

Weedon Island Site
Vicinity of Weedon Island Road and 94th Avenue North
HPC #86-01 - Designated in July 1986



Weedon Island is a well-known archaeological site listed on the National Register from which a vibrant Precolumbian Gulf Coast culture spawned. After excavating in 1923, Dr. J. Walter Fewkes and Matthew W. Sterling of the Smithsonian Institute reported three or four distinct series of mounds. The largest, about 400 feet in diameter and about 27 feet high, was a burial mound. The Fewkes/Sterling excavations established the name for the Weeden Island period cultures and led to the description of an archaeological culture and ceramic series in the central Gulf Coast area. (Their original misspelling of "Weeden" to describe the culture persists to this day.)

Further studies by William Sears of the Florida State Museum indicated the presence of a cultural period following the Deptford cultural period but falling short of the Weeden Island period and referred to it as the "Middle Period." His division of pottery-making cultures was only a beginning as archaeologists now divide the Weeden Island culture into five separate periods or phases.

The Weeden Island Site still holds the potential for producing much valid information about the time period ca 500 AD to 1000 AD. Excavations in the midden deposits by Sears produced evidence of a possible dichotomy between the material culture associated with ritual and secular activities. Based on this and other excavations, Sears postulated that burial offerings are quite distinct (stylistically) from the ceramics recovered from secular activities, but are part of the cultural whole known as Weeden Island. Previous cultures showed little distinction between objects of every day life and those buried with individuals. This distinction perhaps indicates a shift in the cultural and ideological treatment of death by this complex.