

MARCO ISLAND FAMOUS AMONG ARCHEOLOGISTS

"From an archeological standpoint Marco Island is the most interesting spot in the United States," said H. B. Collins, Jr. Indian expert of the Smithsonian institution, during a recent visit to Collier City.

Remains of prehistoric Indians, their pottery and weapons, which are found in the clam shell deposits of the island, he said, shed light on an ancient civilization that in many respects is unlike anything extant today. The clam shells which form the basis of the entire island are natural deposits of gulf waters, he said, and not remains of innumerable bivalves eaten by men.

These shells deposits, in places more than 20 feet thick, overlay hard strata of limestone. At the southern end of the five-mile long island the surface rises abruptly in small hills, the highest of which has an elevation of 62 feet, making it the summit of southern Florida.

As clams contributed much to the building of the island, they now provide livelihood for most of the persons living on it. Two clam factories are in operation in Collier City, the corporate name of the entire island. One at the northern or Marco end is owned by J. H. Doxee & Sons, while the one at the southern or Waxambus end is owned by the Burman Co.

Clams brought to the Doxee cannery are secured at a point 40 miles from the factory, where they are gathered by a dredge which is the only one of its kind. This dredge is 90 feet long, by 20 feet wide, by five feet deep, and has a well in the center which is 30 feet long by 12 feet wide. An endless chain with buckets revolves through this well on shaft and sprockets, digging the clams from the bottom of the gulf.

The dredge digs from 25 to 30 tons of clams a day, and these clams are transferred from the dredge to the clam boat.

The dredge is taken out to the clam beds the first of November and remains at its station until the first of September, when it is brought back to Marco because of the storms which sweep the gulf and the Atlantic during that period.

When the clams are taken from this tank they are drained and placed upon a table, where they are weighed. They are then placed in tin cans and go through a machine which seals the covers, the cans are then placed in large iron baskets and carried to huge vats. They are placed in these large vats and the steam is turned on. The clams are cooked under pressure.

Marco Island Famous (Cont.)

From the cooker the cans are taken to the store room where machines place the labels on the cans. The cans are packed and placed upon a gravity conveyor which carries them to a schooner.

This schooner takes the cargo to Key West, the product is then taken aboard steamers and is carried to New York.