



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 9, 2010

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C.H. Huckelberry", is written over the printed name and title.

Re: **Final Report on the Excavations of Tucson's Historic Cemetery**
*Deathways and Lifeways in the American Southwest: Tucson's Historic Alameda-
Stone Cemetery and the Transformation of a Remote Outpost into an Urban City*

In 2006, Pima County initiated one of the largest and most complex archaeological projects ever undertaken in the state, involving the complete excavation of nearly an entire civilian and military cemetery. Because the entire parcel was planned to be developed into a Joint City-County Courts Complex, state law required the complete recovery and removal of burials from the site and their repatriation to descendant groups who would claim cultural affinity. Thus, to ensure all human remains were recovered, the archaeologists excavated the entire 4.3-acre Joint Courts project area. This excavation resulted in the recovery of nearly 1,400 individuals buried there during Tucson's Territorial Period from the 1850s to 1880s, together with more than 700 archaeological features dating to the post-cemetery and prehistoric periods.

The Joint Courts Complex Archaeological Project was unique for its scale and its complexity. Not only is the excavation of an entire historic cemetery an exceedingly rare and unusual undertaking, few cemetery excavation projects on this scale have ever been planned and conducted in the United States. The project was also exceedingly complex due to the lack of burial records, lack of information about the cemetery closure, any burial removals by the City of Tucson in the 1880s, and intensive post cemetery development – first for residential uses and later redevelopment for industrial and commercial uses. Excavating a cemetery by itself would be a difficult task, but excavating one buried beneath 100 or more years of intensely developed urban infrastructure was daunting. The project was also complex because of the diversity of cultural traditions and peoples in Tucson at the time the cemetery was in use and the correspondingly diverse set of descendant groups in Tucson today who might claim these remains for reburial. A wide variety of burial practices and traditions had to be anticipated, and careful analysis of historical, contextual, and osteological data was also required to determine possible cultural affinity of the individuals.

After four years of excavation, analyses, repatriation, and reburial, the final report is complete. For a project of this scale and complexity, such a rapid conclusion of the final report is remarkable. *Deathways and Lifeways in the American Southwest: Tucson's Historic Alameda-Stone Cemetery and the Transformation of a Remote Outpost into an Urban City*, the final report, is in four volumes. Volume 1 provides the context and synthesis and is written to provide a stand-alone summary of the project results. Volume 2 provides a detailed scientific analysis of the cemetery and the people who were buried there. Volume 3 focuses on the detailed results of the residential and commercial use of the project area after the cemetery had been closed and abandoned. The first three volumes are in printed form. Volume 4 presents the detailed descriptions of all the excavated graves. Because Volume 4 would be 2,755 pages in length if printed, this volume is provided on a CD.

Summary of Results

The project excavated a total of 1,083 graves and recovered the remains of 1,386 individuals from both the civilian and the military cemeteries. The military cemetery was in use from 1862 until 1881. It was partially within the Joint Courts project area: a total of 64 graves were located, of which 57 contained human remains. The remainder of the graves and individuals were located within the civilian cemetery, which was likely in use from the early 1860s until 1875 when it was closed by the City of Tucson. Not a single individual could be identified by name.

Historic context is important. When the cemeteries were in use, southern Arizona had been part of the United States for only two decades, the railroad arrived in 1880, and the eastern edge of town was essentially along what is now Church Avenue. Anyone living in the vicinity of what is now the Old Pima County Courthouse was on the far east side of the settlement.

In the civilian cemetery, just over half the individuals died before they reached 18 years of age, and the majority of these died before they reached 12 years old. Child mortality in the mid to late 1800s was markedly different from today. One area of the cemetery had significantly larger numbers of child burials, and it is thought this may represent the mortality from various epidemics that periodically swept through Tucson's population. The southern portion of the cemetery was different by virtue of the deceased being primarily adult males. These are thought to be non-Hispanic immigrants into the area, men who came from the Midwest, the east coast, and Europe looking to build a new life in the American Southwest.

Historical characterizations of Tucson in the 1860s and 1870s often proclaim a community rife with violence. This view of Tucson was not borne out in the skeletal evidence. Even so, the evidence for violence was prevalent in the adult males in the southern portion of the cemetery.

Items found with the deceased show that Tucson was a community of limited resources. Most people were buried in simple coffins made of locally available wood. Only 50 burial containers had any decorative coffin hardware. Only 42 individuals were interred with jewelry: mainly earrings, lockets, pendants, necklaces, pins broaches and rings. On the other hand, more than 225 graves included at least one religious artifact such as a cross, crucifix or medallion. Beads were the most common artifact, with over 16,600 recovered, most of which seem to have been items of personal adornment. Buttons and other clothing fasteners were also common, with over 7,000 of these items recovered. Occasionally, ammunition was found with someone; there was an occasional pipe; and in one instance, a ceramic poker chip was found beneath a man's torso indicating it was probably in his back pocket when he was buried. Only 13 coins were found. Two adults, a Euro-American male and an African American male, each had two coins by their heads, and it is thought these coins were placed over the eyes of these two men. Six coins were found with a Hispanic adult male: five Mexican *reales* and one American half dollar.

People were using the Joint Courts project area millennia before the cemetery was established and continued to use the area more than a century after the cemetery was closed. The earliest evidence of people in the project area is a roasting pit that is over 4,000 years old. Two domestic dwellings (pithouses) dating just over 2,000 years old were also found. Two millennia later, the historic cemeteries were closed: the civilian in 1875 and the military in 1884. In 1890, the area was subdivided and sold off, followed immediately by the construction of residential houses. The foundations of some of these houses, their associated privies and other features were uncovered as part of the archaeological project. Well over 700 features were excavated and documented that date after the cemeteries' closures. A rich record of artifacts, including items such as legible grocery receipts dating to 1911, were found. The grocery receipts can be attributed to Mose Kelley, a local bank employee, who resided at 48 E. Alameda Street.

History of the Project

Archaeological research regarding the project area began in 2004, two years before the start of archaeological excavations. Background research was conducted to determine what was actually known about the cemetery that was reported to be located within the Joint Courts project area. Researchers were astounded to discover that actual written records regarding the size of the cemetery and its layout were almost nonexistent. Most

surprising was the discovery that no records existed of who was actually buried in the cemetery and where they were buried in the cemetery. The Roman Catholic Diocese death register for this period, generously made available to researchers by the Diocese for the first time ever because of this project and its importance, provided the best approximation of who was likely buried there.

Excavations began on November 6, 2006, and concluded on August 14, 2008. The scale and complexity of the project called for many teams of archaeologists, osteologists (specialists in the human skeleton), and mapping crews. New technologies such as three dimensional LIDAR imaging were brought to use in the field. This greatly increased recording accuracy and significantly reduced the time needed to record each burial. This project has proved the value of new technologies for archaeological recording, and the results can be seen in Volume 4 of the report.

An unusual aspect of the archaeological excavations was the need to remove the detritus of over a century of urban construction from the project area to ensure that all the human remains were located and exhumed. It is essentially unheard of for an archaeological field season to include the demolition of a 17,000 square foot building, the removal of streets and sidewalks, utility removals, the saw cutting and removal of many thousands of square feet of concrete foundations, and the demolition of a bank vault. The bank vault, which was built of 18-inch thick concrete walls reinforced with one-inch diameter steel rebar, proved a challenge. The end result of this work and the archaeological excavations was a totally "clean" project area.

Usually, archaeological field excavations are completed before any laboratory documentation begins. Once again, this project was different. Under the rules that implement the State burial law (ARS 41-844), an assessment of cultural affinity for each of the 1,386 individuals was required soon after the conclusion of fieldwork. To meet the schedule, laboratories were set up onsite with documentation continuously underway concurrent with the fieldwork excavations. The cultural affinity assessment was completed before the end of 2008, four months following the conclusion of fieldwork.

Working with the Descendant Groups

One of the great challenges of the Joint Courts Complex archaeological project was identifying and collaborating with tribes, organizations, and groups who were likely to have an interest in those who were buried in the civilian and military cemeteries. Consultations with descendant groups began two years before any archaeological excavations started. Working closely with these groups, a Burial Agreement was created that provided the documentation evidencing compliance with State burial law. However, because this was a

known historic cemetery, this project was, once again, a special case. A Court Order was obtained to allow the excavation of the burials, a document necessary to obtain a State disinterment and re-interment permit. All of this documentation had to be in place before excavations could begin.

The consultations with the descendant groups paved the way for a controversy-free project. The descendant groups were an essential part of the planning team, and they were fully aware of exactly what was going to happen, how it would happen, and when it would happen. Consultations continued throughout the field project, through cultural affinity determinations, and through repatriations and reburials.

As a result of the cultural affinity assessments and consultations, a number of repatriations and reburials occurred. In every case, all human remains and all associated funerary objects, including any remaining parts of the original coffin, were repatriated and/or reburied.

In May 2009, all the individuals exhumed from within the military cemetery were repatriated to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services. All of these individuals were reburied in a specially designated portion of the Department's cemetery in Sierra Vista, conducted by serving members of the United States Military. Reburial included an elaborate ceremony, attended by Governor Jan Brewer and Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords among many hundreds of others in attendance.

Repatriations were also conducted with the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in July 2009 and November 2009, respectively. Thirty-six sets of remains were repatriated to the Tohono O'odham Nation for reburial in the San Xavier District. Five sets of remains were repatriated to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and were reburied on the Pascua Yaqui Reservation. At the request of the Nation and the Tribe, these repatriation and reburial ceremonies were conducted in a quiet and respectful manner.

The final and by far largest repatriation and reburial took place at All Faiths Cemeteries in February 2010, which included approximately 1,200 individuals. Los Descendientes del Presidio de Tucson was the descendant group representing many of these individuals. At the request of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the four individuals identified as Apache were reburied at All Faiths. All other remains, Euro-American and those that were culturally unidentifiable were also reburied at All Faiths.

To complete the process, Pima County constructed a memorial at All Faiths to commemorate the reburial and honor the memory of Tucson's early residents, who had for

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Re: Final Report on the Excavations of Tucson's Historic Cemetery
December 9, 2010
Page 6

many years before, been forgotten as they lay beneath streets, sidewalks, businesses, and residences. The memorial was dedicated in June 2010.

Availability of the Report to the Public

The attached report represents the scientific results of a major archaeological project undertaken on behalf of the people of Pima County. It is a significant contribution to our understanding of Tucson's history, and it is important this information is made available to the public. A copy of the report will be placed in the Joel Valdez Main Library, and a copy will be made available on the County's website.

CHH/mjk

Attachment

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The Honorable Jan Kearney, Presiding Judge, Superior Court
The Honorable Maria Felix, Presiding Judge, Pima County Justice Courts
The Honorable John Leonardo, Judge, Superior Court
The Honorable Antonio Riojas, Presiding Magistrate, Tucson City Court
Kent Batty, Administrator, Superior Court
Lisa Royal, Administrator, Pima County Justice Courts
Joan Harphant, Administrator, Tucson City Court
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Nanette Slusser, Assistant Deputy County Administrator for Public Works Policy
Reid Spaulding, Director, Facilities Management
Linda Mayro, Cultural Resources Manager
Roger Anyon, Cultural Resources Program Manager