Tidal Forces: The Old Wave: An Exhibition of Pre-Columbian Pottery and Lithics, 28 March - 10 April 2011, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, University of South Florida St. Petersburg

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A Shameful Legacy that Time Will Never Heal

The story of the first Floridians does not end with the arrival of Juan Ponce de Leon along the shoreline of Florida’s east coast in 1513. For nearly 500 years, newcomers and visitors to Florida have searched mounds for pottery, bones, and lost treasures.

The Pinellas Peninsula had fewer than 1,000 permanent residents before the Civil War. With the arrival of the Orange Belt Railway in 1888, the population grew. Tired of navigating muddy roads, the handful of settlers in the village of St. Petersburg demolished more than a half-dozen mounds in the area near the present-day USF St. Petersburg campus to construct shell roads. During your visit to our campus, you rode upon the remnants of many aboriginal mounds that are now entombed under bricks and asphalt.

By 1900, only one large mound remained in St. Petersburg. It was demolished by the 1950s. Pre-Columbian sites throughout the Tampa Bay region now have homes, swimming pools, parking lots, and shopping centers atop them. Little evidence of the first Floridians remains.

The exhibition team wishes to thank the following individuals and institutions for their assistance:

Valerie Bell, Bobbie Davidson, James Dwyer, Ronald Fekete, Alice Graves, Marty Haythorn, Lindajo Haythorn, Carol Hixson, Lin Jorgensen, Phyllis Kolianos, Jeff Searles, and Matt Woodson.

Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History
South Florida Museum
Weedon Island Preserve
Ancient Hands, Inc., of Thomasville, Ga.
Program for Experienced Learners, Eckerd College
Florida Studies Program, USF St. Petersburg

For additional information about Special Collections and Archives at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, please contact:

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Tidal Forces: The Old Wave

In conjunction with the 2011 conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library invites you to enjoy an exhibition of Pre-Columbian pottery, lithics, and reproductions that captures more than 11,000 years of human history along the Florida peninsula.

Exhibition Design Team
Leslie Anne Chanove, Display Coordinator
W.R. “Butch” Evans, Research Assistant
Jessica D. Powers, Research Assistant
James Anthony Schnur, Special Collections Librarian

Exhibit Locations

First Floor, near Elevator:
Originals and reproductions from the Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, the South Florida Museum, and Weedon Island Preserve.

Third Floor, near Elevator:
Originals from the W.R. “Butch” Evans Collection, including lithics and shell tools.

Third Floor, near Special Collections:
Originals and reproductions from the Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, and the South Florida Museum.

Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History
329 Bayshore Boulevard South,
Safety Harbor, FL 34695
727.726.1668

The Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History preserves remnants of the Pre-Columbian cultures that once gathered near Espiritu Santo Springs and other estuarine hammocks in the area.

South Florida Museum
201—10th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34205
941.746.4131

The South Florida Museum contains exhibits that examine the natural and cultural history of Florida from the Pleistocene Era to modern times. In addition to fossils, the museum includes outstanding displays of archaeological artifacts from Pre-Columbian and post-contact periods.

Weedon Island Preserve
1800 Weedon Drive N.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727.453.6500

The Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center preserves the Pre-Columbian heritage found along this peninsula of estuaries and bayous in northeastern St. Petersburg. During the Land Boom of the 1920s, real estate promoters destroyed many mounds in this area.

The W.R. “Butch” Evans Collection

This collection of lithic, ceramic, and shell tools came entirely from surface discoveries rather than excavations. Artifacts were recovered from beaches, rivers, and sites near dredged locations at or alongside the waters of Florida’s west coast.

For more information about this exhibit, including a guide with historical background, please visit:

http://www.nelson.usf.edu/spcoll/nceca.html