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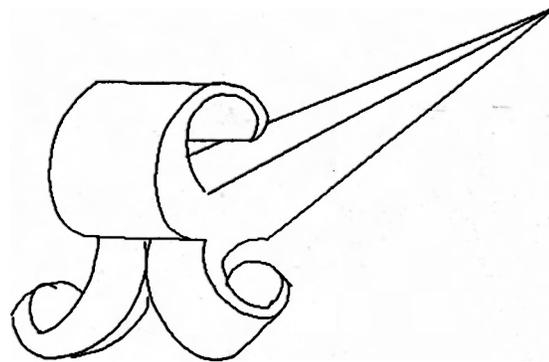
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The Florida CLINKER BREAKER

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A Spanish Puzzle Steve Bloom

Some time ago, a friend who is a professional archeologist, show me an example of ironwork dating from the early Spanish missions in Florida. The object was a tapering spike with the broad end subdivided into three parts. One part was slightly tapered and curled back over the spike. The other two parts were spread approximately 120 degrees apart, recurved towards the pointed end of the spike and were fluke-like. The overall length of the object was approximately 9" (with other examples ranging from 6 to 9" long) and it could have been forged from 1/2" square stock. These spikes are relatively rare and are typically found associated with wall timbers in rooms (they are usually recovered on or near the charred remains of wall timbers). That is about all that is known about them. Now ... how where they made, were they a spike, and what was their actual function? Next month, I'll tell you what I think, but meanwhile think about it.



A Spanish Cleat?

Steve Bloom

One of the realities of life in Spanish Florida was the need to keep food out of the reach of the wee beasties that are still much with us in Florida. There was also the need to light by candles. The solution to these problems was to sink a hook into a ceiling beam and suspend a tray or a light fixture from a rope. When access was needed, the object could be lowered to a reasonable height off the floor. Such a tray can be seen in St. Augustine Antigua (the historical area in St. Augustine).

There was thus a need to tie the rope to something. I suspect that the piece of ironwork described in the last issue of the Clinker Breaker was a cleat used to secure the rope. In general, there would be no need to have a multiplicity of possible heights, since two would do ('up' and 'down'). This could be accomplished by tying two loops in the rope, one in the middle of the rope (the 'up' position - see Fig.I) and one on the end of the rope (the 'down' position - see Fig.II). The lower two limbs which curve back towards the wall would securely hold a loop (with perhaps the rope running between the limbs). When the fixture was 'up', the slack could be neatly handled by flipping the 'down' loop over the curl of metal on the top of the cleat. As least that's my guess - what's yours?

