

# ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

One of the most interesting aspects of archaeology is being able to come up with multiple interpretations for an artifact. Oftentimes, the events that led to the creation and deposition of an artifact happened so long ago, there's not enough information left behind to be absolutely certain of what an artifact is, what it was used for, and how it got there. In these cases, the most we can do is form interpretations based on educated observations of whatever little information we can find about that artifact. This month's artifact is an example of such a case.

Another idea is that this object could've possibly been used as a blade for a plane iron, a tool commonly used in woodworking. "Kearney" could just be the name of the manufacturer who produced this object. There is not enough evidence to substantiate any of these theories, however, so the questions of what this object is and what it was used for remain unanswered.

This artifact (pictured below) is something of a mystery. It is a pointed metal plate less than 7 centimeters long with a raised tab in the center. The name "Kearney" is imprinted along the surface. There are different ideas as to what this object might be and what "Kearney" might be referring to. One idea is that this object could potentially be a surveying tool. It may have belonged to Major James Kearney, who was assigned to the Southern Division under Major General Andrew Jackson in 1816 (Beers, 1942), hence the inscription on the object bearing his last name.



*Paul Crumlish,  
hmdb.org  
(2012)*

One question we can answer is where this object was found. It was recovered along the road to the Fort Basinger military trail. Located in Highlands County off the shore of the Kissimmee River, Fort Basinger was constructed by U.S. soldiers led by Colonel Zachary Taylor during the Second Seminole War. It was named after William E. Basinger, a U.S. army lieutenant who died during the Dade Massacre in 1835 (Lawton, 1961). The rich history behind the location where this object was found alludes to the fascinating but unknown truth behind this artifact.



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#### Works Cited

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