

LIFESTYLES



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Florida's LOST PEOPLE

Locally produced TV premier to provide clues on those who called Florida home for 12,000 years

By **MAUREEN BASHAW**
News-Press staff writer

The mystical music of a flute floats in unison with the rain drops dancing on a river of grass as the journey begins. A voice, smooth and low, guides you back thousands of years to the time of Florida's first settlers.

The narrator begins the story: "They lived and loved, dreamed and died here. But none remain to tell us how they fared."
It's up to the archeologists, those diggers of clues to past civilizations, to piece together the days of their lives.



C. BROWN

And it's up to TV audiences to tune in to "Shadows and Reflections: Florida's Lost People," a 30-minute video on the American Indians who inhabited Florida for 12,000 years. It premieres Monday at 10:30 p.m. on the local PBS station WGPU, Channel 30, cable channel 3.

The video, produced by Cotten Brown, 36, and filmed and directed by his brother, Stuart Brown, 34, of CHAOS Productions in Fort Myers, helps

celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Florida Anthropological Society. It's funded by a \$40,000 grant from the Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources.

But don't get the idea this is a dull, academic video. "We wanted to make a film about the ancient cultures of Florida without viewers necessarily knowing anything about archeology or ever wanting to know any-

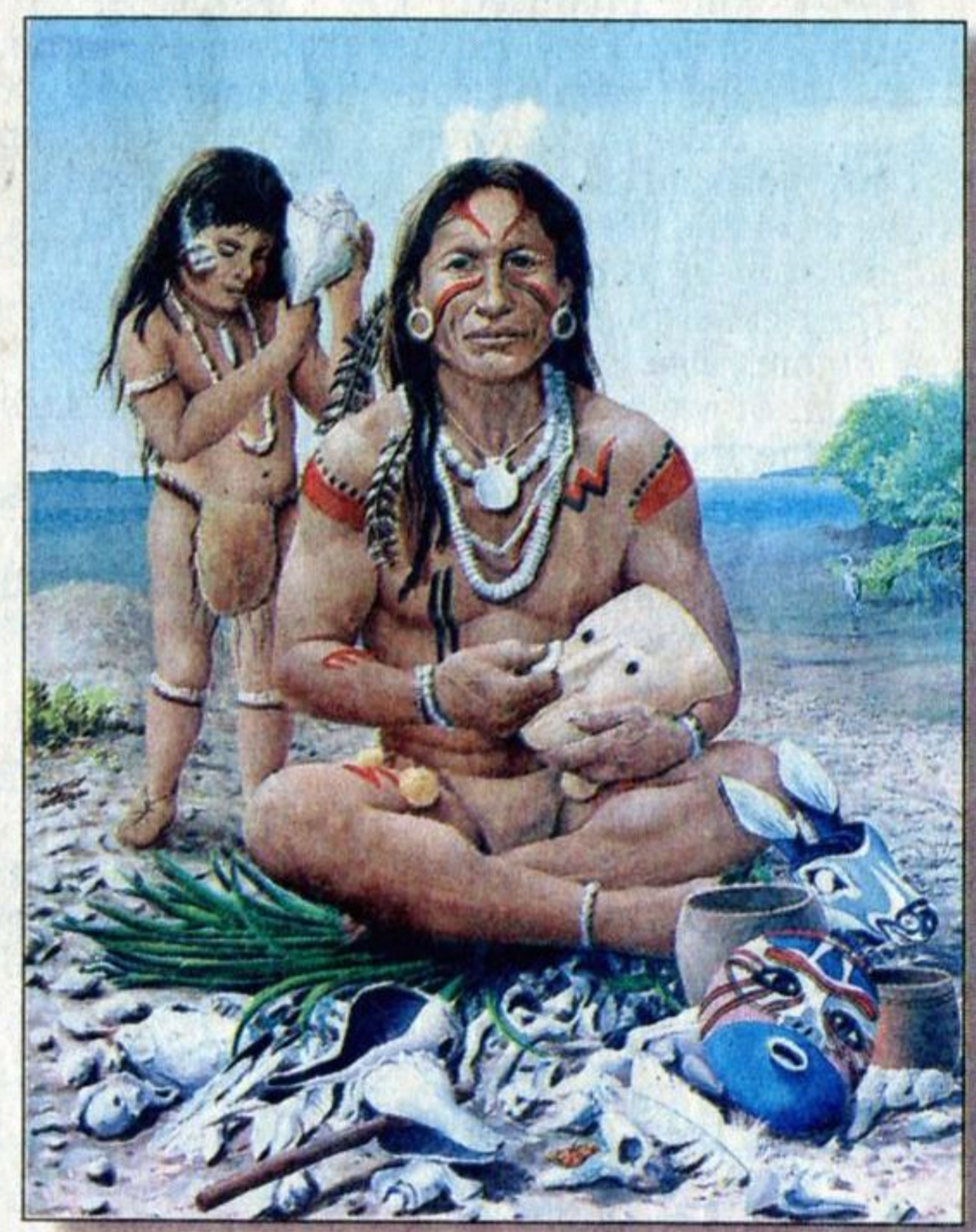
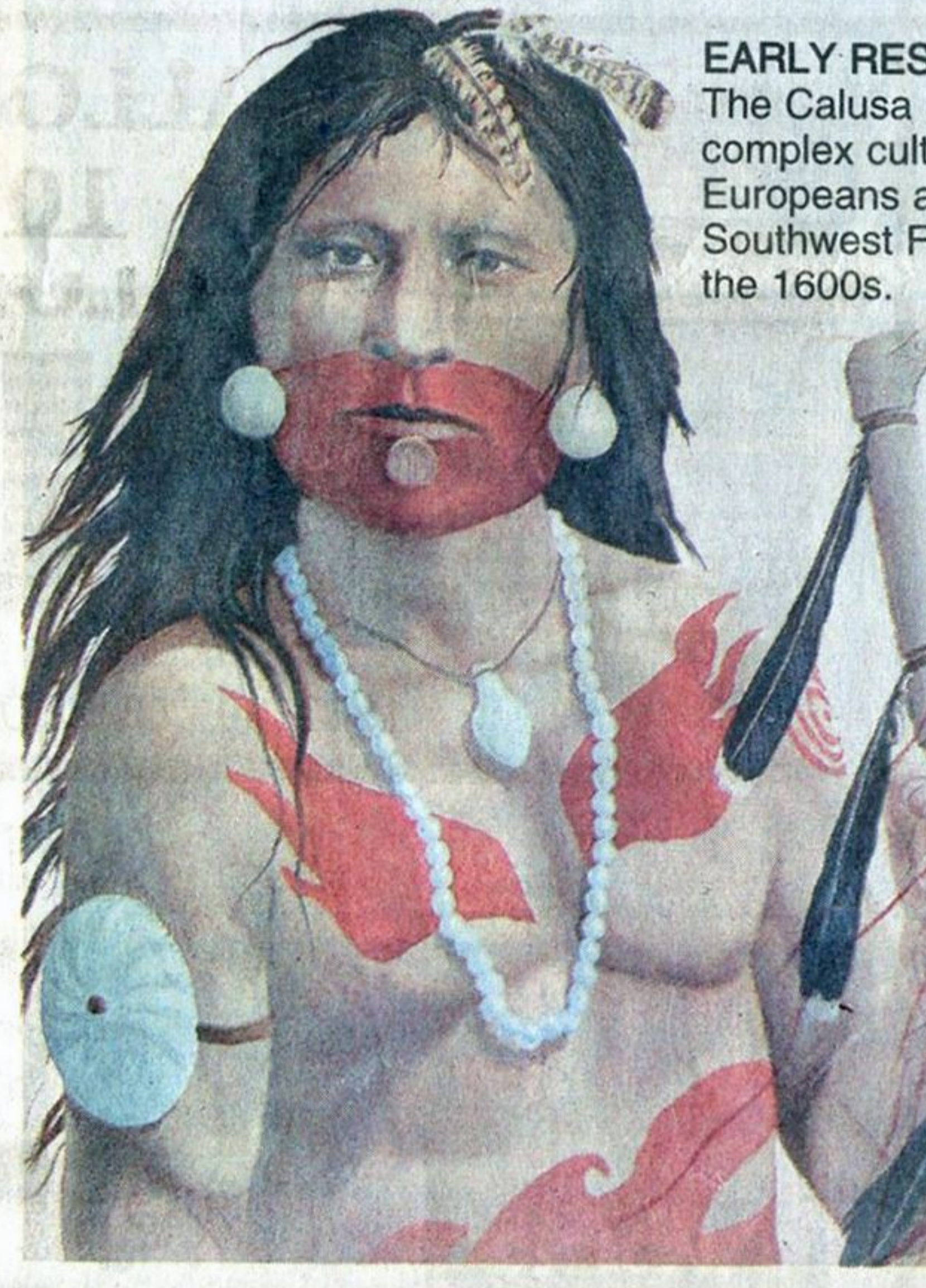


S. BROWN

thing about it," says Brent Weisman, a professor of anthropology at the University of South Florida and the video's executive producer.

See **PREMIERE / 8E**

EARLY RESIDENTS: The Calusa had a complex culture when Europeans arrived in Southwest Florida in the 1600s.



Illustrations by THEODORE MORRIS/
Special to the News-Press

MASK MAKING: A Calusa artisan and his helper.

Viewing

■ **WHAT:** "Shadows and Reflections: Florida's Lost People," a 30-minute documentary produced and directed by CHAOS Productions of Fort Myers

■ **WHEN:** Premieres at 10:30 p.m. Monday on local PBS station WGPU, Channel 30, cable channel 3.

■ **WHY:** The documentary was created for the Florida Anthropological Society with a grant from the Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources, to promote awareness of Florida's history.



PREMIERE: Echoes of the past

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"The purpose of this video is to tell the story of Florida in language everyone can understand," Cotten Brown says.

It's a story that has the Brown brothers awe-struck.

"Where we walk, they walked," Stuart Brown says. "I think we have a tendency to feel like we're the discoverers, but people have been in Florida for a long, long time — not just since the first land boom in Miami in the '20s."

Until the Spanish explorers landed on Florida shores in the 16th century, tribes of American Indians lived along the mangrove forests, creating cultures as complex as any in the 20th century.

Tribes rich in history

St. Augustine writer Marshall Riggan wrote the script that's laced together with voice-overs by Naples resident Peter Thomas (a frequent "Nature" and "Nova" narrator) and accompanied by ethereal music composed by Kat Epple of North Fort Myers. The video weaves together images painted by Sarasota artist Ted Morris with interviews with archeologists to tell the story of Florida's early people.

There are hunters killing giant mammoths and mastodons with nothing but flint-tipped spears and knives. There are women sitting in circles talking as they shape clay into bowls, some plain and probably used to eat from, others ornate enough to accompany people to their graves.

There are men hauling nets teeming with fish, women roasting fish on wood fires, children playing beneath the setting sun.

And there are the chieftans, their bodies tattooed, their faces covered with brilliantly painted masks, presiding at ceremonial burials.

There's a scene at Mound Key, an island in Estero Bay that archeologists consider this the imperial and ceremonial center of the Calusa.

The clues for all of the film's images come from skeletal remains, pieces of broken clay pots and masks, head-dresses, weapons, paintings and writings by the Spanish explorers and other European settlers who took the land from the American Indians.

Unlike the settlers who came after them, the Calusa and other tribes lived in Florida for thousands of years with-



THEODORE MORRIS/Special to the News-Press

POTANO QUEEN: The Potano were a warlike people who lived in north central Florida.

out spoiling the land.

"They were here for 12,000 years and they took from the land only what they needed," Morris says.

State's rich heritage

Morris hopes this video will help people, especially children, understand some of Florida's rich heritage.

"People should appreciate who went before us," he says.

Epple thinks the video will help Florida's current population under-

stand something about the state's roots. "It gives you a connection with all the people who used to live here," she says.

Some think their souls may still linger in the shadows of the mangroves and the reflections of the rivers.

The narrator ends the story:

"Who's not to say they are not with us still, silent companions accompanying us on our journey."

And the music of a flute fades, like echoes from the past.



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