

GTM Cultural Resources

There are 39 recorded cultural sites on GTM-managed property in the northern section of the Research Reserve. The sites range from pre-historic 5,000 years ago to the mid 1800s. Our Resource Management team is charged with protecting and monitoring the sites. GTM's best known sites are Sanchez Mound, Grant's Villa and Shell Bluff Landing.



projectile points, evidence of GTM's historic past

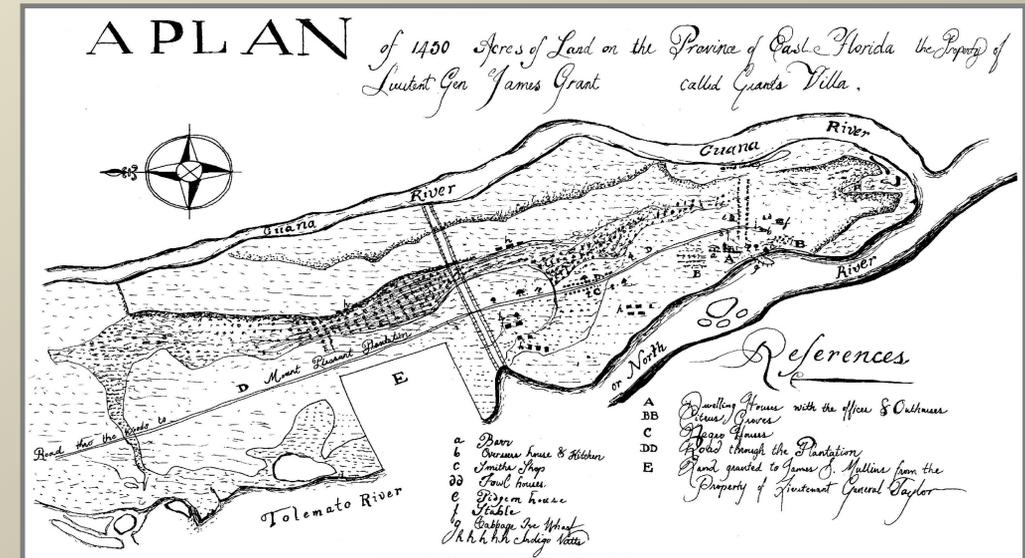
Sanchez Mound probably dates to around 500 BCE. On 8 April, 1878, the mound was excavated by Andrew E. Douglass. Reportedly, 20 human bundle burials were found in the center along with 25 stone celts, 2 whetstones, 2 spearheads, and 2 rubbing stones. All were sent to the American Museum of Natural History in New York by Douglass.



stone celt from Sanchez Mound made of amphibolite



This coquina well is all that remains from the "Ostional Blanco" Plantation located at Shell Bluff and dates to the early 1800s.



Grant's Villa, a British East Florida Indigo Plantation by Benjamin Lord, Surveyor General of East Florida, 1783.

Grant's Villa, a 1450-acre indigo plantation, encompassed the Guana Peninsula from the present day dam, south to the mouth of the Guana River. Grant's Villa was in operation from 1768 to the early 1780s. Growing indigo and shipping the processed dye cakes to England proved to be very profitable. The first five years returned 4,750 pounds sterling, exceeding the amount invested in the Villa. Because land was a free gift from the crown, the only expenditures were for fifty enslaved laborers, livestock, buildings and tools.



Any time soil is disturbed, GTM performs archaeological monitoring by sifting soil from test holes for artifacts, such as, when the fence was replaced around Sanchez Mound.

Humans occupied the Shell Bluff area from at least 5,000 years before present to the 1850s. Due to this rich history, Shell Bluff Landing was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. A coquina well from the Andreu homestead is the main evidence of human occupation remaining today. Shoreline erosion has endangered the well for years. Stabilization projects have afforded temporary protection to date. However, permanent stabilization or possible relocation of the coquina well will be necessary for long-term protection against the ever-encroaching Tolomato River.