STRATIGRAPHIC TESTS IN THE EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

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Originally published in
American Antiquity
vol. 15, 1950

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THE chronological picture in the Glades Area of southern Florida is based on the combined sequences for three subareas, Calusa, Okeechobee, and Tekesta (Goggin, 1947). The Tekesta sequence is perhaps most detailed, being the result of site seriation and of stratigraphic testing at Upper Matecumbe Key (Goggin and Sommer, 1949). Even in this subarea, however, further stratigraphic work is needed to fill out the picture.

An attempt was made to supply the necessary details during three days in January and February, 1949, when archaeological tests were conducted in the Everglades National Park, specifically on the headwaters of Shark River and in the Cape Sable area at the extreme southern tip of the state.[1] The National Park

[1] This was a joint project of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Florida, and the Everglades National Park. A grant made by the Viking Fund, Inc. to the former institution aided in the work, while the National Park Service furnished transportation, living quarters, and guide service. I am indebted to Dr. John Maclachlan, Head Professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Florida, for making it possible to leave the University between academic semesters for this project. The thorough and pleasant cooperation of the Park Service and particularly of Dan Beard, Superintendent of the Everglades National Park, is also acknowledged. I also wish gratefully to recognize the important help of the other party members who cheerfully resisted the superlative fishing attractions in the neighborhood for the hard and hot work of excavation. Helpful laboratory assistance was rendered by Mary Godwin, Lois Watkins, Robert Spangenberg, and Bernard Boyle. Illustrations were prepared by Robert Spangenberg.

Service was represented in this work by J. C. Harrington, Regional Archaeologist; Willard Dilley, Park Naturalist; and Paul Barnes, Ranger. Dr. John W. Goggin of Miami, Ripley Bullen of the Florida Park Service Archaeological Survey, and the writer made up the balance of the personnel.

Three sites were tested: Cane Patch and Rookery Mound on the Shark River, and site No. 1 near Bear Lake. These were chosen because it was believed that they would fill specific gaps in the chronological picture. It was planned also to work at Little Banana Patch, on the Shark River, but this was found to be too small and shallow to warrant testing.

Several months later, in April, two more days were spent making another test excavation. This was also at Bear Lake 1, but in another part of the site. Additional tests were planned for Bear Lake 2 and 3 but rain cut the work short.[2]

The status of chronological knowledge before the present work can be briefly summarized as follows. A broad cultural sequence had been constructed for South Florida, consisting of three major periods and several subdivisions, from early to late: Glades I, Glades IIa, IIb, Glades IIIa, IIIb, IIIc. In southeastern Florida (Tekesta subarea) the local sequence is as follows (with its broader temporal equivalent in parenthesis): Matecumbe Ia (Glades IIa), Matecumbe Ib (Glades IIb), Matecumbe IIa (Glades IIIa), Matecumbe IIb (Glades IIIb), and Matecumbe IIc (Glades IIIc).[3]

Matecumbe I is characterized ceramically by the Key Largo complex, a group of pottery types including Key Largo Incised, Miami Incised, and Matecumbe Incised. The first two appear in Ia times while the first and last type are characteristic of Period Ib. Matecumbe II is similarly distinguished by the Surfside complex, including Surfside Incised and Glades Tooled. The first is found in Period IIa, the second in IIb. The addition of European pottery and other materials to Glades Tooled marks Matecumbe IIc. These temporal units were all represented in the present work, as well as others not previously recognized.

SITES

Rookery Mound. This is a low black dirt midden located on Rookery Branch, one of the headwater streams of Shark River, approximately 8 miles above Tarpon Bay.[4] Rookery Branch, a long mangrove-bordered finger stretching out into the Everglades, has undoubtedly been an important waterway for travel from the glades to the coast. Not far away in the Everglades proper are similar sites of the same age (Goggin, MS).

The site lies on the right bank of the creek, separated from the water by a rank growth of maiden cane. This mound is approximately 80 feet long on the major axis which lies 30 degrees west of north, and has a width of 35 to 40 feet. It rises a little more than 2 feet above the surrounding swamp. At the present time the site shows evidence of not too distant Seminole occupation, the heavy surface growth of sugar cane and a few citrus trees being reliable markers of their former presence.

Rookery Mound has been only recently known. It was first called to attention by Charles Brookfield who made a surface collection here in 1947.[5] No previous investigator has noted it, unless this is the site said by John K. Small (1924, p. 82) to be at the head of Shark River.

A test pit was made on the west, or far slope of the midden, slightly north of the middle of the site. It was 5 feet square and excavated in 6 inch levels. At an approximate depth of 17 inches cultural material disappeared in the gray marl. At a depth of 33 inches limestone was reached (below water level). The pit profile revealed, from top to bottom: 14 inches of black dirt and midden material, 3 inches of marl and small oyster shells, 4 inches of gray marl, and 9 inches of dark granular soil with fine crushed shell (freshwater species?).

Refuse was scattered through the black soil matrix, the only appreciable concentration being in the oyster shell zone at the bottom of the deposit. Shells were not abundant in the remainder of the material but they did form a small percentage of the total refuse. Marine

[2] Like the previous testing this was a joint project. Willard Dilley, Park Naturalist; Joseph Moore, Park Biologist; and other Park personnel assisted in the work. Several other volunteers also participated and their help is gratefully acknowledged.

[3] Goggin and Sommer (1949). Glades I was not positively known on the southeastern coast. A detailed summary of the archaeology of the Glades area as a whole is shortly forthcoming (Goggin, MS).

[4] This site is shown on a map in Brookfield and Griswold (1949).

[5] Material at Yale Peabody Museum, 142788-811.