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Explorers Uncover Old Indian Colony

They don't talk much about it, but a half-dozen Homestead explorers, along with their companions from Sarasota, are quietly uncovering the remains of an ancient civilization deep in the Everglades.

And they have good reason to believe they have uncovered the capital of the Caloosa Indians who preyed on Spanish settlers in Florida in the 16th Century.

Charlie Fales, a Homestead plumber and long-time resident, Cholly Del-Ask, a well-driller, and Al Tommerlin, a builder, spend nearly every weekend and holiday digging for archaeological relics at the site, which they will pin-point only as "about 150 miles from Miami in the Everglades."

Their equally-interested wives go with them. And they are joined by John Fales (Charlie's brother), Sam Corbett, Orbidue Gill and Ben Hoy and their wives from Sarasota.

They are organized as the Sarasota chapter of the Florida Archaeological Society.

On the newsstands this week, the April issue of Saga Magazine tells for the first time the full story of the 10-year-old studies and explorations of this small band of do-it-yourself archaeologists.

The Indian mound — pin-pointed by the group after years of study — already has yielded a vast collection of parchment-thin skulls and shrunken heads believed to be more than 500 years old, along with quantities of rare gold and silver artifacts and Spanish pottery.

The most recent and most exciting discovery was a clam-shell bearing a carefully scratched map of the area and the letters CALOS — undoubtedly the name of the tribe's Chief Calos.

Already the collection has been valued at over \$100,000 by a national insurance company. Some of it is on display in Sarasota.

"We'd like to have a display in Homestead," said Fales, "but so far nobody has offered us a suitable place." Eventually, the group hopes, a museum will be provided to preserve the ancient mementoes.

These explorers are convinced they are writing some new chapters in South Florida's mysterious early history.

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