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Notes on the Ten Thousand Islands, Florida

by Clarence B. Moore

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NOTES ON THE TEN THOUSAND ISLANDS, FLORIDA.

By CLARENCE B. MOORE.

The Ten Thousand Islands, which have been twice visited and twice written of by us,¹ were again the subject of our investigation during two seasons, the winter of 1906 and the winter of 1907. These islands (see accompanying map) fringe the coast of southwestern Florida for about 80 miles, along parts of the counties of Lee and Monroe, between the settlement known as Naples on the north and Cape Sable on the south.

In a former report we have spoken of Little Marco as the northern limit of the Ten Thousand Islands, but as the coast is bordered by small keys to Naples, about nine miles farther north, and as this place can be reached by an inside water-route, the most intelligent inhabitants of the Keys now speak of the Ten Thousand Islands as beginning at Naples.

Little Marco, it should be said, is not a key, but a settlement on the mainland, not far from Key Marco. The island next above Marco is not named Little Marco, but is known as "The Beach."

The settlement of Marco, at the northeastern extremity of Key Marco, the most important key of the Ten Thousand Islands, was again visited by us and a careful search made of all the shell territory adjacent. Near Marco we examined a section of a heap composed partly of shell and in part of kitchen refuse and the debris of fires, the last consisting of fine ash containing fish-bones, etc. In this midden refuse were numerous fragments of pottery of rather inferior ware, some bearing a simple incised decoration, others the imprint of cord. No doubt the key-dwellers used pottery only to a limited extent.

Among objects obtained by us at Marco were many pendants, two of which, of limestone, and two of shell, are shown in Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4.

As we have written in former reports, we gravely doubt that the grooved objects of shell and of stone, known as "plumb-bobs," among the keys, of which such great numbers have been found there, were used as sinkers for lines or fish-nets, though some are so coarsely made as to seem unfitted for ornament. Mr. Cushing,² among his wonderful discoveries at Marco, found fish-nets with sinkers in place, but none was in the form of the pendants found among the keys, while lines had sinkers of *Turbinella* shells with the whorls rudely battered off. The pendants are not found chiefly near the water, but distributed over such of the keys as have

¹ "Certain Antiquities of the Florida West-Coast." Journ. Acad. Nat. Sci. of Phila., Vol. XI, 1900.

² "Miscellaneous Investigation in Florida." Journ. Acad. Nat. Sci. of Phila., Vol. XIII, 1905.

³ "Preliminary Report on the Exploration of Ancient Key-Dweller Remains on the Gulf-Coast of Florida," by Frank Hamilton Cushing. Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. XXXV, No. 153, p. 38, 1897.