



Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



ANCIENT INDIAN LITTERBUGS LEFT MOUND

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NEW SMYRNA BEACH --- Away back before Ponce de Leon visited the Florida East Coast, the ancient Surruque Indians were enjoying the pleasures of its fine beaches and recreational spots.

A spectacular evidence of their gatherings is a 10-acre mountain of debris on a 600-foot wide strip of scrub palmetto land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian River on State Road A1A, about eight miles south of New Smyrna Beach.

This is Turtle Mound, so-called many believe because of its shape as seen from the river, although others say it is because of the large number of sea turtles which came ashore to deposit their eggs here. This 50-foot mound represents centuries of Indian "litterbugs," an accumulation of debris of human occupation in the form of food remains, charcoal from fires, broken pottery and occasional tools and weapons. (Today Turtle Mound is a State Park and the rangers admonish visitors to observe good park "manners" and not leave trash and also to be careful with fire).

Archeologists have never agreed on the mound's function. Some say it had a religious significance and some maintain that fires were built on the summit as a primitive lighthouse for Indian mariners. Turtle Mound is relatively undisturbed and is probably the last large shell heap in the state which has survived with little damage. The property was saved from destruction by public spirited citizens who bought it and deeded it to the Historical Society. The Mound was shown on Florida's earliest map (LeMoyne, 1564).

