

Making sense of 16,000 years of civilization

One thing that can be said about history is that it's a sure fire cure for delusion and conceit.

Sometimes history can bring a helpful dose of humility. It's definitely human nature to believe that no age can equal ours in accomplishments. Just as we declare the supremacy of our culture to all other civilizations, archaeologists confound us with news of the 10th, 11th, and 12th wonders of the ancient world.

Historians today are having to give way to mud-spattered, sunburned archaeologists and a host of other scientists to interpret the mysteries of the past. Those soil sleuthing archaeologists can cull a hundred pages worth of historical data from barely a cubic yard of dirt. In South Carolina it's the archaeologists not the archive-loving historians who are rewriting the history books. We used to believe that the first humans dwelled here 8,000 years ago. Now, thanks to Albert Goodyear, Ph.D., and the USC Institute of Archaeology, we have strong evidence of a Paleo-American community near Allendale that dates back approximately 16,000 years.

That's 4,000 years earlier than humans were thought to exist in North America.

We also know that the Spaniard Francisco de Gordinlo cruised off our shore in 1521. His squadron leader, de Allyon, set up an outpost on Winyah Bay in 1526 — 144 years before the English settlement at Albemarle Point. Simple arithmetic reveals that



History's Lost Moments
Historian Tom Horton

Europeans have prevailed in our region for 487 years. With Professor Goodyear's discovery of the Topper Site we must conclude that European settlers have called the shots around here for just a minute 1/32nd fraction of this region's human civilization. Maybe we're not the greatest, just the latest.

Professor Goodyear's Topper Site reveals startling discoveries about a Carolina settlement existing during the ice age. These early "Carolinians" were part of the Clovis Culture, the Asiatic ancestors of the native Americans.

Clovis Man migrated across a frozen land bridge in the Bering Straits 13 centuries ago — so archaeologists believed.

However, the USC Topper Site is causing textbook writers to correct the 13,000 years of known human existence in this hemisphere to 16,000 years instead. Often what we learn about these long-lost cultures enables us to understand our own existence upon these coastal plains and piedmont hills.

The Carolina that we know is approximately 32,000 square miles of land surface. That's roughly the size of Austria, Ireland, and Lake Superior. The native-Americans who

dwelled here were extensions of larger native tribes that covered areas equal to the size of France or Germany. Just as the native-Americans dwelt along rivers, we have the same tendency today. The Savannah River that was home to the Clovis culture 16,000 years ago has 238 miles of Carolina riverbank. In the 18th century the colonials dotted that river with little towns named after European cities — Vienna, St. Petersburg, South Hampton, and New Bordeaux. The new world sites replaced Indian towns — Yuchi, Oakfuskee, Westoe, and Oconee.

Today, practically all traces of the native and colonial era villages have vanished.

One estimate of SC Indian population during the era of Spanish exploration tallies as high as 4,000 men, women, and children in six dozen villages ranging from the mountains to the coast. The Indians around Mount Pleasant were the SeeWee, a part of the Sioux nation, and their village of Avendaughough passes down to us as Awendaw today. The SeeWee were the natural enemies of the Iroquois, so between the hostilities of the English settlers and their century-old struggle with the Iroquois, the SeeWees have disappeared.

Population density for the native-Americans inhabiting what we know as South Carolina was one person per 8 square miles. Our population density today is 132 persons per square mile. Their native villages appear to have been

organized in concentric circles of huts facing a common community center. From the air some of our subdivisions have a similar appearance.

So far, archaeology has not revealed that the Indians were anything but urbanites — preferring their communal village life rather than living isolated. In South Carolina today, census figures reveal that 76 percent of us are urban or suburban, whereas 24 percent of us prefer to live in the rural settings. The social make-up of an Indian village reveals an interesting lifestyle. Apparently the day-to-day life was regulated by a council of women. Matriarchs organized the food preparation and many of the daily rituals and ceremonies. Males were either warrior/hunters, or they were food harvesters. We can only assume that much status was associated with the warrior/hunters, and that their elite band possessed privileges and obligations not experienced by the others.

In our culture today we are alarmed by the statistic of 23.7 percent of SC's adults have not completed a basic high school education. And, according to the 2000 census, 15.6 percent of us are living below the poverty level. In the Indian villages everyone had a job, from the nut and berry gatherers to the corn meal grinders, bakers and hunters. There was no such thing as an unemployed, or laid-off Indian.

The native-American era that we identify most with is known as the Mississippi Era.

1000 A.D. to 1700 A.D. These industrious inhabitants of our region cleared fields and planted pumpkins, beans, and maize. Their acorn-cornbread was a wonderful-tasting treat for the earliest English arrivals. If a SeeWee Indian could roam about the Mount Pleasant Farmers' Market, he'd see many items that reminded him of the old days, from shellfish to squash to scantily-clad squaws.

Judging from the numerous artifacts found in the archaeology sites, the earliest inhabitants of our area liked to deer hunt, eat oysters on the half shell, dance half-naked, and race down the waterways in sleek canoes. The historian in us makes us wonder if there's something in the water or the soil that perpetuates these same habits and desires in locals today.

Back in 1540 when de Soto met the beautiful Indian princess Cofitachequi by the banks of the Wateree River near Camden, that beautiful woman's face was decorated with red paint composed of kaolin that the Indians were mining nearby. Today kaolin is being mined in Kershaw county and a major kaolin use is for women's lipstick. Maybe we do continue the dream of the earliest inhabitants, from Clovis Man to Colonial Man — right down to the Cable Man.

(Dr. Thomas B. Horton is a history teacher at Porter-Gaud School. He lives in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant. See more columns at www.moultrienews.com.)

East Cooper students receive top honors in National Arts competition

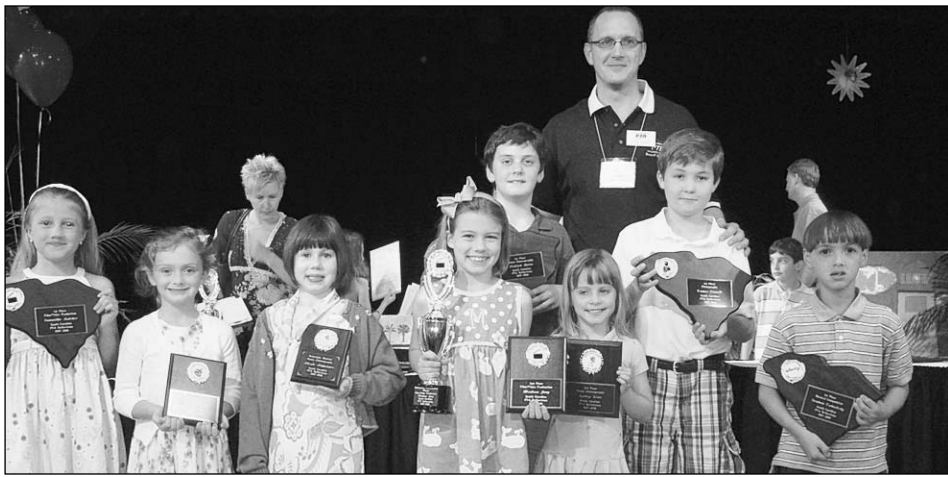


PHOTO PROVIDED
Pictured here with State PTA President Phil Clark are, (left to right): Samantha Kutcher, Laurel Hill Primary, 1st place Film/Video Production; Elizabeth Gosnell, Laurel Hill Primary, 3rd place Primary Visual Arts; Alexis Alsheimer, Laurel Hill Primary, Honorable Mention Primary Dance Choreography; Madison Jung, Jennie Moore Elementary, 2nd place and Outstanding Interpretation, Primary Film/Video Composition; Patrick Burns, Jennie Moore Elementary, 1st place Intermediate Dance Choreography; Sydney Winn, Jennie Moore Elementary, 3rd place Primary Dance Choreography; Tanner Crunelle, Jennie Moore Elementary, 1st place Intermediate Photography; Graham Tulowitzky, James B. Edwards Elementary, 1st place Primary Musical Composition. Not pictured: Paul Kowalchick, Mt. Pleasant Academy, 2nd place Primary Visual Arts.

Several students from area East Cooper Elementary Schools earned State-level awards for their artistic entries into the National PTA Reflections Program. In South Carolina, there were 8,218 total submissions at the state level across all grades in all categories.

Of 24 possible 1st place awards, East Cooper students earned four of them, all at the Primary and Elementary levels. The art of those four students will go on to the National competition.

The winners received their awards at the State PTA Convention. In addition to these students, several others from Charleston County placed at the state level, all from School of the Arts: Alisa Meyers, 2nd place Senior Musical Composition; Angelica Halvarsson, 2nd place Middle Visual Arts; Eileen Szwest, Honorable Mention Middle Visual Arts; Hans Turner, Honorable Mention Senior Literature.

Other area schools with winning artwork include Summerville High School and Fort Dorchester High School.

The National PTA Reflections Program offers students the opportunity to create works of art for fun and recognition.

Students in public school attending preschool through grade 12 are encouraged to create and submit works of art in six areas: literature, musical composition, film/video composition, photography, dance choreography, and the visual arts (which includes art forms such as drawing, painting, print making, and collage).

Artwork must be submitted through a school with a PTA in good standing. In its more than 30-year history, the program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to create works of art.

For information on initiating and hosting a Reflections Program at your school, log onto www.scppta.org for details and materials.

ECRMC says 'thank you'

With this week (May 18-24) being National Emergency Medical Services Week, East Cooper Regional Medical Center would like to recognize the men and women who commit their lives to providing critical, lifesaving services and compassionate care to patients and their families.

"The emergency department is the backbone of our hospital and an essential part of our community," said Andrea Wozniak, RN, FACHE, chief executive officer of East Cooper Regional Medical Center.

"Residents rely on the EMS system and its trained professionals, who have incredible compassion and devotion to their jobs and communities. We're proud to take this opportunity to show them how much we appreciate their dedication."

For 35 years, hospitals across the country have been celebrating National Emergency Medical Services Week and inviting their communities to recognize and thank the dedicated first responders who provide quality care throughout the year.

"Our emergency medical personnel play a very important role at our hospital," Wozniak said. "The round-the-clock dedication and individual compassion they show to our patients makes me proud to be a part of the East Cooper Regional team."

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