

# THE ARCH CREEK SITE, ARCHEOLOGY REPORT.

## INTRODUCTION.

The Arch Creek site, located where the Old Military Road crosses the Natural Bridge over Arch Creek, was known to the earliest white settlers of Dade Co., Florida. Today, it is the Northwest corner of U.S.#1 and I35 th. St., North Miami Beach. It is located within the S.E I/4 of Section 28, in Range 42E, Township 52S.

South of Arch Creek, the upper end of Biscayne Bay was less than a mile away, by Indian dug-out, and westward the Creek leads to the Glades, so that game and shell-fish was near at hand. The high, dry hammock, with deep water access, made an ideal village site.

Dan Laxson, of Hialeah, made an extensive investigation of the site, (Fla. Anth., 1957). He also helped us choose the best area to dig in, for the present excavation. Arthur Marler, of the Broward Co. Archaeological Soc., also reported on his findings here, in 1967. Dr. John Goggins was familiar with the site, but so far as we know, never actually dug here.

When General Motors purchased the area for a used car lot, local conservationists, among them Alice Cohen, reacted vigorously to preserve this beautiful bit of Florida for public recreational and educayional use. The Miami-West Indias Archaeological Society accepted the invitation to dig the site, and with the help of members of the Broward Co. Arch. Soc., completed the excavations which lead to this Report.

Surveyers Bob Patton, of B.C.A.S., and Jack Erne, of M-Wel.A.S., layed out the pits and drew a site map showing pit locations, (Figure #1). Dan Laxson, who earlier dug this site, helped choose the locations for best results.

Standard pits used are 5' x 5', but because of the numerous workers, and short time limits, most pits were 5' x 10'. Grass roots were removed, and all material screened in rocker screens, with  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch mesh.

Arbitrary 6" levels were dug, and all materials found were bagged by pit number and level, and reported as such. All artifacts, after washing, counting and recording, were returned to the M-W.I.A.S. for preservation.

A great many food shells were encountered, which were not visibly worked by man, hence are not truly artifacts, even though brought here by man, and contents eaten. Only those obviously worked in some manner were saved. At first, an effort to segregate and count all shell was made, but it was found impossible to handle the volume of fragments within our time limitations.

There remains plenty of pit area untouched, in event others want to make a Quantitative shell study here, in the future.

Solid rock was met at 6" to 18" below the surface. This rock was found to be solution-hole-riddled Miami Oolite limestone, with holes intersecting. All such holes were dug down to barren, and the materials assigned to the level within which the top of the rock was met. It was not feasible to dig 6" levels within these deep, narrow solution holes. The pottery in the deepest holes differed little from the pottery at rock top level, we found. No really old pottery types were found on the site.

It is possible that future workers may find other areas within the site boundaries, where stratigraphic digging by more sensitive techniques is possible. We did the best we could, within our limitations.

THE ARCH CREEK SITE, III POTTERY SEGMENT of the Report.

From a total of 8 pits dug, a total of 6099 pot-sherds was obtained. A few sherds were found on the surface, but only those sherds actually dug in the enumerated pits were used in this report.

Figure 2 shows the count of sherds found, of each type, in the site.

WARES.

Almost all of the potsherds found were of Four main wares, typical of Glades sites:-

- Glades Gritty Ware, includes many Glades Incised, Punctated, etc.
- Goodland Plain,
- Belle Glade Plain,
- St. Johns series, Checkstamped, and Plain.

Glades Gritty Ware is the usual sand-tempered pottery of the Glades area, which we attempt to break down into recognizable portions, of which Goodland Plain is a West Coast variant of fairly definite description. However, Goodland Plain was not separated in earlier excavation reports of this site.

Belle Glade Plain is a distinctive pottery made in the Okeechobee area. It is found in all levels, but in largest amounts in latest levels.

The St. Johns series is a northern import into the Glades region, and is chalky, temperless ware, with only a little very fine sand in the paste, usually. Of the older, St. Johns Plain, only 21 sherds were found. St. Johns Checkstamped, an impressed lattice-like decorated version on the same paste, is a marker for Glades III time, but only 2 sherds were found on the site.

The Glades Gritty Ware is subdivided, in our present knowlege of the ware, into several undecorated types;- Broward Plain, Peace Camp Plain, Glades Plain, and, of course, Goodland Plain. Further study may result in other types. Decorated pots in the Glades series are many, and more are being found. Commonly found are Glades Tooled, Surfside Incised, Key Largo Incised, Dade Incised, Opa-Locka Incised, Miami Incised, and Matecumbe Incised.

Three new designs were found at Arch Creek, on at least two pots each,

and designated as Natural Bridge Incised, Arch Creek Incised, and North Miami Beach Incised. ( See Figure # ).

In addition to these, sand-tempered sherds from the Florida Bay and West coast areas adjoining the Glades are known, such as Cane-Batch Incised<sup>9</sup>, (or drag-and-jab punctated); Ft. Drum Incised, Punctated, and Rim-Tooled; Gordons Pass Incised, Sanibel Incised, and Plantation Pinched.

All of these well-known types are figured in Dr. John Goggins various writings, especially in the "Spanish Writings, etc." volume.

6 sherds of Glades Red, an early colored-slip-decorated version of Glades Plain, were collected.

5 sherds of Dunns Creek Red, a colored-slip-decorated version of St. Johns Plain, were found.

A few incompleated patterns of unique designs are listed as Unclassified Incised, (See Figure # ). Also, a few exotic wares, probably of West Coast pottery we do not recognize, are listed as Unclassified Wares.

Chronology of the site, based on findings.

Of the list of markers for Glades III time, only 2 sherds of St. Johns Checkstamped, and 3 Glades tooled sherds were found. It is significant that NO Surfside Incised sherds were dug, since it is supposed to be a local product. However, both Dan Laxson and Arthur Marler found a very few Surfside sherds where they dug.

The lack of Glades III markers is really the most distinctive feature of the site, from a chronological point of view. Either almost all late material has been removed from the site, during real estate development, or it was never deposited here. Which of these alternatives is correct has not yet been determined, and may never be.

Actual data found at the site indicate very little use of the site for habitation after about 1250 A.D.

At the other end of the temporal spread, very little really early pottery was found. The Ft. Drum patterns are believed to be older than the locally made Incised patterns with the Dade County names, and are definitely concentrated in the lower levels. But on the whole, there is very little to indicate use of the site before 1 A.D. No recognized Transitional ware was found; no pinky-beige, soft St. Johns ware; no limestone or shell-tempered ware. The deepest levels contained much incised or otherwise decorated pottery of usual Glades II age.

The evidence is convincing, that Arch Creek is a Glades II site, with only a token use of the site in later, including historic time. This would give an occupation range of from about 1 A.D., to about 1250 A.D.

The percentage composition of the various types of pottery reveals that "Glades Gritty Ware", the typical sand-tempered sherds of the Glades Region, accounts for nearly 95% of all sherds collected;- the balance consisting mostly of Belle Glade Plain, with a trace of St. Johns chalky ware.

Breaking the "Glades Gritty Ware" down into its component parts, of named Incised, Punctated, and Rim-tooled types gives percentages as follows:-

	% of total sherds	
Key Largo Incised	1.8 %	
Dade "	1.5	
Opa-Locka "	.8-	5.9% all dec. types.
Miami "	.6	
Ft. Drum " & Rim-tooled	.5	
" Punctated	.7-	
Goodland Plain	6.5-	
Glades Plain sherds, 5108	83.7%,	of 6099 sherds dug.

Unlisted decorated patterns, where found, are less than .1%, and omitted.

These percentages agree fairly well with those of Dan Laxson and<sup>A</sup> Arthur Marler, when consideration is given to the fact that those investigators did not separate Goodland Plain from Glades Plain. Also, the "pot" method of reporting sherds, used in the present dig, gives slightly higher percentages of decorated patterns. These differences in method result in a more sensitive sherd analysis.

Key Largo Incised sherds were the most numerous, with Dade Incised a close second, and Opa-Locka and Miami Incised well represented. The Ft. Drum patterns together came to over 1% of the total. Since it is felt that these are West Coast, or at least Immokallee area types, they would indicate considerable contacts across the Glades. However, the Belle Glade influences were almost twice as numerous, at 1.9%, while St. Johns sherds

total only .3 %.

Those Incised Patterns with familiar local names, and all characterized by groups of straight or curved lines, are obviously related to each other.

A very noticeable feature of this site, and the sherds found here, was the great number of large sherds, of great similarity in thickness, rim profile, pot shape, color, texture, hardness, and temper. Certain pits with large sherd yield were especially noted in this respect. The usual effort to sort out body sherds to match rim sherds, both for accurate classification and for possible restoring of pots, was defeated by this mass of similar material on the bench.

My personal conclusion is , that this site is the place of origin, of much similar pottery, made of the same clay bodies, fired by the same technicians, niques, and made by the same craftsmen. We became accustomed to refer to this pottery as "Arch Creek Product".

Close study of the Incised Patterns found on these similar sherds leads to further conclusions, and reinforces the first one. Both Key Largo and Opa-Locka Incised are represented here by a series of designs, apparently continuous, from single loops around the rim, to stacks of from three to nine loops. Key Largo evolved into Opa-Locka, by the addition of more loops. Dade Incised, with a single loop open at the top, is an inverted version of Key Largo.

A new design was found, combining the two forms in a running pattern, which we named " Natural Bridge Incised". ( See Figure # )

Also, a Dade Incised evolved by multiple loops into a sort of inverted Opa-Locka Incised; this new pattern we named " North Miami Beach Incised".

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Incised". This double-zig-zag design is applied repeatedly around the pot, below the rim, but the units are not connected to each other. ( Figure# ).

Several other unique patterns, and numerous deviations of older patterns, were found. The conclusion was inescapable, that here a vigorous industry existed, with much more variation in patterns than previously known. Added to the fact that many large sherds, unmarred by use, and almost indistinguishable one from another, were dug, and that many patterns occurred on identical pastes, one is driven to believe that this site is the home of pot-making industry in the Glades area.

However, no identifiable kilns, or special means for firing pots, was found. No good source of clay was found. This is negative evidence, of course. Intensive search ought to lead to a clay source, locally. The existence of a natural bridge, as here, might indicate a cave deposit, or concentration of clay, very near the site.



SHELL. This site, while not a typical shell mound, contains a vast amount of shell presumably brought from Biscayne Bay for food. The location on a stream navigable by dug-out canoe, is ideal, and not least because of the inexhaustible supply of shell-fish near by.

All the shells found are potential food sources, and besides, many shells served as containers, cooking pots and ~~eat~~ utensils, knives and scrapers, shell openers, and many uses unknown to us, but including personal decoration.

A partial list of shells found follows:-

Strombus gigas,	"conch", food, celt-material source.
Busycon contrarium,	lightning welk, food and pick-dish-spoon source.
Lucina spcs.	
Dosinia "	
Melongina "	Food shell-fish.
Strombus "	

The Strombus celt, an axe, adze, or scraper made from the heavy conch lip, was a primary tool here, and 58 were found. Many of these celts are long, thin, and narrow, and may have been used as scrapers, in hide dressing.

Glades sites, because they were nearer to cypress stands, used in dug-out making, probably produce more celts than the larger settlement that Arch Creek was. Usually, too, more celts are found in the oldest occupancy levels, reaching back into Archaic times.

The Busycon, or welk, is a large, plump shell, with a handle-like extension on it. Archaic people cooked food in these, until ceramic pots were invented. Dippers, spoons, ladles, cups and plates were made from these shells, and by addition of a long wooden handle, it becomes a pick, for digging roots. Portions of Busycon, as well as Strombus and other shells, were classed as "gouges", of which 245 are counted.

Tips of shell columellas, broken off at an angle, to make a very hard, sharp point, are very common, and vary in size from tiny to large. While there were hundreds of these tips, only 245 were counted. Again, their use is in doubt; wedges for opening shell-fish has been suggested.

A fine columella pendant, or plummet, with a circular groove for suspension, was found by Alice Cohen, in Level I of Pit #6A.

Worked shell objects total 116, with the majority being fragments shaped by grinding, or drilled, or gouge-like tools.

BONE. Shark vertebrae were the most numerous bone artifacts. While only a few were drilled, and so were true artifacts, the rest are thought to have been used as ear-plugs, for personal adornment. 926 were found.

Shark teeth were surprisingly few;- only 18 were recovered, only 1 of which was perforated. This indicates little use of the shark-tooth knife, or engraving tool, here, in sharp contrast to Glades sites in general.

Bone projectile points were fairly numerous, but only the bi-points were dug (37). No socketted points were found. Obviously, this was not a hunters site, primarily. The bipoints were the typical slit-deer bone, ground and polished, in Glades fashion.

Worked Bones. 7 of these were short fragments of bone pins, not dec.

1 flat bone pendant, small, broken, drilled.

3 " " pieces, scratched or notched, indefinitely.

1 Antler fragment was split, had been drilled down the center, may have been a handle, or atl-atl hook. 7 antler bits were dug.

STONE. No worked stone objects were collected.

8 rough fragments of Pumice, a very light, compacted volcanic ash, were possibly used for grinding bone points or shell celts.

Only 1 tiny flake of flint was found, with no hint of use.

No stone projectile points were dug. Apparently, these natives had not much contact with northern Florida, or even West Coast flint using peoples.

The Arch Creek site was a substantial small village area, well located for food sources and accessibility, with large deposits of food shells.

The time span for the site appears to be from about I A.D., to the end of Glades II time, around 1250 A.D., with only occasional use, thereafter. This estimate is based on the pottery recovered.

According to Dan Laxson, an astute observer, and an authority on the Tequesta Indians, the Arch Creek villagers may have abandoned this site in favor of another site at Maddens Hammock, further west on the same water-way. He found large amounts of late, Glades III, pottery there, but little Glades II material.

Arthur Marler, in his report, suggests a move to sites along the Uleta River, just north of Arch Creek.

These concepts should be proved or disproved, by excavations at both areas.

It is suspected that Arch Creek was the ceramic center for the lower East Coast area, based on ware and design similarities found here. Clay deposits found here may have been exhausted, leading to removal of the population westward into the Glades, or elsewhere.

No skeletal remains were found at Arch Creek, but reports persist of a sand burial mound in the Graves Tract to the East. No written report of excavation exists, and it is likely that the mound was vandalized and destroyed.

Extensive areas across Arch Creek, in a beautiful park-like setting, have not been adequately examined for prehistoric occupations. The whole region must have been alive with Indians, for at least several thousand years.

THE ARCH CREEK SITE.

REFERENCES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

All students of the archaeology of South Florida owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. John Goggins, whose publications established the chronology, and described the wares of the Tequestas. The same is true for Dan Laxson, who discovered most, and published reports on many of the local sites; and also for Ripley P. Bullen, Curator of the State Museum, for his advice and inspiration.

Publications consulted in the present work are;-

Dr. John Goggins, "Indian and Spanish Writings", U. of Miami Press, 1964.

Dan Laxson, "The Arch Creek Site", Fla. Anthropologist, Vol. 10, 1957.

Athur Marler, "Report on Arch Creek Site", Unpublished, 1965.

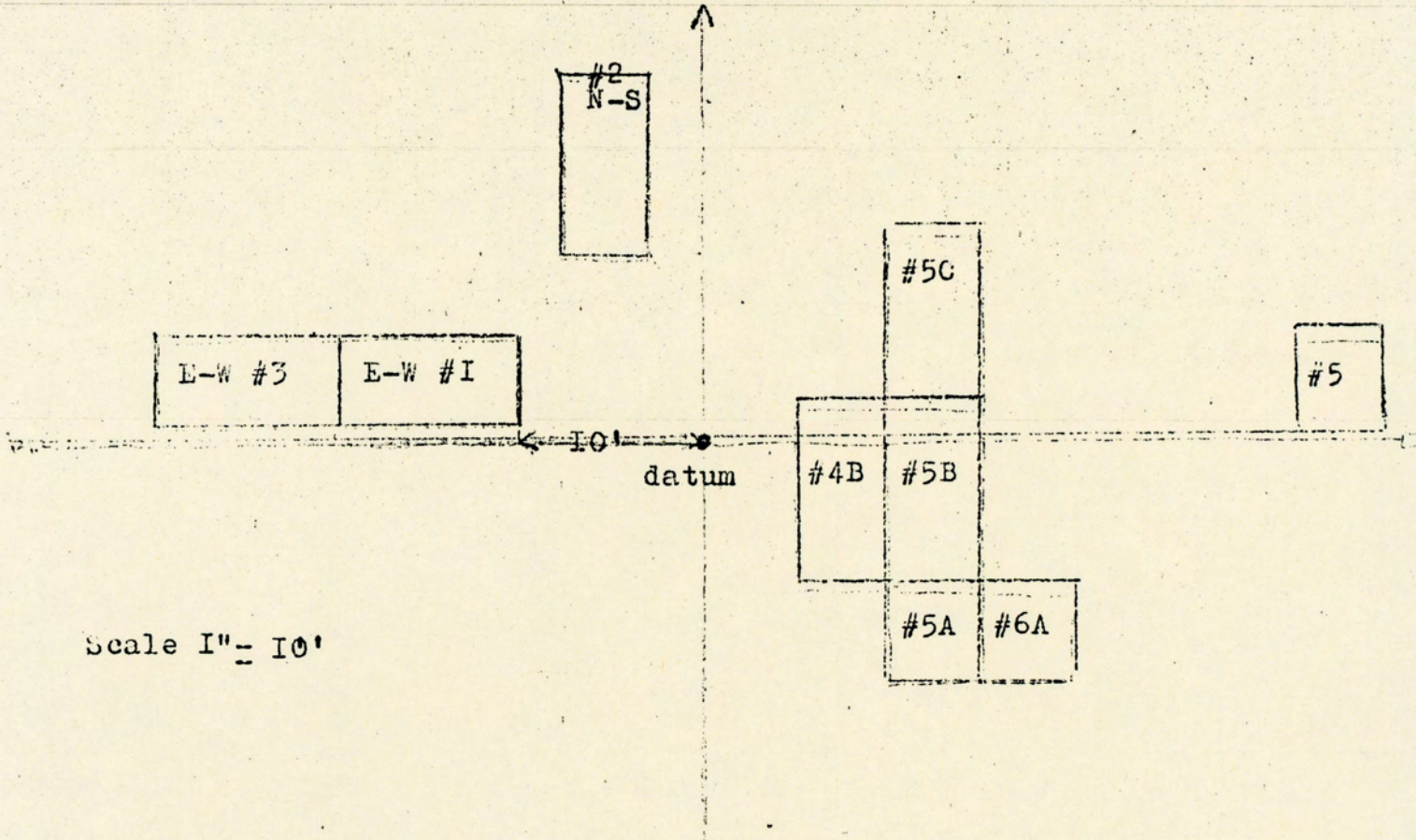
*CHRYSLER REALTY CORP.*

Permission to dig the site was given by the owners, ~~General Motors Corp.~~

Members of the Miami-West India Archaeological Society, and the collaborating Broward County Archaeological Society, along with a host of other willing helpers, performed the actual work of excavating.

Artifacts, bones and shells were described and recorded by Bert Mowers and Wilma Williams, of the B.C.A.S.

This report was written by Bert Mowers, Dec., 1972.



Scale 1" = 10'

## ALL ARTIFACTS FOUND, BY LEVELS.

Pottery types	level-1	level-2	level-3	level-4-5	Totals	% of total
	0--6"	6--12"	12--18"	18"barren		
Glades tooled		3			3	
St. Johns Checkstpd	2				2	
Peace Camp Plain						
Surfside Incised						
Key Largo "	33	55	19	1	108	1.8-
Dade "	40	52	1		93	1.5
Opa-Locka "	16	19	11		46	.8-
Miami "	7	30	1		38	.6-
Matecumbe "		3			3	
Ft. Drum Rim-ticked	4	11	14	2	31	.5
" " Punctated	8	22	11		41	.7-
Arch Creek Incised	1	2			3	
Cane Patch "	1	1			2	
Dunns Creek Red			5		5	
Glades Red	2	2		2	6	.1
Natural Bridge Inc.			1		1	
Unclassified "	8	35	23		66	1.1
" Wares	9	12	2		23	.3
Broward Plain		5			5	
Belle Glade Plain	100	15	1	3	119	1.9
Goodland "	117	210	57	11	395	6.5-
Glades "	1610	2344	1018	116	5108	83.7
St. Johns "	6	8	7		21	.3
	1964	2829	1171	135	6099	100.

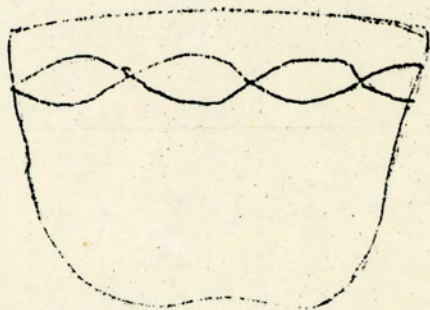
THE ARCH CREEK SITE.

FIGURE #3.

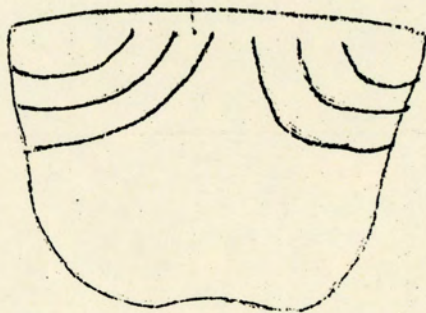
ALL ARTIFACTS FOUND, BY LEVELS.

non-ceramic artifacts	level-1	level-2	level-3	level-4-5		totals
Shark vertebrae	393	384	191	24		926
Shark teeth	12	1	1	4		18
Bone bi-points	20	9	2	7		38
" ,socketted points		1				1
Strombus Celts	25	18	10	3		56
Busycon Tools	22	14	13	2		47
" vessels	2	2	1			5
Columella tools	35	20 39-	16	7		78
" tips	95	76	61	17		258
Worked Shells	35	39	33	10		117
" Bones	9	3	2			14
" Stones						
Foreign Stone	pumice-1		pumice-2	pumice-5		8-pumice
Flint				1		1
Antler	3	5	2			10

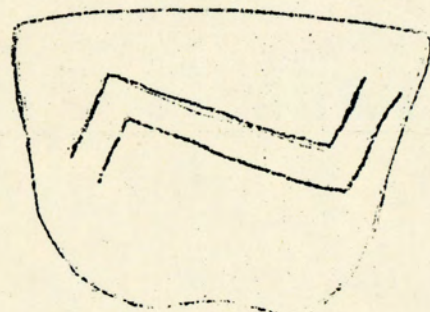




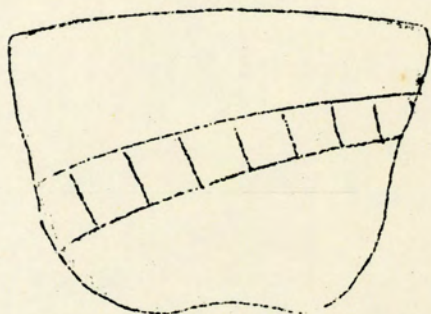
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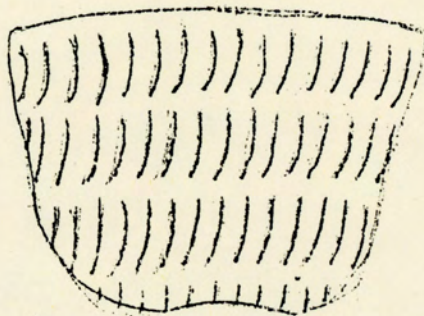
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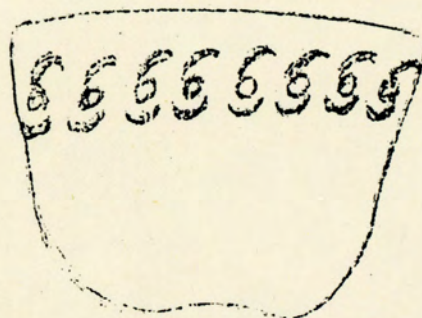
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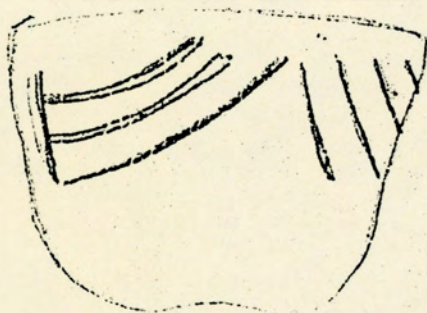
UNCLASSIFIED INCISED.  
Dan Laxson "Ladder".



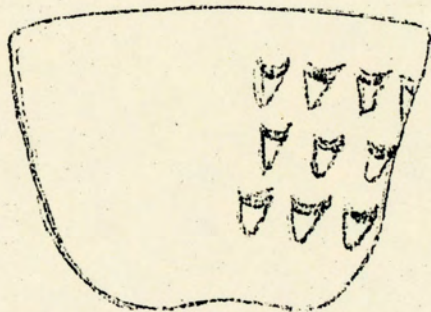
UNCLASSIFIED IMPRINTED.  
Carrabelle-like,  
Unit 4B- Level 3



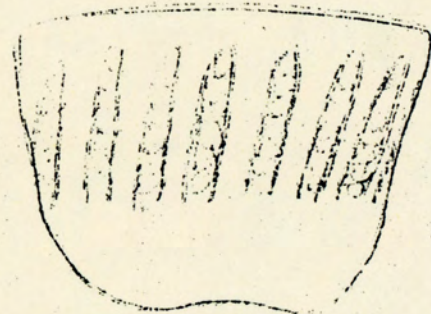
UNCLASSIFIED PUNCTATED.  
"Overprinted"  
Unit 4B- Level 3



UNCLASSIFIED INCISED.  
Unit 2- Level 2  
" Alices Pot "



FT. DRUM PUNCTATED.  
Unit 3- Level 2.  
Unique.



UNCLASSIFIED PUNCTATED.  
Unit 4B- Level 2  
on Goodland Ware.

The percentage composition of the various types of pottery reveals that "Glades Gritty Ware", the typical sand-tempered sherds of the Glades Region, accounts for nearly 95% of all sherds collected;- the balance consisting mostly of Belle Glade Plain, with a trace of St. Johns chalky ware.

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Bone projectile points were fairly numerous, but only the bi-points were dug (37). No socketted points were found. Obviously, this was not a hunters site, primarily. The bipoints were the typical slit-deer bone, ground and polished, in Glades fashion.

Worked Bones. 7 of these were short fragments of bone pins, not dec.

1 flat bone pendant, small, broken, drilled.

3 " " pieces, scratched or notched, indefinitely.

1 Antler fragment was split, had been drilled down the center, may have been a handle, or atl-atl hook. 7 antler bits were dug.

STONE. No worked stone objects were collected.

8 rough fragments of Pumice, a very light, compacted volcanic ash, were possibly used for grinding bone points or shell celts.

Only 1 tiny flake of flint was found, with no hint of use.

No stone projectile points were dug. Apparently, these natives had not much contact with northern Florida, or even West Coast flint using peoples.

The Arch Creek site was a substantial small village area, well located for food sources and accessibility, with large deposits of food shells.

The time span for the site appears to be from about I A.D., to the end of Glades II time, around 1250 A.D., with only occasional use, thereafter. This estimate is based on the pottery recovered.

According to Dan Laxson, an astute observer, and an authority on the Tequesta Indians, the Arch Creek villagers may have abandoned this site in favor of another site at Maddens Hammock, further west on the same water-way. He found large amounts of late, Glades III, pottery there, but little Glades II material.

Arthur Marler, in his report, suggests a move to sites along the Uleta River, just north of Arch Creek.

These concepts should be proved or disproved, by excavations at both areas.

It is suspected that Arch Creek was the ceramic center for the lower East Coast area, based on ware and design similarities found here. Clay deposits found here may have been exhausted, leading to removal of the population westward into the Glades, or elsewhere.

No skeletal remains were found at Arch Creek, but reports persist of a sand burial mound in the Graves Tract to the East. No written report of excavation exists, and it is likely that the mound was vandalized and destroyed.

Extensive areas across Arch Creek, in a beautiful park-like setting, have not been adequately examined for prehistoric occupations. The whole region must have been alive with Indians, for at least several thousand years.