2008 Historical Society of Palm Beach County
Early Contact
A Special Exhibit

This guide will help you explore our special exhibit, Early Contact, which is about Florida's early Native Americans meeting Spanish conquistadors. As you walk through the exhibit, think about what it would have been like to meet strange, new people in a new land far from your own.

Introduction
By Steven F. Erdmann
Curator of Collections and Exhibits

For 250 years Spain continuously held La Florida as a national possession including the area that today is Palm Beach County. Using artifacts, artworks, and archival maps, this exhibit will consider the early contact period between the area's native inhabitants and European explorers and sailors.

Chronicles of ship's logs lend credence to the probability that Juan Ponce de León had contact with native Floridians near Jupiter Inlet in the year 1513. He named the river that flowed to the ocean there, Rio de la Cruz. Records of the voyages of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the founder of St. Augustine, place him in the vicinity of Jupiter Inlet in 1565 searching for mutineers from a Spanish garrison. The journal of shipwrecked Quaker, Jonathan Dickinson, documents him in the native village of Ho-Bay in 1696; a shell mound of the village later to become the site of the DuBois home.

While debate exists over exact geographic location in some instances, what is clear is that over a substantial period of time, there was intermittent contact between European observers and the native population. During this period the native inhabitants of Palm Beach County gained some knowledge of Europe and, for example, learned to distinguish Spanish from English sailors - besides becoming proficient shipwreck salvagers. In conjunction with archaeological excavations and surveys, the writings of these European explorers and sailors provide us an important and little popularly known window into understanding the earliest native inhabitants of Palm Beach County.
Florida’s history began long before it was called Florida. About 12,000 years ago, the last Ice Age ended. That is when the first people began to arrive in Florida. They were hunter-gatherers who moved from place to place searching for food and freshwater. Back then Florida had a cooler and drier climate. There was little rainfall so freshwater was difficult to find. Early Native Americans did not leave us written information about their lives. Archaeologists tell their story. Archeologists are scientists who study the past. They learn about these Native Americans from artifacts found at their campsites.

Artifacts are tools or items left from the past. They tell about the people who used them. One important clue about the first Native Americans in Florida is the shell mounds. Native Americans created shell mounds when they ate shellfish. They tossed the shells into piles or mounds. These mounds are also called kitchen middens, which are trash heaps. By researching the campsites and the shell mounds, archaeologists have been able to learn about everyday life of the Native Americans. The scientists learned what kinds of food these people ate. They also learned about the tools they used and other items they made. Archaeologists sometimes found European goods at the campsites. This tells us that the Native Americans traded with the European settlers or they collected items when ships wrecked along Florida’s coast. Research has shown that there were thousands of Native Americans in Florida when the European settlers first arrived in the 16th century. Sadly, the story tells us that over the next 200 years, many of these Native Americans disappeared. Most of them died from European diseases. Yet others were killed in warfare. Some natives were taken away as slaves.

The Jeaga

The Jeaga lived along the Atlantic Coast from Jupiter to southern Palm Beach County. The remains of some of their villages have been found at Jupiter Inlet, Loxahatchee River, and in Riviera Beach. They are the descendants of the Paleo-Indians that came to Florida over 10,000 years ago. The native population of Palm Beach County was a non-agricultural people who hunted and gathered their food. The Jeaga’s diet included game animals such as deer and raccoon. They also caught food from the sea, such as fish, shellfish, snakes, turtles, and sharks. The Jeaga gathered coco plums, sea grapes, palmetto berries, and roots for food as well.

For clothing, the men wore breechcloths of woven grass or animal skins, while the women may have used Spanish moss to create skirts. The men were described by shipwrecked Englishmen as wearing their hair tied in a roll behind their head with two bones stuck in the hair in the shape of a broad arrow and the other a spear.
Their homes were simple structures built on high ground or on shell middens. According to an English shipwrecked passenger, Jeaga wigwams were made of poles stuck into the ground that created an arch. Then the arch was covered with a thatch of palmetto leaves. The natives sat or slept on mats made of reeds. During special ceremonies Native Americans drank a dark, strong, hot, tea-like drink to purify themselves called cassina. It was also known as the “black drink.” Only men were allowed to have the black drink which made them vomit to cleanse themselves. Cassina was made from roasted and boiled Yaupon Holly leaves and served in a shell cup.

Since there are no deposits of useful chert to make tools and weapons in south Florida, the Jeaga used wood, bone, and shell to manufacture their tools and weapons. Large shells such as the conch were made into dippers, cups, and hammers. Parts of the shell were used as an adz, celts, or shell beads. Woodworkers made bowls and other objects from pine and cypress trees. Shark teeth were used for cutting and carving. The teeth would be mounted on wood or bone handles and used like a knife or drill. Sometimes, the native people would trade for stone to make tools.

In 1696 the Jeaga captured the passengers and crew of the English ship Reforma. It was traveling from Jamaica to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when it was shipwrecked. It happened just north of present day Jupiter. The Jeaga held them for a little while at their village of Hoe-bay and then allowed them to leave. The Englishmen then journeyed 230 miles to reach safety at St. Augustine. During their travel north along the east coast of Florida, the Englishmen met many different native people. One passenger, Jonathan Dickinson, wrote a book describing the land and the natives they met. He included stories about the Jeaga and the Ais. Dickinson wrote in his journal that the Jeaga lived on top of a large shell mound that overlooked the Jupiter Inlet. Today, a part of their shell mound still stands across from the Jupiter Lighthouse overlooking the Jupiter Inlet. On top of the mound is the DuBois house, which was built in 1898. It is located in DuBois Park and it is open to the public.

The Jeaga’s neighbors to the north, around present day Hobe Sound in Martin County, were the Jobes, a small tribe that was part of the Jeaga. Further north were the Ais tribe who lived between the St. Lucie River to Cape Canaveral. To the south of Jeaga territory was the Tequesta whose territory extended from southern Palm Beach County to south of Miami.

The Spanish

The first Spanish people to visit Florida were conquistadors, or explorers. They found the land and its native people to be hostile. The conquistadors tried to establish permanent settlements in Florida, but at first, they failed. Juan Ponce de León was probably the first European explorer to set foot in what is today the United States. He had been to the New World in the 1490s as part of Christopher Columbus’ second voyage. In the spring of 1513 Ponce de León was leading his own exploration when he landed in Florida. The large number of flowers impressed him so much that Ponce de León named the land “La Florida,” meaning “the flower,” he then claimed it for Spain. According to legend, he was searching for the fabled “Fountain of Youth” said to be located on an island called Bimini. Instead, Ponce de León found Florida.

He continued to explore along the coast of Florida when he sailed into an inlet, now known as Jupiter Inlet. At the inlet he skirmished with the local Indians before continuing south along the coast. His next stop was at a village thought to be in the vicinity of Lake Worth where the inhabitants were friendlier. After meeting them, Ponce de León then sailed south to Biscayne Bay where he met the Tequesta Indians.

Along the Florida west coast, he entered a bay near the Caloosahatchee River. There he met the fierce Calusa, a Native American tribe, who attacked the Spanish ships. After the skirmish, Ponce de León left for Puerto Rico. In 1521 Ponce de Leon returned to the west coast of Florida with 200 settlers to start a Spanish colony near Charlotte Harbor. Once again, the Calusa attacked. This time, Ponce de León was wounded during the battle. The Spanish retreated to Cuba where Ponce de León died from his wounds. Over the next few decades, other conquistadors explored Florida.

A Spanish cannonball from the Nuestra Señora de Santa Margarita, 1622. Courtesy Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, Inc.
Other Spanish explorers had discovered rich lands in Central and South America. From these places, they sent home to Spain the riches that they found such as silver, gold, and precious jewels. To transport the goods to Spain, the Spanish formed fleets every year. By the 1560s, a well established treasure fleet sailed to and from Spain.

Two fleets that traveled to the New World from Spain were the Tierra Firme and the New Spain flotas (fleets). The types of ships that made up these fleets were the large, heavily armed galleons which carried large amounts of the gold and silver, naos or merchant vessels carrying passengers, treasure, and cargo, pataches which were smaller scout ships, and the supply ships or resfuerzos. The flotas would leave Spain and head for different Spanish ports. The Tierra Firme fleet sailed to South America and the New Spain fleet headed for Mexico. Once all treasure and goods had been collected the two fleets would meet in Havana, Cuba, before sailing to Spain. The fleet system ended in the 1770s when Spain declared free trade with its colonies in the New World.

The gold and silver that Spain gained from her colonies made it the richest and most powerful country in Europe. The money that was minted from these precious metals bought manufactured goods from other European countries and financed Spain’s wars against other countries. Spain’s fleet system was to protect its treasure from attack by pirates and other countries at war with Spain.

The two fleets would often leave Havana at different times to minimize loss. It was always possible that one fleet could be lost because of hurricanes or attacks. The voyages to Spain were scheduled to make use of the favorable winds, the Gulf Stream, and to miss the hurricane season but this did not always go as planned. When fleets arrived at their New World ports, they would off-load their cargo and then on-load treasure and goods for Spain. Sometimes the ships would have to wait for the arrival of gold, silver, and precious stones. This made the fleet arrive late at Havana which could mean sailing during the height of hurricane season. The Tierra Firme fleet of 1622 found out what could happen if a fleet left too late in the hurricane season.

The Spanish treasure fleet of 1622 departed Havana, Cuba, for Spain on 4 September. The fleet of twenty-eight vessels, including the heavily armed galleons Nuestra Señora de Atocha and Santa Margarita, carried gold, silver, pearls, and emeralds from colonies in Central and South America. On the following day, a powerful hurricane caught the fleet as it was attempting to out run the storm. At least twenty ships were pushed past the Dry Tortugas Islands and into the safe, deep water of the Gulf of Mexico. The other vessels of the fleet were not so lucky.

Over a fifty mile area, between the Dry Tortugas and the Florida Keys, ten ships, including both the Atocha and Santa Margarita, were sunk by the over-powering waves created by the hurricane. The Santa Margarita lost 143 persons. Of the 265 crew and passengers on the Atocha, only five survived. When the Atocha went to the bottom of the sea, it took with it the wealth of Spain. The loss was 20 bronze cannons, 24 tons of silver bullion, 180,000 pesos of silver coins, 582 copper ingots, 125 gold bars and discs, 350 chests of indigo, 525 bales of tobacco, and 1,200 pounds of silverware. The Spanish salvaged what they could from the Santa Margarita. The Atocha was hardier to get to because it was in fifty-five feet of water with its hatches sealed. The shipwreck was marked for later salvaging but soon another hurricane scattered the ship along the bottom. The Atocha was lost for several hundred years.

In 1985 treasure hunters under the leadership of Mel Fisher discovered the Atocha and its untold riches. The story of what happened has been saved for history along with its artifacts of gold, silver, copper, pottery, items made of iron, everyday objects, and much more. Numerous other wrecks from other Spanish treasure fleets dot the coast of Florida and the Keys. Visitors can see many of the items recovered from the Atocha and Santa Margarita at the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, Inc. in Key West, Florida. Some of the artifacts are on display as part of the First Contact exhibit at the Richard and Pat Johnson Palm Beach County History Museum.
Teacher's Guide

Suggested Pre-Visit Activities

Discuss with students the different early Native Americans that once lived in Florida. Some of this information can be found on the Internet and in the Florida History Tabloid (visit the education section at www.historicalsocietypbc.org to download the tabloid if you did not receive it earlier in the school year).

Discuss the vocabulary and People and Places with students before visiting the exhibit.

Have students answer the questions below.

Review timeline and Items of Interest with students.

See pages 13-16 or more activities.

Suggested Post-Visit Activities

Have students create their own timeline of the Jeaga and Spanish after they visit the Museum.

Ask students to write their own story about being captured by the Jeaga in the 1600s or about being a sailor of the 1622 treasure fleet and surviving the hurricane.

Have students complete the worksheet at the end of this booklet.

Suggested Reading:


An early Florida native drawn by an English explorer, ca. 16th – 17th centuries. Courtesy Florida State Archives.
Most of the silver and gold exported to Spain were crude coins. Often called “pieces of eight” or “cobs,” these coins were known as Reales. Cobs were formed from silver or gold bars by cutting the end of the bar off and trimming to the correct weight. The coins were then hammered between engraved dies. Reales were usually irregular in shape. All coinage sent to Spain included where it was minted and the assayer’s mark. The assayer was important because he guaranteed the fineness of the silver or gold and the weight. Reales were struck in denominations of 1/2, 1, 2, 4, and 8 Reales. Gold coins, called escudos, were issued in denominations of 1/2, 1, 2, 4, and 8 escudos.
## Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition or Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adz</td>
<td>An ax-like tool with a blade at right angles to the handle used for shaping wood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bimini</td>
<td>The western most islands of the Bahama Islands. In the ancient Carib Indian language, Bimini means “Mother of Many Waters.” It is fifty miles east of Fort Lauderdale. According to legend, the “Fountain of Youth” is located in the Bimini Islands. Some say that a spring on South Bimini is that “Fountain of Youth.” Another legend is linked with Bimini. It is said that these islands are the location of the “Lost City of Atlantis.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cacique (kah-SEE-kay)</td>
<td>King, chief, or ruler.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dugout</td>
<td>A canoe made by hollowing out the inner part of a large log.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flota (Spanish word)</td>
<td>Fleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galeón</td>
<td>This is a Spanish word for galleon which was a large, multi-decked, heavily armed sailing ship used by the nations of Europe from the 16th to 18th centuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nao</td>
<td>Spanish for merchant ship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Atocha</td>
<td>A Spanish treasure ship that sank off the Florida Keys in September 1622. The ship was built in Havana, Cuba, and named after a sacred shrine in Spain. Of the 265 crew and passengers on board the Atocha, only five survived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midden</td>
<td>Deposits of refuse (or garbage) resulting from human activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patache</td>
<td>A small sailing ship used as a scout or for communicating between large ships of the fleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierra Firme</td>
<td>Spanish from the Latin words <em>terra firma</em> “dry land.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>A group of people bound together by a common culture and ancestry.</td>
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People and Places

Hoe-bay

This Jeaga village has been identified as the mound site in DuBois Park in Jupiter. Hoe-bay is also spelled Jobe and Ho-bay.

Jeaga

A tribe of early Florida Native Americans that lived along the Atlantic coast of what became Palm Beach County. Usually, they were unfriendly and killed or enslaved most Europeans that they encountered.

Jonathan Dickinson (1663-1722)

Dickinson was an English Quaker traveling with his family from Jamaica to Philadelphia when the ship they were on, the *Reformation*, was wrecked just north of Jupiter in 1696. The crew and passengers were captured by the Jeaga and taken to their village of Hoe-bay at the Jupiter Inlet. Dickinson and the others were held there for a few days and then allowed to travel north to St. Augustine, a journey of about 230 miles. During their travel north along the east coast of Florida, the English travelers met many native people. Dickinson later wrote a book about their dangerous journey to safety.

Juan Ponce de León (c. 1460-1521)

Ponce de León Spanish explorer of the New World, early Spanish colonial Governor of Puerto Rico, and is remembered for discovering Florida and claiming it for Spain. In 1493 he sailed with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the New World. The King of Spain made him Governor of Puerto Rico. When political rivals had him removed as Governor in 1512, he obtained permission to search for and colonize an unknown island called Bimini, said to be the site of the legendary Fountain of Youth. In April 1513, he landed in northeastern Florida, and sailing along the east coast and then north around the tip of Florida and along the west coast. He named the land Florida, meaning "flowers" for the beautiful flowers he found growing there. In 1521 he returned to Florida with 200 men and enough supplies to establish a colony. Landing on the west coast of Florida, near Charlotte Harbor, he was attacked by the Calusa Indians and wounded by an arrow. The colonists that had not been killed returned to Cuba with Ponce de Leon where he died of this wound.

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés (1519-1574)

Menéndez was a sixteenth century Spanish admiral known most notably for his founding of St. Augustine, Florida, and his subsequent destruction of the French settlement of Fort Caroline in 1565. The first Spanish governor of Spanish Florida, he founded St. Augustine, the first permanent European settlement and oldest port city in what is now the continental United States, on August 28, 1565.

*Rio de la Cruz*

This river is thought to be the Loxahatchee River where Juan Ponce de Leon visited in 1513.
Answer these questions

Why were the Spanish exploring Florida?

Why do you think the Native Americans were hostile towards the Spanish?

What are some of the kinds of food the Native Americans ate?

Why did the Native Americans use shells for their tools?

Compare the shell hammer and the Spanish ax. What are the differences? Could they both be used for the same purpose, like cutting wood?

A Spanish ax head from the Nuestra Señora de Atocha, 1622. Courtesy Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, Inc.
Shell Hammers were made from large conch shells. The craftsman would hammer, grind, and sand the shell until he had created openings to insert a wood handle. The narrow part of the shell was ground to form a point if it was going to be an axe or flat to make a hammer. The reproduced artifact with the wood handle is a shell ax. The large shell artifact without the handle is over 500 years old and is a hammer.

The Jeaga pottery bowl was created in the 1300s by a potter. It was recovered from a mound in Palm Beach County. Pottery created by the early Native Americans made with clay and sand or clay mixed with some sort of plant fiber. This example is plain. To decorate their pottery, the artists would use tools to make designs on the pot before it was fired to harden it.

The French Map is an 18th century reproduction of the one made in the 1600s. It shows how the French map maker saw Florida, the Bahamas Islands, and Cuba. Most maps of this period did not show Florida accurately.

The dugout canoe is representative of the Jeaga and other south Florida Indians. This cypress wood dugout canoe was made by a Seminole in 1920.
Loggerhead turtles were often hunted by the natives of Florida for its meat and eggs. This species of turtle is the most common in Florida. The loggerhead got its name for its large head. Adults weigh 200 to 350 pounds and measure about 3 feet in length. Loggerhead turtles are now protected and listed as endangered worldwide.

The Spanish galleon diorama shows Spanish explorers meeting Florida natives who are rowing out to the ship. Sometimes the encounters were peaceful and sometimes not. The Indians of south Florida were aggressive towards the Europeans most of the time trying to capture them or killing the explorers.

The Spanish olive jars are from the Buen Jesus 1622 shipwreck. Pottery making is one of the oldest human crafts. The examples displayed here are amphora-like pottery storage jars called “olive jars.” They were used to store food supplies for the crews of the Spanish ships during their voyages from the Americas to Spain and back. When ships sank in the ocean most of olive jars broke. So when archaeologist excavate shipwrecks it is very rare to find an olive jar intact. The material used to create an olive jar was a coarse red-orange clay paste material. Olive jars may have been made upside-down and then turned right-side-up and fitted with a neck. They were then fired using wood at a temperature of 1,800-1,900 degrees F. Archaeologists have suggested that the crudely made olive jars may have been made in the New World are not like the well-made pottery of Europe.

Please see the permanent exhibit Early Floridians in the People Gallery for more interesting information and artifacts of the ancient Native Americans who lived in Palm Beach County.
Timeline

10,000 BC
Paleo-Indians enter Florida

c. 2000 BC
Pottery is developed

c. 750 BC – AD 1763
The Jeaga tribe inhabits Atlantic coastal areas of Palm Beach County

c. 1000 BC – AD 1763
The Belle Glade Culture inhabits the interior area of Palm Beach County and other counties around Lake Okeechobee

c. AD 750
The Jeaga Indians inhabit the area known as DuBois Park at the Jupiter Inlet

AD 1513
Juan Ponce de Leon stops at Jupiter Inlet. He encounters members of the Jeaga tribe

AD 1622
The Spanish galleons Nuestra Señora de Atocha and Santa Margarita sank off the Florida Keys during a storm

AD 1659
The Spanish ship San Miguel de Archangel wrecked off of Jupiter Inlet. The thirty-three survivors stayed at the Jeaga village at the inlet until rescued

AD 1696
English Quaker Jonathan Dickinson is shipwrecked on Jupiter island. The survivors are captured by the Jeaga

AD 1763
Native Indians no longer live in Florida. They have been replaced by Creek Indians from Georgia and Alabama

AD 1942 – 1944
Florida archaeologist John Goggins surveys the mound in DuBois Park
What could the ancient Floridians use the following for?
Activity
Know, Show, & Go Directions

Students will use four note cards for this activity. The below information would be written on the notecards. The column on the left would be what the students would write on the front of the card. On the back of the card is where they would write the summaries and questions. This would be used before they arrive at the museum and completed after the visit. For example, if they wanted to do: Know, Show & Go All about the Jeaga (Card 1), I Think I Know (Card 2) That men wore breechcloths, It Just Goes To Show (Card 3) They lived along the Atlantic Coast, they hunted and gathered food, they ate turtles etc... Where do I go? (Card 4) Why did they wear there hair in a roll with bones in it? Why would the men drink tea that made the vomit? Card 4 would be questions that they made after reading or visiting the museum. The students would use the internet or trade books to research the questions they created.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know, Show, and Go All About Early Contact</th>
<th>This is the student’s prior knowledge about the text’s topic.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Think I know!</td>
<td>After student finishes reading Early Contact information, have him/her predict the selection on the “Know” card.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It just goes to show!</td>
<td>After the student finishes reading, have him/her summarize the information they have read on the “Show” card.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where do I go?</td>
<td>Then have the student’s label, the “Go” card with questions about the information they have read/visited.</td>
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This exercise could be used as something that students enlarge by jotting down things they learn or know about Palm Beach County before they visit the museum. After their visit, they can try to have something for each letter in the box. Or they could carry this around with a clip board and fill it in as they tour the museum.

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<td><strong>Vv</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ww, Xx</strong></td>
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Color your own Spanish galleon

Drawing courtesy Activity Village
Student Notes
This page is for student to write down notes
Places to Visit

Gumbo Limbo Environmental Complex
1801 North Ocean Boulevard
Boca Raton, Florida 33432
561-338-1473
www.gumbolimbo.org
Gumbo Limbo Environmental Complex is part of the Red Reef Park. It is a nature center that preserves a tropical hammock. A Pre-Columbian shell midden can be seen at Gumbo Limbo.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida
101 W Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130
305-375-1492
Exhibits include artifacts from the ancient Indians of south Florida and the Spanish.

Jupiter Inlet Midden I
DuBois Park
19075 DuBois Road
Jupiter, Florida 33477
In the park there is a Jeaga shell mound with a pioneer house on top of it. The house was built in 1898 by the DuBois family. This mound is where the Jeaga held the English shipwreck survivor Jonathan Dickinson, his family, and the ship’s crew of the Reformation in 1696.

Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum
Lighthouse Park
500 Catin Armour’s Way
Jupiter, Florida 33469
561-747-8380
Museum has exhibits of Jeaga artifacts. The museum conducts tours of the Jupiter Lighthouse which sits on top of an Indian mound.

Mc Clarty Treasure Museum
13180 Highway A1A
Vero Beach, Florida 32963
772-589-2147
Museum has exhibits of artifacts from the 1715 Fleet that sank along Florida’s Treasure Coast and is located on the site of the survivor’s camp.

Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage
200 Greene Street
Key West, Florida 33040
305-294-2633
The museum is dedicated the history of the 1622 Fleet including the treasure recovered from the Nuestra Señora de Atocha and Santa Margarita.

Answers to worksheet:
1. Shells could be used for tools, weapons, net weights, and jewelry.
2. Deer antlers could be used for tools, arrow points, fishing hooks, and jewelry.
3. Shark teeth could be for tools, arrow points, and jewelry.
4. Fiber, palm fronds, and palm fur were used to make cords/rope.
5. Spanish moss was used to make cords/rope and clothing.

Drawing of the wooden human effigy from the Pahokee area, ca. AD 900-1200. This artifact is on display in the People Gallery.