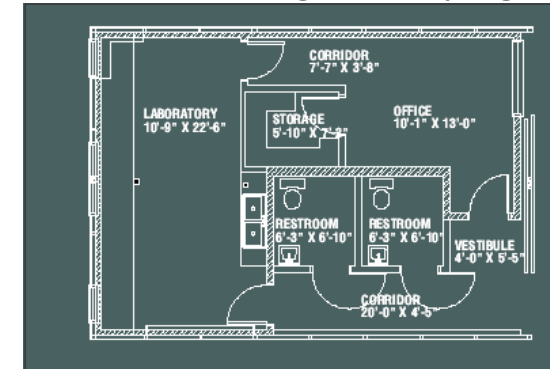
In late spring 2004, the Mound House contracted with historic preservation architect John Parks of Renker Eich Parks Architects in St. Petersburg, Florida to produce a preservation plan for the property including rehabilitation of the circa 1921 garage. Beginning in March, the garage will be transformed to accommodate two restrooms, a working laboratory,

services would interfere with the open spaces currently enjoyed by visitors. Second, the garage enjoyed a similar use during the late 1940s when the James Foundation operated the property as the Shell Mound Experimental Station. An additional advantage to this plan involves the national recognition of this property. Although the Mound House and grounds are historically significant, a

New Grants Funded!
 ✓\$500 from the Trail of the Lost Tribes to sponsor a spring archaeological speaker event.
 ✓\$6,000 from the Claiborne and Ned Foulds Foundation towards renovation of the historic garage. These monies are in addition to an initial grant award of \$5,000 last fall.
 ✓\$269,500 from the Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resources to convert the 1958 swimming pool into a walk-in shell mound exhibit.

that currently serves as an administrative office and lab. Relocation of these activities to the historic garage will allow for removal of this late addition, although it is not planned at this time.

The renovation will proceed over the summer by Concept Enterprises, Inc. of Odessa, Florida.



Proposed Plan
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'

office and archival storage space.

The historic garage was selected to house these services for a number of reasons. First, the adaptive reuse of an existing building has the advantage of preserving historical views of the property. Construction of new buildings for basic

National Register nomination in 2000 failed due to post-1950s changes to the main structure that effected its architectural character. Two of the changes postdating this time period are the swimming pool area and the circa 1980 caretaker's suite added onto the north side of the building



Proposed Building Section

This cross-sectional rendering of the garage following restoration details interior finishes such as random width board walls that will help maintain the ambience of the original structure. Plans by Renker Eich Parks Architects.



Use of the garage as an archaeological laboratory is consistent with its use during the James Foundation tenure. As illustrated below, the interior of the garage has changed little since that time.



Ford Times 1950 Vol. 42 No. 9

Pool Exhibit Grant Funded for \$269,500!

By Theresa Schober & Corbett Torrence

In the Spring 2004 *Mound House Happenings* newsletter, we reported that the swimming pool exhibit would not be funded this year due to funding cuts at the state level. It is so wonderful to be wrong! Since state budget hearings were completed last July, two special category projects ahead of us in line for funds fell through, leaving enough money in the state budget for the Mound House pool exhibit project.

Since that time, we have been busy meeting with the structural and geotechnical engineers and architects involved with the project to plan a strategy for securing the house when the 1958 swimming pool is removed. Four holes were cut into the concrete pool deck to evaluate the stratigraphy underneath the patio. Subsequent excavation supported our expectation that archaeological deposits on the eastern and southern sides of the pool were intact, while deposits to the north (adjacent to the house) and west (back of the property) had been disturbed. Part of the mound along the entire western edge of the pool was probably removed during construction of the pool in 1958 and replaced after its completion, thus destroying the archaeological value of these deposits. It is the intact shell layers along the southern and eastern sides of the pool that will ultimately comprise the exhibit.

The exhibit project will take approximately two years to complete. The first step will involve mechanical

removal of disturbed deposits along the western side of the pool. This opening will enable the removal of the pool with the exception of the wall adjacent to the house that will serve as a retaining wall. Hand excavation in fall 2005 will expose the floor area and create sufficient vertical space for the exhibit room. Although the existing pool area is large (20 x 40 foot), the shallow end of the pool is only four feet deep. In order for the exhibit room to be developed, clearance will be needed for the interior room and for the ceiling and floor of the exhibit. The exhibit room will be capped by a concrete roof that will support plant growth so the above ground mound landscape will be returned to an early twentieth-century appearance. In addition, the project involves reconstruction of a water cistern known to exist on the site as early as 1906. The top of the cistern rose two to three feet above the mound and this space may be used for needed mechanical and electrical services such as air conditioning in the exhibit.

The pool exhibit will provide a rare opportunity to evaluate a substantial horizontal area of a shell mound. Most excavations into mounds have been characterized by small units or narrow trenches driven deep into the mound. These vertically-oriented excavations enable archaeologists to determine when and how mounds accumulate. Horizontal excavations reveal activity areas and enable archaeologists to evaluate such things as shell tool manufacturing techniques, the size and shape of house structures, and how people organize space in all time periods (see inset). Based on excavations adjacent to

Continued on Page 7



2002 excavation unit from the pool area showing intermixed shell and earthen layers. Note the dark vertical organic stains (post holes) indicating a structure (possibly a house) once stood in this location.

**Space
An Archaeological Frontier**

The organization of space or how people design and arrange different activity areas reveals cultural patterns and interpersonal relationships. For example, consider the relationship between the front hall, kitchen, dining and living rooms in houses built at least twenty years ago to those today. The floor plan of earlier homes placed the dining room and living room on either side of the foyer, with the kitchen walled off. This design was a social product of a culture that prescribed a strong sexual division of labor. Men gathered in the living room, the kitchen was the female domain, and food was shared communally in the dining area. In modern homes, the dividing walls of these spaces are frequently absent creating a single grand room. This architectural change reflects a shift in gender roles and expectations and lifestyle.

Bea Repetti and Elizabeth Smith wash artifacts during the 2002 excavations. Photo by Grant Hammersburg.



William H. Grace Collection

The Mound House circa 1906 with a water cistern located south of the cottage in the area of the current swimming pool.



Photo by Karen Nelson

Corbett Torrence and Theresa Schober in the Mound House pool -- soon to be the location of the walk-in exhibit. Full-scale archaeological excavations will begin in November.

The Mound House Happenings
Volume 2 Number 1

From the Directors

As you can see from the diversity of topics covering the pages of this newsletter, the Mound House is striving to provide a variety of fun and educational programs for all age groups while meeting the capital improvement needs of the property. Grant success has been integral to meeting these needs and to providing unique opportunities for the public to help this property attain its potential.

With Division of Historical Resources grant assistance, we are about to embark on one of the most dramatic transformations this historically significant property has witnessed since the parcel was reduced from 26 acres to the present 2.77 acres in 1953 as Shell Mound Park Subdivision and the canals within it were created. The removal of the swimming pool embodies that transformation both in terms of returning the landscape immediately surrounding the Mound House to its historic configuration and in the creation of a world-class exhibit within the shell mound. While the final walk-in exhibit space will be at least two years in the making, the archaeological excavations to mitigate against construction impacts will be an exhibition as well. Rarely do opportunities to see history uncovered occur in one's own backyard. We sincerely hope island residents and visitors will take this opportunity to participate in or observe this unique experience first hand or any of our other new educational programs.

EDITORS: Theresa Schober
& Corbett Torrence

CONTRIBUTORS: Scott Goodwin, Joyce Heckman,
Regan McBride, Theresa Schober & Corbett Torrence

The Mound House Gets Wired

By Theresa Schober

The Mound House electrical system has been overhauled! Beginning in January of 2004, a 660-foot long trench was excavated along the back access road of the property. This trench now houses upgraded electrical, sewer, cable, and telephone lines to support current and future programming at the facility. On a typical parcel of land, this project may have been completed in a month or two. However, significant archaeological and historical features of this property required mitigation and protection throughout the work.

This project came to fruition with the expertise, hard work, patience, and good humor of many individuals and companies. Design of the electrical circuitry was completed by Anchor Engineering Consultants with considerable input from architect Bob Sanford (Ferrell Sanford Studio Inc). Demolition of old wiring and installation of the upgraded circuitry

was completed by Shamrock Electric Inc with finishing carpentry provided by Nease Inc Construction. D&D Air Conditioning and Heating Inc placed air handlers in the newly created lecture room that is complete with an electric ceiling-recessed projection screen. Projection equipment from Audio Visual Innovations in Tampa now allows for slide, computer and overhead projection as well as internet, television, and video capabilities. This lecture-style room will allow for an increase in the quality and diversity of site programming.

Unlike modern renovation where holes in walls are made and repaired, each piece of historic building fabric was carefully removed for wiring and then returned to its original place. A good job is evidenced when you can not tell that anything has been done. Thank you to all that made this project happen!



Steve MacDonald, Charlie Price, and Joey Courson install an air handler in the Florida Room ceiling to allow programming year-round. Left: Installation of video screen.



Luis Ortiz and Jeanty Joseph install the new electrical panel at the back of the Mound House garage as Tom McLean looks on.



George Morris installs period light fixtures.



Photos by T. Schober

Who is CELCAB?

Continued from Page 4

and grounds during Mrs. Long's tenure. Business woman and civic volunteer, **Roxie Smith**, has been active in the Fort Myers Beach community since 1952. She has been involved with the Tourist Development Council and the Florida Tourism Committee. She values the history of Fort Myers Beach and believes that a successful future is dependent upon protecting and respecting the past.

Ted Reckwerdt was born in La Belle but has lived on Fort Myers Beach for the past fifty years, attending Beach Elementary. His family was instrumental in starting the Beach United Methodist Church. Growing up on the island, Ted explored not only the beach but also Mound Key and surrounding islands which he considered his playground. This contributed to a deep rooted interest in history and archaeology that he maintains today as a life member of the Estero Island Historic Society. Ted serves on the Historic Society board as well as CELCAB where he contributes his expertise from working on the house

"I want all the citizens of Fort Myers Beach and beyond to be as proud of the Mound House as the committee is and to feel a real ownership and be comfortable to use the property. It is indeed becoming the jewel of our island community."

- Fran Myers, Chair

Ceel Spuhler and her late husband Peter moved to Fort Myers Beach in December 1995 as the island became a Town and made one of its first and biggest preservation steps by acquiring the Mound House. Ceel immediately signed on as a volunteer and has been a fixture at the house ever since. Her interest in developing the house into a learning center lead her to serve on CELCAB



CELCAB members **Bill Grace and Ceel Spuhler** good-naturedly share a laugh and some crow over a past vote.

News and Noteworthy ...

House Weathers Storms

Despite a relentless 2004 hurricane season, the Mound House and grounds weathered the storms with a minimum of damage. Hurricane Charley resulted in the loss of one royal Poinciana between the main house and garage (falling without touching either structure) and the Sapodilla tree near the swimming pool. We are thankful for the removal of the two fusia trees adjacent to the front of the house last May. Based on the direction of the other fallen trees and the substantial branch weight over the house, we may not have had a house left! Some damage also occurred to the garage roof that was exacerbated by Hurricane Jeanne. Fortunately these repairs have been incorporated into the garage renovation project.



Brochures Now Available

A full color brochure for the Mound House has been produced with the assistance of grants from VISIT FLORIDA and Florida Humanities Council. Susan Lockwood, Director of Grants for FHC writes, "[The] brochure is very attractive and well done. If you can spare a few more, I would like to use it as an example of a cultural tourism project." Drop by for a copy or pick one up around town.

Rezoning & Events Policy

The Town has rezoned the Mound House from Residential Single-family to a Commercial Planned Development. An Operations & Events Policy will directly oversee use of the facility and place limitations on use.

and also to collect oral history interviews of many people with stories about the property.

Dr. Irvin Winsboro is a senior professor of history, African-American Studies, and Southwest Florida Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University. He has authored five books and over forty-five scholarly articles, many dealing with Southwest Florida history. Students supervised by Dr. Winsboro assist in the Mound House internship program. He and his wife Betsy are residents of south Lee County.

Aleutian Bidarka

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is an interesting juxtaposition of native cultures. The bidarka, a design created thousands of years ago for use in the cold waters off the northwestern-most part of North America, was at home in my home of the sub-tropical waters of southwest Florida. The Aleut and Calusa cultures are different in many ways, yet innately connected by their reliance on the sustainable abundance of the sea. Each culture spanned thousands of years and both ultimately gave way to pressures from foreign forces. Both peoples had an intimate connection to their environment and a deep understanding of their place in it. This is knowledge that we are only beginning to rediscover.



Show Me The Money

What does the Mound House cost & where does the money come from?

By Theresa Schober

Almost two million dollars have been spent to acquire, renovate, and operate the Mound House since its acquisition in 2000. An impressive 70% of that cost has come from state and local grant funds including the full purchase price of \$1,031,000 awarded by Florida Communities Trust (FCT). This initial award set the agenda for what the Mound House is to become -- a cultural and environmental learning center dedicated to educating residents and visitors about Florida's unique past and present. Sponsorship by FCT required the development of a management plan to outline objectives and provide a timeline for progress. This plan was developed by then Director Arden Arrington with input from the facility's citizen advisory board (CELCAB) and the public. Once completed, the management plan was approved by FCT and Fort Myers Beach Town Council. Annual stewardship reports by the Mound House to FCT detail our progress towards the management objectives. The property is further protected by deed restrictions that prevent sale by the Town.

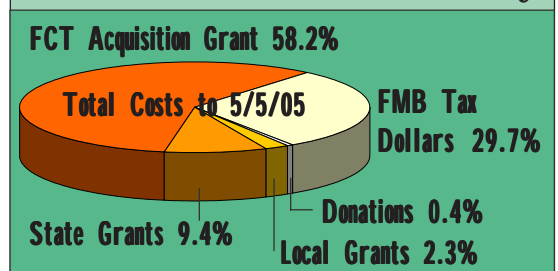
A number of other state grants have also contributed to the development of the Mound House. Both a Historic Structures Report detailing the history of the house and its architectural significance and an archaeological assesment of the property to determine the extent, integrity, stratigraphic structure, and temporal affiliation of the site's prehistoric components were funded by 50% matching grants from the Division of Historical Resources (DHR). These reports were a preliminary step in obtaining information to support subsequent applications for larger projects.

The 2002 excavations at Mound House were made possible by a \$20,000 grant from the Florida DHR and 125 community volunteers.



For example, one goal of the archaeological assessment conducted in 2002 was to determine if the mound layers are stable and intact in the area of the 1958 swimming pool. The pool itself is now cracked and deteriorating, and a DHR grant for \$269,500 has been awarded to remove the pool and convert the space into a walk-in exhibit showcasing the shell mound from top to bottom (see opposite page). Similarly, the Historic Structures Report and a Preservation Plan provide the necessary information about integrity of historical materials within the house, allowing the Mound House to produce an informed grant application for restoration of the structure. We have submitted a grant request for \$349,650 for this purpose. These Special Category Grants require only a \$50,000 match and allow all capital expenditures from the previous five years to be included in the calculation. The current electrical upgrade, for example, was completed

Mound House Grant History



- ✓ \$500 for a Trail of the Lost Tribes event.
- ✓ \$269,500 from the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State for the Walk-in Shell Mound Exhibit. 2004-2006
- ✓ \$6,000 from the Claiborne and Ned Foulds Foundation for the rehabilitation of the historic garage. 2004-2005
- ✓ \$2,900 from the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program to produce educational materials to supplement kayak tours. 2004
- ✓ \$14,600 from the West Coast Inland Navigation District for installation of the kayak landing area and purchase of 10 kayaks and supplies. 2003-2004
- ✓ \$2,000 from Florida Humanities Council to develop and produce a brochure for the facility. 2003-2004
- ✓ \$5,000 from the Claiborne and Ned Foulds Foundation for the rehabilitation of the historic garage to house restroom facilities. 2003-2004
- ✓ \$2,500 from VISIT Florida to develop and produce a brochure for the facility. 2003-2004
- ✓ \$300 from the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program to support an Estuary Day celebration.
- ✓ \$12,025 from the West Coast Inland Navigation District to rehabilitate the Mound House dock. 2002
- ✓ \$20,000 matching grant from the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State for an archaeological assesment of the property. 2000-2002
- ✓ \$8,000 matching grant from the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State to complete a Historic Structures Report. 1998-2000
- ✓ \$1,031,000 from Florida Communities Trust Florida Forever for the full purchase price of the Mound House property. 1999

Grant support to date = \$1,374,325

Community Interest Element of Success

By Theresa Schober

The Mound House advisory board, known as CELCAB (Cultural and Environmental Learning Center Advisory Board), is made up of 12 local citizens with diverse interests but unparalleled concern for the future of this significant property. Each advisory board member has a

slightly different interest in and view of the property resulting in a unique board that continually attempts to mediate site development with the needs of the beach community and neighborhood concerns. The spirit and commitment of this group is perhaps best illustrated by their steadfastness. All but two of the members have been a part of the Mound House board since its inception. We welcomed Ted Reckwerdt in

2003 and former Mayor Dan Hughes in 2004. What follows are brief biographies of each board member.

Penny Brown has been a resident of Estero Island since 1967, after spending school vacations here since 1956. Penny and her husband Joel, who has been a part of beach life since 1946, raised their two children on the island. In addition to serving on CELCAB, Penny saw the founding of the Estero Island Historic Society where she has served as secretary, president and treasurer.

Terry Cain has shown devotion to her family and community by serving on the Marine Resources Task Force, Bay Oaks Advisory Board, Estero Bay Buddies, Cub Scouts, Keep Lee County Beautiful, Fort Myers Beach Town Council, and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuaries Program in addition to CELCAB. Terry is also the creator of the successful Treasures of the Sea program and currently works for Lee County Parks & Rec.

Helen Caldwell contributes her expertise as a science educator to program development. Helen served as a science teacher from 1961 to 1970

and Lee County Science Education Coordinator until retiring in 1989. Helen initially moved to the community in the 1960s and visited the Mound House many times as a friend of Florence Long, attending social engagements and swimming in the large pool.

“CELCAB goals include the development of a public understanding of our past and awareness of the need for policies which will result in a sustainable environment to ensure the future of this fragile and beautiful place. We have the opportunity to work together to achieve a community that values education and understands our connectedness to each other and to the place where we live.”

- Bets Jordan

the property. Bill was involved in identifying the property as endangered and worked to secure its recognition as a significant historic site. Preferring to help preserve the heritage of southwest Florida to golf or tennis, Bill has been instrumental in securing and restoring several local historic properties including the Burrough's Home and many buildings at the Koreshan State Historic Site. His expertise in historic preservation has been invaluable throughout the development of the Mound House.

Barbara Hill moved to Fort Myers in 1987 with her husband John. Before purchasing their home on the Beach, they resided for two years on their houseboat at the Fort Myers Yacht Basin. Barb became a realtor and took the master gardening course through Lee County Extension Services, holding plant seminars on the island as a part of

her training. Barbara has been active on town committees including CELCAB, and has served as president of the Fort Myers Beach Pilot Club. Barbara looks forward with particular interest to the development of a landscape plan for the Mound House.

Retired banker and attorney, **Daniel Hughes**, volunteered to serve on CELCAB in 2004 following his term as Mayor. He also served on Town Council for six years. Dan is a member of the original Local Planning Agency that drafted the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He has a particular interest in developing and utilizing the Mound House site to its maximum potential - not only as a learning center, but also as a museum & recreational facility.

Elizabeth Jordan's love of nature and strong interests in biology, history, and science led her to seek membership on the boards of the Estero Island Historic Society, the Fort Myers Beach Library District and CELCAB. Bets brings research and administrative experience to the CELCAB board from her career in parenting outreach and child protection services. One of her primary concerns for the Mound House is the development of policy to ensure responsible operations.

CELCAB Chair **Fran Myers** has been an active member of the Beach community for twenty five years. She is a business woman and has served on several boards in Lee County including the Tourist Development Council and the Edison & Ford Winter Estates that introduced her to

The Mound House is familiar territory for CELCAB Vice-Chair and Fort Myers attorney **Bill Grace**. The earliest portions of the house were built by William & Milia Case, Bill's great grandparents -- leading to a life long interest in



Board Members Roxie Smith, Dan Hughes, and Chair Fran Myers at the kayak landing opening. Photo by T. Schober.

Continued Page 10



Assembly requires the use of temporary lashings to hold the gunwales and deck braces together during construction. View of boat deck looking from the bow.

of the deck. The boat is turned upside down, the keel is placed on temporary supports and the ribs are placed between the gunwales and the keel.

Rib fabrication is the most difficult step in the construction, requiring years of practice to make them quickly and efficiently. The



With an overall length of 18 feet, this bidarka required 31 ribs. View of hull.

ribs are made from red oak, cut to a rough size and left to soak in a vat of water for two weeks. After soaking they are placed in a steam box for a few minutes. The heat and high moisture content allows the ribs to be bent and shaped by hand, but they can only be worked for two to three minutes before they cool. Each rib must be individually bent, trimmed, and placed in the boat before it becomes brittle and cracks. After the ribs are placed and lashed to the gunwales and keel, six narrow strips of pine are spaced evenly around the hull and lashed to each of the ribs. This helps to strengthen the hull, and creates the unique facet-like shape of the bidarka.

The stern plate is formed from a piece of white oak, pinned into place between the keel and top deck support, and lashed to the stern cross brace. The bow section is made of three pieces of wood -- a horizontal top plate and two vertical "jaws".

These jaws create the bifurcated bow -- another feature that is unique to the bidarka. Adding the bow and

stern plates brings the boat from the gunwale length of sixteen feet to the finished length of approximately eighteen feet.

The finished wood frame and flax lashings are coated with linseed oil. This seals the wood, and hardens the flax thread. At this stage, Aleut boat builders ceremonially cut their hands and allowed their blood to penetrate the boat. We decided to skip this step.

The canvas fabric is stitched to the shape of the bow and stern and placed loosely over the frame. Small loops are stitched to the deck side of the fabric creating a zigzag pattern for a rope lace. This lace is drawn up, pulling the fabric tight around the hull. The fabric is gathered at the top and stitched together. Pieces of fabric are added near the cockpit where the frame is wider than the fabric. A stitch is run between the jaws of the bow drawing the fabric tightly together. This makes the broad, round bow become sleek and knife-like. The long seams are trimmed and stitched down closing up the boat. The bent-oak combing is lashed to the fabric creating an opening for the paddler.

The final step is coating the fabric with a mixture of linseed oil, chalk, mineral spirits, and paint. This mixture creates a putty-like liquid that is painted on and then rubbed in by hand. Multiple coats with weeks of curing time between applications are required. After six weeks, and six coats of sealant and paint the bidarka is finally ready for the water.

My bidarka made its maiden voyage from the Mound House on September 27th, 2004 as part of the inauguration of the kayak landing. Paddling this craft in the waters of Estero Bay



Stern view showing the stern plate lashed to the



Two vertical "jaws" create a bifurcated bow unique to the bidarka. This feature when covered in fabric and stitched, creates a knife-like bow

deck by chine stringers to form the unique hull shape of the bidarka.



Fabric is wrapped around the hull and laced tight.

Aleutian Bidarka At Home in Estero Bay

By Scott W. Goodwin, 2004 FGCU Student Intern

My summer revolved around kayaks. The primary focus of my internship at the Mound House was to assist in the development of the kayak tour program and the text for the estuary field map and interpretive guidebook. In a strange twist of fate my vacation to Wisconsin had much to do with kayaks as well.

Months before my internship began I made plans to travel north to build an Aleutian style kayak known by its Russian name, bidarka (or biadarka). Only a handful of people in the world remain with knowledge of how these boats were built. Fortunately for me, my uncle is one of them. He has made ten of these boats over the last few years, slowly learning the process from his mentor, Mark Rogers, who researched the building techniques by studying Aleut boats in museums.

The bidarka is a "skin-on-frame" boat. A skin, usually seal, was stretched and stitched over a lashed and pinned wood frame. The Aleut design is rounder in the hull than the Greenland-style boat, allowing for more stability and a bit more cargo capacity. Aleut hunters used this space



The Greenland kayak (left) with its hard chine hull design is more maneuverable but with less cargo space than the soft chine Aleutian bidarka (right). Softer chine results in a more rounded hull shape.

well. They went to sea well supplied and heavily armed with harpoons, spears, small bird darts, atlats, and wood plugs to keep the speared prey from sinking after capture.

Aleut hunters wore long-sleeved, hooded jackets and enclosed their boats with waterproof spray skirts made from sea mammal intestines. Elaborate large-billed hats shielded their eyes, making sighting prey

easier. These hats were often decorated with sea lion whiskers and paintings of past successes. While the Inuit hunters of Greenland went solo, the Aleuts hunted in groups. After one Aleut hunter found and harpooned a seal, the other kayakers surrounded and drove the seal, attacking it with spears whenever it surfaced to breathe. Exhausted, the seal would eventually come to the surface and be killed.



Friedrich H. von Kittlitz lithograph from 1827 demonstrating hunting equipment and technique. Source: George Dyson (1986) *Biadarka*.

In the early 1700s, Russian traders arrived in the Aleutian Islands hunting seals to supply the fur trade with China. Russian influence on the Aleuts was complex as they resided in Aleut villages and intermarried, yet exploited the hunters for their skill. In order to keep the native population under control the Russians killed many Aleut leaders, hunters, and boat builders. With these individuals gone knowledge of bidarka construction faded away.

After learning about the history of the bidarka and the people who created it from my uncle I decided that this would be the boat I would build. I have long wanted a kayak, and while I could buy a modern fiberglass or plastic boat I was intrigued with the opportunity to build one by hand. I wanted to feel a connection to my boat so that it was more than just another possession. I have learned to build a

boat whose design and style was passed down from generations and yet whose construction process is nearly lost.

My own bidarka was constructed of pine, red oak, and white oak to form the frame. As seal skin and other items from marine mammals can no longer be legally obtained bidarka reproductions must make use of non-authentic materials. For

example, flax thread is used in place of sinew to lash the frame and stitch the covering. The covering itself is made from cotton canvas treated with linseed oil and chalk in the final stages to make it waterproof.

Each bidarka is custom built with all boat measurements based directly on the paddler's size. Once the length, height, and beam dimensions are determined the gunwales and deck are laid out. Since the boat's strength derives from the gunwales, these two pieces are the most critical. Two sixteen foot long lengths of the best pine available are used. Slots are drilled and carved in the gunwales for the ribs, then the gunwales are spread apart with temporary spacers to form the arced shape of the boat. Permanent deck braces are cut, set, lashed, and pinned between the gunwales creating the shape

Show Me The Money *Continued from Page 3*

with capital improvement funds and serves as part of the match for the house restoration grant request.

It is the stated objective of the Mound House Director under the direction of Town Council and CELCAB to solicit grant funds for site restoration and program development projects. However, some projects are more difficult to convince a granting agency to fund -- particularly infrastructural needs such as upgrading electrical circuitry or restroom facilities.

So what does the Mound House actually cost? The Mound House budget is found within the Town of Fort Myers Beach general budget and includes four line items: Director, Operations and Maintenance, Utilities & Capital Improvement. Additional line

items may occur in a year for grant projects such as dock repair or the archaeological assessment. From October 1, 1999 to May 5, 2005, Mound House expenditures were \$633,120 (~\$105,000/year) with an additional \$108,657 in closing costs. Twenty percent (20%) of these expenditures were reimbursed with grant funds (not to mention the acquisition grant) with \$202,125 in grant revenue already secured for the 2005-2006 year. With approximately 8,900 tax bills contributing to the Town's budget, this equates to an average cost per taxpayer of \$12/year to support the facility. More specifically, a residence taxed at \$200,000 would provide about \$7.50 for Mound House programs while a \$400,000 residence would contribute about \$15.00. This tax support is the

Mound House Featured in Trail Series

By Regan McBride

The Mound House is a member of the nonprofit Trail of the Lost Tribes organization that promotes awareness and responsible visitation to cultural sites of the original inhabitants of Florida. The Trail organizes an archaeological speaker series for adults with funding by the Florida Humanities Council, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Frank E. Duckwall Foundation. The 2005 speaker series entitled, "Stories Buried in the Ground: How Archaeology Strengthens Florida's Communities" marks the third such program and includes six events at sponsoring sites along the Trail.

On Saturday, April 23rd, the Mound House sponsored two presentations by archaeologist and Mound House Co-Director Corbett Torrence on the architecture of coastal mound sites in Southwest Florida. Corbett was introduced by Dr. James Miller, former State



Archaeologist of Florida. After the presentations, Torrence led guided tours to Mound Key -- the former Calusa capital in Estero Bay and a site Torrence mapped and conducted limited excavations at in 1994.

In addition to the lectures and boat tours that entertained about 150 adults, two dozen children took part in other activities on the Mound House grounds including pottery, mask, and rope making.

The program was a tremendous success with 95% of audience reviews ranking the program as excellent! The independent evaluator for the Florida Humanities Council wrote, "[Torrence's]

basis for a site policy that offers reduced fee or free programs to islanders.

The Mound House will reach its operating potential following restoration of the house & garage, completion of the pool exhibit, installation of exhibits, and site-appropriate landscaping. With current staffing and the limits inherent in grant cycles, this may be five or more years away. However, continued professional development of the site will provide a revenue stream to offset a portion of the cost to the Town depending on the frequency and type of programs determined appropriate for the residential location of the site. While restoration moves forward, we will continue to provide as many high quality educational projects and programs as possible.

enthusiasm was boundless and infectious, his knowledge of his subject astounding, his effect on the audience riveting and his willingness to engage the attendees in dialogue magnanimous." He also credited Mound House volunteers for their enthusiasm.

The final speaker event of the series presents archaeologist Judy Bense speaking on fortified Spanish Colonial settlements in Pensacola between 1698 and 1763 at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, October 14. Visit www.trailofthelosttribes.org for information.



Young visitors construct Calusa masks while adults enjoyed an on-site archaeological lecture.



Mound House Launches Back Bay Program

By Corbett Torrence

On September 28th, 2004 as colors of red and orange rose from the western sky and wisped over the clouds etched along the horizon, 16 kayakers drifted into the waters of Matanzas Pass from the Mound House -- inaugurating our back bay education program. The program is comprised of three guided kayak tours (see box below) that provide participants an on-the-water perspective as they learn about estuarine ecology and this regions natural and cultural history.

This program was made possible by a generous \$14,600 grant from the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) that enabled the excavation of a kayak landing; purchase of kayaks, paddles, safety equipment, and other supplies for guided tours; and the construction of a specialized kayak trailer. A second grant obtained from the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program is providing \$2,900 to fund the production of educational materials to complement the guided kayak tours. These materials include a set of laminated maps of Estero Bay that contain an identification guide to the wildlife frequently encountered on tours and production of a small booklet describing human-environment relationships in the region over the past 12,000 years. All participants will be given a copy of the booklet for future reference and use.



The kayak landing was excavated into the fill deposits at the northern extent of the Mound House property in June 2004 by Conidar Builders following the receipt of a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection. Rarely are they asked for permission to remove rip rap and fill from waterways!

Photos by Scott Goodwin

Henry looks on. Initially missing after Hurricane Charley, Henry has returned to supervise shoreline programs.



The landing was excavated along the side canal to protect against erosion and to provide safe access by non-motor craft to Lee County's Great Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail. Maps of the Calusa Blueway are available by the landing.



Photo by Theresa Schober

Reflections

By Joyce Heckman

Kayaking on the Back Bay in the light of a Harvest Moon ... What a memorable experience it was. After a quick lesson on paddling from Corbett Torrence, we donned life jackets, took a paddle and a bottle of water, and were gently helped into our respective boats. The night was warm, the water like silk and the surroundings so quiet that we only had to whisper to be heard by our fellow paddlers. When we first set out, the sun had set and the moon was behind a cloud. By the time we reached Hell-Peckney Bay the cloud had passed and the full moon shone down like a spotlight. The moonlight rippled on the water making a carpet of silver across the bay.

Too soon it was time to return. On the way back, the flames from the Tiki torches set up on the Mound House shore served as beacons to guide us safely home.

--September 28, 2004



Photo by Theresa Schober

Kayak Tours & Schedules

Equipment & basic paddling instruction are provided for all tours. The Mound House fleet includes 10 kayaks supporting groups up to 15 people. Reservations are required and all tours are weather permitting. A limited number of individuals with personal equipment may accompany each tour. Group tours can be arranged. All Fort Myers Beach property owners can become Mound House members to receive a 50% discount on tour fees.



Corbett Torrence

Reflections Tour

Kayak the bay as the colors of sunset give way to a golden moon where shadows and reflections play on a watery stage. Discover the moon's influence on time and tide, and how it shapes the cycles of estuarine life. Experience the cosmological world of the Calusa and ponder some of the many ways religion and astronomy intertwine.

Approximately 2 hours. Offered on the full moon. Tours start at sunset. **2005 schedule:** October 17 (6:45pm), November 15 (5:15pm), December 15 (5:15pm). **2006 schedule:** January 14 (5:30pm), February 12 (6:00pm), March 14 (6:15pm), April 13 (7:30pm), and May 12 (7:45pm). \$25 per person/\$12.50 per student.

Creatures of the Back Bay

This interactive tour focuses on the estuary and the life that relies on it. Departing from the Mound House, the tour heads through the mangroves into Hell Peckney Bay. Individual dip nets allow first hand examination of creatures in the water.

Approximately 2-3 hours. Offered Saturdays at 10am, October 15 through May 27, 2006 on a rotating basis with the Calusa World (Mound Key) tour. \$30 per person/\$15 per student.

Paddle the Calusa World

Travel to *Escambaba* (Mound Key), the ancient capital of the Calusa Indians at the time of contact. This tour - led by a professional archaeologist - explores the lifeways of the Calusa and how local resources provided the foundation to a great and powerful, non-agricultural chiefdom. Discover their ancient monuments and canals and hear first-hand Spanish accounts describing their political and religious practices and their interactions with the early European explorers and missionaries.

Approximately 4-5 hours (please bring a picnic lunch). Offered Saturdays at 10am, October 15 through May 27, 2006 on a rotating basis with the Creatures tour. \$40 per person/\$20 per student.



Corbett Torrence

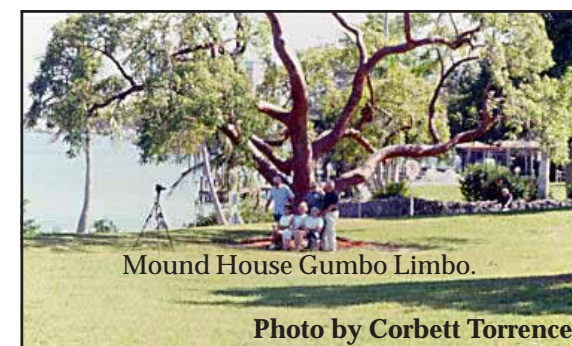


Events & Activities



Town Tree Project

You elected the gumbo limbo as the official Town Tree! In a program cosponsored by the Garden Club and the Town of Fort Myers Beach, 3 gallon and 7 gallon gumbo limbos are available to residents at half price to encourage replanting on Fort Myers Beach. The Mound House grounds served as the distribution center on Saturday, January 21st for Florida Arbor Day and on Friday, April 29th for National Arbor Day. The success of this program ensured its continuation next year.



Mound House Gumbo Limbo.

Photo by Corbett Torrence.

Garden Club Meetings

Beginning October 17, the Garden Club will make the Mound House its new home. Join the club for a "Get to Know You" session that day and learn what is in store for the 2005-2006 season. Highlights include holiday arrangements with tropical foliage and flowers, a hands-on bonsai demonstration, island beautification and Arbor Day projects, and much more.

A Walk Through Time...

Tours of the Mound House are offered on Wednesdays and Saturdays between 10am and 2pm October 12 to May 31, 2006, excluding major holidays. Join us for a one-woman play on the lives and experiences of Milia Case and Florence Long written and performed by Ceel Spuhler on Wednesdays at 11am.

Pool Excavation

Continued from Page 2

the swimming pool in 2002, we expect to find evidence of domestic activities that took place in and around Calusa houses.

The final phase of excavation will begin in the spring of 2006 and will take place inside the exhibit room. The excavation will involve careful cleaning of the exposed archaeological profiles. These walls must be sloped in such a manner that the various shell layers remain stable. In areas where human activities are evidenced shell mound walls will be stepped down to provide horizontal display surfaces. A laminated glass barrier will prevent visitors from touching the fragile display.

As with the 2002 excavations, we invite the public to participate in and/or visit the ongoing excavation and laboratory work.