

Settlement

In the next three chapters, the archaeology of the Everglades is discussed in terms of where people lived, what they ate, how they organized their society, and what they believed. We will be examining what David Hurst Thomas (1979) calls archaeology's "intermediate objective," that is, the reconstruction of extinct lifeways, an intellectual endeavor that lies between constructing cultural chronologies and defining the processes that underlie human behavior.

From the data presented in preceding sections of this volume, and in view of their inherent limitations, it should be apparent that such an attempt can be only partial and preliminary. As such, however, it can identify gaps in our knowledge and clarify where we might go from here. While basing the following discussions primarily on the data gathered by the National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center survey from sites in Everglades National Park, we will also be looking more generally at the Everglades archaeological area, as defined in chapter 5. In particular, we will be focusing on the northern part of the Ten Thousand Islands as far north as Marco Island and on the coastal area east of the Everglades, including the Florida Keys.

Settlement Types

A first step is to look at the archaeological sites in terms of their physical appearance. This was done by the National Park Service survey of Everglades National Park (Taylor 1985:12–20). That system, which combines site type and locale, includes the following settlement types:

(1) *Shell works*. Twelve locations with shell works are found on islands in the Ten Thousand Islands area, on margins of coastal rivers, and within coastal mangrove swamps. Shell works are composed of marine shells in complex arrangements of mounds, ridges, and flat areas. The principal locations of American historic settlement and use are found on these sites.

Only one shell-work site, Turner River (see chapter 8), has been tested. Its occupation ranges from Glades I late into Glades IIb.

(2) *Shell middens*. These site types, 20 of which are known, occur in similar locations to shell works. They also are composed of marine shell, but without the elaborations of the shell works. And, as with the latter, some also were settled and used in the American period. A few tests and C-14 determinations suggest these sites date to the Glades I late to Glades IIa period.

(3) *Eroded beach sites*. Twenty-one locations are known from the margins of Cape Sable or on islands on the outer edge of the mangrove zone or in Florida Bay. All are badly eroded, and their total areas cannot be determined. Large surface collections are available from some and date primarily from Glades III times; evidence of Glades II occupation comes only from Mormon Key.

(4) *Earth middens of the mangrove zone*. These are single and multiple midden mounds in the mangrove fringe on the coast, including Cape Sable. Twenty-six are known. A number have been tested with occupations ranging from Glades I late into Glades III.

(5) *Relic shell ridges*. Considered to be natural features formed by wave action, not midden accumulations, relic shell ridges were, however, occupied or used in prehistoric times. Six are recorded.

(6) *Earth middens of the Shark River Slough*. Located on tree islands in this major drainage feature, these sites, though numerous (62 are recorded) are small. Their occupancy is from Glades I late through Glades III. Thirty-five sites have evidence of Seminole occupancy or use.

(7) *Earth middens, artifact scatters, single artifact finds, and historic sites of the western Everglades*. Thirty-four of these sites are between the Shark River Slough and the mangrove coastal zone. They are smaller and have fewer artifact distributions than sites in the Slough.

(8) *Earth middens of Taylor Slough*. Three Glades II and III sites of this type are represented in the sample.

(9) *Miscellaneous sites*. In this group of 7 sites are a possible burial mound, a prehistoric earthwork, historic house sites, and the proposed location of a Seminole War fort.

In this volume we have retained the types *shell works* and *shell middens* and have combined the *earth middens* site types into one class. Together these three classes account for 157 of the known 191 sites. Information on surface area of 138 of the sites is recorded. With one exception, all of the sites for which surface area is not known are earth middens, mostly in

the western Everglades. The remaining 34 sites are eroded beaches (21), relict shell ridges (6), and miscellaneous (7).

The eroded beaches are a significant category from which a substantial number of the surface collections have been collected. However, their present condition does not permit estimation of former surface area or, for that matter, exact composition. There is considerable shell with the sherds and artifacts on the beaches, but whether these were shell middens, earth middens, or something in between such as “sand middens” is uncertain. What is known is (1) they are in the coastal zone, (2) there are as many of them as there are in the shell middens category, and (3) they must surpass manifold the surface area of the approximately equal number of earth midden sites in the interior of the Everglades for which no surface area is recorded. In other words, if surface area data for the eroded beach sites were available, the figure of 92.2 percent of surface site area in the mangrove zone (Taylor 1985:39) would be further increased.

The relict shell ridges also are in the mangrove zone. Their surface area figures are not included because they are regarded as natural features, but they do show evidence of use and occupation.

Table 9.1, which presents the surface area for the 138 sites for which such data are recorded, points out the vast differences between the three major classes of sites in terms of average site size and percentage of site area. The inverse relationship between shell works and earth middens is striking.

Looking now at three of the geographical divisions in which Taylor (1985:39) placed his earth middens, we see that there is clearly a descending order in the average size of the earth middens from the mangrove zone (0.27 ha.), through the Shark River Slough (0.16 ha.), to the earth middens of the western Everglades (0.05 ha.). At the end of the first season of the National Park Service Everglades survey—which concentrated on the mangrove zone and the Shark River Slough—Ehrenhard, Komara, and Taylor (1982:29) remarked that “it is noteworthy that while sites are dispersed they appear to be larger than similar sites in Big Cypress.” They later found that the situation in the western Everglades matched the Big Cypress more closely.

The site types, or groups, used in the Everglades survey are, as we have noted, descriptive categories based upon appearance and condition and secondarily, in some instances, divided into geographical groups. No attempt was made during the survey to assign a settlement typology to the data.

Table 9.1. Surface area of site types

Site type	No.	% no.	Area (ha)	Average area (ha)	% total area
Shell works	12	8.7	93.36	7.80	75.5
Shell middens	19	13.8	14.14	0.74	11.4
Earth middens	107	77.5	16.26	0.15	13.1

The Big Cypress Survey reports reveal an interesting development of thinking about the sites during the five years of that survey. In Season 1 (Ehrenhard, Carr, and Taylor 1978:ii), four site types were recognized: black earth middens, sand mounds, rock mounds, and transient camps. Three of these are based on physical attributes and one on function. During Season 2, black earth middens and transient camps were the two site types located (Ehrenhard, Carr, and Taylor 1979:iv).

The Season 3 report (Ehrenhard and Taylor 1980:ii) described locating black earth middens, sand mounds, and transient camps but also asserted that “[f]uture research should more clearly define the relationship among what presently appear to be villages, base camps, and transient camps or procurement areas.” The only change in Season 4 (Ehrenhard, Taylor, and Komara 1980:2) was to substitute “and” for “or” between “transient camps” and “procurement areas.” And finally, in Season 5, Taylor and Komara (1983:i) noted that “the variety and frequency of sites within this locational framework indicates that the area within the preserve was a rich natural resource procurement area composed of an intricate network of villages, base camps, transient camps, and procurement areas.” While details are lacking, it is interesting to see the apparent changes in thinking that went on, from a typology based primarily on the physical appearance of the sites to a view of a settlement system made up of varying functional categories of sites.

The definitions of the site types that emerged were not included in the annual reports on the Big Cypress survey that primarily addressed the recording of site data. Athens (1983), however, included definitions of some of these in his study of site distribution in the Big Cypress Preserve. He recognized four types: (1) primary habitation sites, (2) secondary habitation sites, (3) resource procurement and processing stations, and (4) mound sites. He defines them as follows (Athens 1983:7):

(1) *Primary habitation sites*. Midden areas having within their perimeter one or more refuse mounds created through extensive accumulation of midden or refuse material.

(2) *Secondary habitation sites*. A midden accumulation more than 20 cm thick, distinguished from the preceding site type by the absence of refuse mounds.

(3) *Resource procurement and processing stations*. A midden accumulation of less than 20 cm. “The paucity of large amounts of cultural remains indicates that these sites were not extensively used, although their use and subsequent reuse as seasonal camps can not be ruled out.”

(4) *Mound sites*. “This category includes aboriginal burial mounds, sand mounds, and other non-habitational, i.e., intentionally constructed sites.”

The first three of these categories were included in the *earth midden* category used in the Park Service survey, reflecting some of the differences between the two adjacent areas. Shell works, shell middens, and eroded beach sites are lacking in the Big Cypress.

Widmer (1988:256–57) recognizes three basic site types in Southwest Florida: (1) large nucleated villages, characteristically 10 ha or larger in area, with an average population of 400 individuals; (2) smaller villages with areas of 3–4 ha, with populations of around 50 individuals; and (3) small fishing hamlets or collecting stations. Widmer (1988:256–57) referred specifically to the Big Cypress survey results, calling attention to the small size (most are less than 1 ha), and interpreted them as “temporary task-specific collecting, hunting, or fishing stations, whose expeditions were launched from the permanent villages.” He acknowledged that some of the larger sites in the Big Cypress probably had larger populations, which may have been permanent or were the result of extended seasonal periods of occupation.

In terms of Widmer’s typology, the sites within the Everglades equate somewhat as follows. The shell-work sites correspond to Widmer’s large nucleated villages, although some of them are on the small end of the range. The shell middens are mostly small enough to be collecting or fishing stations, although some could fall in the small nucleated village range. The vast majority of Everglades sites, particularly away from the mangrove zone, would correspond to his “collecting, hunting, or fishing stations.” I believe this is roughly correct.

Site Size and Settlement Size

One of the first questions to be addressed is, What does surface area mean? Can we, for example, use it to estimate the number of people who lived on a site? The answer depends upon more than just the size of the site, because of good evidence in South Florida of lateral movement of occupation on sites. Such movement can create a total site area much in excess of what is being used at any one time and can therefore lead to overestimates of community size.

John Goggin's (1950a) work at the huge Goodland Point shell midden is a case in point. By controlled surface collecting, he was able to seriate his collections and establish a chronology much as one would through vertical stratigraphy. This disclosed a pattern of site growth toward the water's edge and indicated that only a portion of the surface area was occupied at any one time. The Granada site at the mouth of the Miami River also indicates that occupancy moved back and forth on the site (John Griffin et al. 1982). The Turner River site is another example. Sears (1956) documented its growth toward the water.

The Bear Lake site, reported in chapter 7, shrinks when carefully examined. In Glades I late times, there were two smallish marl mounds that could hold no more than several households, if that. All later occupation was on the large mound, but it grew from east to west and possessed a more limited living area than its total size suggests. By Glades III times, apparently only the western portion was used and was in effect a rather small active area. Perhaps no more than 30 to 50 people ever lived there at any one time. A single test pit would have revealed only part of the site history, and perhaps this led to the unwarranted assumption that the people who left the latest pottery zone had lived all over the site.

All of these instances should warn us that lacking information to the contrary—information that can only come with far more extensive and intensive work—we should be cautious in assuming populations on the basis of surface area. Widmer (1988:256), while recognizing these factors, assumed for the sake of his argument “that the maximal extent of the site was utilized at a single point in time, since there is ethnohistoric evidence of dense populations at the time of contact.”

In the Shark River Slough, the number of places suitable for a camp are relatively few, usually on the north end of a tree island where the land is higher. The available locations restrict site size and encourage repeated usage, thereby building up the site depth over the years. The Western Ever-