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TWO WEEDEN ISLAND PERIOD BURIAL MOUNDS, FLORIDA

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MACKENZIE BURIAL MOUND

The lake region of central Florida has suffered from a more than normal scarcity of archaeological excavation and reporting. Except for C. B. Moore's unusually brief comments on mounds which he excavated in the 1890's (Moore, 1895), we have only a report by Sleight (1949) on a mound which had been badly disturbed by the time the investigators arrived and one by the Cabeens (1955) on a surface collection from a village site on an island in Lake Harris.

The map (Fig. 1) and Plate IV, an aerial photograph of Bird Island, indicate, respectively, the location of Lake Weir and the position of the MacKenzie mound on Bird Island. It is almost certain that this little 45-acre patch of land was an island when it was occupied by the Indians.

Surface material is nowhere abundant, but a few sherds can be picked up almost any place where the land is not swampy. The apparent lack of any midden concentrations dissuaded us from attempts at village excavation. A listing of our surface collection follows:

Safety Harbor Incised	1
St. Johns Check Stamped	6
St. Johns Plain	22
Dunns Creek Red	2
Pasco Plain	2
Unclassifiable complicated-st'd., sand-y'd.	1.
Sand-tempered plain	9
Projectile point, Pinellas type, broken	1

Except for the Safety Harbor Incised sherd, this assemblage is in agreement with that from the burial mound (see below) for a late Weeden Island (early St. Johns II) dating. The Safety Harbor Incised sherd was collected on the mound and was probably associated with a single, badly disturbed, intrusive burial (Burial 23)

which had a fragment of blue glass bead in definite association.

The mound stood at the western edge of the village area. It was about 3 feet high and roughly 75 feet in diameter. There were perhaps a few more sherds on its surface than was to be expected for the island generally.

EXCAVATION

The mound was staked out in a grid system, with the east-west axis bisecting the apparent center of the structure and the north-south axis of the grid along the west edge of the mound (Fig. 6). Initially, 5-foot squares were excavated in arbitrary 6-inch levels. This practice was adhered to as far as possible, particularly for recording the occasional sherds in mound fill. It was, of course, necessary to resort to stripping techniques at many points.

Burials, sherd concentrations, and artifacts other than isolated sherds were precisely located by grid coordinates and depths below an arbitrary datum plane. Burials were photographed and, due to their poor condition, reburied or left alone, depending on specific conditions and locations.

A few sherds were removed from the top of the pottery cache in the east end of the R-5 trench before its existence was ascertained. Except for these, the pottery deposit was excavated and recorded by cleaning off as many sherds as possible in a 5-foot wide strip and then taking a number of elevations at key points, followed by a photograph. Sherds were then sacked by apparently related groups, and the process was repeated a second time. Twice over in this fashion was sufficient for adequate recording and removal in all cases.

The excavation plan and profile (Figs. 6 and 7) present basic structural and location data. Features of some interest are the the concentration of burials near the center of the mound and on the old ground surface, the small pottery vessels generally above the burials in the fill, the mass pottery cache in a shallow pit at the east end of the mound, and two small sherd concentrations on the west side of the structure.

sheet mica. Sheets were 3 to 4 inches in their maximum dimension. None of them showed any traces of workmanship.

Conch Shell

A number of fragments of *Busycon* shell were found concentrated around Burial 1, the infant. Although it had been badly broken and disturbed by the plow, there are some indications in the parts present that the shell had been fashioned into a dipper.

Conch Shell Beads

Shell beads (Pl. IX, A) were found only in association with Burial 1. Forty specimens were recovered, representing perhaps one-half of those actually present. Bead varieties were as follows:

5 barrel-shaped, 1/2 by 3/4 inches

7 small disc-shaped, 3/16 by 1/16 inches

28 large disc-shaped, 1/2 by 1/8 inches

Numbers of the disc-shaped beads, both large and small, were adhering in rows with the perforations lined up, but none of the rows were adhering to each other. I would guess from this that all of the beads were from a single string.

Glass Beads

One-half of one bead, the light-blue Ichtucknee type (Goggin, 1952) Spanish-period trade bead, was found with Burial 23. Since most of this burial had been removed by the plow, there can be little doubt of its intrusive status. It will not be referred to further.

MOUND CONSTRUCTION AND SEQUENCE

The major concern in excavating a burial mound is reconstruction of the mound-building methods and the sequence of events. Unless one does this, contexts and associations can be badly misinterpreted. With this information, both a meaningful descrip-

tion of the structure and some informed guesses as to its function and the ceremonialism involved in its construction are possible.

Apparently, the ground was not cleaned for construction of the MacKenzie mound. Instead, fourteen bodies (in the area excavated), thirteen bundles and one flexed (?) burial, were placed in shallow pits in the humus. Flexed Burials 9 and 10 and bundle Burials 2, 19, and 20, were laid on the surface. This simultaneous mass placement of bodies, mostly secondary burials, is, I think a definite indication that there was a community charnel house, perhaps one which also served as the temple. The two flexed bodies may represent the last two deaths, which, for some ceremonial reason, caused through the initiation of mound-building ceremonies the construction of this permanent place for the deposition of the accumulated remains.

I would think that the charred logs and charcoal, perhaps from a sacred temple fire, along with the first-mentioned sherd concentration were placed at the west edge of the burial area at this time.

The third phase was construction of the body of the mound. Clean sand, probably from a nearby beach area, was brought in and piled over the burials. The small pots, the sloped west-side sherd concentration, and the single and double skull burials were placed at this time as the fill was being piled up. Possible exceptions are Vessels 5 and 7 on the old humus level. The last items placed in the body of the mound were Burial 1, the infant, accompanied by a large number of conch shell beads, Vessel 1, and a conch shell dipper. I would think that these items represent, together, a single ceremonial deposit. The infant was probably sacrificed at this point in the ceremonies, infant sacrifice not being too uncommon in the Southeast. The Saturiba Timucua were one group who sacrificed children (Swanton, 1946, p. 762).

Quite probably, since they are the only ones of their kind, the single skull burial (Burial 15) and the double skull burial (Burial 17) had some special ceremonial function. They may have been treated as ceremonial objects rather than as burials *per se*.

The profile is confused between stakes 50 and 60 (Fig. 7). This confusion and the slope of the west end of the pottery cache certify that the main, or core, mound was complete before place-