

## EXCAVATIONS AT GROSSMAN HAMMOCK. DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

*Marvin J. Brooks, Jr.*

### THE SITE

Grossman Hammock includes nearly 100 acres of high, wooded land in the east edge of the southern Florida Everglades about 25 miles southwest of Miami. The excavations described in this report are a few hundred feet east of the center of Section 25, Township 55 south, Range 37 east, Dade County, Florida.

The hammock averages from 10 to 12 feet above sea level and is dry the year around. The surrounding rocky glades are from 7 to 7.5 feet above sea level and are flooded during much of the rainy season.

This area was included in land purchased by the Grossman family in 1917. When Mr. M. L. Grossman first visited the hammock in 1925, he found sugar cane, banana trees and pumpkins growing along the east edge. The Seminole occupation evidenced by this growth must have ended several years earlier as there were no remains of chickees evident.

The family of William McKinley Osceola lived along the east edge of this hammock and farmed much of the high ground about 1900 (personal communication, Sept. 25, 1955).

During 1927 Mr. Grossman visited the families of Jimmy Willy and Willy Tommy, Seminole Indians, who were living on a small hammock three or four miles to the west.

During 1926 and 1927 a road was built to the hammock, and the hammock, as well as much of the surrounding low ground, was cultivated. This cultivation disclosed evidences of occupation along the east edge of the hammock. These included pottery fragments, rifle barrels, an iron sewing machine frame, and part of a human jawbone.

In 1943 and again in 1949, the hammock was visited by companies

exploring and drilling for oil. In 1953 the Mineral Springs Corporation started development of a recreational resort near the south end of the hammock.

There are rumors of parts of human skulls, cannon balls, almost whole pots, and mysterious chests having been found here, but none of these reports have been verified. Karl Squires' collection is supposed to contain artifacts from this site, but the writer has not seen this collection. Dr. John M. Goggin visited the hammock during the 1940's but did not find the Indian mounds (personal communication, Feb., 1955). So far as is known, the excavations described in this report are the first attempt at controlled archaeological excavations here, although there are numerous evidences of previous digging by treasure hunters.

## EXCAVATIONS

The excavations described in this report are in the northernmost of a group of three middens. Two of these are along the east edge of the hammock. The third, a small near-circular midden, rises 4 or 5 feet above the glades east of the hammock.

Midden 1, with which this report is concerned, is about 200 feet long, 75 feet wide, and follows the irregular east edge of the hammock. The deposit seems to be 12 inches deep or deeper only in a central area hardly more than 60 feet in diameter and concentrated where the slopes to the old slough to the east are steepest. Most of this central area has been disturbed by recent truck farming and much of the soil has been removed. All of the excavations described in this report were made in Midden 1.

### Excavation 1

Excavation 1, near the northwest extremity of the midden, was made before the area had been adequately explored; the site was chosen solely because of ease of access. During August and September, 1954, a 5-foot-square pit was excavated in two arbitrary 4-inch levels to blue-gray marl.

### Excavation 2

Excavation 2 is about 120 feet south of Excavation 1 and is near the southeast extremity of the midden. It is in the small area of near-level ground between the disturbed area and the slope marking the edge of the midden. It was started in October, 1954, as a 2-foot-square hole. By subsequent addition of 2-foot-square sections, it was finished in January, 1955, as a 6-foot-square pit.

Each of the 2-foot-square sections was excavated in 3-inch levels approximately parallel to the ground surface. The ground slopes about 3 inches diagonally across the pit from the northwest to the southeast. It should be noted that the levels excavated, although parallel to the ground surface, were not parallel to the layers of deposition.

Artifacts disappear at a depth of about 12 inches where a gray marl is reached. About 2 inches of this gray marl overlies the honeycombed Miami Oolite. In the old slough to the east of the midden there are several inches of muck on top of the Miami Oolite, but this marl is absent there. The upper 12 inches in this pit consist of black midden dirt intermixed with potsherds and bone and shell fragments. The top 2 to 5 inches were lighter in color, but this slight difference in color could not be seen during excavation; it was observed only after the excavated bank had been exposed for a day or longer. This thin zone was observed over an area only some 20 feet in diameter.

### **Excavation 3**

Excavation 3, an irregular pit covering about 9 square feet and located just west of the disturbed area, was made to test the possibility of gathering worthwhile data from this location. The deposit was only 5 inches thick here.

### **Excavation 4**

Excavation 4 was a 5-foot-square pit in the disturbed area about 25 feet northwest of Excavation 2. It was made to test the possibility of gathering data from the disturbed area. This location appears to be near what was once the highest part of the midden. From 9 to 12 inches of the deposit had been removed previously and only 4 or 5 inches remained.

### **Excavations 5, 6, and 7**

Excavations 5, 6, and 7 were each 5-foot-square pits along a north-south line about 25 feet east of Excavation 1. Ten feet of unexcavated space remains between these pits. The nearest is about 65 feet from Excavation 2. The deposit at all three pits was thin, although the actual depth to rock varied from 4 inches to 16 inches. None of these pits produced many artifacts, and the actual number of both potsherds and non-ceramic artifacts varied greatly from pit to pit.

## **ARTIFACTS**

Excavation 1 produced 483 undecorated sherds, 5 decorated sherds,

1 blue glass bead, and numerous fragments of unworked bone and shell but no bone or shell artifacts. All five of the decorated sherds came from the upper 4-inch level. These included 1 Glades Tooled, 1 unique incised, and 3 miscellaneous incised. The glass bead was also from this level. The undecorated sherds included 43 rim sherds and 322 body sherds.

Pottery from the lower 4-inch level consisted of 11 plain rim sherds and 107 plain body sherds.

The unique incised sherd from Excavation 1 is decorated on both sides and is curved so slightly as to suggest a plate form rather than a bowl form. The buff-colored interior is decorated with a combination of incised lines and dash-like punctations. The black exterior is decorated with irregular faint dash-like punctations. The sherd is too small to determine the complete pattern.

The 5835 artifacts from Excavation 2 are tabulated by level in Table 1. No attempt at a complete description of these artifacts will be made, and only points of special interest or significance will be noted.

### **Pottery Types of Interest**

*Unclassified Plain.* The unclassified plain rim and body sherds are made of a paste having a very fine sand temper. Most of them are nearer to Belle Glade Plain paste than they are to Glades Plain Paste. The rim sherds were separated into Belle Glade Plain, St. Johns Plain, and unclassified plain. No attempt was made to classify the more than five thousand plain body sherds; but they were carefully examined to detect the presence or absence of St. Johns Plain. None were found that compared to the two St. Johns Plain rim sherds or to the single St. Johns Check Stamped sherd from the surface collection. About one-half of one per cent were noticeably softer and contained much less temper than the average, however, and may represent borderline cases.

*Glades Tooled.* Five of the Glades Tooled sherds from the 9- to 12-inch level differ in character from the others of this classification. All five appear to have been modeled with the fingers rather than with a tool. One is similar to the sherd described by Willey (1949a) as "Glades Plain fluted lip" and pictured as C in his Plate 14. The other four have a thickened lip that is notched both on the top and on the sides. This group, though listed in Table 1 as Glades Tooled, may more properly fall into that group with rims "grooved, notched, or lightly crimped" that Goggin and Sommer (1949, p. 90) suggest "may have led to the development of the boldly tooled rims of Glades Tooled."

Table 1

VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ARTIFACTS FROM EXCAVATION 2,  
GROSSMAN HAMMOCK, DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

TYPE	LEVELS (inches below surface)					TOTALS
	0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	12	
<b>CERAMIC</b>						
Glades Tooled	15	16	3	6		40
Surfside Incised	3	1				4
Englewood-like or Safety Harbor-like Incised	5					5
Key Largo Incised		21	29	4		54
Matecumbe Incised		2	3	1		6
Miami Incised			1			1
Dade Incised				1		1
Miscellaneous incised	28	30	18	7		83
Belle Glade Plain, rims	26	13	6	6		51
St. Johns Plain, rims			2			2
Plain rim sherds	152	163	90	69		474
Plain body sherds	1450	1809	1206	591	33	5089
<b>TOTAL CERAMIC</b>	<b>1679</b>	<b>2055</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5810</b>
<b>NON-CERAMIC</b>						
Glass beads	6					6
Tubular shell bead	1					1
Fragment of fish spine point	1					1
Bone awls	1	1				2
Shark teeth, perforated		1	2	2		5
Shark tooth, edge worn	1					1
Short bone points		2				2
Fragments of bone points		4	2			6
Socketed bone point			1			1
<b>TOTAL NON-CERAMIC</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>25</b>



*Surfside Incised.* Two of these sherds do not have the typical incised line or lines parallel to and below the lip but have only a shallow longitudinal groove on top of the lip. These might be more correctly classified as Glades Plain, but are listed here as Surfside Incised because they are of the same temporal period as Surfside Incised (Goggin 1950a).

*Englewood-like or Safety Harbor-like Incised.* These five sherds from the 0-to-3-inch level are too small to type exactly. They are pictured in Figure 1 as *E* through *I*. They are about 3/16 of an inch thick and vary in color from buff through black. The paste is sand-tempered. The inside of the sherds is pictured here. They are also decorated on the outside with fine random crossing incised lines.

*Key Largo Incised.* The fifty-four sherds in this group vary greatly in size of pattern and execution of pattern. (Fig. 1, *J-O*). An attempt was made, by measuring the diameters of the arches, to discover any temporal significance in the variations in arch diameter. The only conclusion that could be reached, however, was that the older sherds showed more variation in pattern size and in execution of pattern than did the more recent sherds.

*Matecumbe Incised.* Typical Matecumbe Incised sherds are pictured as *A* and *B* in Figure 1. One variant (Fig. 1, *D*) is similar to another such variant pictured by Goggin and Sommer (1949) as *D* in their Plate 1.

*Miscellaneous Incised.* This group includes those sherds with a single incised line and those too small to classify. Some are no doubt fragments of known types. One sherd might represent Miami Incised, two appear similar to Opa Locka Incised, and one group of eight body sherds with two nearly parallel incised lines might be either Key Largo Incised or variants of Matecumbe Incised. In these cases, however, the sherds were too small to allow positive identification. One rim sherd from the 0- to 3-inch level is suggestive of a Weeden Island influence. The flattened lip is notched and a single incised line parallels the lip. Other slanting incised lines terminate at this line. One rim sherd (Fig. 1, *C*) from the 3- to 6-inch level is of particular interest as it is similar to one excavated in Hialeah by Laxson and pictured in an article by Bullen and Laxson (1954) entitled "Some Incised Pottery from Cuba and Florida." The sherd found here was in a mixed level containing elements of both Glades II and Glades III. The sherd from Hialeah was found in a Glades II level.

#### **Non-Ceramic Artifacts**

The glass beads are all faceted, some crudely. Two are dull green, the remainder blue. All are from 3/16 of an inch to 1/4 of an inch in diame-

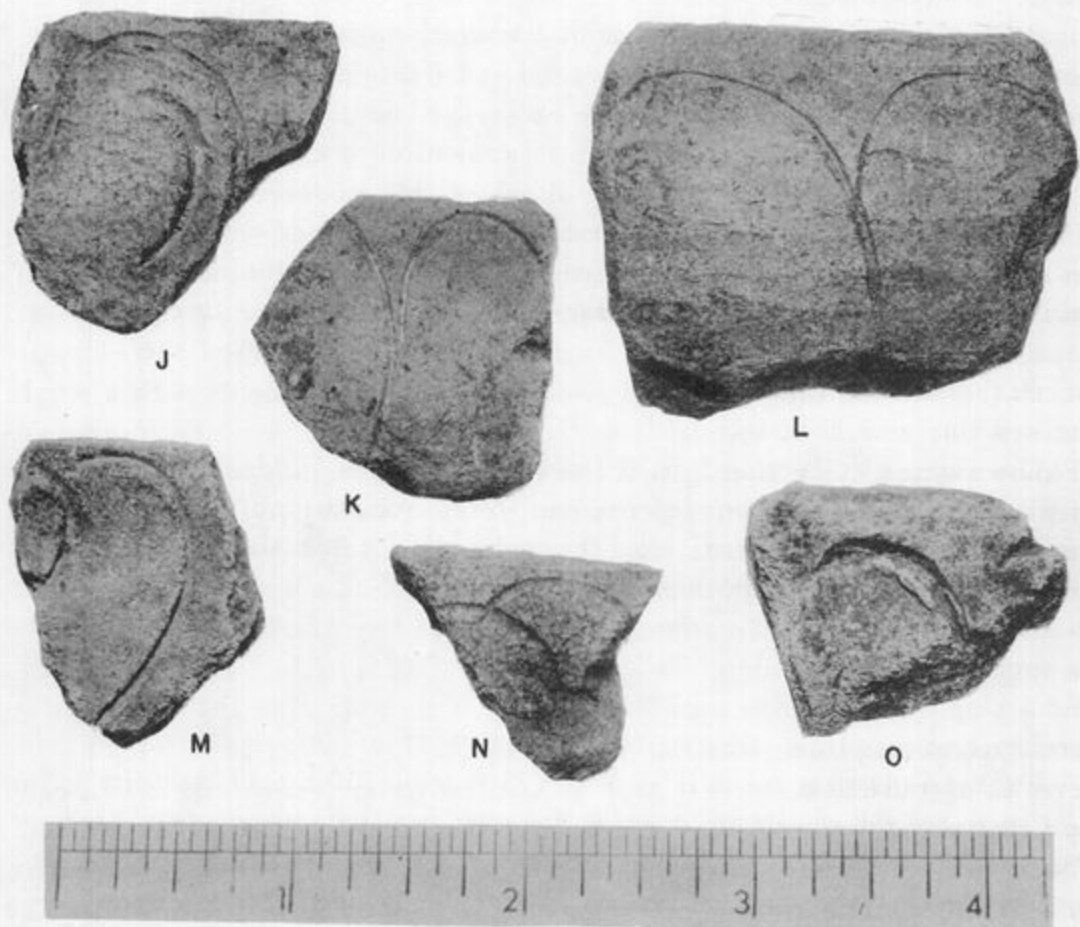
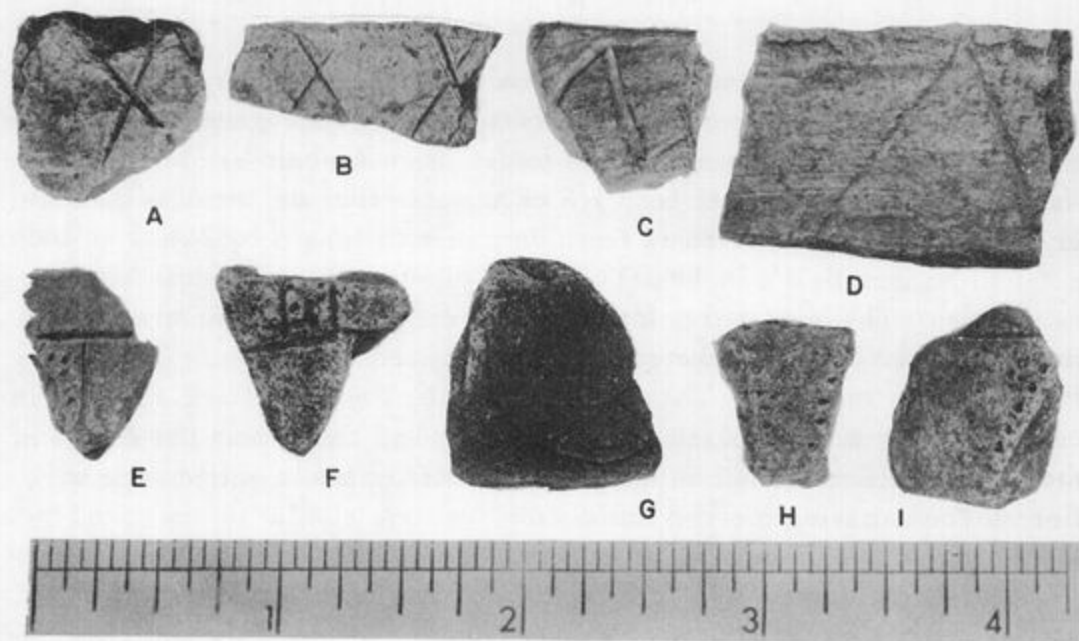


Fig. 1. Decorated pottery from Grossman Hammock.

*A-B*, Matecumbe Incised; *C-D*, unique incised; *E-F*, Englewood Incised; *G*, Safety Harbor-like Incised; *H-I*, Englewood-like Incised; *J-O*, Key Largo Incised.

ter. The straight-sided tubular shell bead is  $3/16$  of an inch in diameter by 1 inch in length and is drilled from both ends. The fragment of a fish spine point is 1 inch long and shows traces of an asphalt-like material. The bone awl fragments are both  $3/8$  of an inch wide and are  $3/4$  of an inch and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. The shark teeth vary in size from  $1/2$  by  $7/8$  of an inch to  $7/8$  of an inch by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The short (bipointed) bone points are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long. The socketed point is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. The fish spine point, the bone awls, and the socketed point are fragmentary.

Artifacts from Excavation 4 are comparable to those from the 9- to 12-inch level of Excavation 2 with the addition of ten unclassified incised sherds. These have incised parallel lines and are similar to one found by Goggin in the Everglades National Park (Goggin, 1950a, Fig. 78, D). Non-ceramic artifacts noted only in Excavation 4 included two bone pins and one columella chisel.

Artifacts from the thin deposits of Excavations 5, 6, and 7 are not tabulated here. They include Glades Tooled, Surfside Incised, Key Largo Incised, and one doubtful Matecumbe Incised. The distribution, both as to numbers and types, was erratic from excavation to excavation and from level to level. Of interest are three sherds with a modeled decoration similar to some from upper Matecumbe Key (Goggin and Sommer, 1948, Pl. 2, A). These were in a provenience with Key Largo Incised as the only other decorated type. Non-ceramic artifacts from these three excavations include three *Strombus* celt fragments and one perforated shell sinker.

The surface collection from the disturbed area at Midden 1 includes only one decorated type not represented in the excavations, a single St. Johns Check Stamped sherd. Non-ceramic artifacts from the surface collection include four *Busycon* picks, Type A.

## DISCUSSION

Excavations were made in a small (75 foot by 200 foot) black dirt midden where the remaining deepest deposits are little over 1 foot thick. The smaller area of these deeper deposits — as deep as 1 foot — seem confined to the area adjacent to an old slough. Most of these deeper deposits have been destroyed by removal of much of the rich soil from the center of the midden. Only Excavation 2 was in these deeper deposits. It produced a relatively large number of potsherds and a relatively small number of non-ceramic artifacts.

As even the "thicker" deposits are actually thin, the stratigraphy



shown is on a gradual percentage change basis rather than on a basis of sharp separation (Table 1). The glass beads and the Glades Tooled and Surfside Incised ceramics in the upper level evidence occupation not only by Seminoles but during the major part of Glades III times.

The next level contains both Glades III and Glades II types, but the lower levels are clearly Glades II except for the presence of a few Glades Tooled sherds. Glades IIc, with its predominately undecorated pottery, is not observed here; but sherd types from both Glades IIb and Glades IIa are seen: Matecumbe Incised, Miami Incised, Dade Incised, and miscellaneous incised similiar to Opa Locka Incised — all accompanied by Key Largo Incised, the marker for the Glades II period.

The very low percentage of St. Johns Plain (chalky ware) seems explained only by consideration of the fact that this midden is 17 miles west of the Atlantic Ocean and some 6 or 7 miles west of the west edge of the "Miami Rock Ridge." It should be noted, however, that the types marking the Glades II period in the Calusa sub-area to the west, where St. Johns Plain is at a minimum, are not represented here either in the excavations or in the surface collection.

Influence from the northwest during Glades III times is seen, however, in the five sherds from the upper level that are similiar to either Englewood, Sarasota, or Safety Harbor Incised.

With the exception of the excavation in the disturbed area, all the other excavations were in the thin deposits some distance away from the old slough. This part of the midden, while occupied during both Glades II and Glades III, must have been occupied only intermittently; as not only are the deposits thinner, but even the number of artifacts recovered are less per volume excavated.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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