

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

March 2023



Peach State Archaeological Society



The level of preservation of artifacts throughout the United States is dependent on several factors. Soil makeup and the intrusion of water are two factors that can deeply effect the stability of artifacts within the soil and when it comes out. Unfortunately, Florida is one of the worst states for preservation so it's not often artifacts such as pottery survive thousands of years within its sandy matrix. And if the sand is acidic and rough, is it any wonder that the pottery (which is often made from the sand) would be any better at maintaining its shape and structure without constant mending ([Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#)) ?

Finding larger pieces of pottery out in the Everglades and swampy areas of the reservations is truly a feat for the archaeologists. Right now the Collections team is working through a backlog of older projects, one of which is a field school that took place in 2011 on the Big Cypress Reservation. A multitude of small sand-tempered pottery fragments were recovered and within that some of the more rare pottery types (for the THPO) were identified. Fort Walton Ticked Rim, Opa Locka Incised, and Hare Hammock Surface Indented pottery are all now part of the collection. Throughout this year, the Collections team will highlight these pieces but this month, the focus is on Opa Locka Incised.

Found mostly within South Florida, this pottery piece made of sand is designated as part of the Glades pottery series. Glades culture, which is mostly identified by its lack of decoration, ranges in dates from 500 BP (before present)-AD 1542 ([Florida Museum](#)) (bottom). Opa Locka Incised is more specifically dated to AD 700-900. It is characterized by the downward-opening semicircles along the rim of the vessel (Griffin, 2002). The number of loops within each stack can vary, but once that number is set, it is repeated on the vessel without variation ([Peach State Archaeological Society](#)) (middle). Unfortunately as stated above, the Opa Locka Incised piece is fairly small, measuring 1.24 (L) x 0.3 (W) x 0.97 (H) in inches and weighing 5.7 grams (top).



The Ceramic Technology Lab at the Florida Museum is an excellent source of information regarding the pottery types throughout the southeast including Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. For more information click on this link: <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/ceramiclab/galleries/aboriginal/> or search for the lab's webpage on your web browser. The addition of this Opa Locka Incised piece brings the total in the THPO collection to four.