

SUMMARY INTERIM REPORT OF EXCAVATIONS AT  
THE QUAD BLOCK SITE (8Hi998), TAMPA, FLORIDA

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In June of 1980, the City of Tampa began clearing a downtown block for the construction of a parking garage. Local bottle collectors digging in a newly exposed area uncovered human remains and associated artifacts which were later identified as belonging to historic period Indians. The Florida Division of Archives, History, and Records Management determined that the burials dated from the 1824-1848 period and were associated with Fort Brooke. A prehistoric cultural component was also evident at the site. Based on this data, the State Historic Preservation Officer advised that this site should be professionally excavated prior to commencement of construction activity. The City of Tampa then contracted with Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. of St. Petersburg, to mitigate the impact of the construction project on the cultural resources.

The archaeological field crew spent 14 weeks excavating the complex multicomponent site. The impact area contained a prehistoric Indian site and evidence of late 19th and early 20th century occupation, as well as a locally unknown cemetery that contained the physical and material remains of historic Indians, soldiers, and probably, settlers.

The remains of 126 individuals were removed and turned over to the City of Tampa for reinterment. Another 10 gravestains were excavated from which coffin nails were recovered, but no bones. Nine additional graves located outside the impact area were mapped, but not excavated. The majority of burials outside the impact area were revealed during a pipeline excavation that was dug in the street east of the project area, indicating that the cemetery continued in that direction. Analysis of the materials from the site is ongoing. Dr. Curtis Wienker, a physical anthropologist, was retained by the Piper firm and has recently completed his description and analysis of the human osteological and dental remains from the site. Results from trace element analysis and amino acid dating tests by consultants Dr. Peter Betzer and Dr. Daniel Belnap, respectively, are forthcoming.

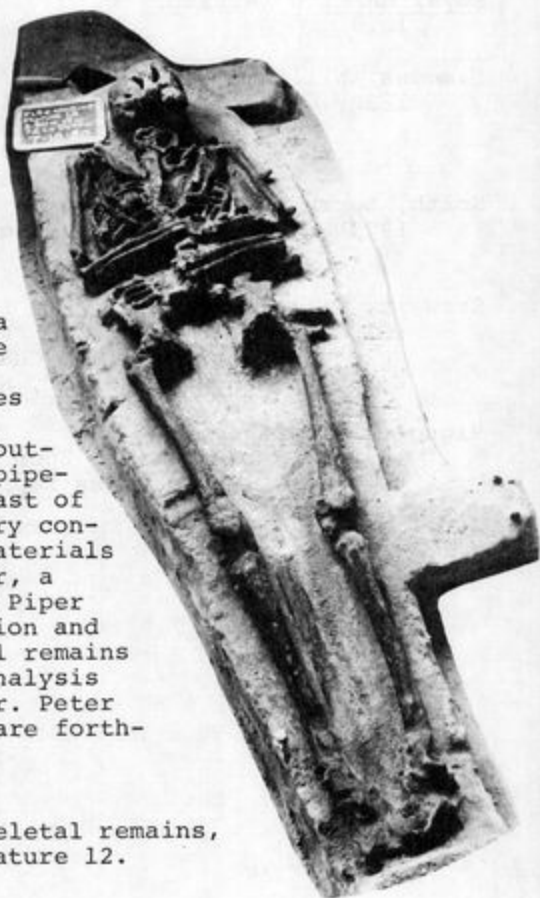


Figure 1. Skeletal remains,  
Feature 12.

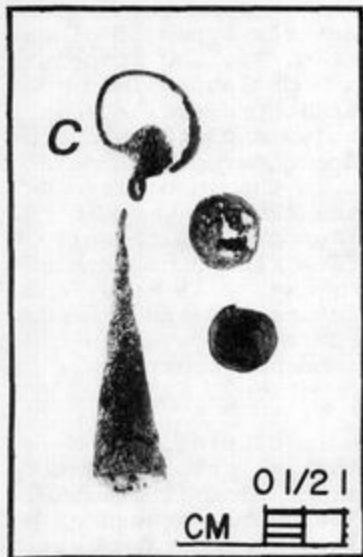


Figure 2.

Above. Silver earbob.

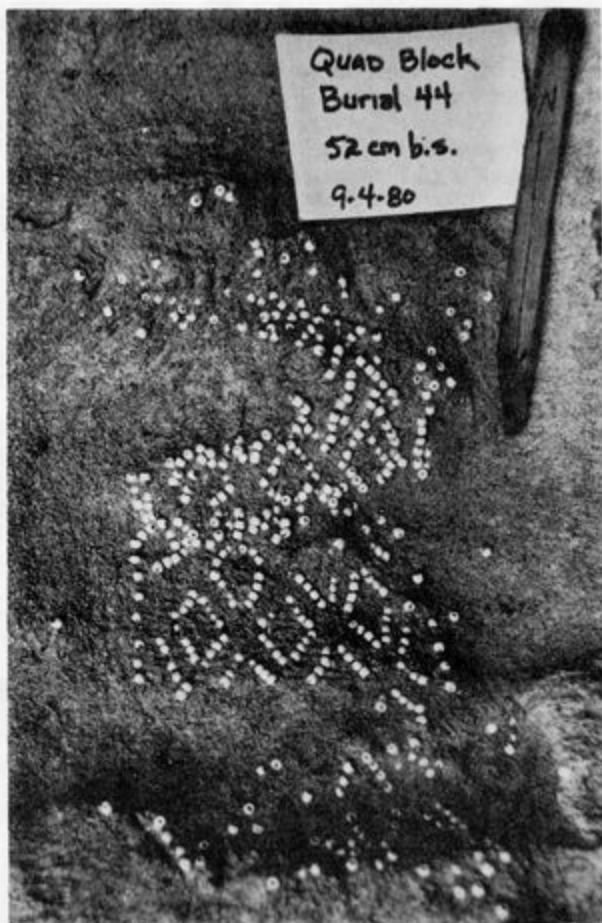


Figure 3.

Right. Seed bead pattern.  
Burial 44.

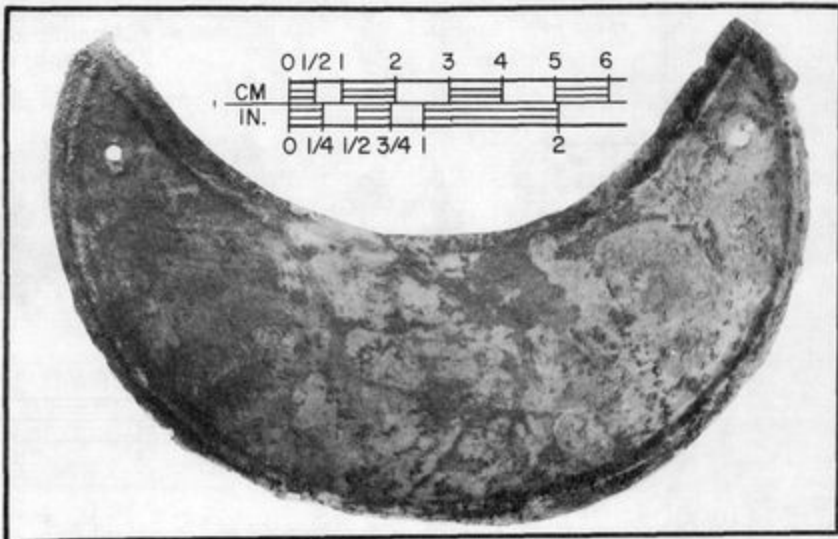


Figure 4.

Silver crescent  
gorget.

Broad categories of artifacts recovered include several types of glass and ceramic beads, German silver medallions, gorgets (Fig. 4), and bracelets, silver coins, metal and glass containers, table knives and clasp knives, military and civilian buttons, musket balls, nails, lithic projectile points, tools and flakes, and aboriginal pottery. Although analysis of the archaeological remains has not been completed as yet, it is anticipated that data from the historic component of the site will fill gaps in the incomplete documentary records concerning the second quarter of the 19th century at Ft. Brooke and the frontier settlement which later became Tampa. Additionally, an analysis of the cemetery burials is expected to reflect the demographic structure of the population during the time the cemetery was utilized. Analysis of soil samples from the stomach area of the skeletons and trace element analysis of bone samples may yield dietary and health data. Excavation of the graves also produced useful information concerning burial practices, coffin types, and materials available for coffin construction.

Although physical traits of skeletons can be used to distinguish between individuals of Amerindian and non-Amerindian ancestry, tribal identity of individuals interred in the cemetery must be determined from artifactual evidence. For example, careful excavation revealed a beadwork pattern of a traditional Seminole style (Fig. 3) which, together with other data, verifies the historical record of the presence of Seminoles at the Fort.

The site is considered a major source of information on the material culture of the Seminoles during a period of rapid cultural adaptation. Differential social status within the Indian population may be evidenced in the grave goods associated with the burials or by the absence of such goods. Perhaps most importantly, the cemetery site has the potential of helping to better understand the process of acculturation during a period of contact and conflict between two cultures.

When analysis and studies are complete, a final report of the findings at 8Hi998 will be written and submitted to the City of Tampa. It is the authors' hope that the report will be made available to the interested student.

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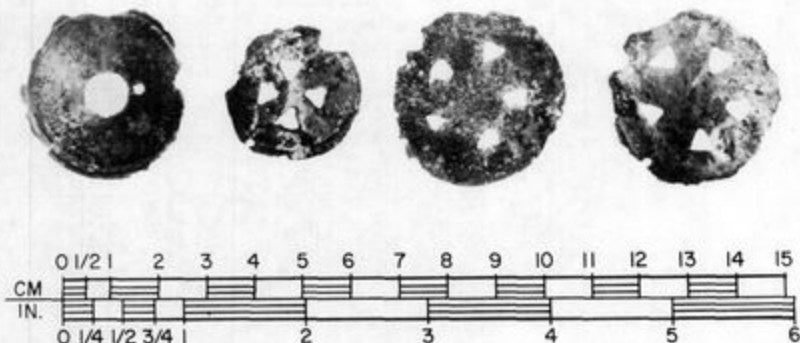


Figure 5. Silver bodice piece (on left), and silver pendants.