

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

In the time after the formal end of the Third Seminole War in 1858, the Seminole people kept their contact with white colonists to a minimum. The limited number of interactions between the two were largely centered around trade. During this period, colonists established trading posts, and the Seminole would come to sell their goods, which typically consisted of animal hides and bird plumes. They would also purchase products such as manufactured food items, glass beads, guns and ammunition. Through these trading posts, economic as well as cultural exchanges between the two peoples took place (Butler, 2023; Kersey Jr., 1972).

While there were several trading posts that operated throughout Florida, one of the most historically significant of these was Brown's Trading Post. Located in the Big Cypress region, this trading post was established by William H. "Bill" Brown and his wife Jane in 1910 (Butler, 2023; Kersey Jr., 1972).

Brown's Trading Post was unique for the time in that it was built closer the middle of the state, rather than on the coasts around white settlements as was typical. This location was quite convenient for the Seminole living in Big Cypress, who now no longer had to make the long trek to the coasts to buy and sell goods (Ahtathiki, 2012).



Close-up image of the Brown's Trading Post site marker

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Our January artifact is a remnant of this historic trading post. While it may be hard to tell, this object is actually a metal wagon wheel axle. The wagon that this axle belonged to might have been used to transport goods to and from the trading post. It was found between 1976-1981 by a descendant of the family and generously donated to the THPO in 2013.

To learn more about all the incredible artifacts within our collection, please visit the THPO website at www.stofthpo.com.

Works Cited

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