

# Further Excavations at Hialeah, Florida

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## FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT HIALEAH, FLORIDA

D. D. Laxson

This article pertains to excavations in the second midden (Dd-76, University of Florida records) of a cluster of three located in Section 35, Township 52, Range 40 east, Dade County, Florida (Site Hialeah No. 2, Fig. 1). Findings from the first hammock midden (Hialeah No. 1) were described in *The Florida Anthropologist* of March, 1953 (Laxson, 1953).

The midden is in the north-central portion of a roughly oblate shaped hammock, 500 feet NE-SW and 325 feet N-S, located 850 feet east of Peters Pike and 375 feet south of the Hialeah Garden Fill Company's road (Fig. 1). Elevation of the land in the area varies from six to ten feet above mean sea level. The midden slopes gradually to the north and west, but drops off sharply east and southeast. The highest point on the midden is a little over two feet above the terrain.

The largest banyan tree in the hammock was chosen as a bench mark. Angular measurements off all test pits were accurately made from this point by transit for the site map.

Aerial photographs of the region (FPL Map 271-782, 1950 Series) plainly show the remains of an old slough, 500 feet wide, running NE-SW and bisecting the hammock area. It can be traced easily southwest to the canalized Miami River at a point approximately one and one-half miles northwest of the junction of Peters Pike and Highway 27. It is thought not too fanciful to suppose that in the past it offered access to the area for the dugout canoes of the aborigines.

Since the vegetation at Hialeah No. 2 seemed different from that at the first site, the more common growth will be mentioned here. Trees are predominantly banyan and hackberry. Other vegetation includes myrsine, wax myrtle, trema, paw-paw, elderberry, swamp bay, Virginia creeper, wonder leaf, goldenrod, false nettle bush, groundsel, rouge bush, scarlet bush, and potato tree. Three kinds of ferns, swamp, Boston and shield, and two grapes, Simpson and Muscadine, were seen. The oldest present vegetation seems about fifty years old. There was evidence the hammock had been burned over.

No attention was paid to the fauna. However, several specimens of the nocturnal barn owl were observed and more than two dozen different butterflies were collected.

Digging started in March, 1953, and was completed in June. All test pits were five feet square, shallow, and in close proximity to one another,

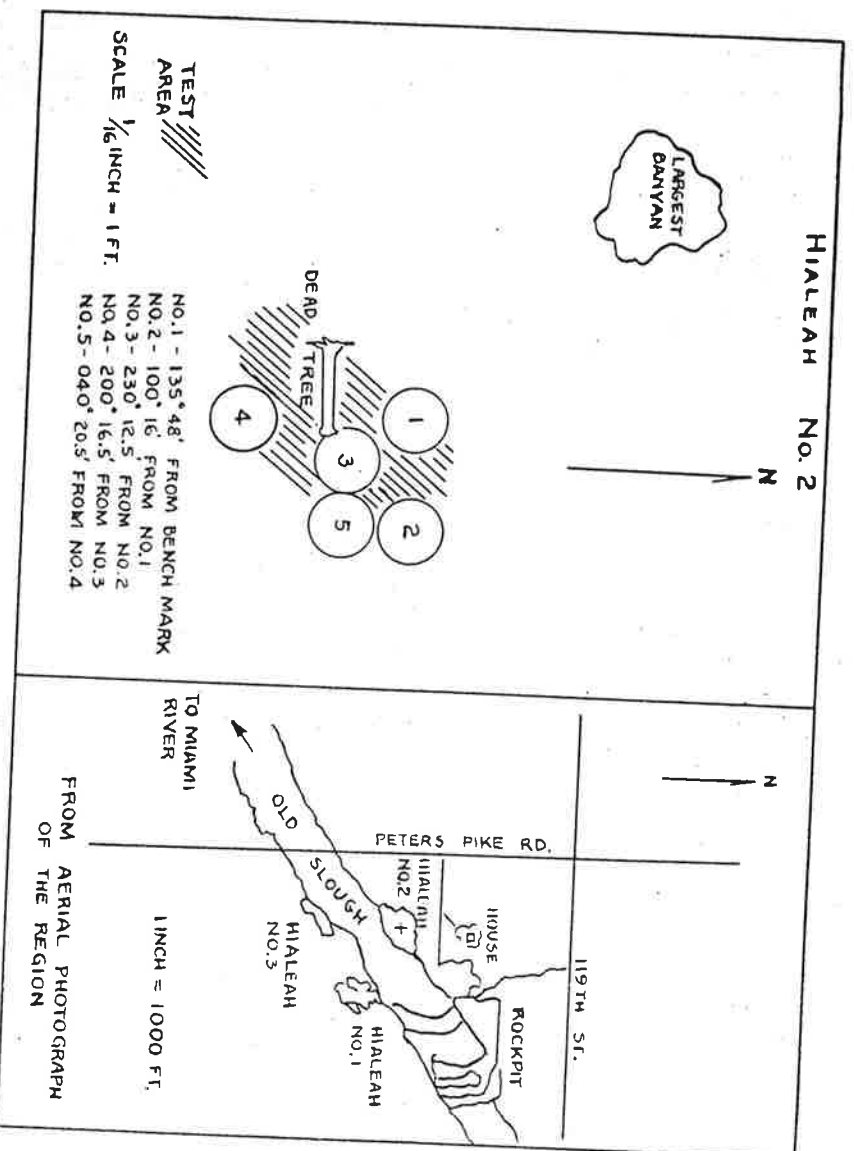


Fig. 1. Left, excavation plan of Hialeah No. 2 midden site. Right, location and relative positions of three middens.

the material being fairly well concentrated. Soil in the tested area was muck and quartz sand over limestone, honeycombed with solution holes. The layer just above the limestone was a hard breccia of minute bone and shell fragments in marl.

Test results are given stratigraphically in the accompanying tabulation. No 8-12 inch zone is shown for Pits IV and V as the underlying limestone was encountered at a depth of eight inches in these pits. Pottery types are illustrated in the previous article (Laxson, 1953).

As the tabulation shows, Glades Tooled sherds were limited to or heavily concentrated in the superior 0-4 inch zone in all five tests. Clearly this superior zone may be classified as of the Glades III period, post 1125 A.D. (Coggin, 1950, pp. 10-11).

Of considerable interest was the finding of a single San Marcos Stamped sherd in the 0-4 inch zone of Test II. Such pottery is representative of the St. Augustine period of northeastern Florida, circa 1600-1720 A.D. (Coggin, 1950, p. 10). So far as is known this is the southernmost point at which an example of this ceramic type has been found.

This zone also contained all of the eight blue glass beads uncovered. These beads are typical of those used by Seminole during the 19th century.

TABLE 1. VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SHERD TYPES.

[illegible]

is of iron, large pieces of turtle bone, and several Cal. 30-40 Krag cartridge cases, adopted by the U. S. Army in 1893, also were found in this zone and on the surface. They may pertain to Seminole using the hammock or to other hunters around the turn of the century.

The 0-4 inch top zone of Hialeah No. 2 contains evidence of the use of this hammock by at least three if not four groups of people the aborigines of Glades III times, possible refugees from the St. Augustine area, Seminole, and the users of Krag rifles.

In spite of the lack of definitively decorated sherds such as Key Largo ware, it may be suggested that lower zones represent Glades II times. Lack of Glades Tooled sherds would so argue. At Hialeah No. 1, short bone points were limited to Glades II deposits. Presence of these points in Pits I and IV between depths of four and eight inches, and their absence in higher elevations in both middens, also would argue that the lower zones of Hialeah No. 2 are Glades II in date.

One or two of these bone points seem to have some black material adhering to them. It may be pitch or asphaltum used to fasten them to shafts.

Food remains include crabs, snails, and clams, *Busycon*, *Strombus gigas* and *Macrocalista* shell fish, fish vertebrae, sharks, turtles, snakes, and alligators. Mammals are represented by bones of the opossum, otter (*Lutra radensis*), rabbit, deer, gray fox (*Urocyon cinereus argenteus*), and deer. The only identified bird bone is the beak of the white egret (*Casmerodius*).

This list is extensive, compared with many archaeological sites, probably because conditions for the preservation of bone were favorable. Apparently, the aborigines at the midden were omnivorous. Attention is called to food originating at the coast or in the ocean, indicating the inhabitants may have ranged over a fairly large area for their sustenance. The old slough, mentioned earlier, may have been important to them as an avenue to other areas.

Appreciation is expressed here for the help of the following people: Mr. Jack Christiansen, owner of the land; Prof. Roy Woodbury of the University of Miami for identification of the flora, Mr. Richard Lessler, of Miami Edison, who collected the butterflies; Dr. Harley B. Sherman of the University of Florida, for identification of mammals; Dr. Pierce Brodtkorb for identification of the bird beak; Mr. Ripley P. Bullen, curator of social sciences, Florida State Museum, for invaluable aid on typology and preparation of the manuscript; Mr. Robert Master, of Florida Power and Light, and Mr. Noel Truman, of Eastern Air Lines, for help with the digging and screening, the aerial photos and the map.

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Hialeah, Florida