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Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. Special Collections and University Archives.

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W.R. “Butch” Evans Collection of Pre-Columbian Surface Artifacts

Catalogue of Accessions in Original Order

By
W.R. “Butch” Evans
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Sylvia Martinez Mullenix
James Anthony Schnur

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Special Collections and University Archives
Nelson Poynter Memorial Library
University of South Florida St. Petersburg
Introduction to the Collection

This collection includes nearly 800 items donated by W.R. “Butch” Evans in summer 2011. Evans, a resident of Pinellas County, collected the artifacts, chert, pottery sherds, lithic tools, shell tools, and other items while exploring coastal areas and estuaries of Florida. He located “surface finds,” items providing evidence of pre-Columbian settlements that appeared along beaches, river beds and shorelines, and other similar areas of Florida. Out of respect for those middens and mounds remaining, Evans did not violate or desecrate historical sites while collecting these materials.

Some items from the collection appeared in an exhibit sponsored by the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library between March 28 and April 10, 2011. Entitled “Tidal Forces: The Old Wave,” this exhibit included pre-Columbian artifacts and reproductions from Evans’s private collection, as well as from the Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, the South Florida Museum in Bradenton, and Weedon Island Preserve. Following the museum-quality exhibit, Evans worked closely with staff from Special Collections and University Archives to provide metadata about the materials, including provenance (if known), general location found, and other information.

This catalog represents a preliminary inventory of the materials in the W.R. “Butch” Evans Collection. Additional context regarding the materials in this collection will appear in a revised edition of this catalog at some point in the future.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 783 unique items. The majority of materials came from Pinellas, Citrus, and Lee counties. All materials were located in Florida, and none came from established mounds or other areas that have received statutory or other legal protections or restrictions. Most items were located between the mid-1960s and early 1990s. Pottery sherds and various lithic and shell tools constitute the bulk of the collection.

Pottery fragments (sherds): The Evans Collection includes fragments from a variety of sites in the greater Tampa Bay region, from the Crystal River and Homosassa areas in Citrus County to coastal locations in Lee County, near Fort Myers. Other items from Gilchrist, Volusia, and Orange counties are also represented.

Lithics (stone tools): Many people associate arrowheads with Indian stone tools, but lithics came in a variety of sizes and performed many functions. Some served as knives, while others may have provided protection as weapons. Some lithics in this collection probably date to the Archaic periods of more than four thousand years ago.

Shell tools: Large whelks and smaller shells also served as tools for early residents of the Florida peninsula.

Provenance of the “Butch” Evans Collection

This collection falls under the Local and Regional History provenance of the Special Collections and University Archives department, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, USF St. Petersburg
Biographical Narrative by W. R. “Butch” Evans

Mr. Evans’s interest in archaeology, paleontology, and anthropology began at about the age of twelve when he discovered discarded books in a dumpster behind a public library in St. Petersburg, Florida. He passed by the library every day on his way to and from Mirror Lake Junior High School. One day, he began “dumpster diving” into the discarded books, slowly building a collection and becoming hooked into the subject. About this time, in 1952, his parents and one his friends began potholing along the bank of Joe’s Creek, in an area that at the time remained undeveloped. They found Pleistocene bones and teeth that had washed out of the embankment for their picking.

Through his readings from the books discarded from the Mirror Lake library, Evans’s interests switched to the early Indians who once lived in what is now the present-day southeastern United States, with Florida becoming his primary focus. This newfound interest remained throughout Butch’s life. He began to learn of the sites in the St. Petersburg area and asked his parents if, on the weekends, they would drive him to these locations so he could try his luck at finding “arrowheads” or other items. His wonderful, loving parents agreed to take on the task. The first site he checked out was the Bayshore Homes site, just south of where Tyrone Boulevard approaches the Bay Pines Bridge towards Seminole. His mother would pack lunch for everyone. They brought along a variety of tools for digging and potholing. This took place in 1952-1953, before Dr. William Sears did his work at the site and brought his findings to publication. This site became Butch’s first attempt to perform an excavation, though some of the digging and potholing probably did disrupt the cultural context of the items. This occurred during his early teenage years, before he had a formal education in archaeology and more generally in anthropology.

By the early 1960s, Butch investigated other sites in the Tampa Bay region. One of these locations, Turtlecraw Point, offered a wealth of funds from the early Holocene period, many of them inundated by the tidal waters. This location, now at the tip of War Veteran’s Memorial Park, was where Butch had an opportunity to work with Dr. Albert C. Goodyear and Dr. Sam B. Upchurch in 1964-1965. At about the same time, Butch also met and collaborated with Dr. Lyman O. Warren. They observed oyster shell beds dredged from the bottom of Tampa Bay in search of Paleo and Archaic Indian artifacts. Under the direction of Francis Bushnell, an instructor at St. Petersburg Junior College, Butch investigated various mounds in Pinellas County.

In 1971, Evans participated in a controlled dig on the grounds at Bay Pines Hospital with a group then known as the Suncoast Archaeological Society. Raymond Robinson, president of the group at that time, coordinated this dig at the site where they planned to remove a burial mound to make room for a new nursing home at the Bay Pines facility.

Some of Butch’s finds along the Pinellas coastline assisted scholars in their research. For example, he loaned some of his Paleo artifacts to Dr. Albert Goodyear for his article that appeared in the March/June
1983 issue of the Florida Anthropologist. The article, “Paleo-Indian Manifestations in Tampa Bay,” recounted the significant presence of artifacts from pre-Columbian cultures in the area. Evans received an acknowledgement for his assistance in providing sources for Goodyear’s article. Butch also located the remains of the third known specimen of Floridatrtragulus dolichancheus, an extinct member of the camel family that once lived on the peninsula. Evans located this specimen during a fieldtrip sponsored by St. Petersburg Junior College to the Thomas Farm site in central Florida. The previously discovered specimens were given to Harvard University. Butch shared his finding with S. David Webb, then the assistant curator in Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Florida, in 1966.

Although he aspired to become a professional archaeologist, opportunities were limited in the Tampa Bay area at that time. He started at St. Petersburg Junior College in 1965 and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology at the University of South Florida in 1969. At that time, USF did not offer graduate studies in this field and he could not afford to attend an out-of-state school, or for that matter any other school. During the late 1970s, after USF started the master’s program, Butch was accepted and started on a long haul taking classes as an evening student. After some years, he completed all of the course work and took the comprehensive exams. As he began to work on his thesis, he had to divert attention to family matters that took him away from the University.

Butch also focused on collecting materials from surface finds at the Anderson Mound in the Jungle Prada area of western St. Petersburg. He often tagged along with Walter Askew at this location, a site sometimes referred to as the Narváez mound because many historians believe that Pánfilo de Narváez landed at this location in April 1528, during one of the first Spanish incursions into the Tampa Bay region. Butch also joined Askew at the “Askew site” in Citrus County near the Homosassa River.

Evans joined Askew and Goodyear at the rich Philippe Park site, the first public park in Pinellas County. They conducted a surface review near the mound at the shoreline of Old Tampa Bay, and a couple of miles north of Safety Harbor. On the other end of the county, Evans, Askew, and Goodyear visited the Canton Street midden in lower Pinellas County. At one time, a five-foot high mound existed along the entire block between Canton Street South and Thirtieth Street, in the Pinellas Point area near Sixty-seventh Avenue South. Presently a densely populated residential subdivision in southern St. Petersburg, until the early 1970s this location had one of the oldest mounds in the area.

Over a period from the 1960s through the 1990s, Butch was involved in surface collections at the site of an Indian village at Maximo Point in southern Pinellas, overlooking Boca Ciega Bay. Evans examined both the eastern and western (beach) areas of this site, a place where a vibrant village existed a thousand years ago that the pre-Columbian people had abandoned before first contact with Europeans.

Many years ago, he performed surface examinations at the Pinellas Point temple on Pinellas Point Drive near Twentieth Street South. This mound dates from the Safety Harbor Culture period of the Tocobaga Indians, one of the last groups to thrive along Tampa Bay before contact with Europeans. Although this mound is one of the few noticeable ones remaining and has received some level of protection, the mound has experienced some erosion.
He has toured other sites in Florida. For example, he visited Key Marco with a local anthropological group and studied many Calusa sites. During the 1970s and 1980s, he traveled across the Sunshine Skyway Bridge to the Madira Bickel Mound State Archaeological Site. At this location existed a culture that occupied this mound just before the beginning of the Spanish colonial period. He and Walter Askew enjoyed visiting the site, a place that has received protection and preservation under the laws of Florida and is part of the Florida Park Service.

Recognizing his extensive knowledge of local archaeological sites, St. Petersburg Mayor Edward Cole Jr. asked for Evans to offer assistance when the city planned to embark upon a citywide archaeological survey and planning project. This took place in the mid-1980s, with much of the work done in the fall of 1986. Robert Austin of Piper Archaeology supervised the project.

Butch assisted the St. Petersburg Museum of History with plans for an exhibition entitled, “Gulf Coast Prehistoric People, 10,000BC-1500AD.” This exhibit began in January 1994. Evans also loaned some of his Paleolithic items for display. In March and April 2011, a representative sample of Butch’s collection appeared in an exhibit at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, along with materials from the Weedon Island Preserve, the South Florida Museum in Bradenton, and the Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History. This exhibit, “Tidal Forces: The Old Wave,” recounted the legacies of pre-Columbian cultures along Florida’s west coast by offering a stunning series of displays with original pieces and high-quality reproductions.

In looking back at more than fifty years of having a love of Florida archaeology, Evans hopes that his contributions have saved some sites and artifacts that would have disappeared through urban development, road building, and a lack of laws to protect the sites and artifacts. He wants to be known as a person who had an early interest and love for what he discovered in these materials, books on the subject, and having a chance to interact with older and more experienced archaeologists from the days of his first adventures into the fields as a thirteen-year-old in 1953. He remains proud of his many maps, some done as a youngster, of archaeological sites, as well as the careful notes and painstaking measurements he made when working at various locations. He wanted to be a positive role model for those who had avocational interests in the field, in that he shared information with others, let other students examine the materials he had collected from surface finds, and offered helpful information about the various site locations.

Since he was a child, Butch Evans had always had a respect for the past. If one does not understand our prehistory and history, they cannot understand the present or the future: That has always been a cornerstone of his thinking. To hold a Suwannee point in his hand is to transport himself back to the human being that produced the artifact thousands of years ago. What was his diet? What were his thoughts and religious practices? What was his village like? In Butch’s way of thinking, this is a spiritual experience that he had always taken quite seriously, a way of life that the present worldview has lost. He believes that the present society has lost an understanding and much of its connection with the natural world and the relationship between living beings and nature. The Indian that crafted that
Suwannee point was more a part of the natural world he lived in during his times than we are today. Although some people who have engaged in amateur archaeology have sold artifacts, Butch has never engaged in such a practice.

Always careful with the information that he has collected from sites and locations, Butch has also informed others of applicable laws related to human remains that may appear at some locations, as well as other site restrictions. Those days of potholing along Joe’s Creek took place before laws and ordinances ensured a degree of protection for mounds and other such sites. Since then, laws have provided some security for those areas that remain. The materials in this collection, surface finds, were located over a long period of time, but all were found in accordance with the laws and legislation of the time, and none violated the integrity of those items still located within mounds. Many of the surface finds took place in areas near where dredging and other land transformations of the mid-twentieth century had disrupted or destroyed pre-Columbian settlement sites.
Notable Mound Sites in the Tampa Bay Region
(with County in parentheses)
A: Bayboro Shell Mounds, near USF St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)
B: Bayshore Homes Mound Site, near Tyrone Boulevard (Pinellas County)
C: Big Bayou Mounds (Pinellas County)
D: Cabbage Key and Pine Key (Pinellas County)
E: Cat’s Point, near Maximo Moorings and Eckerd College (Pinellas County)
F: Indian Shores Beach Area (Pinellas County)
G: Joe’s Creek, Lealman Area (Pinellas County)
H: Cockroach Mounds (Hillsborough County)
I: Madira Bickel Mound, Terra Ceia (Manatee County)
J: Maximo Point (Pinellas County)
K: Mound Park Area, west of USF St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)
L: “New Publix” Site, west of US 19 by 54th Avenue South (Pinellas County)
M: Pánfilo de Narváez Site, near Park Street, St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)
N: Papy’s Bayou, Weedon Island (Pinellas County)
O: Pinellas Point Mounds, Pinellas Point, St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)
P: Philippe’s Hammock, Safety Harbor (Pinellas County)
Q: Turtlecrawl Point, Bay Pines (Pinellas County)
R: Weedon Island Preserve (Pinellas County)
S: Yat Kitischee Site (Pinellas County)
T: Yat Kitischee Perimeter Site on Tampa Side (Hillsborough County)

Other Mound Sites Included in this Collection
(Outside of the Greater Tampa Bay Region)

Map appears on the Following Page

AA: Crystal River, Homosassa River, Withlacoochee River (Citrus County)
BB: Santa Fe River (Gilchrist County)
CC: Pine Island (Lee County)
DD: Orange County Health Department Site, Orlando (Orange County)
EE: Tick Island (Volusia County)
Other Mound Sites Included in this Collection
Accession:  Citrus 01
Site Name and County:  Crystal River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  22 mixed items
Accession:  Citrus 02
Site Name and County:  Crystal River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  2 mixed items
Accession:  Citrus 03  
Site Name and County:  Gum Slough Midden (Withlacoochee River)  
Number of Items:  12 mixed items
Accession:  Citrus 04
Site Name and County:  Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  9 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 05
Site Name and County:  Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  8 mixed items
Accession: Citrus 06
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 20 sherds
Accession: Citrus 07
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 9 mixed items
Accession: Citrus 08
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 18 sherds
Accession: Citrus 09
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 28 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 10
Site Name and County:  Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  9 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 11
Site Name and County:  Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  22 sherds
Accession: Citrus 12
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 31 sherds
Accession: Citrus 13
Site Name and County: Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items: 20 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 14
Site Name and County:  Homosassa River, Citrus County
Number of Items:  9 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 15
Site Name and County:  Withlacoochee River (Askew/Bullen Mound)
Number of Items:  21 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 16
Site Name and County:  Withlacoochee River (Askew/Bullen Mound)
Number of Items:  17 sherds
Accession:  Citrus 17
Site Name and County:   Withlacoochee River (Askew/Bullen Mound)
Number of Items:  23 sherds
Accession: Gilchrist 01
Site Name and County: Santa Fe River, Gilchrist County
Number of Items: 11 mixed items
Accession:  Hillsborough 01  
Site Name and County:  Culbreath Isles, Hillsborough County  
Number of Items:  6 mixed items
Accession:  Hillsborough 02
Site Name and County:  Across from Yat Kitischee Site, in the area near where the Howard Frankland Bridge intersects with Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County
Number of Items:  25 chert
Accession:  Hillsborough 03
Site Name and County:  Across from Yat Kitischee Site, in the area near where the Howard Frankland Bridge intersects with Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County
Number of Items:  12 chert
Accession: Hillsborough 04
Site Name and County: Across from Yat Kitischee Site, in the area near where the Howard Frankland Bridge intersects with Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County
Number of Items: 22 chert
Accession: Lee 01
Site Name and County: Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items: 5 lithic tools
Accession: Lee 02
Site Name and County: Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items: 18 sherds
Accession:  Lee 03
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:  19 sherds
Accession:  Lee 04
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:  6 mixed items
Accession:  Lee 05  
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County  
Number of Items:  6 sherds
Accession: Lee 06
Site Name and County: Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items: 4 mixed items
Accession:  Lee 07
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:  8 shell tools
Accession:   Lee 08
Site Name and County:   Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:   5 shell tools
Accession:  Lee 09
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:  8 shell tools
Accession:  Lee 10
Site Name and County:  Pine Island, Lee County
Number of Items:  4 shell tools
Accession: Orange 01
Site Name and County: Orange County Health Department, Orlando, on surface
Number of Items: 1 lithic tool
Accession: Pinellas 01
Site Name and County: Joe’s Creek (Seminole Field), in St. Petersburg
Number of Items: 1 fossil (mastodon molar)
Accession: Pinellas 02
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 6 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 03
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 8 shell tools/ornaments
Accession: Pinellas 04
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 7 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 05
Site Name and County:  Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  2 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 06
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 6 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 07
Site Name and County:  Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  8 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 08
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 9 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 09
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 8 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 10
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 4 lithic artifacts
Accession: Pinellas 11
Site Name and County: Turtlecrawl Point, near Bay Pines, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 10 mixed items
Accession: Pinellas 12
Site Name and County: Indian Shores Beach, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 25 mixed items
Accession: Pinellas 13
Site Name and County: Indian Shores Beach, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 1 chert
Accession: Pinellas 14
Site Name and County: Bayshore Homes, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 2 mixed items
Accession:  Pinellas 15
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point Beach Park, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  11 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 16
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point Beach Park, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  13 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 17
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Beach Park, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 12 mixed items
Accession: Pinellas 18
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Beach Park, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 24 sherds
Accession: Pinellas 19
Site Name and County: Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 7 mixed items
Accession: Pinellas 20
Site Name and County: Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 10 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 21
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  12 sherds
Accession:  Pinellas 22  
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point Beach Park, Pinellas County  
Number of Items:  16 sherds
Accession:  Pinellas 23
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  7 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 24
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  6 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 25
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  28 sherds
Accession: Pinellas 26
Site Name and County: Maximo Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 13 sherds
Accession: Pinellas 27
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Mound Complex (east side of US Hwy. 19 (entire complex destroyed), Pinellas County
Number of Items: 15 sherds
Accession: Pinellas 28
Site Name and County: Maximo Moorings Area (Publix Site), Pinellas County
Number of Items: 2 shell artifacts
Accession: Pinellas 29
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Beach, west of Interstate 275, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 4 mixed materials
Accession:  Pinellas 30
Site Name and County:  Maximo Point Beach, west of Interstate 275, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  1 shell tool
Accession: Pinellas 31
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Beach, west of Interstate 275, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 2 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 32
Site Name and County: Maximo Point Beach, west of Interstate 275, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 4 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 33
Site Name and County:  Cat’s Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  16 mixed items
Accession: Pinellas 34
Site Name and County: Cat’s Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 6 shell tools
Accession:  Pinellas 35
Site Name and County:  Cat’s Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items:  20 chert
Accession: Pinellas 36
Site Name and County: Cat’s Point, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 7 shell tools
Accession: Pinellas 37
Site Name and County: Narvaez Mound, Pinellas County
Number of Items: 7 mixed items
Accession: Volusia 01
Site Name and County: Tick Island, Volusia County
Number of Items: 3 mixed items