Northwest Region Speaker’s Bureau

FPAN can help facilitate speakers for meetings of your civic group, community organization, youth club, or heritage society, and for lecture series and special events. In addition to staff, we also can draw on the expertise of University of West Florida professors and graduate students as well as on local professional historians and archaeologists.

Most presentations last about 30-45 minutes with additional time for questions, although programs usually can be tailored for your needs. Specific topics are dependent on speaker availability, so book early! There is no charge for presentations, although donations are gratefully accepted to support FPAN educational programs.

Take a look at our offerings below, then contact us at dscottireton@uwf.edu or nbuchino@uwf.edu and let us know what you'd like to learn about! If you don’t see what you’re looking for, ask us and we'll do our best to accommodate you.

Della Scott-Ireton, PhD, RPA
Della is the FPAN Associate Director. Her research interests are in nautical and underwater archaeology, public interpretation of maritime heritage, and involving the public in the understanding of the past. Della can speak about:

Shipwrecks of Northwest Florida
The Panhandle of Florida is the site of hundreds of historic shipwrecks, the result of centuries of maritime commerce, conflict, and travel. Three of these wrecks are featured in this presentation: USS Massachusetts, the nation's oldest battleship sunk for target practice off Pensacola; SS Tarpon, a merchant vessel famous for its weekly trips between Mobile and Panama City until it was lost in a gale; and Vamar, sunk at Port St Joe under mysterious circumstances during World War II.

Shipwrecks of Pensacola
The excellent port of Pensacola was long the focus of European rivalries in the New World because control of the harbor helped ensure dominance of the northern Gulf Coast. Shipwrecks litter the bay and surrounding waterways, many of which have been identified and archaeologically investigated. This presentation describes a variety of Pensacola's historic shipwrecks from Pensacola's Spanish, British, early American, and Industrial Expansion periods.

Shipwrecks of the Blackwater River
A major tributary of Pensacola Bay, the Blackwater River flows through the pine forests and fertile uplands of Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties. Historically, commerce along the river
included shipyards, brick kilns, and lumber mills, all of which used the river for transport of supplies and products. The remains of many of the watercraft engaged in these industries lie hidden in the dark water, some of which have been archaeologically investigated. This lecture describes these vessels, ranging from lumber schooners to steam tugs to snapper smacks.

**USS Massachusetts: History and Archaeology of the Nation's Oldest Battleship**
Just outside Pensacola Pass lie the remains of our nation's oldest existing battleship, USS *Massachusetts* (BB2). Launched in 1896 as part of the New Steel Navy, the powerful warship soon was rendered obsolete by naval technological advances. Nevertheless, *Massachusetts* had an exciting career of combat, training, and target practice, and now is a massive artificial reef. This presentation describes the ship and her long life of service to the nation and to Pensacola.

**History is the Real Treasure: The 1733 Spanish Galleon Trail**
The Spanish treasure fleet of 1733 wrecked in a violent hurricane along 80 miles of the Florida Keys. With the discovery of the first shipwreck in the late 1940s and the growth of scuba diving in the 1950s and 60s enabling treasure hunters to locate most of the rest of the fleet, these wrecks suffered from haphazard digging and the loss of much information. Today, these shipwrecks are among the oldest and most vibrant artificial reefs in the Keys. This lecture describes a State of Florida project to record and interpret the 1733 fleet that resulted in the production of a booklet and website devoted to telling the story of the fleet disaster and to promoting the archaeological importance of the sunken ships as tangible remains of our maritime heritage.

**The Emanuel Point Ships: Florida's Earliest Shipwrecks Associated with the 1559 Colonization Attempt by Tristán de Luna at Pensacola**
Before the English settled Jamestown and before the Spanish colonized St. Augustine, the harbor of Pensacola, Florida, was targeted by Spanish authorities as the perfect place to establish a town on the northern Gulf Coast. Only a few weeks after arrival, however, Tristán de Luna's fleet was destroyed by a violent hurricane. Although the land site has never been identified, two of Luna's ships have been discovered in Pensacola Bay and have been archaeologically investigated. This lecture presents this little-known episode of colonial history as well as the ships and artifacts associated with the Luna expedition.

**Museums in the Sea: Florida's Underwater Archaeological Preserves**
Clues to Florida's maritime history are scattered along the state's coasts, bays, and rivers in the form of shipwrecks relating to waterborne exploration, commerce, and warfare. This lecture features Florida's Museums in the Sea, historic shipwrecks that have been interpreted for divers and snorkelers as a way to educate citizens and visitors about the real treasure of Florida's shipwrecks – their history.

**Diving, Historic Preservation, and Heritage Tourism**
Florida's historic shipwrecks have long been exploited for their perceived tangible value as mines of (often non-existent) treasure. The real treasure of shipwrecks, however, is their value as sites of history and heritage, and their potential for heritage tourism. This lecture describes the issues archaeologists face regarding effective management and protection of submerged cultural sites, as well as strategies that have been developed for interpretation and sustainable tourism at underwater archaeological sites.

Our Past in Peril: Florida's Trouble with Treasure
As the scene of several colonial Spanish fleet disasters from the 16th to the 18th centuries, Florida is at the center of the commercial historic shipwreck salvage industry. Despite public opinion and laws protecting submerged cultural heritage, treasure hunters still are engaged in the destruction of underwater historic sites for personal gain. This lecture describes Florida's history of treasure hunting, laws regarding commercial salvage of historic shipwrecks, and the strategies employed by archaeologists and resource managers to protect historic shipwrecks for the present and future and to promote responsible visitation.

Tombstone Tales: Cemeteries, Symbols, and Stories
Historic cemeteries are amazing outdoor museums containing vast amounts of information on markers and tombstones that can be “read’ like historic documents. This presentation describes the development of the modern cemetery, the kinds of information that can be learned from inscriptions and symbols on markers, the laws protecting historic cemeteries in Florida, and ways to protect them for the future.

Nicole Grinnan, MA, RPA
Nicole is the FPAN Northwest Region Public Archaeology Coordinator and specializes in maritime and public archaeology. Nicole can speak about:

Introduction to Archaeology
What do archaeologists do, exactly? If dinosaurs and rocks come to mind, this is the presentation for you! Learn about the science of archaeology, its role as part of the field of anthropology, where archaeologists work, and how they discover and protect our cultural heritage. Appropriate for all ages, this fun and informative show sets the stage for understanding how archaeology preserves our past for the present and future.

Introduction to Underwater Archaeology
Archaeologists work in a variety of settings, and underwater is one of the “coolest,” literally and figuratively! Learn about how archaeologists work in this alien environment, the types of sites they study (hint: it's not just shipwrecks!), the issues and problems facing “submerged cultural resources,” and how underwater archaeologists work to protect the tangible remains of our maritime past.
Remote Sensing in Archaeology
Archaeology is a destructive science. Excavation disturbs sites in such a way that they can never be restored to their original state. To preserve sites as they are found, archaeologists have various technologies in their archaeological "tool kit" to help study and gather data from sites without intrusive excavation. This lecture discusses, in basic terms, the kinds of remote-sensing instruments archaeologists use, both on land and underwater.

Shipwrecks of Pensacola
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Talking Smack: The Sailing Vessels of Pensacola’s Red Snapper Fishing Industry
After the end of the American Civil War, industry in Pensacola and Northwest Florida boomed as money flowed from the North to the South. Among the various industrial endeavors in the Pensacola area, commercial fishing for red snapper became one of the most successful. From 1870-1930, the colorful fishermen and beautiful sailing vessels of the red snapper fishing industry dominated the city's waterfront. This presentation discusses the importance of red snapper fishing to the development of Pensacola and Northwest Florida, in addition to why the industry began and ended so quickly.

Exploring Race-Based Differences in the Post-Civil War Red Snapper Fishing Industry
The booming red snapper fishing industry in Pensacola, Florida, in the years 1870-1930 provided a significant source of employment for racially varied immigrant and local fishermen. Despite strong similarities in onshore living conditions among racially categorized “black,” “mulatto,” and “white” fishermen, offshore experiences onboard the fishing vessels were markedly different. This presentation discusses these differences as part of the range of individual experience in Post-Civil War Florida.

Mike Thomin
Mike is the Director of FPAN's Destination Archaeology! Resource Center. His research interests include southeastern Native American history, Atlantic World studies, and museum studies. Mike can speak about:

**Mosquitos, Muggles, and Museums: Exploring Florida's Archaeology with Geocaching**
Are you ready to get outside and explore Northwest Florida's archaeology and history? Forget your fedoras and bullwhips; pick up a GPS device and go geocaching! Geocaching is a worldwide scavenger hunt game. Players try to locate hidden containers, called caches, using GPS devices and share their experiences online. FPAN recently created a series of geocaches hidden at historic and archaeological sites across northwest Florida to increase awareness that these places are out there and they are open for you to visit. This presentation describes how geocaching works, what you need to play, and a unique geocaching adventure created by FPAN that will take you back in time through northwest Florida's history and archaeology.

**Pirates! The Last Scourge of the Gulf: An Exhibit**
Two centuries ago a massive wave of piracy struck the Gulf of Mexico and terrorized shipping along the Gulf Coast. Florida was especially dangerous for travelers. Jean Lafitte and Charles Gibbs, two of the most notorious pirates from this period, had close ties to the Florida panhandle. One case of piracy even wound up in the court of West Florida in Pensacola and made newspaper headlines across the nation. This talk examines some of the broader aspects of piracy during the early 1800s in the Gulf and Caribbean by analyzing this federal court case held in Pensacola in 1823.

**Unearthing Florida**
With close to 500 years of European history and more than 10,000 years of Native American history, Florida is host to an array of archaeological sites on land and underwater. In this presentation the author of the Unearthing Florida radio program will highlight eight different archaeological sites across the state from prehistoric times to the Civil War. We will learn about the history and archaeological investigations of these sites, some of the high-tech tools archaeologists used there, the artifacts they uncovered, and why the sites are important cultural resources on this statewide journey!

**Tristan Harrenstein**
Tristan is a graduate student in the Historical Archaeology program at the University of West Florida and is the senior Public Archaeology Intern for the Florida Public Archaeology Network. Tristan specializes in terrestrial historical archaeology and can speak about:

**Dear Friends at Home: Accounts of a Union Soldier in Pensacola**
During the Union occupation of Pensacola in the Civil War, a Union soldier by the name of Melvan Tibbetts wrote 20 letters home to his family in Maine. These letters provide a wealth of information about West Florida during the Civil War, however, the reader also gains a strong sense of familiarity with the author. This presentation shows how using
primary documents to learn about history can bring about an intimate knowledge of people in the past that is rarely found in history books.

**Gregg Harding**
Gregg is a graduate student in the Anthropology program at the University of West Florida, doing research on pre-contact and contact-era Native American sites in the Panhandle. Gregg is particularly interested in the prehistoric and historic use of caves. Gregg can speak on:

**Archaeology and the Use of Caves in Florida**
For thousands of years people have been utilizing caves in the southeastern United States. These caves have been used for shelter, burials, religious ceremonies, and have been mined for natural resources by both prehistoric and historic people. In Florida, caves have produced human remains, cultural materials, and petroglyphs. Many of these caves still affect our lives through tourism, recreation, and scientific research. This presentation introduces an archaeological look at the past and present use of caves in Florida.

**Kad Henderson**
Kad is a graduate student in Historical Archaeology at the University of West Florida, focusing on maritime archaeology. He also specializes in conservation of waterlogged materials from shipwrecks. Kad can speak about:

**Maritime Archaeology of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, Fort Pickens Area**
The Fort Pickens Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore includes many archaeological and historic sites. In addition to military installations built to protect the entrance to Pensacola Bay, a number of archaeological sites are found in the park such as the second location of the permanent Spanish settlement of Pensacola, Presidio Isla de Santa Rosa. Several historic shipwrecks also are within the park boundaries, including the Spanish warship *Rosario*, sunk in a storm in 1705, and *Catharine*, a Norwegian cargo vessel that ran aground in 1894. This presentation describes the archaeological investigations of these sites as well as a general history of the Fort Pickens Area.

**Nuestra Señora del Rosario y Santiago Apostol: A Spanish New World Frigate**
*Rosario* was built in 1696 as a powerful warship for the Spanish navy. As part of the Windward Fleet, she protected convoys of ships loaded with valuable goods traveling between Spain and its New World colonies. Throughout her career the ship performed many duties including hunting pirates and supplying far-flung settlements. The ship was lost in 1705 while resupplying the colony at Pensacola, then known as Presidio Santa María de Galve. This presentation describes the ship’s unique history and the archaeological investigation of the shipwreck.
Wayne A. Abrahamson, MA
Wayne is an adjunct instructor at the University of West Florida (UWF) and teaches classes in both the Anthropology and History Departments. He earned a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology and a Master of Arts degree in History from UWF and specializes in maritime archaeology. Wayne is currently completing a third graduate degree from UWF in creative writing. He can talk about:

Pirates, Slave Smugglers, and Blockade Runners of the Gulf Coast
The subject of Wayne’s history thesis research is three specific periods of maritime crime which occurred between 1800 and the American Civil War (1861-1865). From the Age of Discovery until the end of the Civil War, the Gulf Coast was known as a region dotted with numerous bays and inlets, isolated stretches of beach, and sparsely populated islands. Lack of development and infrastructure, along with inadequate law enforcement and little cohesive political structure, enabled maritime criminals such as pirates and smugglers to engage in nefarious activities. This lecture describes the role of Pensacola residents and the Gulf Coast region in this colorful period of New World history.