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General Problems of Florida Archaeology

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Mrs. STONE, of the Middle American Research Institute of Tulane University and Chairman of the Committee on Archeology of the Florida Historical Society, is a well known contributor to journals in her field and author of (*monographs*) Some Spanish Entradas (1932) and Masters in Marble (1938). Her present paper lists succinctly the problems open to us in Southern Florida and suggests some possibilities for their solution.

THE flat limestone peninsula of Florida has been thrust upward from the sea, leaving the southeastern portion slightly higher than the southwestern.¹ Of all the states in the Union, Florida is geologically the youngest² and is the only state whose Flora³ and Fauna⁴ are related both to the West Indies and to North America. This relationship is particularly evident in southern Florida.

Skirting this limestone peninsula, from Biscayne Key practically into Tampa Bay, are a host of small islands known popularly as reefs and keys. Technically, however, the only coral reefs are in the northeast. The southwestern maze of keys, namely those forming the Ten Thousand Islands, is what remains of an ancient, large island.⁵

Archaeological sites in Florida can be divided roughly into three categories: mounds, keys, and shell heaps. Taken as a whole, they suggest rather distinct periods of Florida occupation, each type in a measure revealing the culture of the people who built it. Yet over and through practically the entire area, sites have been used and reused, thereby making obvious the penetration of cultural thrusts from divers regions and at different times. This leaves a confusing, not-so-clearly-defined picture.

Florida mounds, as apart from the shell heaps and the keys, are found in quantity throughout the northern portion of the state. Although con-

1. Charles Schuchert, *Historical Geology of the Antillean-Caribbean Region* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1935), p. 243.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

3. Robert Francis Scharff, *Distribution and Origin of Life in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), p. 167; see also Charles T. Simpson. In *Lower Florida Wilds* (New York: Putnam, 1920).

4. Simpson, *op. cit.* and *Florida Plant Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

5. Schuchert, p. 256.