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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effacement and Persistence of Tocobaga, a Native Florida Town

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Abstract Historical descriptions and archaeological research provide a compelling association of the Native town of Tocobaga with the Safety Harbor site (8PI2), in Tampa Bay, Florida. The Spanish established a mission-fort at Tocobaga in 1567, but it was short-lived: responding to abuse by the colonizers, the Tocobagans killed the soldiers who had been left at the town and the Spanish burned the town in retaliation. We employ the metaphor of effacement, in its original referent to the wearing away of the surface of a coin, to describe the manner in which the colonial destruction of the town provided an opportunity for imposition of new meanings on the landscape of Tocobaga in the modern era: first as a plantation and "pleasure garden," next as an ancient ruin and archaeological site, and later as a reform park. Archaeology is part of the effacement of the Native town—the remnants of Tocobaga were reinscribed as the type site for the Safety Harbor–period and the eponymous Mississippian-period (1010–1550) material culture complex. However, archaeology—including our recent testing—also provides a means for understanding such concepts as effacements, as well as the persistence of materiality.

Resumen Las descripciones históricas y la investigación arqueológica proporcionan una asociación convincente del pueblo nativo de Tocobaga con el sitio de Safety Harbor (8PI2), en Tampa Bay, Florida. Los españoles establecieron una misión-fortaleza en Tocobaga en el año 1567, pero duró poco: en respuesta a los abusos de los colonizadores, los tocobagueses mataron a los soldados que habían quedado en el pueblo y los españoles quemaron el pueblo en represalia. Empleamos la metáfora del borramiento (effacement, en inglés), en su referente original al desgaste de la superficie de una moneda, para describir la manera en que la destrucción colonial del pueblo brindó una oportunidad para la imposición de nuevos significados al paisaje de Tocobaga en la época moderna: primero como una plantación y un "jardín del placer", luego como una ruina antigua y un sitio arqueológico, y más tarde como un parque reformado. La arqueología es parte del borramiento de la ciudad nativa: los restos de Tocobaga se reinscribieron como el sitio tipo para el período de Safety Harbor y el complejo de cultura material del período del Misisipi del mismo nombre (1010–1550). Sin embargo, la arqueología, incluidas nuestras pruebas recientes, también proporciona un medio para comprender, por ejemplo, los borramientos, así como la persistencia de la materialidad.

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Résumé Les descriptions historiques et la recherche archéologique fournissent une association captivante de la ville autochtone de Tocobaga avec le site de Safety Harbor (8PI2) à Tampa Bay en Floride. En 1567, les Espagnols établirent une mission fortifiée à Tocobaga, mais elle fut de courte durée car face aux abus des colonisateurs, les habitants de Tocobaga tuèrent les soldats restés dans la ville et les Espagnols la brûlèrent en représailles. Nous recourons à la métaphore de l'effacement, dans sa référence d'origine à l'usure de la surface d'une pièce de monnaie, pour décrire la manière dont la destruction coloniale de la ville a donné l'opportunité d'imposer des significations nouvelles au paysage de Tocobaga à l'ère moderne, tout d'abord comme une plantation et un « jardin d'agrément », ensuite comme une ruine ancienne et un site archéologique, et plus tard comme un parc de réforme. L'archéologie fait partie de l'effacement de la ville autochtone. Les vestiges de Tocobaga furent rétablis comme le site-type pour la période Safety Harbor et le complexe de culture matérielle de la période Mississippienne (1010–1550) éponyme. Toutefois l'archéologie, notamment nos tests récents, fournit également un moyen pour comprendre qu'ils sont des effacements ainsi que la persistance de la matérialité.

Keywords colonialism · modernity · materiality

Introduction

> After [the Adelantado] had been with Carlos for three days he left with all six brigantines for [the country of Chief] Tocobaga, taking Carlos and another twenty principal Indians with him. He arrived at the harbor on the second day, at night. The chieftan lived twenty leagues inland, but one could reach the side of his house by a saltwater channel. Even though it was night and there was no moon, one of the Indians who accompanied Carlos steered by the North Star in such a way that, with a fair wind, the Adelantado arrived near Tocobaga's house one hour before daybreak, without being discovered. He ordered the brigantines to anchor with great secrecy. (Solís de Merás 2017:175)

Spanish descriptions of the Native town of Tocobaga provide a compelling argument for its association with the Safety Harbor site (8PI2) on the western coast of the Florida peninsula (Brinton 1859:118,171; Swanton 1946:195; J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950:31; Mitchem 1989:56; Milanich 1995:73) (Figs. 1, 2). The flat-topped mound at the site—the presumed location of Tocobaga's house—stands imposingly on a high bluff above an embayment at the northern end of Old Tampa Bay. The mound, preserved today as part of a county park, is the only obvious reminder of the Native town (Fig. 3). Picnic shelters and horseshoe pits dot the bluff edges to the north- and southwest, where the two arms of the village were located. The presumed plaza between these has been paved for a parking lot. Farther in the distance, another picnic shelter and playground occupy the area where a burial mound once stood. Visitors to the park could be forgiven for assuming that even the platform mound is another park feature, given the extent to which it has been landscaped.

Yet it was likely here—on the "highest and most prominent place" (Solís de Merás 2017:178)—that Governor Pedro Menédez de Avilés met with the Tocobaga chief in 1567. The meeting proceeded to the irritation of Carlos[1]—chief of the rival Calusa—who expressed his preference for burning Tocobaga's village to the ground (Hann 1991:309; Solís de Merás 2017:178). After brokering a shaky truce between the two chiefs, and before returning to mission San Antón at the Calusa capital to the south,[2] Menéndez and Jesuit priest Father Juan Rogel established a mission-fort with two dozen soldiers at Tocobaga. However, the Native people of Tocobaga—especially the chief and his family—resisted conversion to Christianity (Hann 1991:235–237). Menéndez and Rogel began hearing tales of trouble at the colony, from a lack of food to abuse at the hands of undisciplined Spanish soldiers. Only a year after the mission-fort was established, Rogel returned to find Tocobaga deserted and the soldiers killed. Marquéz ordered the town burned in retaliation.

The Tocobagans appear "rarely and in the briefest of passing remarks" in subsequent Spanish

[1] "Carlos" was a Spanish corruption of something closer to "Caalus" (Hann 1991:280).

[2] Recent research indicates that the mission of San Antón and the Calusa capital are represented by the Mound Key site in modern Estero Bay (Thompson, Marquardt, Walker et al. 2018; Thompson, Marquart, Savarese et al. 2020).

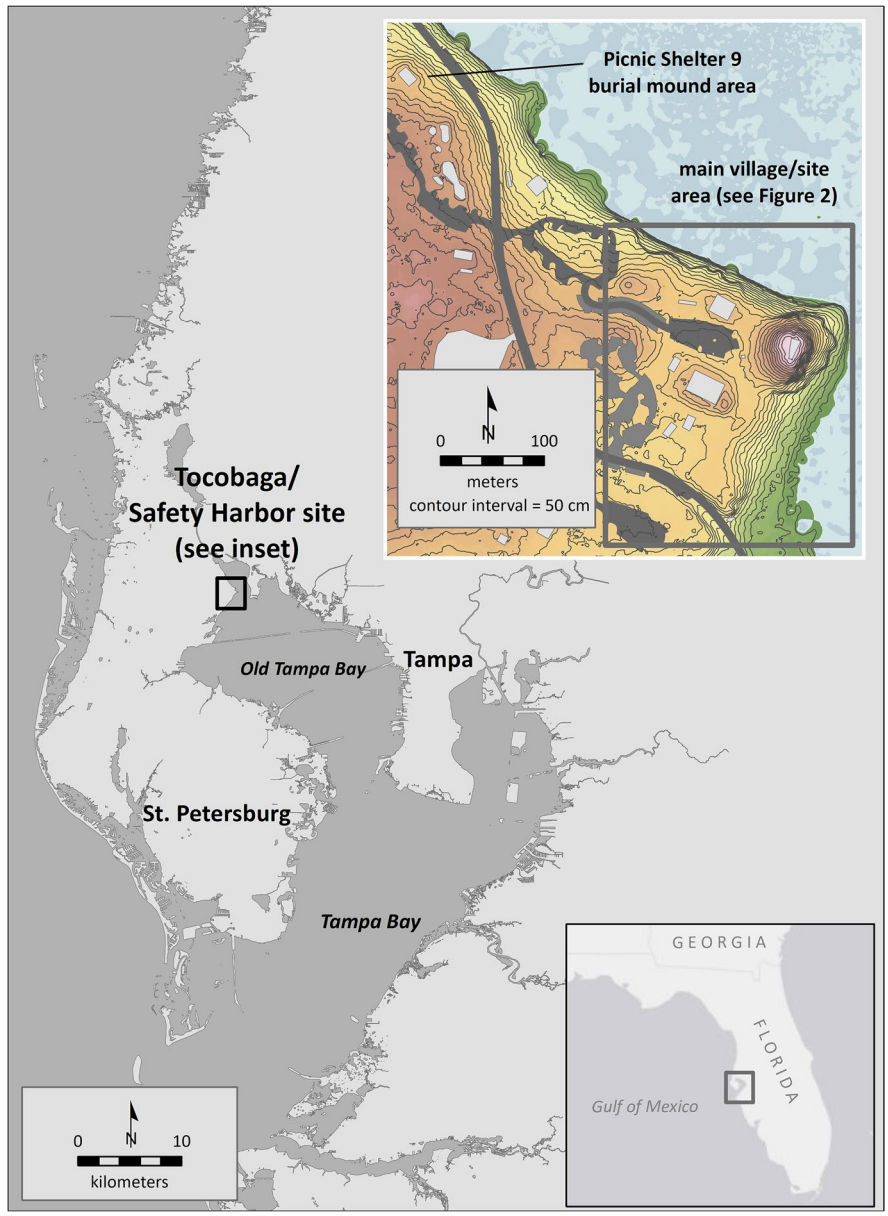


Fig. 1 Location and general map of Tocobaga/the Safety Harbor site.

records (Hann 1991:347). By the early 1700s, they were living on the fringes of the Apalachee missions of northern Florida. But at an attack by rival Indigenous groups wiped out all but a few survivors, who sought refuge with their colonizers (Hann 1991:348, 1995:188). An English map drawn a few years later bears the notation "Tocobogga [*sic*] Indians Destroyed 1709" (Cumming 1998:map 184A, plate 48C).

If we were to interrupt the story of Tocobaga at this point, the archaeology of the town might be profitably framed through the lenses of "erasure" or "clearance"—concepts regularly employed to describe how subaltern groups and their material remains were removed by settler colonialism (Byrne 2003; Guernsey 2008; A. Smith 2008b; Verdesio 2008; Zimmerman and Move 2008; Panich and Schneider 2019). Arnold (2014:2442) defines "erasure" as an action that "permanently removes material traces and past peoples or cultures from future contemplation, study, or manipulation." Angèle Smith (2008a:18) explains "clearance" as "removing people and communities from the

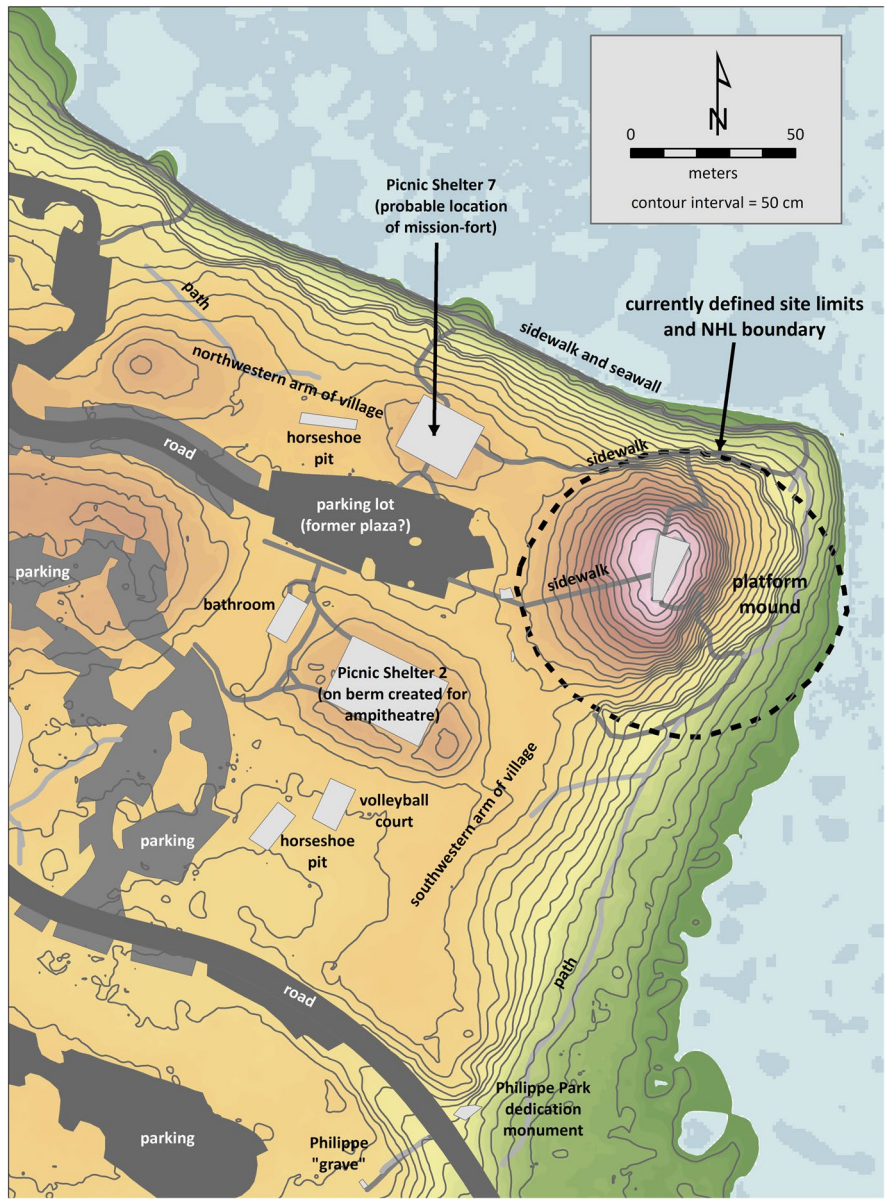


Fig. 2 Detailed map of the main village area at Tocobaga/the Safety Harbor site.

landscape." Some applications consider how erasures may be subverted or resisted, mainly in the "haunting" of places, sites, and landscapes (Supernant 2020; Surface-Evans et al. 2020). Still, given the strength of the metaphor, framing the history of Tocobaga around these concepts risks understating the persistence of Tocobaga in terms of its materiality, meanings, and—although no one today identifies as Tocobagan—its descendant communities (Silliman 2005:64; Panich 2013; McNiven 2016:30; Schneider and Hayes 2020). It also ignores the way the remains of the Native town have been appropriated in the contemporary era, in service of modernist notions of temporal segmentation, rupture, and progress (Dawdy 2010:770–771; Arnold 2014:2442–2443; González-Ruibal 2016).

We could alternatively approach Tocobaga through the lens of "ruins" and "ruination." As defined by Stoler (2008:194, 2013), "ruination" calls attention to the manner in which imperial formations—the relations of force inherent to colonial empires—persist in "material debris, in ruined landscapes and through the social ruination of people's lives." Historical



Fig. 3 Views of major features of Tocobaga/the Safety Harbor site. *Clockwise from top left*: GPR survey near the northern slope of the platform mound (note paved ramp to summit); terrace walls and steps on the south slope of the platform mound; Picnic Shelter 9, in the vicinity of the former burial mound; Picnic Shelter 7, where the Spanish mission-fort was likely located.

archaeologists have turned their attention to ruins with increasing frequency in recent years, mainly in relation to the urban decay associated with industrial decline (Graff 2017) (but see Beisaw [2017], González-Ruibal [2017] and Penrose [2017]). In theory, "ruination" is understood as a political project in which the ruins of colonialism are actively reappropriated (Stoler 2008:196; Dawdy 2010:769). But, in practice, studies framed in ruination tend to romanticize and aestheticize ruins of the modern era, placing modernity in the past and making it appear "both inevitable and uncomplicated" (Harrison 2011:151) (see also McAtackney and Ryzewski [2017:17]), a concern exacerbated by the tendency to focus on the ruins of capitalism's "successes" (Dawdy 2010:771). The focus on ruins as stationary objects may also subvert understanding of change, neglecting the "creative destruction" inherent to Western modernity (Penrose 2017) (but see Moshenka [2015]). The connotation of stasis is arguably a particular risk in consideration of ancient "ruins" (Pétursdóttir and Olsen 2014:4985), but see Hadad (2019). More pertinent for our case study, some Native Americans consider "ruin" a pejorative associated with land appropriation by settler colonists, especially when conceived as "abandoned" (Ferguson et al. 2001:10; Zimmerman and Move 2008:192; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009:196).

Rather than either erasure or ruination, we suggest that another metaphor—effacement—better encompasses the archaeology and history of the Native town of Tocobaga. The term "effacement" has been used occasionally in archaeology, usually more or less as a synonym for "erasure" (M. Smith 2001:32; Mullins 2006:60, 2017:244; Abu El-Haj 2008:214). This use is consistent with the contemporary definition of the verb "efface," meaning "to rub out, obliterate (writing, painted or sculptured figures, a mark or stain) from the surface of anything, so as to leave no distinct traces" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2022).

However, the term has also been used in reference to the manner in which material remains may persist, despite being diminished by subsequent activities, practices, and processes (Brouwer Burg et al. 2016). This sense of the word is arguably more in keeping with its etymology. Specifically, "efface" comes to English by way of the French "*effacer*," but ultimately from Latin for "*ex* out + *facies* face" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2022), a meaning reflected in the earliest English use of the word by poet William Cowper, published in the 1780s: "So coin grows smooth. ... Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last." This sense of the word continues especially among numismatists, who employ it to describe the degree of wear of

the inscriptions on a coin's surface (British Museum 2022; Penn Museum 2022).

Several prominent philosophers have employed the same metaphor. Lacan (1991:157) used the example of "an effaced coin passed from hand to hand in silence" to illustrate talk without purpose, or empty speech (Forrester 2000:140–141). Nietzsche likened truth to "coins which have been effaced and which from then on are taken to be, not pieces of money, but metal" (Forrester 2000:140).[3] In both senses, the materiality of the coin persists despite effacement of the surface. Meaning may also persist, as in Lacan's example, where the coin continues as currency through the habitus of exchange (McGowan 2004:20). Alternatively, as in Nietzsche's metaphor, the meanings may be stripped away or altered with effacement.

We suggest that "effacement"—so defined—encompasses both erasure and persistence in qualified measure, making it appropriate for understanding not only the manner in which the one-two punch of colonialism and modernity have diminished many of the surface features of Tocobaga, but also how such blows have also been deflected. As we note below, archaeology has played a role in the effacement of Tocobaga, through the physical removal of bodies, artifacts, and sediments, as well as through the appropriation of meaning in the abstraction of pottery types and periods. Yet archaeology also has the potential to be revelatory of the process of effacement, through its focus on the manner in which material may "mediate practices, relations, and worldviews" (Cobb 2014:590). We draw on previous archaeological work, our own recent testing, and a review of historical records to describe the effacement of the Native town of Tocobaga—as Spanish colonial outpost, as plantation and pleasure garden, as ancient ruin and archaeological site, and—most recently—as a suburban reform park.

"Their Village ... at the Back of the Bay": The Native Town of Tocobaga

Native American settlement of the bluff where the town of Tocobaga would eventually be located preceded the formation of Tampa Bay by several millennia. A light but extensive scatter of chert flakes in the aeolian sands in the lower levels of our shovel tests, along with stone tools recovered in previous work at the site (J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950; Mitchem 1982), attest to occasional settlement between around 6000 and 1000 B.C.E. At the early end of this range, the estuary now known as Tampa Bay was yet to be fully formed, consisting instead of a series of restricted lagoons formed by karst depressions, with limited water circulation (Donahue et al. 2003; Willard et al. 2007; Van Soelen et al. 2010:222). Continued sea-level rise over the next few millennia, along with attendant raising of aquifers and surface waters, connected these lagoons and extended estuarine waters into the upper reaches of the bay (Donahue et al. 2003; Cronin et al. 2007).

Archaeologists John Griffin and Ripley Bullen (1950:7) described the village at the Safety Harbor site as L-shaped, an inference apparently made from surface artifacts and topography, but one that is substantiated by our testing. Shovel tests (measuring 50 × 50 cm and conducted at 20 m intervals) and two 1 × 1 m test units reveal a shell midden of uneven preservation (Fig. 4). Tocobaga-related artifacts, consisting mainly of shell, lithics, and pottery (Fig. 5), exhibit highest densities along or near the bluff edge extending north and west of the platform mound (Fig. 6). This L-shaped village plan is likewise apparent in strong reflections in the GPR data—generally indicative of buried shell midden, although complicated by other anomalies suggestive of modern intrusions, such as utility lines (Fig. 7).

Table 1 summarizes 18 recent radiocarbon dates from off-mound areas of the Safety Harbor site. The absence of any earlier dates suggests that Native people founded the town after around cal A.D. 1200. The L-shaped plan may have been established early in the town's history: our two earliest dates come from excavation units at opposite ends of the midden (Shovel Test 40 in the northern arm of the village and Test Unit 2 in the west). However, a few of our test excavations demonstrate stratigraphy possibly indicative of reworking of the village; the profile of Test Unit 2, for example, shows two distinct layers of midden (Fig. 4). These stratigraphic anomalies may be the result of the cleaning of house floors, which J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950:22) hypothesized based on the profile of their nearby test trench (Fig. 7). Pluckhahn et al.

[3] An alternate translation of this text avoids the word "effaced," but retains the same essential meaning: "coins which have lost their embossing" (Nietzsche 2005:17).



Fig. 4 Views of stratigraphy in test units, demonstrating variability in the preservation of the Tocobaga midden. *Left*: Plan of Test Unit 1 in the northern arm of the village at 75 cm below surface; note PVC pipe through otherwise well-preserved shell midden, with preserved features in floor below. *Right*: South profile of Test Unit 2 in the western arm of village, showing stratified shell-midden layers.

(2022), tying posthole patterns identified by J. W. Griffin and Bullen to the recent GPR survey, find evidence for an oval structure about 7 × 15 m in the village west of the platform mound. Extrapolating to similar anomalies in the GPR data, the western arm of the village may have contained four such houses. Assuming the same for the northern arm, the pattern would be consistent with a 16th-century Spanish

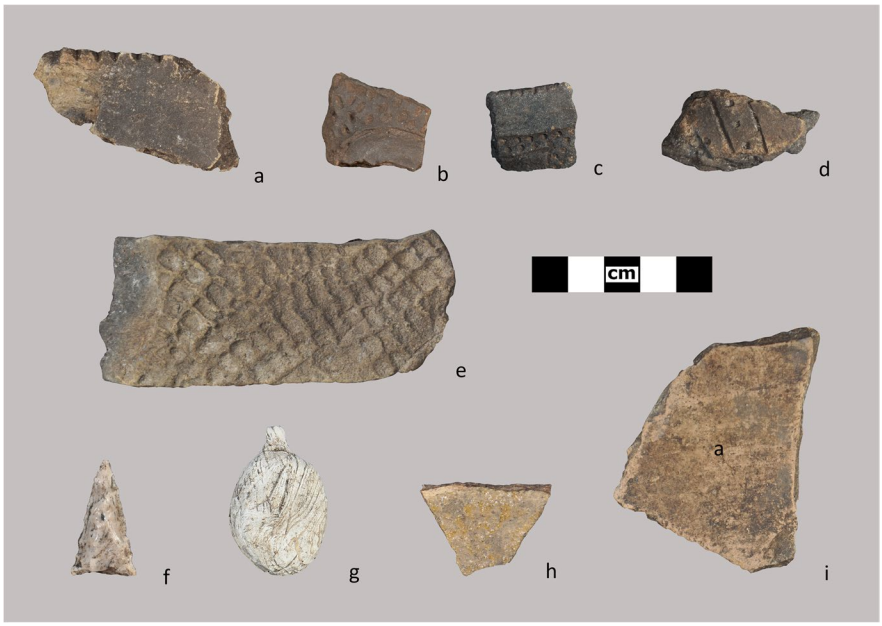
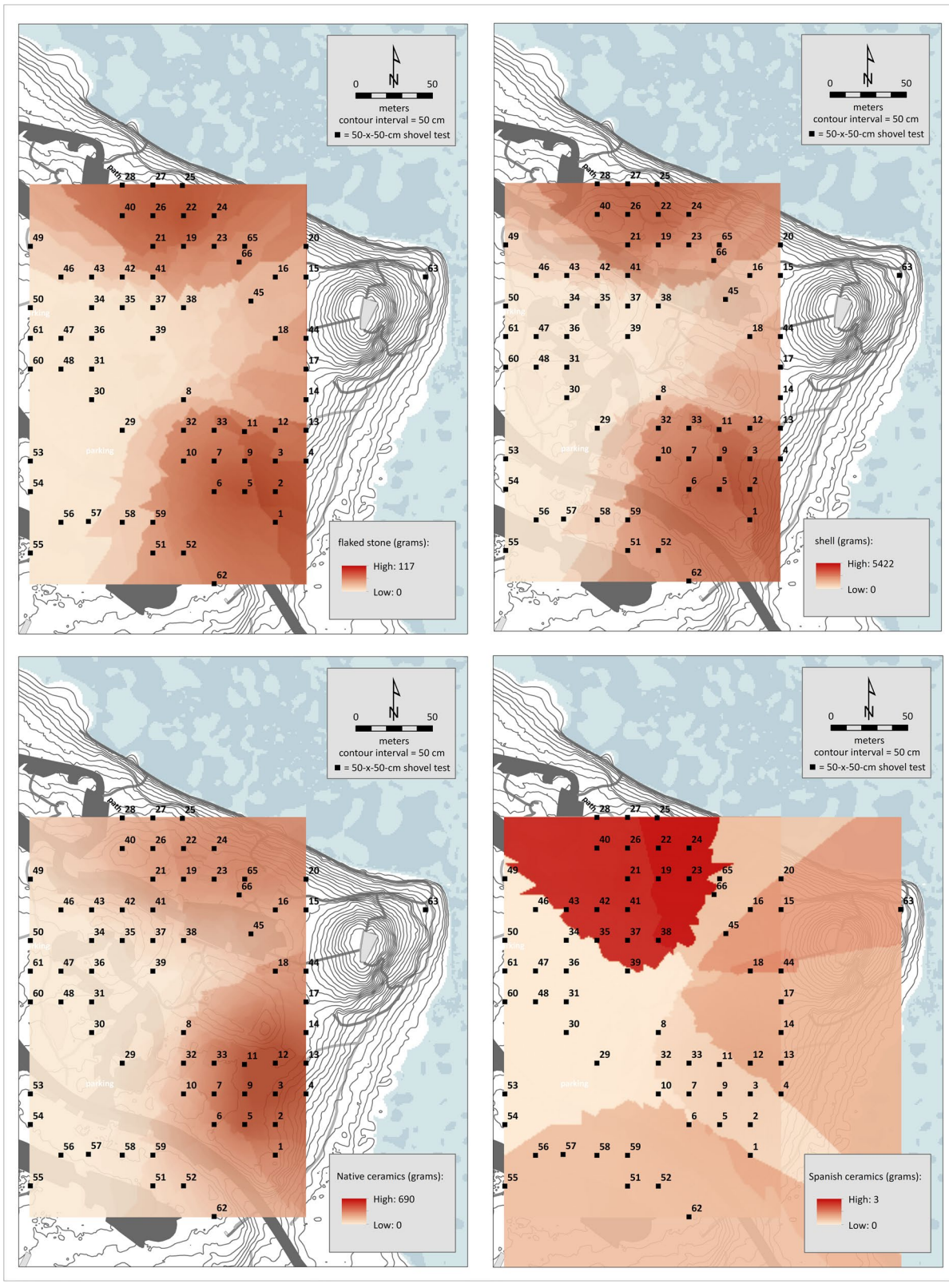


Fig. 5 Selected Tocobaga- and Spanish-related artifacts: (*a*) Pinellas Plain ticked rim sherd (Test Unit 2, Level 2, FS 838.01); (*b–d*) Safety Harbor Incised/Punctate sherds (Shovel Test 3, Level 6, FS 39.10; Shovel Test 9, Level 4, FS 115.14; Shovel Test 13, Level 3, FS 176.10); (*e*) St. Johns check-stamped sherd (Shovel Test 5, Level 8, FS 65.10); (*f*) Pinellas projectile point (Shovel Test 3, Level 5, FS 38.10); (*g*) shell plummet-pendant (Shovel Test 34, Level 2, FS 495.05); (*h*) lead-glazed (interior) olive-jar sherd (Shovel Test 65, Level 4, FS 897.07); and (*i*) unglazed olive-jar sherd (Shovel Test 21, Level 2, FS 305.09).


0
N
50
meters
contour interval = 50 cm
■ = 50-x-50-cm shovel test
flaked stone (grams):
High: 117
Low: 0
shell (grams):
High: 5422
Low: 0
Native ceramics (grams):
High: 690
Low: 0
Spanish ceramics (grams):
High: 3
Low: 0

◂**Fig. 6** Kriging interpolations of quantities (by weight) of major classes of Tocobaga- and Spanish-related artifacts in shovel tests. *Clockwise from top left*: flaked stone, shell, Spanish ceramics, Native ceramics.

description of another Native town in Tampa Bay as composed of seven or eight small houses (Robertson 1993:57).

The platform mound anchored the village. In its current form, the mound measures about 60 × 80 m at its base, with a summit platform of around 17 × 25 m elevated 7 m above the surrounding bluff. Jackson et al. (2021) summarize the mound stratigraphy and dating, based on previous trenching (J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950) and recent small-diameter coring and GPR survey. Briefly, a dome-shaped primary mound composed of marine clay was expanded into a larger platform mound by the addition of alternating layers and lenses of sand, shell, and redeposited midden. Above this, in the upper levels, are a series of included superimposed layers of clay and midden. J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950) described three main

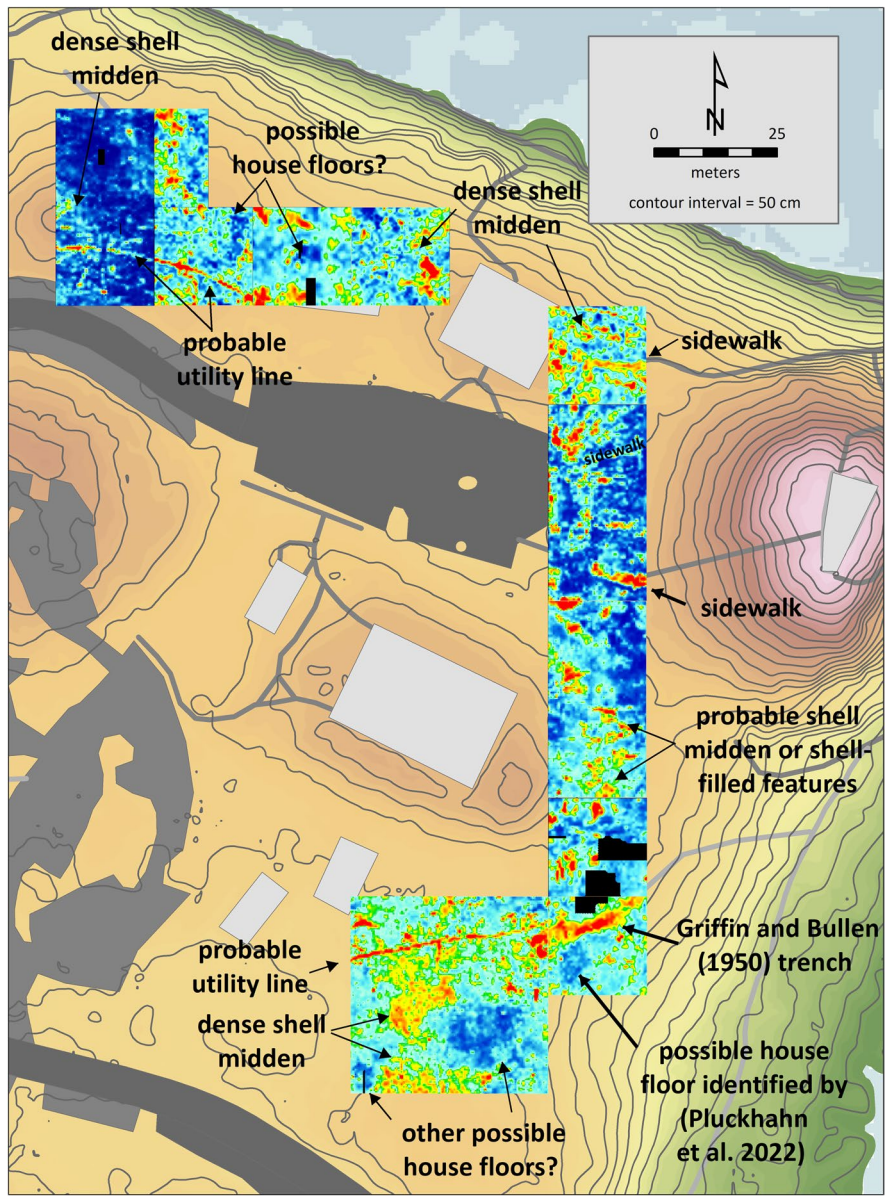


Fig. 7 Results of GPR survey. This is the second horizontal "slice," roughly equivalent to the lower portion of the A horizon at around 30–40 cmbs, interpolated from data collected with a SIR-3000 (Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc.) using a 400 MHz antenna on transects spaced at 50 cm intervals. The data were processed using GPR Slice.

Table 1 Radiocarbon dates from off-mound areas of the Safety Harbor site

Sample No.	Provenience	Material	13C, 0/00	14C BP	±	pMC	±	One-Sigma Calibrated Probability	Two-Sigma Calibrated Probability
UGAMS-50138	STP 16 Stratum IV	wood charcoal	-25.2	60	20	99.22	0.24	cal A.D. 1706–1720 (20.1%), 1816–1833 (21.8%), 1891–1907 (26.4%)	cal A.D. 1695–1725 (29.6%), 1811–1839 (28.5%), 1845–1853 (1.1%), 1877–1916 (36.3%)
UGAMS-50135	TU 2, Level 4	*Carya* nutshell	-27.2	380	20	95.36	0.23	cal A.D. 1458–1499 (52.6%), 1600–1615 (15.6%)	cal A.D. 1451–1521 (67.5%), 1580–1624 (27.9%)
UGAMS-50137	STP 18, Feature 5	wood charcoal	-26.6	410	20	95.03	0.23	cal A.D. 1448–1475 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1439–1499 (91.2%), 1600–1615 (4.2%)
UGAMS-59154	STP 22, Level 6	*Zea mays* cob	-10.35	500	20	93.94	0.26	cal A.D. 1417–1436 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1408–1442 (95.4%)
UGAMS-44071	STP 9, Level 6	*O. virginianus* tooth	-20.01	500	20	93.94	0.25	cal A.D. 1417–1436 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1408–1442 (95.4%)
UGAMS-50133	STP 65, Level 4	charred seed	-23.3	510	20	93.87	0.23	cal A.D. 1412–1431 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1404–1440 (95.4%)
UGAMS-41142	STP 5 Level 7	*Carya* nutshell	-25.91	530	25	93.60	0.25	cal A.D. 1402–1427 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1327–1348 (8.8%), 1395–1438 (86.7%)
UGAMS-52472	TU 2, Level 3	wood charcoal	-25.83	580	20	93.08	0.25	cal A.D. 1326–1352 (53.9%), 1394–1402 (14.4%)	cal A.D. 1311–1362 (68.1%), 1387–1410 (27.4%)
UGAMS-50136	STP 14, Level 4, Zone A	wood charcoal	-25.9	590	20	92.87	0.23	cal A.D. 1323–1357 (57.5%), 1392–1399 (10.7%)	cal A.D. 1307–1364 (73.2%), 1386–1407 (22.3%)
UGAMS-52471	STP 65, Feature 22, Level 9	wood charcoal	-26.28	590	20	92.94	0.43	cal A.D. 1323–1357 (57.5%), 1392–1399 (10.7%)	cal A.D. 1307–1364 (73.2%), 1386–1407 (22.3%)
UGAMS-44070	STP 5 Level 9	*O. virginianus* tooth	-20.48	610	20	92.64	0.24	cal A.D. 1307–1328 (28.2%), 1342–1363 (26.4%), 1385–1396 (13.7%)	cal A.D. 1302–1369 (74.9%), 1379–1400 (20.5%)
UGAMS-50134	STP 65, Feature 21, Level 11	charred seed	-22.9	610	20	92.70	0.23	cal A.D. 1307–1328 (28.2%), 1342–1363 (26.4%), 1385–1396 (13.7%)	cal A.D. 1302–1369 (74.9%), 1379–1400 (20.5%)

Table 1 (continued)

Sample No.	Provenience	Material	13C, 0/00	14C BP	±	pMC	±	One-Sigma Calibrated Probability	Two-Sigma Calibrated Probability
UGAMS-44067	STP 5 Level 5	*Carya* nutshell	-24.49	650	25	92.20	0.25	cal A.D. 1295–1316 (27.8%), 1361–1388 (40.5%)	cal A.D. 1283–1326 (43.8%), 1352–1394 (51.6%)
UGAMS-44068	STP 40 Level 5	*Carya* nutshell	-24.94	650	25	92.17	0.25	cal A.D. 1295–1316 (27.8%), 1361–1388 (40.5%)	cal A.D. 1283–1326 (43.8%), 1352–1394 (51.6%)
UGAMS-52474	TU 2, Level 6, Feature 15	wood charcoal	-26.54	650	20	92.24	0.25	cal A.D. 1296–1312 (24.1%), 1361–1387 (44.2%)	cal A.D. 1287–1323 (41.5%), 1356–1392 (54.0%)
UGAMS-44073	STP 22 Level 10	*O. virginianus* bone	-20.11	660	20	92.14	0.24	cal A.D. 1291–1306 (28.1%), 1364–1384 (40.2%)	cal A.D. 1283–1320 (45.4%), 1359–1390 (50.1%)
UGAMS-52473	TU 2, Level 6, Feature 14	wood charcoal	-27.47	710	20	91.49	0.24	cal A.D. 1277–1293 (68.3%)	cal A.D. 1271–1301 (91.7%), 1371–1378 (3.7%)
UGAMS-44069	STP 40 Level 6	*Carya* nutshell	-25.24	780	25	90.79	0.24	cal A.D. 1229-1246 (30.4%), 1255–1274 (37.9%)	cal A.D. 1223–1277 (95.4%)

Calibrations conducted using OxCal 4.4 (Bronk Ramsey 2009) and the IntCal 20 atmospheric curve for the northern hemisphere (Reimer et al. 2020).

occupation layers in the upper portion of the mound, but radiocarbon dates show numerous stratigraphic reversals; taking the most recent as a *terminus post quem*, the upper portion of the mound was constructed after cal A.D. 1405–1440 (95%), in part from earlier midden materials.

The Native people of Tocobaga constructed a burial mound on higher ground several hundred meters northwest of the village. Matthew Stirling (1931:172), who excavated the mound in 1930, reported that it was around 13 ft. (4 m) high and had been built "by gradual stages," with most of the burials "of a secondary nature and placed without order." Stirling (1931:172) noted that artifacts of any kind were rare in the mound, with exception of pots placed at the base "as offerings, without interring them." One of the more than 100 burials Stirling excavated was later radiocarbon dated by Stojanowski and Johnson (2011:Table 1); the recalibrated range for this date is a century or so older than our earliest dates from the village, but this may reflect an offset related to a diet heavy in marine resources (Stojanowski and Johnson 2011:2).

Thus, by at least by the 1400s, the Native town had grown to resemble "Mississippian" villages elsewhere in the region, with a semicircular arrangement of houses around a central plaza, with associated platform and burial mounds (Payne and Scarry 1998; Stout and Lewis 1998). Little is known archaeologically of outlying settlements, but the small size of the village relative to its civic-ceremonial architecture suggests that it served as a gathering place for domestic groups dispersed across the surrounding area.

By the early 1500s, the village may have been attracting visitors from much further afield. Juan Ponce de León's expeditions to find and settle a landmass reputed to lie to the north of Cuba brought him to the Gulf Coast of Florida in 1513. León likely never made it as far north as Tampa Bay, but his explorations precipitated illicit Spanish slave raiding

of the Gulf Coast (Worth 2014:16–19). León's death in 1521 at the hand of the Calusa opened La Florida to a series of Spanish claimants, many of whom began their ill-fated expeditions in Tampa Bay.

Tocobaga may have been visited first by the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez in 1528. Narváez's treasurer Cabeza de Vaca (2003:55) described a visit to a town "at the back of the bay," consistent both with the location of the Safety Harbor site and later accounts of the setting of Tocobaga (Milanich 1995:118). Here, the Spaniards found "many crates belonging to Castilian merchants" each containing bodies covered in painted deer hides (Cabeza de Vaca 2003:55–56). The Indians related that these crates and bodies, as well as items of linen, gold, and feathers, had been scavenged from a Spanish shipwreck. The Spanish burned these bodies before realizing they were the remains of fellow Spaniards.

Less than a dozen years later, in 1539, Hernando de Soto's expedition landed on the south side of Tampa Bay, spending time in the Native towns of Ocita and Mocozo (Milanich and C. Hudson 1993:53–70; Milanich 1995:129; C. Hudson 1997:69–70). Chroniclers of this expedition fail to mention Tocobaga, suggesting the town had yet to achieve its later prominence. Alternatively, Tocobaga may once have been a peer of these other towns, but had been weakened by the earlier visit by Narváez. In any case, de Soto and his expedition, like Narváez before them, quickly departed Tampa Bay in search of gold and the reserves of Native-grown corn that were required to feed their expeditions (Milanich and C. Hudson 1993:71; C. Hudson 1997:89).

Fontaneda (1944), who survived a shipwreck in the Florida Keys and lived as a captive of Native peoples of southern Florida for almost 20 years, traveled through Tocobaga in the 1550s. In his 1575 memoir, Fontaneda (1944:69) described Tocobaga as the "head chief of that district toward the right side for the coming toward Havana" and noted that the chief "has many vassals, and is an independent king" (Fontaneda 1944:29). A list of caciques that accompanies Fontaneda's memorials indicates that Tocobaga controlled a population of around 6,000 people (Hann 1991:317; Worth 1995:351). To the extent these accounts are accurate, they suggest that the chief may have taken advantage of destabilization in the wake of de Soto to consolidate control over Tampa Bay.

Tocobaga's ascendancy appears to have brought him into greater conflict with the Calusa king Carlos. When the Spanish brought Carlos to Tocobaga in 1567, the chief was holding captive Carlos's sister and 12 of his subjects (Worth 2014:260; Solís de Merás 2017:174–177). A rivalry of such severity did not serve the purposes of the Spanish military and religious objectives, prompting their attempt to broker a peace between the two rival chiefs.

"In Order to Plant the Gospel There": Spanish Colonial Mission-Fort

The effacement of the Native town of Tocobaga may have begun with conflicts with the Calusa, or perhaps with the visit by Narváez in 1528. But it certainly accelerated in 1567 when Menéndez sailed north from the Calusa capital and anchored in the shallow waters adjoining the chief's house, as described in our epigraph. The Tocobagans fled their homes at the sight of the Spanish, but they were entreated to return (Solís de Merás 2017:176–177). Solís de Merás (2017:178) noted with apparent wariness that more than 1,500 Indians assembled at Tocobaga "with their bows and arrows" over the course of three days. But he also observed that the Natives were "of very good disposition." At Menéndez's request most of the warriors were sent away, but 29 chieftains and 100 "principal Indians" remained to negotiate peace with Carlos.

Having accomplished an agreement of sorts, the Spanish attempted to reinscribe the Native town as a Christian mission and the Native peoples as Christian subjects. Menéndez established a "settlement" at Tocobaga, consisting of 24 houses and a "fort of brushwood faggot and lumber" (Hann 1991:309; Solís de Merás 2017:178). Two dozen soldiers were left under the command of Captain García Martínez de Cos, selected because Menéndez "was displeased with him over a disobedience he had committed, but also because he was level-headed and a good Christian" (Solís de Merás 2017:178).

With Pedro Menéndez Marquéz (nephew and lieutenant of Menéndez de Avilés), Father Juan Rogel visited Tocobago later that year "to hear the confessions of the Christians" and "to plant the gospel there" (Hann 1991:235). Rogel noted that, although some of the children of Tocobaga had

learned to recite Christian prayers in Spanish, the chief and other adults "were very much attached to their idols" (Hann 1991:235). Indeed, the Tocobaga chief was said to be so attached to his idols that he made it known that, if they were burned, he would throw himself and his wife and children on the fire (Hann 1991:236).

Marquéz and Rogel remained at Tocobaga for four days before returning to San Antonio. Rogel soon began receiving reports of "great distress and trouble" at Tocobaga (Hann 1991:249); the meager supplies had rotted as a result of heavy rains (Hann 1991:250). Rogel wanted "to console those Christians who were there," but was unable to persuade the Calusa to take him, owing to the continuing hostilities. He sailed for Havana to let the suppliers know the Spanish at Tocobaga were fairing poorly and to expedite the delivery of supplies.

Eventually, Rogel and Marquéz returned to Tocobaga, but it was apparent before they landed that the town had been deserted (Hann 1991:253). A small contingent of soldiers went ashore "well armed and ready for war," but found only two dead Spaniards. Rogel later learned that the remainder had also been killed; these two soldiers and one other had been kept as slaves before also being killed at the sight of approaching ships (Hann 1991:253–254). Native sources later told Rogel that the Spaniards were killed because they were "very mean spirited" and "put their hands on everyone except for the king and his captain general." Rogel inferred that, as the food supplies dwindled, the Spaniards "began to be more of a burden and more bothersome to the Indians" (Hann 1991:254). Before departing Tocobaga, the Spanish soldiers "set fire to the town and to the house of the idols" (Hann 1991:254). The loss of the Tocobaga mission was a harbinger of the end of the Jesuit order in Florida; their withdrawal in 1572 followed "seven years of effort, martyrdom, and little success" (Marrinan and Peres 2021:9).

Although their town was burned to the ground, accounts suggest that the Tocobagans were still living in Tampa Bay as late as 1612 (Hann 1991:239,257,266). A Tocobagan chief, along with the leader of the allied (for a time) Pohoy, was executed by the Spanish in 1611, as punishment for attacks on Christianized Timucuan groups (Worth 2014:42). In 1614, a Calusa fleet of 300 canoes travelled north to attack the Tocobaga's neighbors the Mocozo, killing around 300 (Worth 2014:42). Whether or not this was the impetus, by 1677 a group of Tocobaga had moved north to the Wacissa River, where they lived "mixed up ... with other tribes" in a village on the fringes of the Franciscan missions of Apalachee province (Hann 1991:349; Sattler 1996:44–45; Light 2022). As Hann (1991:348) notes, this location may have been chosen as a means of "keeping the friars at arms' length;" a Spanish visitor to the town chided the "heathen nation" for not having become Christians despite living among them for so long (Hann 1991:349–350). The Tocobaga's isolated location may have allowed them to maintain a distinction from the "new, liminal identity" that was emerging among the diverse Native groups living in association with the missions of Florida (Stojanowski 2005:428). But the "Tocopaca," as the Franciscans now preferred (Hann 1991:347), also provided services for the Spanish, transporting maize and other commodities from western Florida missions to St. Augustine (Hann 1991:348).

The Tocobaga may have managed to avoid the destruction of the Apalachee province in 1704 by combined British and Creek forces (Sheppard 2021:316–317). But, in 1718, the Tocobaga were attacked by their former allies the Pojoy, who by then aligned themselves with the Calusa (Hann 1991:348, 1995:188). The few surviving Tocobagans were removed to a Spanish fort on the St. Mark's River for their own protection (Hann 1991:348,355). This battle may have been what prompted cartographer William Hammerton to describe the Tocobaga as "Destroyed" on his 1721 copy of an earlier map of the Southeast (Cumming 1998:map 184A, plate 48C).

Considering the severity of its consequences for the Tocobagans, the Spanish colonial destruction of their village reveals a surprisingly light imprint in the archaeological record. J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950:11) recovered small quantities of Spanish pottery from their excavations on the mound summit and in each arm of the village. Four of our radiocarbon dates are consistent with the timing of Spanish invasion of Tocobaga, perhaps even dating charcoal associated with the burning of the town. One of these dates comes from a shovel test on a knoll to the north of the platform mound—now occupied by a picnic shelter (Fig. 1)—where we recovered one fragment of a glazed olive jar. Much larger quantities of olive-jar sherds were reportedly found in this same area

as a result of excavations by an avocational group in the 1960s. Additional Spanish artifacts, including majolica (Yayal blue on white) and a Portuguese coin (minted during the reign of John III, 1521–1577) (Mitchem 1989:5) were primarily recovered from the shoreline downslope (J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950:23). This knoll seems the most likely location of the mission-fort.

There are also material remains that potentially speak to the Tocobagan's resistance. Stirling recovered items of seemingly later European manufacture, including a silver tubular bead, two iron axes, and a sheet-silver ornament, with burials in the upper levels of the burial mound (Stirling 1931:172; J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950:27), suggesting the possibility that some Tocobogans remained for a time even after the town was burned, or returned to their former village to bury their dead. Possible evidence of Native resistance may also be evident in the surprisingly large numbers of stone Pinellas points recovered our excavations (a minimum of 10 from less than 20 m^2 of excavation, far outpacing the density observed on other sites in the region). The contexts of these points are sufficiently varied spatially that we cannot argue for evidence of a single act of rebellion, although they do cluster in and around the presumed location of the mission-fort.

Eventually, despite such resistance, even the name "Tocobaga" would be effaced from the landscape. In the 1500s, the Spanish referred to the estuary now known as Tampa Bay alternately as the "Bay of Tocobaga" or the "Bay of the Holy Spirit" (Hann 1991:310). However, over the course of 1700s, the estuary came to be more commonly known as "Bahia de Tampa" or "Tampa Bay," e.g., Romans (1999:88). However, "Tampa" (or "Tanpa") was actually a Calusa town originally located to the south of the eponymous bay (Swanton 1922:332; Boyd 1938:208; Hann 1991:21,311; Worth 2013:768, 2014:3–4).[4]

Spanish Florida did not long outlast the Tocobaga. In 1763, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris that concluded the French and Indian War, Spain ceded Florida in exchange for Havana, which had been captured by the British (Tebeau 1971:72–73). Creek Indians from southern Georgia and Alabama began moving into the Florida territory in the 1700s (Tebeau 1971:152; Mahon and Weisman 1996:187–188). These Creek migrants, themselves a mixture of groups of many different names and identities, combined with Indigenous survivors of the Spanish Florida missions—likely including any remaining Tocobaga and Calusa—to form the people that would soon come to be known as "Seminoles" (Sattler 1996; Frank 2014:278).

"A Place ... as Pretty as I Have Ever Seen": Plantation and Pleasure Garden

Following the American Revolution, the Spanish regained the Florida colony, only to cede it to the United States in 1819. Settlement of the American territory of Florida placed ever more pressure on its Native residents. Under the terms of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek negotiated in 1823, four million acres of land in the central Florida peninsula were set aside for the Seminoles (Tebeau 1971:154). But even before the treaty went into effect, the U.S. government had moved to favor Indian removal to lands west of the Mississippi (Tebeau 1971:151), a position that became official policy with the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in 1829 (Tebeau 1971:156). Many Seminoles were impounded at Egmont Key at the mouth of Tampa Bay for removal to Indian territories in the West, but some evaded capture and took refuge in the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp (Tebeau 1971:170; Mahon and Weisman 1996:201).

Under the Armed Occupation Act of 1842, permits to settle the western coast of Florida were granted to settlers who were willing to build homes, clear land, and bear arms against any remaining Natives (Grismer 1948:22). The land of the former village of Tocobaga attracted the attention of "Count" Odet Philippe, who acquired the property in 1842 (De Foor 1997:41–42). Philippe is said to have been: a childhood friend of Napoleon; a surgeon in the French navy who was wounded at Trafalgar; driven from the Indian River after his first wife insulted Chief Osceola; the first European settler of Pinellas County, a confidant of the legendary pirate Gomez

[4] Specifically, "Tampa" was located 33 leagues south of Tocobaga (Hann 1991:310) and is probably represented by the Pineland site complex at Charlotte Harbor (8LL33, 34, 36–38, 757, and 1612) (Worth 2014:3-3).

(alternatively Jose Gaspar or Jean Lafitte), the first to cultivate citrus in Florida, and the first to introduce cigar rolling to Tampa Bay (Hoercher 1952; McKay 1959; De Foor 1997). Some of these may have a basis in truth, but others are demonstrably false (De Foor 1997:5–6,53). Perhaps more intriguing is what is omitted from these tall tales: Philippe likely migrated from Haiti rather than France, was probably of African Caribbean descent, and was himself the owner of several enslaved people of African descent (De Foor 1997:9–10).

As part of his own reinvention, Philippe reinscribed the former town of Tocobaga as his citrus plantation "St. Helena," a supplement to his other commercial ventures—oysters, billiards, cigars, livestock—across the bay at the fledgling town of Tampa on the margins of Fort Brooke (De Foor 1997:3). The plantation served as an exotic attraction for European American settlers in the region; one soldier who made the boat trip from Ft. Brooke in 1857 described it as "a place ... as pretty as I have ever seen" with a "[m]ound some forty or fifty feet high, the sides of which are completely covered with lime and orange trees" (De Foor 1997:9). In this way the plantation paralleled the "pleasure grounds" that became popular in Eastern American cities in the 19th century—picturesque landscapes intended to serve as refuges from artificial, technology-dominated cities (Cranz 1982:24; Stubbs 2012, 2013:44). However, Philippe's St. Helena was differentiated by its frontier location and its exotic tropical plants, qualities that presage later Florida roadside attractions, such as Cypress Gardens (De Foor 1997:8).

The hurricane known as the "1848 Great Gale" destroyed much of Tampa and Ft. Brooke (Barnes 2007:61–62; Bouth 2021). Family histories recall that Philippe's first house and citrus plantings were destroyed in this storm, with the family and their enslaved workers surviving thanks to the refuge provided by the mound's summit (De Foor 1997:2–3). Several decades later, Walker (1880:411) observed that a storm had carried away "a portion of the eastern base." J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950:23–25) estimated that as much as 50 ft. (15 m) of the bluff north of the mound had eroded away, presumably as a result of this and other storm events. Family history suggests that Philippe rebuilt "just to the West of the large mound on a flat area" (Historical Society of Safety Harbor 1965). An 1855 map shows the rebuilt plantation of St. Helena, including one house just south of the mound and another to the west (Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida 1855).

Philippe died soon after the Civil War, in 1869 (De Foor 1997:3). His two wills directed his plantation to be divided among six heirs, each receiving a sliver of land (De Foor 1997:54–61). One will further stipulated that "the Mountain [the platform mound] and lime grove shall belong [to] nobody in particular," remaining the common property of his three daughters (De Foor 1997:54). At least one of his heirs continued to live on the land through around the turn of the century; a house and orchard are depicted on several maps dating to the late 1800s.

Like the Spanish before him, Philippe contributed to the effacement of Tocobaga. The former location of the Native town was co-opted as "Philippe Point" and "St. Helena," but the material imprint was more additive than subtractive, at least as viewed archaeologically. The remains of the plantation appear as a scatter of kaolin pipe fragments, whitewares, olive glass, cut and wire nails, and bricks (Fig. 8) mixed together with the midden left by prior Native inhabitants (J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950:22). Philippe-related artifacts were concentrated in our shovel tests to the west and northwest of the platform mound (Fig. 9), consistent with the location of his plantation structures indicated by archival sources; see also Fredrickson (2019).

The "Ancient Village Site at Safety Harbor": Ancient Ruins and Archaeological Site

Disputes among Philippe's heirs appear to have helped spare the ruins of the Native town of Tocobaga from the effacement that befell many mound sites across the Southeast at the hands of antiquarians and archaeologists at the turn of the 19th century. S. T. Walker (1880:410–411) described the "Mound at Phillippi's Point" as "one of the largest on Tampa Bay," but lamented that there were "impediments in the way of exploration," including not only the presence of an orange grove, but also that fact that "four different men claim an interest in it." Moore (1903:356) was likewise refused permission to dig in the mounds at Safety Harbor.

By the 1890s, the remains of the estate—especially its citrus groves and mound—had become a



Fig. 8 Selected Philippe plantation–related artifacts: (*a*) pipe stem (Test Unit 1, Level 1, FS 836.21); (*b*) metal button (Test Unit 1, Level 1, FS 836.18); (*c*) metal clasp (Test Unit 1, Level 1, FS 836.23); (*d*) glass syringe plunger (Shovel Test 38, Level 2, FS 541.06); (*e*) cut nail (Shovel Test 13, Level 2, FS 175.14); (*f*) glass serving-vessel shard with embossed tree motif (Shovel Test 4, Level 2, FS 50.04); (*g*, *h*) hand-painted whiteware (Test Unit 1, Level 1, FS 836.33; surface piece plot, FS 891.01); and (*i*) blue-edged whiteware (Shovel Test 22, Level 1, FS 301.12).

minor tourist destination, as described in an article in a local newspaper in 1894:

> Above Safety Harbor ... is Phillip Hammock, one of the prettiest places on the coast. A winding drive through tropical growth so festooned with Spanish moss and vines as to form an arch overhead brings you into a broad avenue with fine orange groves on each side. At the terminus of this avenue an Indian mound arises a hundred feet above the water. You can drive around its base on the beach. From its base to its lofty top is thickly studded with large trees and shrubbery, which height when gained gives you a commanding and beautiful view of land and water. (*Tampa Tribune* 1894)

Additional articles from around this time indicate that a boat captain regularly took visitors to the mound, entertaining visitors with "relics ... in the shape of arrow heads, tomahawks, freak trees and branches" (*Tampa Morning Tribune* [*TMT*] 1906a); see also *TMT* (1905)

In the early 1900s, the property was purchased by Thomas Palmer, a prominent Tampa attorney and former president of the state senate (*TMT* 1946). Palmer continued maintaining the property as a pleasure ground for hunting, gardening, and other leisurely pursuits (*TMT* 1902). In 1906, he and "some of the most distinguished men of affairs in Southern Florida" formed "The Historic Shell Mound Epicurean Club" with the intent "to explore and examine the historic shell mound at Phillippi Hammock, Safety Harbor" (*TMT* 1906c). Newspapers of the day reported several boat expeditions to the site by club members and guests of Tampa hotels "in search for pleasure and in studious research" (*TMT* 1906d); see also *TMT* (1906b, 1908).

Thus, by the turn of the 19th century, the remains of the Native town had come to be understood as a ruin of a period and people separate from the contemporary era and an object of study. Stirling (1931:172) later observed that the burial mound had been "considerably dug over" before his arrival, and J. W.

Griffin and Bullen (1950) likewise documented a prior excavation in the platform mound. Other possible evidence of "pleasure and studious research" by Palmer and his club may be provided by J. W. Griffin and Bullen's (1950:19) observation that the top of the mound had been "slightly disturbed by picnickers ... which accounts for the charcoal briquettes, recent glass, and small fragments of iron found in the upper one foot." Their field notes (on file at the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville) also describe the recovery of a fragment of a Victrola record; one can imagine Palmer and his Progressive-era visitors listening to phonographs on the summit of the "ancient mound" as they contemplated "the patience and industry of some prehistoric people who once inhabited these shores" (*TMT* 1908).

Other appropriations emerged around this same time. One suggested that the mound might be a natural feature, rather than a Native construction. This possibility was first suggested in an 1894 newspaper article, which declared that "whether this mound was a volcanic upheaving from the bay or formed by nature is a mystery yet unsolved" (*Tampa Tribune* 1894). Two decades later, as the automobile age began in earnest, a local geologist declared the mound to be a "gas dome" with the potential to be "a real oil gusher" (*TMT* 1922). Evidence for this was seen in the steepness of the slopes ("unlike any other Florida shell mound") and the presence of small rocks (said to be sure sign of a former "gas blowout"). Fortunately, this theory seems to have found little acceptance.

Another, more persistent, legend connected the mound to the 1539 landing of Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto (*TMT* 1908), a plausible hypothesis in the early 20th century (Phinney 1925), but one that would soon lose scholarly support in favor of a landing at the opposite end of the bay (Swanton 1938, 1985). Limerick (1988:225–226) notes that the "business of romanticizing the Spanish past" became common around this time in many areas of the U.S. formerly subject to Spain's colonial rule; this "imperialist nostalgia" (Johnson 2001:49; Bell 2014:6) has persisted, as we note below.

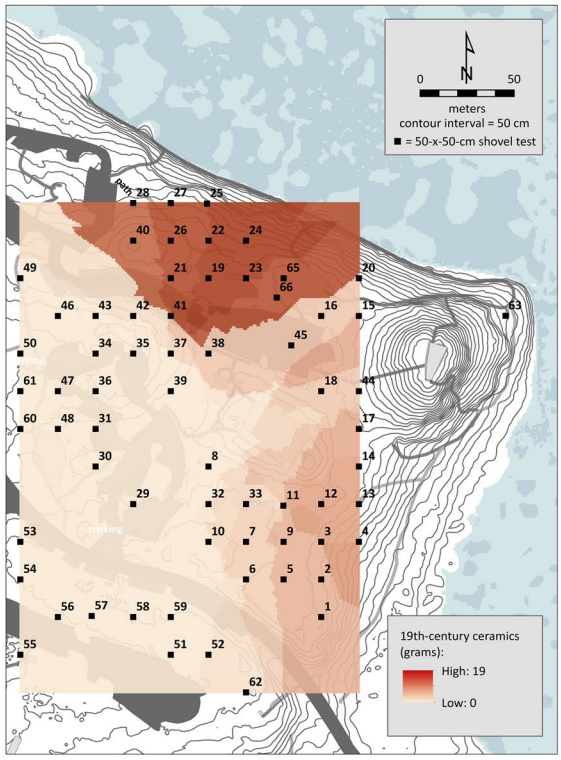
Another appropriation identified the mound as the hiding spot for treasure buried by legendary pirate Juan Gomez, said to have been Philippe's captor, turned patient and friend (Hoercher 1952). There may be a grain of truth here: the fencing of stolen goods was among Philippe's many industries (De Foor 1997:33), and Gomez and Philippe may have been acquainted, given that they lived in proximity and both engaged in business at Ft. Brooke (Bell 2014:6). But Gomez is considered such an unreliable source that he has been described as "Tampa's first tour director and travel agent" (Bell 2014:6). Nevertheless, the association of Philippe with pirates and buried treasure also persists.

Palmer reportedly sold "Phillipi Hammock" in 1925 to an "Atlanta syndicate" that planned a luxury hotel and residential development known as DeSoto Estates (*TMT* 1925a, 1925b). Advertisements promised that the development "will stand forth as a perfect example of modern subdivision achievement" (*Tampa Sunday Tribune* 1925). The development company employed the mound and its mythologized history as a sales prop:

> The opening of the properties will precede the landing of DeSoto and his hosts on the Indian Mound on the property where he will gather his warriors and the Indians for a huge outdoor pageant. (*TMT* 1925a)

Fortunately, while much of the surrounding land was indeed developed for subdivisions, the mound and its immediate environs were spared. Palmer later made efforts to buy back some of the property, including "the old Indian burial grounds" (*St. Petersburg Times* [*SPT*] 1944). In 1929, the "ancient village site at Safety Harbor" attracted the attention of the Smithsonian Institution's Matthew Stirling (1930:184), who returned the following year to excavate the burial mound (Stirling 1931:174). He and his field crew employed a mule-drawn scoop to unearth the remains of over a hundred people and their associated burial goods—mainly pottery. The whole pots and some of the human remains were carted back to the museum (Hrdlička 1940). However, photographs (on file at the Smithsonian Institution and the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center) suggest that many bones were left scattered about; some were reportedly collected by local farmers for use as fertilizer (Firschein and Kepner 2013:50).

To add to the insult, one of America's most infamous snake oil salesmen attached himself to the excavation. Curtis Howe Springer, who the American Medical Association would later describe as the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contour interval = 50 cm
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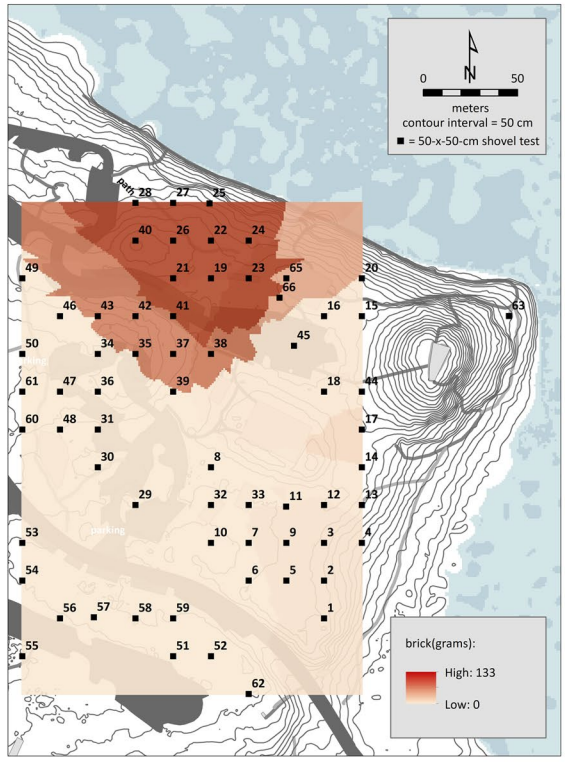
19th-century ceramics (grams):
High: 19
Low: 0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contour interval = 50 cm
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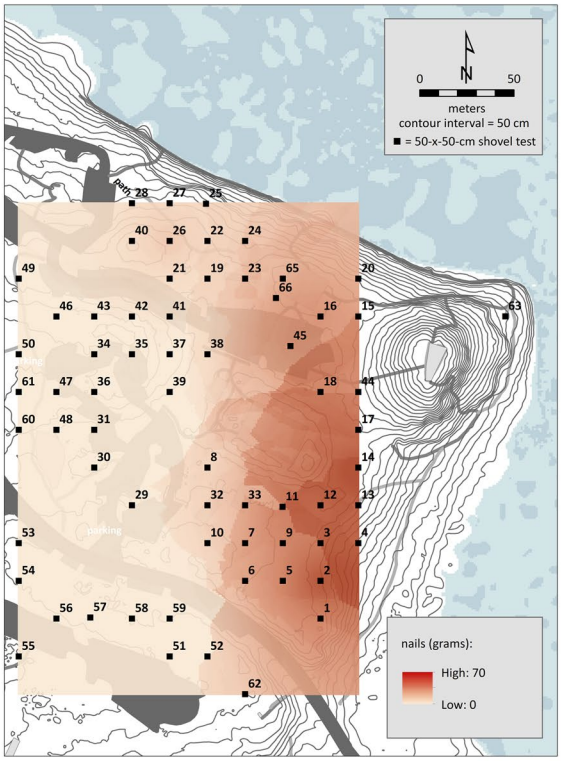
brick(grams):
High: 133
Low: 0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nails (grams):
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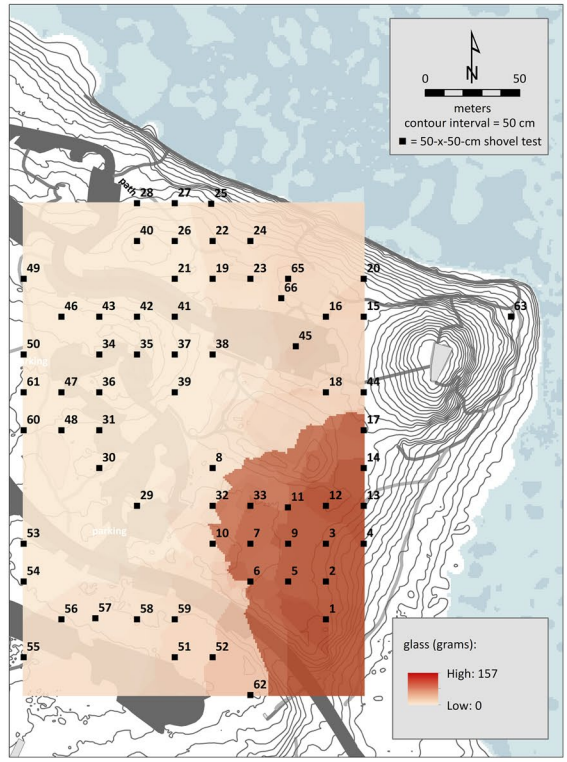
Low: 0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meters
contour interval = 50 cm
■ = 50-x-50-cm shovel test
glass (grams):
High: 157
Low: 0

◂**Fig. 9** Kriging interpolations of quantities (by weight) of major classes of Philippe plantation–related artifacts in shovel tests. *Clockwise from top left*: 19th-century ceramics, bricks, glass, and nails.

"King of the Quacks" (Nosowitz 2015), participated in the burial mound excavation and used his archaeological experience on the lecture circuit in promotion of his "crusade for Vitalic Living" (Springer 1930; *Times-Leader* 1930; *Pittston-Gazette* 1935). He also promoted racist stereotypes of Native peoples as carnivorous savages, augmented by the display of human remains (*Pittston-Gazette* 1935)—possibly including some from the burial mound at the Safety Harbor site. Springer promoted the mistaken notion—also beginning to gain currency among archaeologists (Fairbanks 1949:52)—that "these early men of Florida bore no relationship to the Seminoles who migrated to Florida from the Creek nation country in the years that followed" (*Pittston-Gazette* 1935). One article displayed a photograph of Springer and Stirling "studying relative brain cavities of members of a vanished race" (Springer 1930).

By the middle 20th century, archaeology had begun to distance itself from its antiquarian roots, asserting its position as "the science of what is old" (Kroeber 1948:4). The pottery that Stirling recovered from the burial mound attracted the attention of Gordon Willey (Willey 1949:475–485), whose seminal culture historical synthesis of the Florida Gulf Coast formally reappropriated the ruins of Tocobaga as the type site for the Safety Harbor pottery type, ceramic series, culture, and period; see also Bullen (1955:60–63), Goggin (1947:118), J. B. Griffin (1952:327), Mitchem (2012), Stirling (1936:354), Willey (1948:213–214), and Willey and Woodbury (1942:244–245).

Griffin and Bullen excavated at the Safety Harbor site in 1948, permission having been granted after a letter writing campaign to county officials (J. W. Griffin 1948). Over the course of two weeks, using a field crew composed of county prisoners under the supervision of a shotgun-bearing guard (Weisman 1994:224), J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950) excavated trenches on the mound's summit and in each of the two arms of the village, summarizing their work in a report that further solidified "Safety Harbor" in the lexicon of archaeological taxonomy (J. W. Griffin and Bullen 1950). Bullen (1978:50) later abstracted "Tocobaga" to a "generic term for the aboriginal peoples" who inhabited a broad swath of the central peninsular coast at the time of European "contact," a usage that continues in some contemporary scholarship (Cave 2017).

But older appropriations of Tocobaga have persisted. Less than a year after they had finished excavations at Safety Harbor, J. W. Griffin and Bullen (1950:9) were called back to the site by the county park board to evaluate a request to excavate the mound by two local treasure hunters. The men, abetted by an "electro magnetic treasure finding instrument" (*SPT* 1949e), claimed the mound contained "tons" of metal and "three large rooms" (*SPT* 1949c); see also Bothwell (1956) and *SPT* (1949a). A demonstration of the device on the mound failed to impress a delegation that included Griffin, an expert in electricity, and members of the park board (*SPT* 1949e). In 1950 a local homeowners association had a picnic on top the mound followed by a "make believe treasure hunt to seek the treasure buried by Count Odet Philippe and visiting pirates" (*SPT* 1950). A 1958 newspaper article hinted of evidence that Philippe had been "in league with famed pirate Jean LaFitte of Louisiana," and that gold had been discovered in the park (Allyn 1958). Stories of lost treasure continue to prompt illicit digging and metal detecting in the park (L. Hudson and Prescott 1973:23; Zimmer 2018).

Theories connecting the site with the de Soto expedition also persist. The local mayor, who served as the first president of the Safety Harbor Area Historical Society (SHAHS) at its formation in 1965, challenged the membership "to work on finding proof that DeSoto landed here" (SHAHS 1965). Gustave A. Nelson, who succeeded the mayor as president (SHAHS 1966), made the search for a de Soto connection his mission, appealing to the county's historical commission for permission to excavate at the Safety Harbor site (Nelson 1966). In 1967, the county approved the "licensing" of the historical society and its research affiliate "The Searchers" to excavate in the park (*SPT* 1967a). The investigations focused primarily on the knoll to the north of the mound, where an estimated 900 tons of soil were excavated from a 100 sq. ft. area (Helm 1968; *Tampa Tribune* 1972). Nelson cited the recovery of over 700 pieces of olive jars as "definite proof" of de Soto's landing, based on the types and thicknesses (Helm 1968); see also Bothwell (1967a, 1967c) and *SPT* (1967a, 1967b). Unfortunately, the

results of the excavations have never been reported (Mitchem 1989:52–53), and many of the artifacts appear to have been lost in their many moves from one municipal storage facility to the next (O'Neill 1998; Ouico 1998).

Archaeology has contributed to both the remembrance and the effacement of the Native town of Tocobaga. The excavations by Stirling and Griffin and Bullen clearly established the importance of the location of the former Native town, contributing to its designation as Florida's first National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964 (National Park Service 1992). However, this importance has been defined mainly in relation to its value to archaeology and the history of European colonial settlement, as Bullen (1966) articulated in a speech dedicating installation of a NHL marker at the base of the platform mound: "The site is noteworthy as the village visited by Menendez in 1567, as the largest proto-historic center of the area, as the type site for the Safety Harbor culture period, and as the home of Count Odet Philippe."

However, the intensity of previous excavations—particularly those of Stirling and avocational archaeologists—have substantially reduced the materiality of the Native town. This is reflected in the NHL boundaries, drawn to include only the platform mound owing to the perception that "the village area and other mounds have been excavated to extinction" (McKithan 1981). These effacements in meaning and material through archaeology would enable others, as the remains of the Native town were developed as a public park.

"It May Have Been a Nice Village. It Makes a Better Park": Reform Park and Recreational Facility

In 1948, Pinellas County purchased the location of the former town of Tocobaga from Palmer's heirs to create its first public park (Sands 1948:13). Historian Galen Cranz (1982) suggests that, by this time, the philosophy undergirding park development in the United States had shifted from the progressivist ideals of the "reform park" period, where organized recreational activities were seen as important for preventing the moral decay of a working class with increasing leisure time. But the continuation of such progressivist notions is plainly evident in a brief prepared by county officials to justify the park's creation:

> Recreation is simply the wise use of leisure time. Modern technology has freed us from the slavery of long hours of work without providing an outlet for our surplus time and strong motivations to express ourselves.
> In those days when hours of work were long, the work was diversified and had to do with the crafts and the out-of-doors. Today, we tend machines, administer activities, pound pavements.
> We are passing into an era which will make a great contribution to human progress. Those leaders of the technological age now passing—Edison, Einstein, Steinmetz, Cope, etc—have spoken of the coming age as one in which human relations will gain tremendous attention. We must be prepared to meet the challenge. ... The establishment of public recreational facilities in Pinellas County will go a long way in this direction. (Pinellas County Board of Parks and Recreation 1949)

County officials found Philippe—or at least his legend—a better fit for a recreational facility of "the coming age" than the Tocobogans that preceded him. The dedication of the park—named for Philippe—included the placement of a stone monument and plaque that enshrined his place in the social history of the county, noting his connections to other pioneer families and his "many descendants" in the area.[5] County officials seem to have intended this plaque and a nearby headstone erected in Philippe's honor (Fig. 10) to become the principal focal points for the new park (Sands 1948:13; *SPT* 1949b, 1949d)—despite the fact that the headstone misspelled Philippe's name, incorrectly stated both his year and place of birth (De Foor 1997:52–53), and probably

[5] Of course, the naming of the park for Philippe and the attendant enshrining of him as pioneering ancestor preceded the understanding that he was likely of African Caribbean descent (De Foor 1997:9–10). Ironically, in 1956, when "a carload of Negroes" demanded entry to the park to picnic, it caused some consternation among the county park employees (*SPT* 1956). Conflict appears to have been avoided; a park employee let the party in and set up a picnic table for their use "behind an Indian mound"—probably in the vicinity of Philippe's first house.



Fig. 10 "Young Girls Look at Grave of Odet Philippe—Safety Harbor, Florida," ca. 1960 (Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida [1960]).

does not mark the actual location of Philippe's grave (O'Neill 1999). Still, the remnants of the Native town—especially the platform mound—were not completely forgotten. An inaugural tour of the new park included a photograph of members of the county commissioners and park board on the mound's summit (*SPT* 1949b). One newspaper reported that "visitors with sharp eyes may be able to find bits of pottery and relics left by the Indians who occupied the park before Count Philippe" (*SPT* 1949d).

Cranz (1982:101) suggests that, over the course of the middle 20th century, the philosophy of social reform that had previously been used to justify public parks in the U.S. was abandoned; parks were instead increasingly seen as facilities for an expanding range of leisure activities, from sports to community-wide events, such as pageants, dramatic productions, and musical performances (Cranz 1982:105,114–116). Consistent with this shift, in the early 1950s, a local theater group performed a play entitled "Count Philippe's Orange Tree" in an "open sky theatre" at the base of the mound (*SPT* 1951a, 1951b). Over 200 people showed up to watch the premiere of the play, described as a "salty version of how oranges were introduced to Florida in the 1800's" (*SPT* 1952a) "replete with music, dance, drama, pirates and Indian scenes" (Hoercher 1952); see also *Safety Harbor Herald* (*SHH*) (1952). But the crowds could not be maintained for the three-night-per-week performances, which played "to many empty seats" (*SPT* 1952c). The pageant folded after only a few weeks (*SPT* 1962).

Undeterred by this failure, plans were soon made to land a stage production entitled "Florida Aflame" (*SHH* 1953), purporting to tell the story of Seminole chief Osceola, "who came to Tampa Bay shores with his people during their troubled years with the white man" (*SPT* 1953a). The cast was composed exclusively of non-Native actors—mainly students from the University of Tampa. Seminole youths from the Brighton reservation, including one described as "a direct descendant" of the Seminole chief Jumper, were hired to assist with "ushering and parking lot duties," although plans were said to have included training them for parts in the drama (*SPT* 1955a). To house the production, the county constructed a much larger and more elaborate facility north of the mound "using the natural jungle of that area as a scenic backdrop for the Indian drama" (*SHH* 1954a) (Fig. 11). The new amphitheater had seating for more than 1,000 people and required over 13,000 cu. yd. of fill dirt (*SHH* 1954b). The county hoped to hold 70 performances in the winter and 60 in the summer (*SPT* 1954).

The play opened to fanfare in early 1955, with one newspaper reporting that "several thousand ... visitors jammed the highways leading into Philippe Park" (*SPT* 1955b) (it also reported that younger

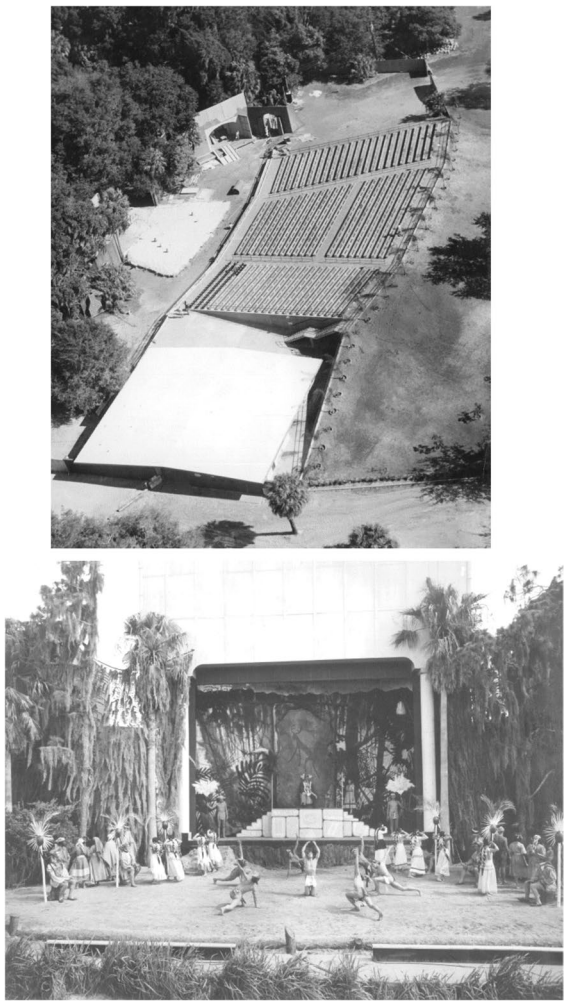

Fig. 11 Photographs associated with the stage production of "Florida Aflame" at Philippe Park, 1953: *Top*: oblique aerial view to south-southwest of stages (near base of platform mound, obscured by trees) and seating and concessions (on artificial berm). *Bottom*: close-up of stage and cast. (Images courtesy of Thomas J. Pluckhahn.)

attendees "spent their time climbing up and down the great Indian mound, highest natural spot on the peninsula"). But, once again, the production failed to attract an audience of sufficient size to balance the expenses. The head of a budget board blasted the production as "the biggest bill of goods ever sold in the county" and a "complete ruination of Philippe Park as a pleasure spot" (Hackett 1955). Eventually, the county decided to "dismantle the weatherbeaten seats and resod the hillside" (*SPT* 1962).

While the theatrical productions were unsuccessful, the park's recreational facilities proved popular. In 1952, local politician Courtney Campbell called for more improvements, such as picnic tables (*SPT* 1952b). By 1954, an estimated 130,000 people were said to visit the park annually, either to picnic or inspect "its woodlands and historical sites" (Douglass 1954). Eventually, the recreational facilities were expanded to include ball fields and playgrounds. By 1967, the park had become a favorite local attraction, as one newspaper columnist waxed:

> It has been called Pinellas County's most historical spot. And somehow, it has escaped the blade of the bulldozer and the bite of driving steel. It is trees and fields and a shoreline where children run and play and enjoy life. ... It may have been a nice village. It makes a better park. (Bothwell 1967b:6).

In 2006, the park was estimated to have attracted nearly a million visitors annually (Reeves 2006). The popularity of the park has effaced the material remains of Tocobaga. Within a few years of the park's opening, a newspaper article noted that the park "has been gradually disappearing into Tampa Bay" and quoted the county park supervisor that, soon "the park's main attraction, an old Indian mound, will be damaged beyond repair" (*SPT* 1953b). In 1967, motorcycles, scooters, and bikes were said to "ride up and down the mounds cutting deep ruts"; this damage was exacerbated by an open water tap that resulted in a gully that "all but destroyed the famed Indian Mound" (*Clearwater Sun* 1967). In the late 1970s, under pressure from the state, the county undertook mitigative measures (Albury 1979:3). Stone steps and retaining walls were added to check erosion and deter the collection of artifacts (Reeves 2006). The president of the historical society lamented these additions, charging that the mound had lost its originality and was reduced to "just another grassy knoll" (Albury 1979:3).

Park-related effacements of Tocobaga, such as picnic shelters and the terracing of the mound, are obvious. But archaeology also reveals more subtle erosion of the materiality of the Native town at the hands of park development and recreation. Utility lines intrude on the midden, as revealed in the data from GPR survey and test excavations; see Figures 4 and 7, respectively. Over the years, a steady stream of picnics and



Fig. 12 Selected park-related artifacts: (*a*) plastic fork fragment (Test Unit 2, Level 2, FS 838.12); (*b*) plastic comb fragment (Shovel Test 2, Level 2, FS 19.14); (*c*) plastic tiddledywinks game piece (Shovel Test 8, Level 2, FS 99.02); (*d*) glass marble (Shovel Test 14, Level 2, FS 179.07); (*e*) metal bottle cap (Shovel Test 2, Level 2, FS 19.33); (*f*) "zip top" pull tab (Shovel Test 18, Level 3, FS 256.08); (*g*) "T-type" pull tab (Shovel Test 58, Level 2, FS 791.02); (*h*) metal nail clipper (Shovel Test 27, Level 1, FS 399.07); (*i*) plastic "Congrats" party favor (surface collection, FS 805.02); (*j*) plastic-bag closure (Shovel Test 29, Level 1, FS 427.01); (*k*) plastic bead (Shovel Test 23, Level 1, FS 318.12); and (*l*) metal "arrowhead" (probable stage prop) (Shovel Test 66, Level 5 (FS 916.06).

birthday parties have cumulatively superimposed a modern midden composed of lost coins, plastic-bag ties, cellophane wrappers, cigarette butts, bottle glass, and aluminum pop tops. From a shovel test in the vicinity of the former stages built at the base of the mound, we recovered a crudely formed brass "arrowhead"—probably a prop for "Florida Aflame" or an earlier theater production (Fig. 12).

Until recently, mention of Tocobaga was limited to a single interpretive sign at the base of the mound. In 2017, avocational archaeologist Lou Claudio led an effort to bring greater recognition of the Native American history of the park area. Although the county administration declined to support a proposal to change the park's name, they did agree to add the words "Historic Site of the Tocobaga Capital City" to the entrance sign. Less formally, the Tocobogan presence persists in legends of a "shaman" whose daily prayers from the mound summit are said to have kept storms at bay, and whose ghost is said to haunt the park (Muncy and Schultz 2018:107–108).

Conclusion

Colonizers reduced the town of Tocobaga to ashes, removed the Tocobagans from the landscape, and wiped their name from the map. However, the Native town has been neither "erased" nor "cleared" from the landscape. Archaeology reveals how, like the numismatist's coin, the materiality of Tocobaga persists even if the inscriptions on the surface have been effaced. But archaeology also reveals that these material traces have not persisted simply as static "ruins." The colonial effacement of the Native town provided an opportunity for the imposition of new meanings across the modern era, first as plantation and pleasure garden, next as ancient ruins and archaeological site, and later—and continuing to the present—as reform park and recreational facility.

Modern effacements have long served to distance the Tocobaga from contemporary descendant communities: the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and the Miccosukee

Tribe of Florida. Archaeologists, in particular, have tended to dismiss the ancestors of these groups who resided in the Tampa Bay area in the 19th century as relatively recent immigrants to the region, e.g., Fairbanks (1949:52). But this is an oversimplification—arguably to the point of falsehood. Migrant bands of Creeks certainly contributed substantially to the ethnogenesis of the Seminole and Miccosukee, but some of these bands clearly incorporated survivors of the Spanish missions, whose ancestors had resided in the Florida peninsula for millennia (Weisman 1989:172–173; Sattler 1996; Stojanowski 2005), as well as free Africans who had taken refuge in Spanish territory for several generations (Weik 2009). The Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma have recently been determined culturally affiliated with human remains presumed to have come from the Safety Harbor site (National Park Service 2021), a legal and symbolic victory.

Tocobaga's history is unique, but also broadly similar to the manner in which other Native towns of Florida were effaced by the combined impacts of colonialism and modernity. Archaeologists have devoted considerable attention to the Spanish missions and forts of colonial-era Florida, as well as the Native communities associated with them. But they rarely consider the later, modern-era effacements of the latter. We suggest that their inclusion in the story of Tocobaga helps us see that these were never inevitable and remain ongoing—including in our work (Buchli and Lucas 2001; Harrison and Schofield 2010:142–143; Harrison 2011:151; Mrozowski et al. 2015; González-Ruibal 2016). Ours is not quite a history told backwards, as called for by Wurst and Mrozowski (2014:210–211), but we nevertheless hope that, by bringing the story of the effacement of Tocobaga through to the contemporary, we can achieve the larger goal they describe of situating our understanding of the present "within the context of the historical social relations—the preconditions—that gave rise to it."

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Data availability The detailed data generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all the authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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