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NOTES CONCERNING AN HISTORIC
SITE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Frederick W. Sleight

Several years ago the author was informed of a mound and habitation site west of Tavares, Florida. Further inquiry into the matter revealed not one but two mounds and a camp site. The area in question is located on the west end of Lake Dora in Lake County and is about two miles west of the above mentioned town of Tavares. Casual observation revealed that both mounds had suffered considerable mutilation. The camp site adjacent to the lake shore, although never excavated, has suffered from cultivation. Accurate study of the two mounds will never be possible; however, subsequent finds have been made in the refuse piles and fallen banks. These salvaged materials will be the subject of this paper.

That the area has long been known to "treasure" seekers is demonstrated by the present condition of the two mounds. Reference to Moore (1895: 536-9) verifies the fact that this party came into the region in the early part of 1895. He states that both sites had been "dug through by relic hunters." In addition to this, we are informed that his party did "completely" dig the larger of the two sites.

It might be well to review briefly the findings made, and reported, by Moore (1895) as the referenced material may not be accessible to lay readers. The site was described as being about five feet high and fifty feet in diameter. It was composed entirely of sand, and throughout were exhibited fire-places or charcoal accumulations. Evidently, numerous "bunched" or secondary burials were present, but in all cases advanced deterioration prevented recovery of measurable specimens. No complete pottery vessels were found although sherds of a plain and a decorated surface were reported. "Those adorned with red pigment predominated."

The objects that captured Moore's attention were a number of elongated stone pendants typical of earlier discoveries from central Florida. What was interpreted as a bird amulet was uncovered. This specimen measured 2.1 inches and was believed to have been made from diorite. Several polished celts as well as fragments of chert and one projectile point completed the material removed and reported by Moore.

It is of interest to note that European trade material was not present in this, the larger of the two Tavares sites. However, the mound that had contained such items had not escaped the attention of Moore. Even in 1895 it seems that this smaller site had been heavily mutilated and was not excavated further by the Moore party. They did refer to the fact that glass beads were in evidence on the surface of this site.

In recent years the author has salvaged several items from this smaller mound near Tavares and through diligent search in the refuse of earlier diggings has retrieved a small collection of European trade beads and three pottery vessels. The material thus preserved is scant and does not represent a complete picture of any phase of the life and times of the peoples who constructed this mound. However, even in its fragmentary form, these items may aid in reconstructing a section of Florida's prehistory.

The European trade beads recovered from the Tavares site bear a close similarity to those recently uncovered by Griffin and Smith (1948) in the Goodnow Mound. In the excavation of this latter site they report the finding of numerous trade materials. As that mound had had but little previous digging, an opportunity afforded itself for the making of percentile studies and counts of the various beads found. The beads listed in this paper come from a site, on the other hand, that has had considerable mutilation; therefore, it is realized that the bead count herein recorded undoubtedly gives an erroneous proportion of the original numbers, varieties, and associations. The collection does offer, however, a crude picture of what must have been contained in the site prior to its destruction.

For comparative purposes this account will follow the organization of the Goodnow report in its description of glass beads.

Except for two beads, all varieties found were of the seed bead category, the others consisted of the following:

color	count
light blue.....	155
dark blue.....	75
white.....	75
black.....	37
light blue (translucent).....	13
white (translucent).....	4
green.....	2
yellow.....	1
total.....	362

There are three beads of the seed bead type that are outstanding from the more numerous group listed above. In outline, color, and style, they are seed beads; however, their large size makes them prominent. They are:

light blue (7mm. dia.).....	1
dark blue (8mm. dia.).....	1
black (6mm. dia.).....	1
total.....	3

None of the pseudo-Hudson's Bay (Cornaline d'Aleppo) beads or its original counter-part was found in the Tavares site. This is also true of the star or chevron beads.

One bugle, or tubular, bead was recovered. This specimen measures 32 mm. long and 6 mm. in diameter. This type bead has also been referred to as a "pipe" bead. The decorative aspect of this bead consists of alternating longitudinal bands of red, white, blue, and green.

The remaining specimen to be discussed is what the author has chosen to call a tear-drop bead. It measures 24 mm. long and 13 mm. through its widest diameter. Without doubt this pendant type bead was made in a mold and was "pulled" in such a manner as to produce a thin section of glass that was lapped over to form an eye. The glass is light blue and nearly translucent. On opposite sides, where the mold evidently joined, there are squeeze ribs that extend roughly 1 mm. from the sides of the bead and thus form a flange type element. This flange is assymetrical and does not maintain the same extension distance on one side as it does on the opposite.

Beads similar to those discussed above have been found in numerous sections of Florida as well as other sections of the New World. The interested reader should refer to the Goodnow report. For comparative purposes, Woodward's recent paper dealing with trade material from a California Yokut site would prove of value (Walker and Woodward, 1947). Of course, Orchard's (1929) paper has long proven an authority for the detailed study of beads of the American Indian.

Three specimens of pottery were salvaged from the Tavares site despite the random digging of relic seekers. While searching the surface for beads, the author noted the wall of a pottery vessel in an exposed bank under a fallen tree. Further investigation revealed the vessels discussed below. What their relation to other material in the mound might have been will never be revealed as all the surrounding soil had been disturbed long ago. It has been deemed worthy to describe these vessels so that the fragmentary information they offer will not be overlooked in the process of unveiling the shroud of time.

The recovered specimens are:

Vessel 1 (Fig. 9, C): An example of St. Johns Check Stamped Type.¹ It measures 8 cm. in depth, 9.5 cm. in width at the mouth, and 13 cm. at the widest diameter. The checks average five to the inch. Fractured base indicates "killing." Vessel designed for suspension: two sets of perforations on opposite rim positions.

Vessel 2 (Fig. 9, B): An example of St. Johns Plain in an extended globular shape measuring 8 cm. in depth and 5 cm. in diameter at the rim. Designed for suspension as indicated by two holes on opposite rims.

1. Identification of pottery was made through the kindness of John W. Griffin.

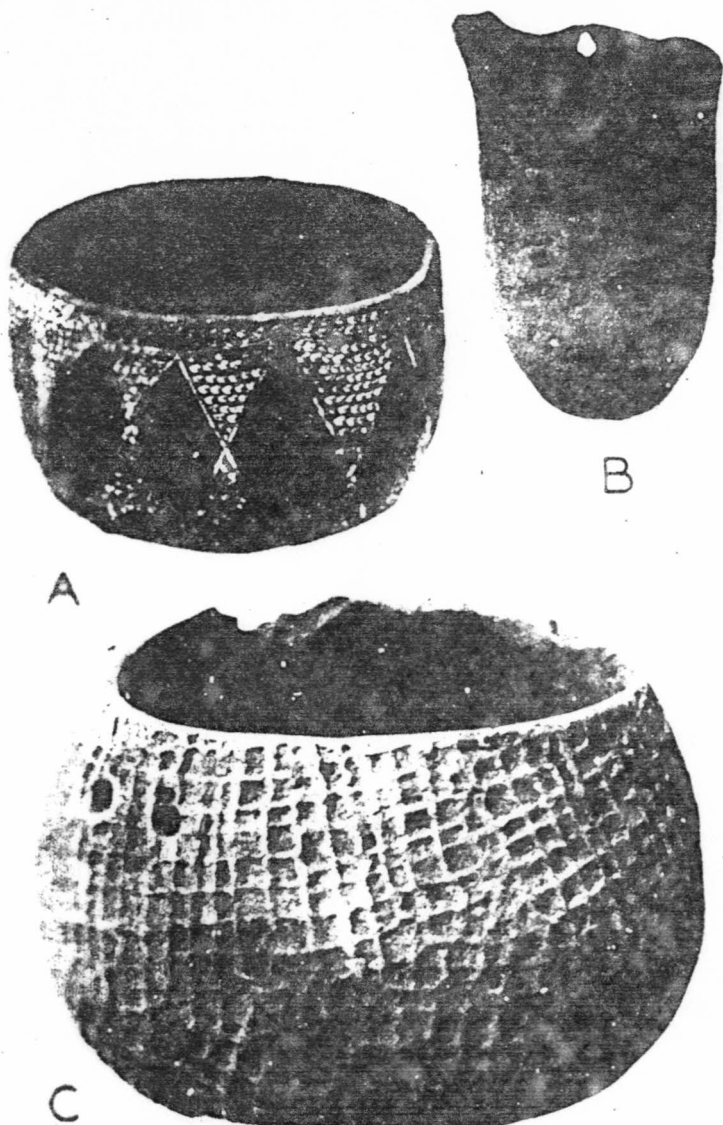


Fig. 9. Pottery vessels from near Traveres. A, Sarasota Incised; B, St. Johns Plain; C, St. Johns Check Stamped.

Vessel 3 (Fig. 9, A): A Sarasota Incised vessel with perpendicular, thin walls and a flat bottom. Measures 6 cm. in depth and 9 cm. in diameter. The hole in the base a result of "killing." Decorated with a continuous incised band of diamonds and triangles filled with punctates, negative design produced.

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