

BISHOPS HAMMOCK, BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Bishops Hammock is one of the many Everglades tree islands or hammocks that were occupied by various South Florida aborigines for about three thousand years. East of the Conservation Areas all of the hammocks are privately owned and are in constant danger of destruction by the developer. In the past, such sites have been salvaged by excavation. Permission to excavate the Bishops Hammock site, located just east of levee 35A in an area which is developing rapidly, was granted by Mr. and Mrs. James Swift.

The site was excavated in two stages, the first was from April through July, 1971 and the second from January through May, 1974. Since no excavations were done on the property between these periods, this report treats the two together. The site, 8Bd66, is located in Section 18, Township 49S, Range 41E. Presently the hammock, which measures approximately 150 by 200 feet, is covered on the north edge by Brazilian peppers and a large ficus tree. On the south part of the mound was one lone bald cypress, the remnant of an old stand.

Excavations

After the survey and contour readings were taken, a grid of five by five foot units was laid out (Fig. 1). During the earlier excavations the excavation units were placed on the base lines for maximum retrieval. During the later excavation, the same grid and datum was used and the work continued by expanding the original area to include the higher part of the site and the perimeter. A total of thirty three five by five foot squares were excavated, all in arbitrary six inch levels.

Ceramic Artifacts

Glades Plain is the predominant pottery type found at the site. Because it was manufactured during the entire range of time from the Florida Transitional period through the Glades I, II, and III periods it alone is not a good indicator of duration of site occupation. However, most of the recognized decorated types of the Glades pottery series were represented and indicate occupation throughout the Glades tradition.

The Florida Transitional period (Bullen 1959) was marked by a number of very early Glades gritty ware sherds and several pieces of early St. Johns thick, chalky ware. The Glades I period was indicated by a small number of Ft. Drum Punctated and Ft. Drum Rim

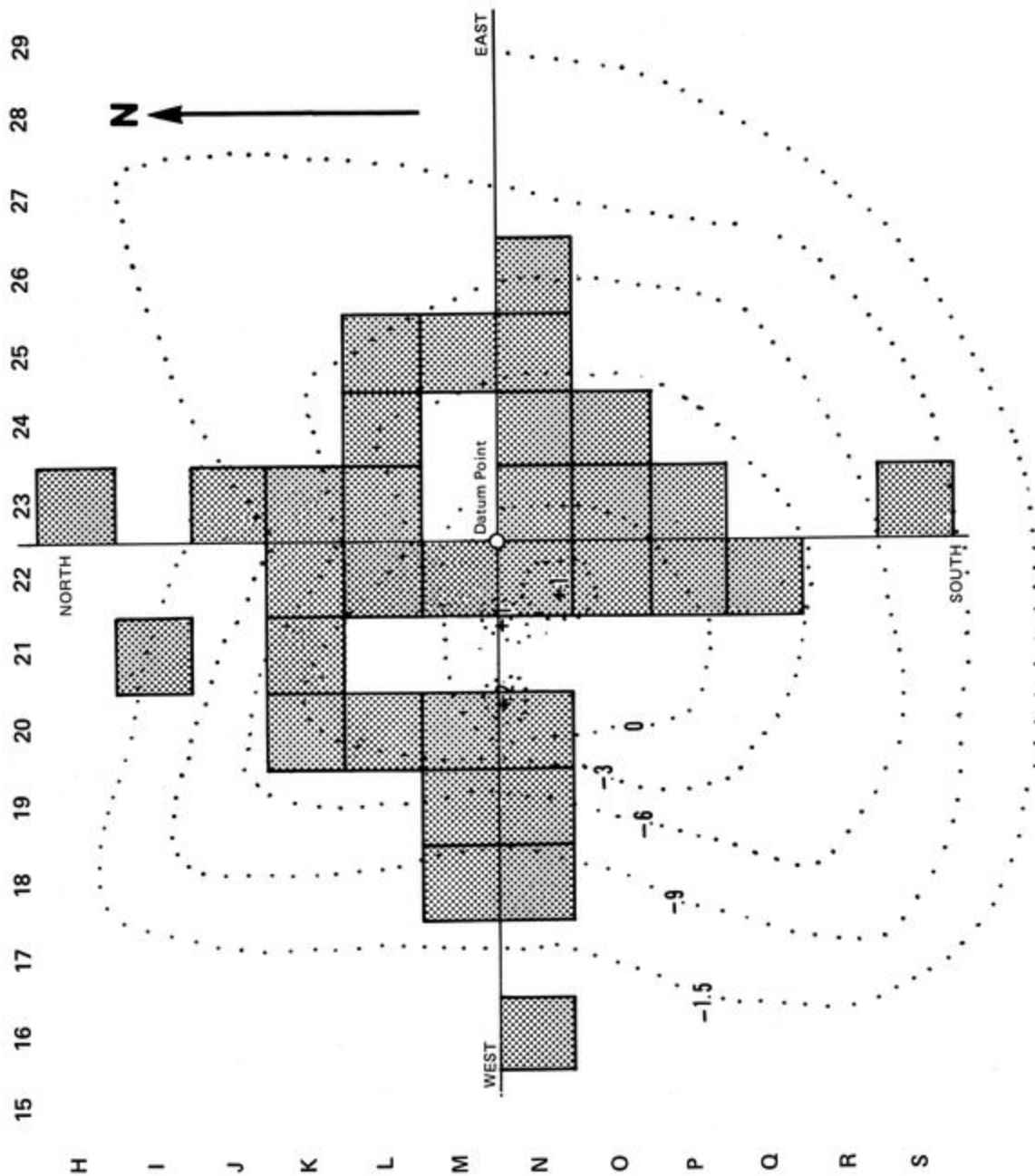


Fig. 1. Contours and excavation units. Contour lines labeled in feet relative to datum.

Ticked Sherds (John Griffin, personal communication, 1968). Eight sherds of a probable Ft. Drum variant were found (Goggin 1964:171), all belonging to the same pot but found in different levels in adjoining different squares. The two lines of punctations are not continuous, but are in intervals around the rim.

Glades II types present were Miami Incised, Dade Incised, Key Largo Incised, Opa Locka Incised and Peace Camp Plain (Mowers and Williams 1972). Representing the Glades III period were Glades Tooled and Surfside, plus the St. Johns Check Stamped which accounts for a large percentage of the final tally of ceramics. A substantial number of Belle Glade sherds were found throughout the mound. This ware has a wide areal distribution in the Glades region (Table 1).

A Glades Plain variant, tentatively called Broward Plain, has been separated from the general grouping. It is buff to light gray, with soft eroded surface but a hard irregular core. When areal distribution is determined and this type becomes better known, formal definition may be made (Table 1).

Bishops Hammock contains many unclassified sherds. A large number of these can be identified only as being from outside southeast Florida. The arrival and departure of many waterborne visitors to the Everglades hammocks may account for this variety of types (Fig. 2).

Non-ceramic Artifacts

The basic hand tool or shell celt made from the Strombus gigas shell was found in quantity. Analysis of these celts showed blanks, adzes, and axes were present (Fig. 3). Their numerical distribution followed the same pattern of Laxson's study of 664 celts (Laxson 1964) which showed blanks most common and axes least common. These tools were probably used in the construction of shelters, dug-outs, paddles, and the like and in the preparation of skins. Such celts, used in many ways, were probably an important tool in everyday life. The largest number of celts were found in levels 2, 3 and 4 (Table 2), unlike the Markham Park No. 2 site, where more were found in levels 5, 6 and 7 (Williams and Mowers 1977).

Busycon tools were next in importance (Table 2; Fig. 4). Each has the truncated beak, the notch in the outer whorl and the hole in the opposite wall of the shell with either one or two holes in the top. The haft was placed through the notch to the opposite hole and twisted slightly against the columella to hold it firmly in place. Lashing probably completed the process. The uses of the Busycon contrarium were fourfold. The animal could be eaten; the columella could be used for a pick or chisel and the remainder of the shell used for a dipper or ladle;

Table 1. Pottery distribution by levels, all squares.

Pottery Types	L-1	L-2	L-3	L-4	L-5	L-6	L-7	Total
Glades Tooled	83	4	1					88
St. Johns Check Stamped	860	621	52	5				1538
Peace Camp Plain	26	31	2					59
Surfside Incised	2	9	3					14
Broward Plain (tentative)	166	141	9					316
Key Largo Incised	2	11	2	4				19
Dade Incised		4						4
Opa Locka Incised		1						1
Miami Incised		5						5
Ft. Drum Rim Ticked		3	20		1			24
Ft. Drum Punctated	5	8	5	1				19
Ft. Drum Rim Grooved			1					1
Pasco Plain		4						4
Belle Glade Plain	333	99	76	6				514
Glades Plain	3653	5277	1880	356	34	8	3	11211
St. Johns Plain	523	384	128	26				1061
St. Johns Decorated	1	11			2			14
Glades Red	12	7	17	6	1			43
Glades Plain Rim Grooved	2	8						10
unclassified decorated	1	20	4	8	5			38
unclassified ware	726	1261	502	191	13			2693
ceramic object	1		1					2
modern glazed ware	15	4						19
Totals	6411	7913	2703	603	56	8	3	17697

Table 2. Non-ceramic artifacts by levels, all squares.

Artifacts	L-1	L-2	L-3	L-4	L-5	L-6	L-7	Total
shark vertebrae	6	25	39	4	2			76
shark teeth	69	103	42	6	2	1		223
shark teeth (perforated)	3	5	5	1				14
bone bi-points	30	89	34	8	2	1	2	166
bone socketed points	4	7	10	2	1			24
bone gouges		2		2				4
bone awls		1						1
bone single point		1						1
bone double stemmed point	1							1
Strombus celts	12	36	21	14	4	2		89
Busycon tools & fragments	68	75	53	53	16	1		266
columnella tools & tips	28	21	18	7	3			77
worked shell fragments	3	9	8	3	1			24
worked bone	7	24	17	9	3			60
worked stone	1	1					2	4
Macrocallista fragments	25	34	34	12	10			115
stingray spline (worked)				1				1
antler	20	28	13	11	4			76
modern artifacts	3	1						4
Totals	280	462	294	133	48	5	4	1226

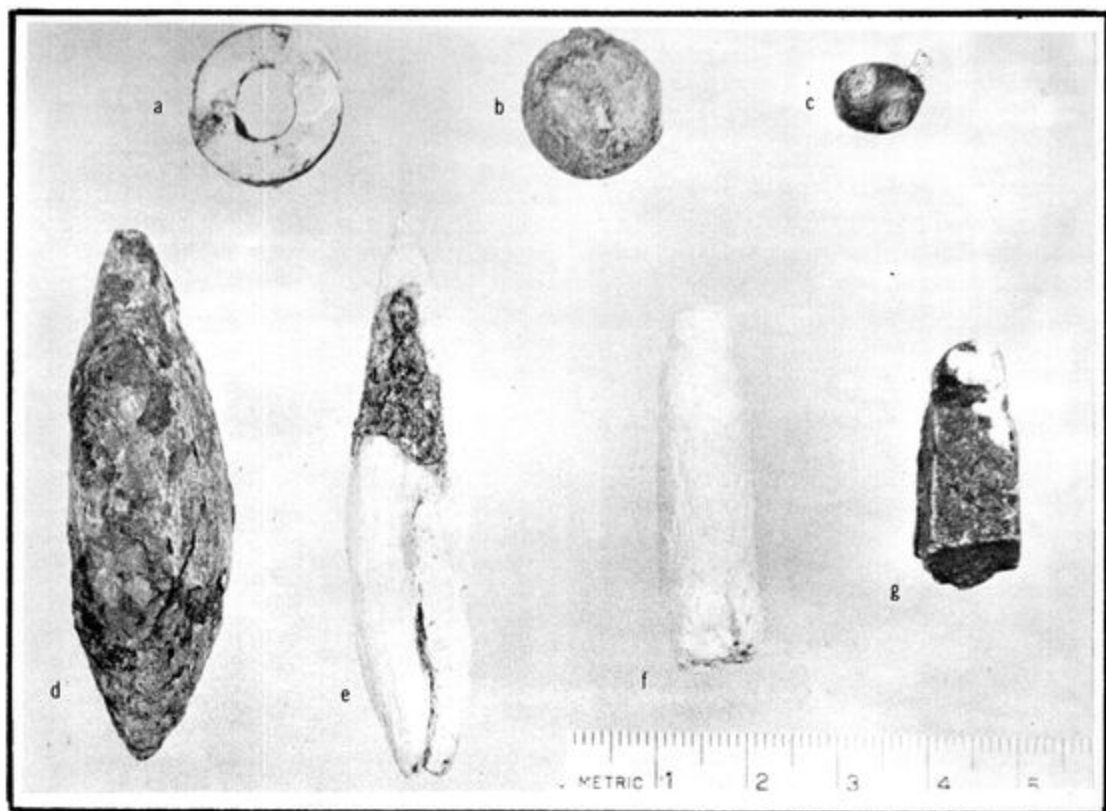


Fig. 6. Miscellaneous artifacts; a, shell ring; b, unfired musket ball; c, European bead with insets; d-g, columella pendants.

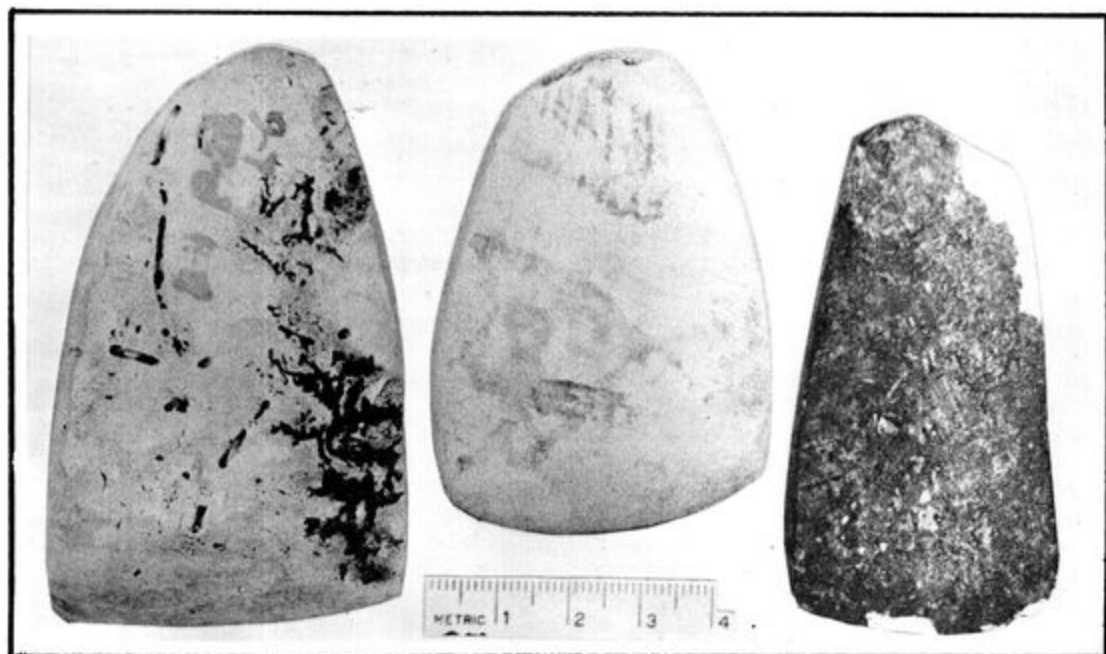


Fig. 7. Three miniature celts with adze blades (pointing down).

and the whole shell, slightly modified with the notches and holes, could be hafted (Goggin and Sommer 1949:72).

The columella tool and pendants made from the Pleuroploca gigantea were found in varying forms throughout the site (Table 2). An exceptional columella chisel was found in square K-20 (Fig. 5). It was 21 1/2 centimeters long and is notched for hafting. Also found were smaller columella pendants (Fig. 6) and three miniature celts, all with adze blades, possibly ceremonial in function (Fig. 7).

Bone

Some bone artifacts show evidence of the process used in their manufacture. The end of a deer cannon bone was ringed with a cut. A three inch small animal bone has a saw mark near the top; another three inch small animal bone was ringed and cut midway of the bone (Fig. 8). Four specimens of carved bone pins, pegged-top, flat-headed, side notches, and plain, and numerous bone points were excavated (Fig. 9).

Burial

The one human burial, probably adult female, found at Bishops Hammock was in grid N-19, level 5 (Fig. 10). It was a primary, flexed burial with the skull pointed toward the west and the face turned downward. Inside the mandible was a deer antler tip. A number of Ampullaria snail shells were around the skull and fire stones, fractured by heat, were under it. Bits of charcoal were intermingled with the soil in the area of the rib cage. Concretion had been forming at this level in the site and completely incased the bones. The burial was lifted in two sections and removed to Florida Atlantic University Anthropology Department for analysis.

Historic Artifacts

Two historic artifacts deserve mention. A small oval bead was found with four insets and blue, silver and red stripes of either glass, enamel or paint. The other is a musket ball from a percussion trade rifle. It had never been fired (Fig. 6).

Summary and Conclusions

All indications show that Bishops Hammock was a small, thriving village or camp, occupied most heavily during the Glades II and Glades III periods. Travel from coast to coast was evidently a way of life even at that time. The 1841-42 map by Sprague (Fig. 11) shows the Everglades much like it must have been during the time of the Tequesta Indian. On the map, routes of Major Child and Captain Wright followed the age-old routes of the Indians from island to island. A modern infrared satellite map made 132 years later in 1974 (Fig. 12) still shows