

# Introduction

DAVID K. THULMAN AND ERVAN G. GARRISON

This volume had its genesis in papers and meetings where the authors exchanged the results of their research as well as their ideas focused on the state and future of Paleoindian studies in Florida but also reached into the Early Archaic period and into the greater Southeast as far as Texas. Although the focus is still on Paleoindians in Florida, several chapters place the Florida-specific chapters in larger spatial (the greater Southeast and now-drowned Gulf and Atlantic shelves from Virginia to Texas) and temporal (Early Archaic period) contexts. Today, research into Early Florida (circa 15,000–9,000 cal B.P.) is blossoming and entering an exciting phase that has the potential to reveal much about early Floridians in particular, and wider Paleoindian and Early Archaic scholarship in general. While established Florida archaeologists, like Barbara Purdy, Jim Dunbar, and Michael Faught, are still working hard on Florida Paleoindian issues, it feels like a torch is being passed to the next generation—Jessi Halligan, C. Andrew Hemmings, Jessica Cook Hale, Ryan Duggins, and Morgan Smith, to name a few—who are taking the discipline in new, fruitful directions. Several of these scholars contributed to this volume.

Florida's securely documented pre-Contact culture history starts about 14,400 years ago with the pre-Clovis biface found in mastodon dung at the Page-Ladson site in Jefferson County (Halligan et al. 2016). Table 0.1 relates the ages and associated Paleoindian and Early Archaic cultures making up the Early Floridian period that encompasses the temporal extent of this book. The Early Floridian cultures are represented by projectile point

styles, but at the start of the Middle Archaic, point style markers are less important as cultures apparently become more complex, as represented by the breadth of their material culture, such as cemeteries, shell mounds, and range of tools (Milanich 1994). Much of the cultural affiliation in the table is supposition; only Bolen is well dated, and Clovis has one date. As several chapters make clear, we do not know the ages of Simpson, Suwannee, or other lanceolate points in Florida, although most researchers infer they are post-Clovis and pre-Bolen in age. The same goes for post-Bolen supposed Early Archaic points, such as Arredondo, Wacissa, Kirk corner-notched, bifurcated, and others (Bullen 1975). After Bolen, the best-dated culture is represented at Windover, a cemetery near Cape Canaveral (Doran 2002), which is about 8,000 years old at the earliest.

From its beginnings in the early 20th century, Paleoindian research in Florida was not focused on hunting Pleistocene megafauna, although the relationship of man and megafauna played an important role in conceptualizing late Pleistocene occupations in the state. Florida's first important Paleoindian site was Vero Beach (Sellards 1916). It was controversial because of the purported association of Pleistocene fauna with human skulls. Although dismissed early on and largely forgotten (Hrdlička 1917), it is interesting to speculate how our present understanding of Early Floridian studies may have changed if the association had been taken seriously at the time (Hemmings, this volume). Regardless, the subsequent focus in Florida was on submerged sites and the finds of early organic tools (Jenks and Simpson 1941).

Whereas the rest of North American Paleoindian and Early Archaic archaeology is limited almost exclusively to the analysis of site distributions and stone tools, Florida has produced an embarrassment of riches in the form of Paleoindian-age organic tools, including ivory points or shafts (Hemmings 2004), ivory harpoon points, mastodon patella anvil, horse tibia tool handle, and several modified megafauna bones of unknown function (Dunbar and Webb 1996). Organic tools from Early Archaic sites in Florida include wooden stakes (Carter and Dunbar 2006), modified deer antlers, skulls, and postcranial bones (Carter 2003), a wooden mortar (Clausen et al. 1979), and fabric (Hemmings, this volume). Perhaps more than any other area of North America, Florida provides the opportunity for extraordinary preservation of organic Paleoindian and Early Archaic material from submerged sites in its fresh and coastal waters. In

contrast, the early organic tools from outside Florida are mainly limited to ivory, bone, or antler rods (Hemmings 2010). The focus on submerged sites by the authors in this book is likely due to the number and variety of organic artifacts, albeit mainly deflated or out of context, and Florida's problematic terrestrial sites, which are usually found in bioturbated (for example, Thulman 2012c) or deflated (Daniel and Wisenbaker 1987) contexts. Few early sites, with the notable exception of Paradise Park (Neill 1958), retain stratigraphic integrity. This is not to dismiss the importance of early terrestrial sites in the state, but most terrestrial Paleoindian sites are in or adjacent to water bodies and only a few large Early Archaic sites are undisturbed (Austin and Michell 2010; Goodwin et al. 2013).

Some of the challenges to conducting underwater Early Florida archaeology have been overcome, or work-arounds are being tested. Underwater prehistoric archaeology is daunting, both in cost and equipment. Early efforts were focused on simply collecting material (after his death, human bones collected by Bill Royal from Warm Mineral and Little Salt Springs had to be chipped out of his fireplace mantle where they had been cemented in place [David Dickel, personal communication 2012]), but excavation techniques implemented by professional archaeologists have improved underwater prehistoric archaeology to the point where the control is comparable to terrestrial excavations (Clausen et al. 1975; Doran 2002; Faught 2004a and b; Webb 2006b). Techniques keep improving, and in many regards the data preservation exceeds that at any terrestrial site (Halligan, this volume). The unique preservation of organic Early Floridian artifacts and early human remains in submerged contexts (Carter 2003; Clausen et al. 1975; Cockrell and Murphy 1978; Doran 2002; Dunbar and Thulman, this volume) has archaeologists searching Florida's rivers, lakes, and continental shelf for preserved, undisturbed Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene sediments. The effort pushes existing methodologies and requires a thoughtful marriage of geoarchaeology, chronometry, and careful excavation techniques. Everyone involved in these efforts believes it is simply a matter of time before the new submerged sites will be found that change our understanding of Early Floridians.

However, challenges remain in refining Florida's early chronology, typology (Dunbar and Hemmings 2004; Farr 2006; Thulman 2007, 2012b), land-use patterns (Daniel 1985; Dunbar and Vojnovski 2007), offshore survey techniques (Faught, this volume; Garrison and Cook Hale, this

volume; Duggins 2012), and synthetic regional studies (Thulman, this volume), and in preserving terrestrial sites in the face of tremendous development pressures and a deteriorating relationship with private collectors (Glowacki and Dunbar, this volume).

We have organized the book into three sections: The Past, Present, and Future of the Archaeology of Early Floridians, Early Floridian Studies in a Broader Context, and Technological Advances in the Study of Early Floridians.

### **The Past, Present, and Future**

As touched on earlier, Florida has a rich but less-appreciated history of Paleoindian research in the larger context of North American Paleoindian prehistory. In the first chapter, Thulman reviews this history, touching on several themes: cooperation among professionals and amateurs, the organic artifacts, the problems with chronology and typology. Michael Faught picks up the story in Chapter 2, reviewing in more detail the first methodical exploration of submerged Paleoindian sites starting in the 1980s through the early 2000s. Michael's work fundamentally changed the discipline and direction of underwater prehistoric archaeology, in general, and Paleoindian archaeology, in particular. First conducted in the 1980s as part of his dissertation and then with his students in the 1990s and early 2000s in the nearshore paleochannels in the Gulf of Mexico using submerged sites in Florida's terrestrial rivers as analogues, Michael explains in an entertaining way how science was conducted on a shoestring budget before GPS. Anyone who has spent any time on the Gulf as the late afternoon winds pick up can appreciate the challenge of taking compass bearings while standing in a small boat. Michael's seminal efforts worked out several methodological difficulties, which smoothed the way for future efforts, regardless of time period. Today, Jim Adovasio, Andy Hemmings, and Jessica Cook Hale are searching the submerged Gulf Coastal Plain, while Mike Waters and Jessi Halligan are surveying potential river sites. The Archaeological Research Cooperative has surveyed a large Late Paleoindian Suwannee site in Lake George in the St. Johns River (Thulman 2012c) and conducted a larger bathymetric and subbottom survey of the lake looking for promising landforms. Several older sites—Ray Hole Spring in the Gulf (Anuskiewicz 1988), Guest Mammoth in the Silver

River (Rayl 1974), and Ryan-Harley in the Wacissa River (Dunbar and Vojnovski 2007)—are being re-examined by new scholars, several who report their work in this volume.

As discussed above, most of the present efforts in Early Floridian studies are focused on submerged sites, especially finding and properly interpreting them. To that end in Chapter 3, Jessi Halligan summarizes the challenges and efforts to continue robust and sophisticated Paleoindian studies in the state. Jessi emphasizes the need to consider terrestrial context of submerged sites to fully understand the submerged component.

Some of the important early sites were found in Florida but remain footnotes in North American Paleoindian archaeology. Thankfully, several of these are being re-evaluated in efforts to resolve questions about their integrity using modern techniques. In Chapter 4, Andy Hemmings reports on the latest findings at Vero Beach. Initially dismissed by the infamous Paleoindian curmudgeon Aleš Hrdlička (1917), the site became too toxic to champion by people interested in preserving their careers. Hemmings reviews the tragic history of the site, the careers affected, and the last few field seasons that shed light on Sellards's (1916) original conclusion of association of humans and late Pleistocene fauna.

The Guest Mammoth site in the Silver River is another site that was poorly received by the archaeological establishment when it was first presented by George Hoffman in the 1960s. In retrospect, this was a lost opportunity, because the Guest Mammoth was one of the first, if not the first, professionally excavated submerged Paleoindian sites in North America. Little was published on the find or the excavation. Morgan Smith reviews the history of the site and recent efforts to relocate it, date the excavated bones, and rehabilitate the site's importance.

## **Broader Context**

Complementing Halligan's focus on freshwater submerged sites, in Chapter 6 Jim Dunbar and Dave Thulman focus on the potentials for finding Paleoindian sites on the greater Southeast's continental shelf. Jim and Dave argue that early Paleoindian sites, which include Clovis and pre-Clovis time periods, should be all over the shelf but make the case that the best chances of finding preserved landforms—and therefore sites—is on Florida's Gulf continental shelf.