

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Ground We Stand On

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- :19 The roots on inequity in Pinellas County started as early as 1528 with Panfilo de Narvaez landed on the shores of Boca Ciega Bay. Spain was exploring the new world looking for gold. Narvaez and his men claimed the lands and the people they encountered for their king and church. With them was Estavanico, Little Stephen, an enslaved man from Morocco, believed to be the first black person on the continent. Narvaez explored Florida along the Gulf Coast in Texas and eventually made his way to northern Mexico to meet up with the rest of his expedition. He and his men pillaged storehouses and exposed the indigenous Tocobaga people to disease.
- 1:01 The Tocobaga tribe primarily inhabited west central Florida around the northern end of Old Tampa Bay and into Pinellas County. Their culture was a blend of indigenous cultures from Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. It is believed that their principal town was in Safety Harbor. Due to disease and raids, by 1709, the Tocobaga tribe was all but destroyed.
- 1:31 Around 100 years later, the Seminole people fled into Florida after a disastrous war against white settlers led by General Andrew Jackson. As the United States expanded and Florida became a US territory in 1821, the government forced many Seminoles to relocate to Oklahoma. Today, the Seminoles remaining in Florida call themselves the Unconquered People and are descendants of the roughly 300 people who avoided capture by the US Army. Currently, more than 2000 native people live on six reservations in the state. They have established themselves in such industries as tourism, citrus, and cattle.

