

# CHAPTER 1

## Research Background

### THE I-75 PROJECT

This volume provides comprehensive results of excavations conducted at Harney Flats—one of the archaeological sites of the I-75 Highway Salvage Program investigated by the Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties (now the Bureau of Archaeological Research). The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, History and Records Management, Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties has maintained a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation since 1966 to allow the Bureau to assess impacts of highway construction on cultural resources within the state of Florida.

Under this program a Phase I survey was conducted in 1978 by B. Calvin Jones over 66.3 km of the proposed I-75 right-of-way through Hillsborough County. A total of thirty-one archaeological sites was recorded during the survey by means of subsurface testing of selective topographic features including ridge tops, slopes,

**Table 1.** Archaeological Sites in Hillsborough County Investigated in Conjunction with the I-75 Highway Salvage Project

Site	Phase II Test Excavations	Phase III Excavations
	Reference	Reference
8Hi99	K. Hardin (1982)	
8Hi393c	K. Gagel (1981b)	
8Hi393c/uw	J. Palmer <i>et al.</i> (1981)	
8Hi450	Daniel and Wisenbaker (1981)	
8Hi471	M. Almy (1982)	
8Hi472	J. Haviser (1983)	B. Johnson (1985)
8Hi473	M. Chance (1982)	M. Chance (1983)
8Hi476	B. Wharton (1983)	M. Chance (1982)
8Hi480	M. Almy (1981)	
8Hi483A	R. Daniel (1982)	
8Hi483B	K. Gagel (1981a)	
8Hi507	(This volume)	(This volume)
8Hi510	K. Gagel (1984)	
8Hi521	K. Gagel and I.R. Daniel, Jr. (1985)	
8Hi522	K. Gagel and I.R. Daniel, Jr. (1985)	

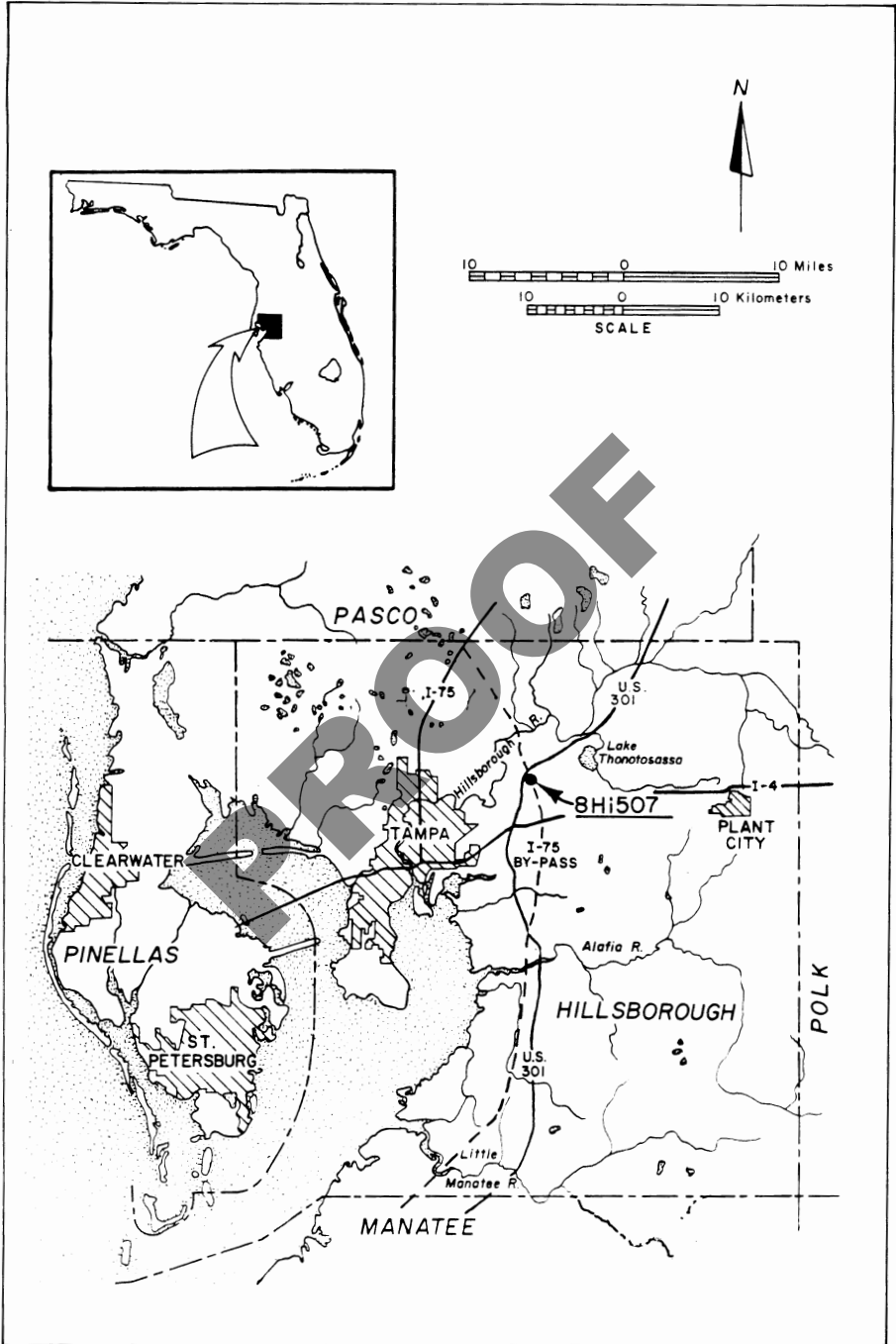


Figure 1. I-75 Right-of-way through Hillsborough County, Florida.

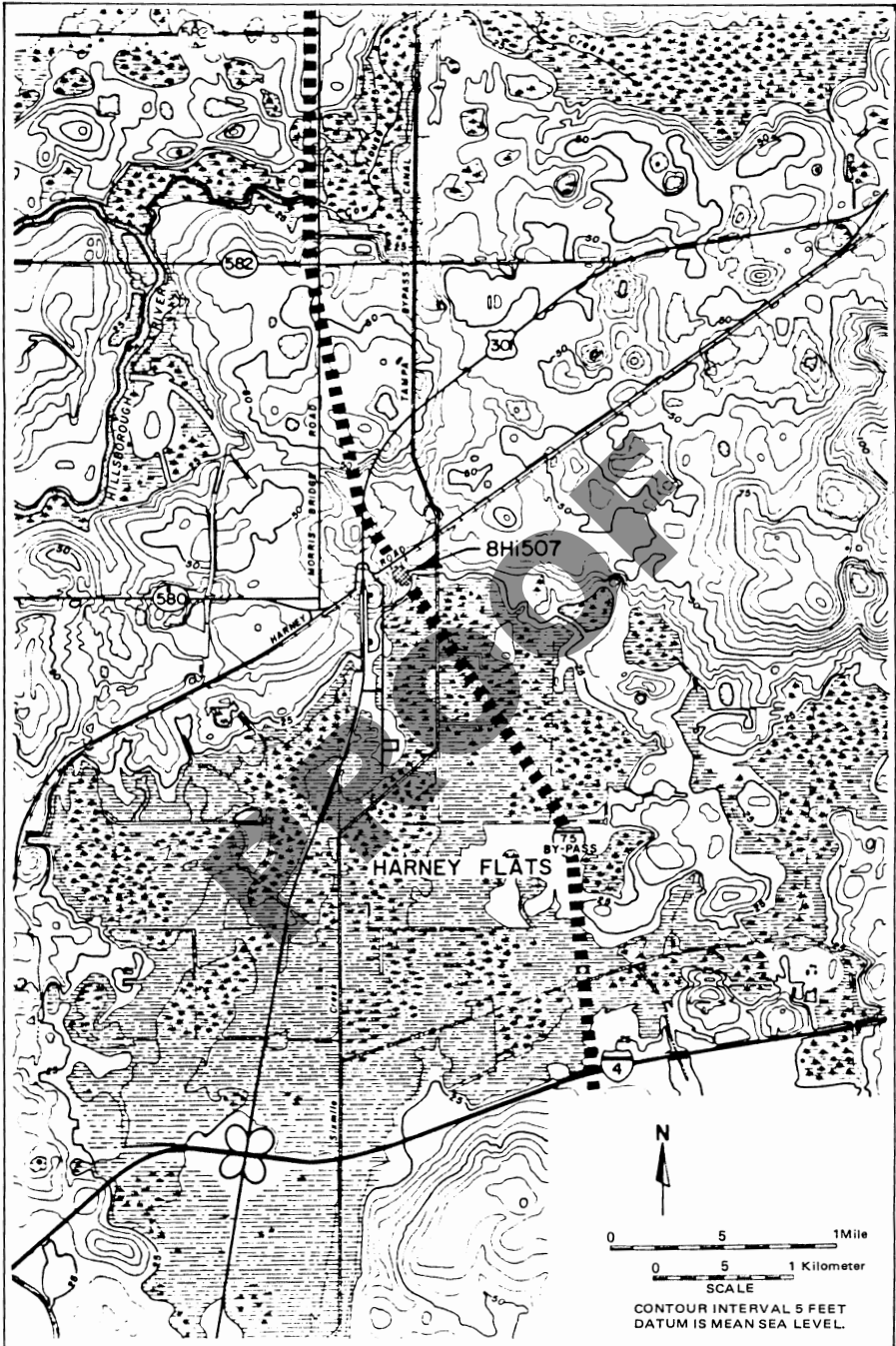


Figure 2. Topographic map of Harney Flats.

plateaus, river terraces, and natural levees transected by the right-of-way. In addition to the test pits, visual surface inspection was conducted over the entire corridor. Thirteen of the thirty-one sites were chosen for Phase II testing. While testing was underway, four of these sites were deemed significant enough to warrant Phase III mitigative salvage excavations (Jones and Tesar, 1982).

Table 1 lists Phase II excavations and Phase III salvage projects in the Hillsborough County I-75 corridor (Figure 1). With the exception of 8Hi471 and 8Hi480, both of which manifested major ceramic components, the sites in the corridor contained Archaic (primarily Middle Archaic) period cultural materials. However, there were suggestions of Paleo-Indian remains at some sites. Ten weeks of Phase II test excavations corroborated Jones' belief that the Harney Flats site contained significant quantities of Paleo-Indian lithic materials. Because no major land sites of this time period had been excavated in Florida, we decided to conduct an extensive Phase III mitigative salvage excavation at Harney Flats (Figure 2).

## SITE SETTING

### Physiography

The Harney Flats site is located in Hillsborough County just south and east of the intersection of Harney Road and U.S. 301. (USGS Thonotosassa Quadrangle; 1974, SE1/4 of NW1/4 of Section 19, Township 28 South, Range 20 East) about 3.2 km east of the city of Temple Terrace (Figure 3.) The site is bounded by private property along the north, northeast and west, and the Tampa Bypass Canal and levee to the east and south. The area tested was approximately 360 m long (north and south) by 100 m wide (east and west) and covers about 4 ha. Although some of the site's surface had been disturbed prior to testing, there were several recognizable zones of vegetation within the Phase II test area. The northern third of the site, a well-drained hillside, was covered with xerophytic flora. South of this dry zone, seven-year-old pines had been planted in diagonal rows from northwest to southeast. Mesic vegetation was observed down slope south and east of the planted pines on the southeastern portion of the right-of-way. The extreme southern parts of the proposed road corridor were covered with marsh-like vegetation on the west and a hydric hardwood swamp to the east.

Harney Flats, between 5 and 10 m above sea level and covering more than 180 km<sup>2</sup>, is a plain that slopes gently upward from Hillsborough Bay to the adjacent Polk Upland (Figures 3 and 4) at well over 30 m in elevation (Deulering and MacGill, 1981; Knapp, 1980; White, 1970). The plain is a former bay bottom which was submerged sometime during the Pleistocene and was part of an estuary larger than the present Hillsborough Bay (MacNeil, 1949; Motz, 1975). This low, swampy plain in the Hillsborough River Valley, a secondary landform of the Gulf Coastal Lowlands physiographic region (Wright, 1973), is intermittently rimmed by a scarp, on the northern rim of which is located the site (Figure 2). The scarp is what remains of the Pamlico shoreline (Healy, 1975) and represents an advance of the sea to an altitude of about 8 m (Alt and Brooks, 1965; MacNeil, 1949).