

lowest stratum of shells. But no such
overflows are now known; were the
water ten feet & nearly the whole
habitable part of E & Florida will be
submerged. I do not know what else
to look for but drifting sand. For this
the alternations are too regular & there
are not enough of them, if they extend
through long periods — However
the appearances are to be explained, a
careful examination of the whole
section on its face & by excavations
revealed the existence of the bones of
animals as in the other mounds
& of charcoal in connection with
calcareous shells, but apart from
the surface not a particle of pottery
which in other places ~~of~~ of
similar nature existed in surprising
quantities — Here then the only
indications of man now the burned
bone & charcoal, which certainly
would not place the views expressed
beyond a doubt. Fortunately I

J. Myerson

Jacksonville Fla March 28 67

Dear Gray.

I have long been intending
to write to you but have put forward things
until I could say as definitely as possible
what my excursion has led to — I am,
for a reason, glad that I did so since the
last observation made is a most satisfactory
one. The burial mounds for which
I expected so much have yielded little
or nothing of any consequence — If there
was to give me the only results, it was
better, as far as the interests of science
are concerned, that I should have staid
out Rome. The real interest has been
in the shell mounds of which I
have examined twenty, scattered
along the banks of the river, over
a space of nearly two hundred miles.
The contents of fresh water shells, *Paludina*
shufallensis, *V. ligata* — They cover areas

from a few square rods to two or three acres, & are from a few inches to fifteen ^{or even eighteen} feet in thickness, in fact forming the highest land above Pilatka in the upper St. John. They have so much the appearance of geological formations, & customary deposits, that they have, in so far as I can find out, been universally so considered. It was long before I could entertain the idea that they were not. But after much use of the hoe & spade, much labour & sweat, I have obtained as I believe satisfactory information, that they were formed in the human epoch or that man existed in their epoch. The general upshot of the whole matter is this; I have found the bones of the deer, soft shelled turtle, wild turkey & of other edible animals scattered through these heaps, in many places from the top to the bottom; in addition to these potting ^{ashes} & charcoal - Several

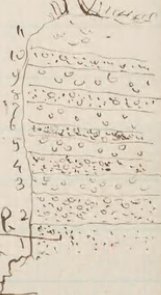
places I found the bones burned, the shells in which the charcoal rested calined & around them fragments of pots. There but were still sooty & in none but one case the carbonised contents adhered to the inner surface. But the chimney of the whole came only two days ago, at a place above Pilatka where we camped called "Horse Landing." Here was a bluff, ~~sixteen~~ ^{seventeen} feet high, into which the river had ~~run~~ ^{cut} its way; rising above the water was a clean vertical section.

1 debris of the bank only a few inches above the water -

2 Some sand, somewhat consolidated, with a few fragments of shells in the upper part.

2 to 11, as seen in one place, were successive strata consisting of shells alone, & of shells mixed with sand.

The sand ^{appeared} ~~to be~~ sedimentary, & the strata of sand & shells were such as could be accounted for by overflows of the river. When I was at the spot the water was high, but not within four feet of the



asked Mr. Probody, one of my companions
& a most accurate & careful observer to
witness the removal of several pieces of bone
& charcoal from the deposits. As we
passed along the face of the bluff near
the water, he called my attention to
something projecting from the fine
sand below the shells (it be in the
section). We carefully examined it
before removal to see that it was "in
place". I then picked it out with
my knife, when the work of man
appeared in flint; & so he antedated
this bluff. On the top of the bluff
is a live-oak 3 ft in diameter. On
the tops of other bluffs, as at ~~Black~~
Springs, below Lake Monroe, I
have seen ~~the~~ oaks 5 & 6 ft in diameter.
These ^{last} trees, I suppose, began to grow
before ~~the~~ or not far from the coming
of the white man. The absence of
pottery in the above described bluff I
cannot explain. When the bluff is

compared with the others it is, in this
respect, anomalous, nevertheless I believe
none was there as the bluff rose - I
have now - large collections, which
will illustrate each of the localities.
I trust they will prove valuable to
the Museum, to which I intend to
present them. & for which I made
them.

I shall leave on Saturday
for St Johns Bluff at the mouth of
the river where there is a mound
of Oyster shells, clearly the work of the
Indians. & then go home as fast as
steam will take me - I have been
in the woods for about six weeks
& have found camp life in these regions
enjoyable beyond description, I
reduce your house to a tent, or, as we
have several times done, to the "chamber with
a blue ceiling" & your clothing to shirt
& trousers, sets you free.

With kind regards to Mrs Gory
always sincerely yours
J. Wyman



Wyman, Jeffries. 1867. "Wyman, Jeffries Mar. 28 1867." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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