

Appendix I :

A Sample of Excavated Human Remains on the Coasts of the Gulf and Atlantic as well as the Lower Alabama River

by:

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One major question concerning the discovery of the 1559 Spanish Luna settlements on Pensacola Bay and the Alabama River is ... Might human skeletal remains from colonists who died on the expedition be found in the form of bones and teeth at the settlement sites located somewhere on the bay and the river? If so, those remains could be major evidence of the presence of the locations of the 16th-Century Spanish settlements.

That brings up the question of how long human remains of Spanish or Native burials might be preserved being buried in soils of the Pensacola Bay area and the inland area of the lower Alabama River?

Human remains have been excavated by archeologists on the northern Gulf Coast and the interior of Alabama since the late 1800s. The preservation factor relative to the bones and teeth of the human remains are reliant upon the pH acidity or alkalinity factors of the surrounding soils. If the soils are very acidic, the bones and teeth are dissolved at a more rapid rate. If the soils are more basic, the bones and teeth tend to be preserved for longer periods of time.

Human remains buried in midden deposits containing numerous marine or brackish water shellfish species are better preserved due to the neutralization of the surrounding acidic soils by the calcium carbonate content of the shells. However, human bone and teeth remains are also found in more acidic soils of the Gulf and Atlantic coasts even without the accumulation of shellfish remains surrounding them.

It is highly likely that human remains of the Luna Expedition on the Gulf Coast and inland areas will be archeologically recognizable, due in part to the relatively short period of their time buried underground (circa 400+ years). Furthermore, human skeletal remains dating to the 1500s have been excavated along the coasts and interior of Florida and Alabama for decades. The remains are mostly comprised of Native burials, but the preservation factor remains, be the burials Spanish or Native. Human bones are human bones regardless of their cultural origin.

The following figures provide samples of Native and Spanish burials dating to the period of approximately 400+ years before present. These data reinforce the high probability of identifiable skeletal remains of Spanish burials from the Luna settlements on Pensacola Bay and the Alabama River. As such, Spanish skeletal remains are absolute marker artifacts of a historic Spanish presence. Of all relevant diagnostic features indicative of the presence of early Spanish and Naïve contact sites, undoubtedly Spanish skeletal remains are the most diagnostic.



Figure 1: Two Native burials at 1Ba1, circa 500 years before present, Northern Gulf Coast, Southern Alabama (photo credits: Contact Archeology Archives, Caleb Curren)

Ref. *Native/Spanish Contact Site on the Alabama Coast, Site 1Ba1*. by Caleb Curren, Website archeologyink.com. 2014.



Figure 2: A portion of a Christianized Native burial cemetery (over 100 excavated) near a Spanish church dating to the 1500s at the Fountain of Youth Park, St. Augustine, Florida. Excavated by Ray Dickson of the Smithsonian Institution in 1934. (photo credit: Pinterest Website and Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park Website)

Refs., *Report on the Indian Site at the Fountain of Youth Park*. by Lillian Seaberg. Ms. On file at the Florida State Museum, Gainesville. 1951

Reprinted in *Spanish St. Augustine: A Sourcebook for America's Ancient City*. Garland Press. Edited by K. Deagan. 1991.



Figure 3: Spanish burials at the Fountain of Youth Park in St. Augustine, Florida on the Atlantic Coast. Excavated by a team led by Carl Halbirt in 2017. Another skull and longbone were also discovered in the area. Date, circa 400+/- years before present. (photos and information credits: The St. Augustine Record, Feb. 7, 2017 and Carl Halbirt quotes from the article)



Figure 4: Two Native burials from the lower half of the Alabama River at site 1Wx169. Date, circa 400-600 years before present. (photo credits: Contact Archeology Inc. Archives, photographers Caleb Curren and Marion Furman)



Figure 5: Two Native burials from the lower half of the Alabama River at site 1Wx169. Date, circa 400-600 years before present. (photo credits: Contact Archeology Inc. Archives, photographers Caleb Curren and Marion Furman)

Ref., *The Protohistoric Period in Central Alabama.*
by Caleb Curren. Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission, 1984.

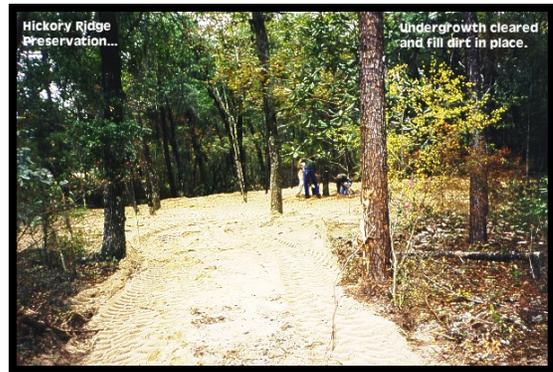


Figure 6: The University of West Florida excavated a portion of a Native cemetery on the Northern Gulf Coast near Pensacola. A radiocarbon date was obtained from the site that dated to 500 AD. +/- 60 years before present. Three Native burials were recognized. Three pottery vessels from the excavations are shown above.

- Burial #1: secondary burial, partial cranium, mandible, teeth
- Burial #2: cranial fragments, teeth, possible longbones
- Burial #3: poor bone preservation but still discernible

Current members of Contact Archeology Inc. conducted a preservation project to protect the Native cemetery. Figured above are several pottery vessels from the cemetery as well as the actions of covering the cemetery with sand and protective horizontal wire barriers. Native skeletal remains were definitely present on the site. (photo credits: Caleb Curren)

Refs., *Hickory Ridge, A Mississippian Period Cemetery in Northwest Florida.* University of West Florida Website. 2017.

Archaeological Testing at the Hickory Ridge Site (8Es1280). by John Phillips. University of West Florida Institute of West Florida Archaeology Report of Investigations #26. 1989.

Aboriginal Burial Preservation, A Cooperative Public and Private Attempt in Northwest Florida. by Caleb Curren. Pensacola Archeological Lab. 1997.

Innerarity Point: Mississippian Period Sites. Archeology Ink Website (archeologyink.com). Contact Archeology Inc. 2015.