

Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

July 2017

Thousands of years go, the inhabitants of Florida were amongst the first to manufacture ceramics to cook and store their food in North America. Ceramics like this fragment of Orange Series pottery from the Brighton Reservation, were hand formed with natural clay and tempered with organic fibers like Spanish moss or palmetto. Tempering is the process of adding an additional material type to the clay, so that the vessel is less vulnerable to cracking and breaks when it's subjected to high levels of heat during firing.



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Orange series pottery was often tempered with fibers like the Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) pictured above.

The July Artifact of the Month is one of the oldest man-made objects in our collection! It dates back between 1000-2000 B.C. Archaeologists can be fairly certain of its antiquity because of its distinctive fiber temper. If you look closely at the image, can you see it? As the manufacture of ceramics progressed, fiber tempers fell out of favor and were replaced by sand, shell, or other materials. We are lucky to have found such a significant amount of Seminole history in such a small fragment of pottery.

