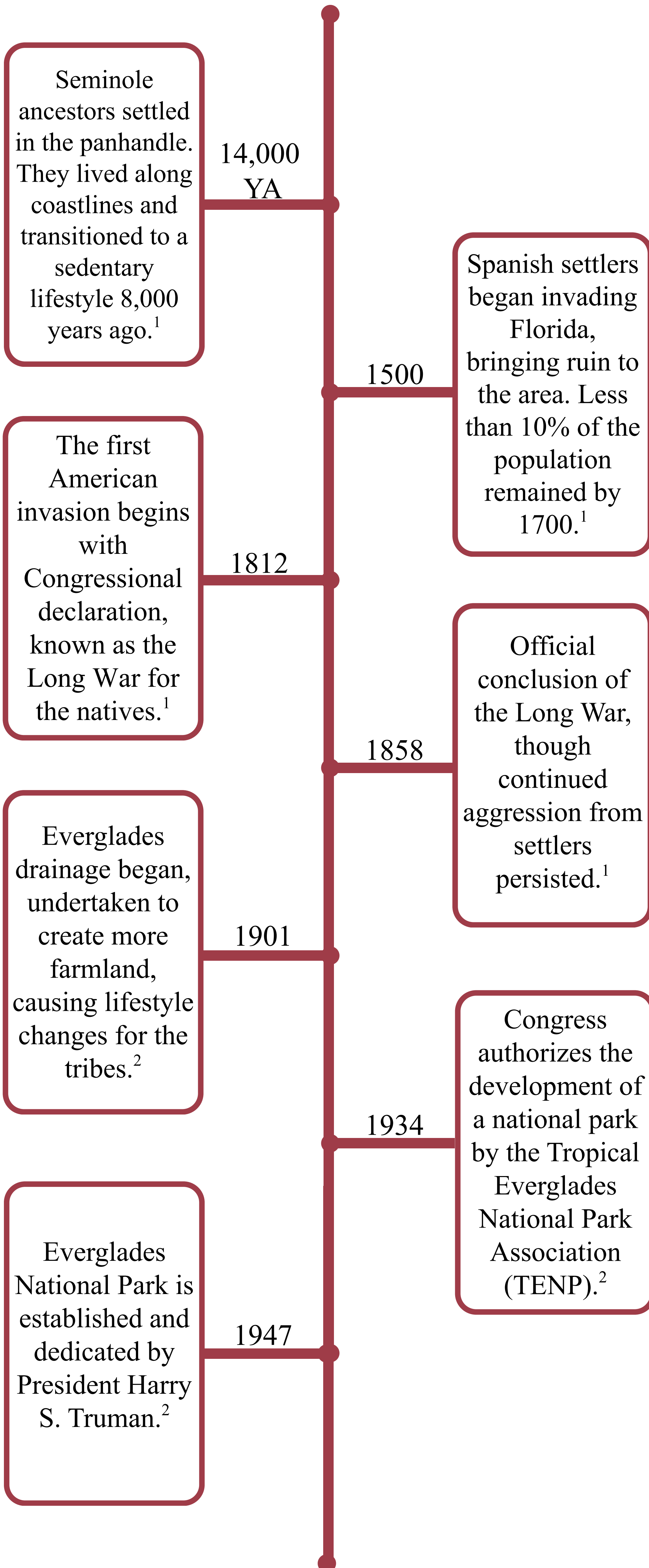


The Language of Omission: Tracing Indigenous Erasure in Federal Planning for Everglades National Park

Timeline of the Natives in Florida



Introduction

The Florida Everglades have long served as a sanctuary for the Seminole and Miccosukee natives, whose southward retreat in the nineteenth century followed U.S. expansion, warfare, and dispossession. Subsequent proposals for Everglades National Park, particularly those advanced by Ernest F. Coe and the Tropical Everglades National Park Association, introduced plans for extensive dredging that threatened Indigenous water-based customs. Although prior studies examine the park's environmental and social consequences, gaps remain regarding the extent of governmental disregard for tribal sovereignty. This research analyzes United States federal documents to assess whether the official language reflects a systematic neglect of Indigenous interests during the creation of the national park.

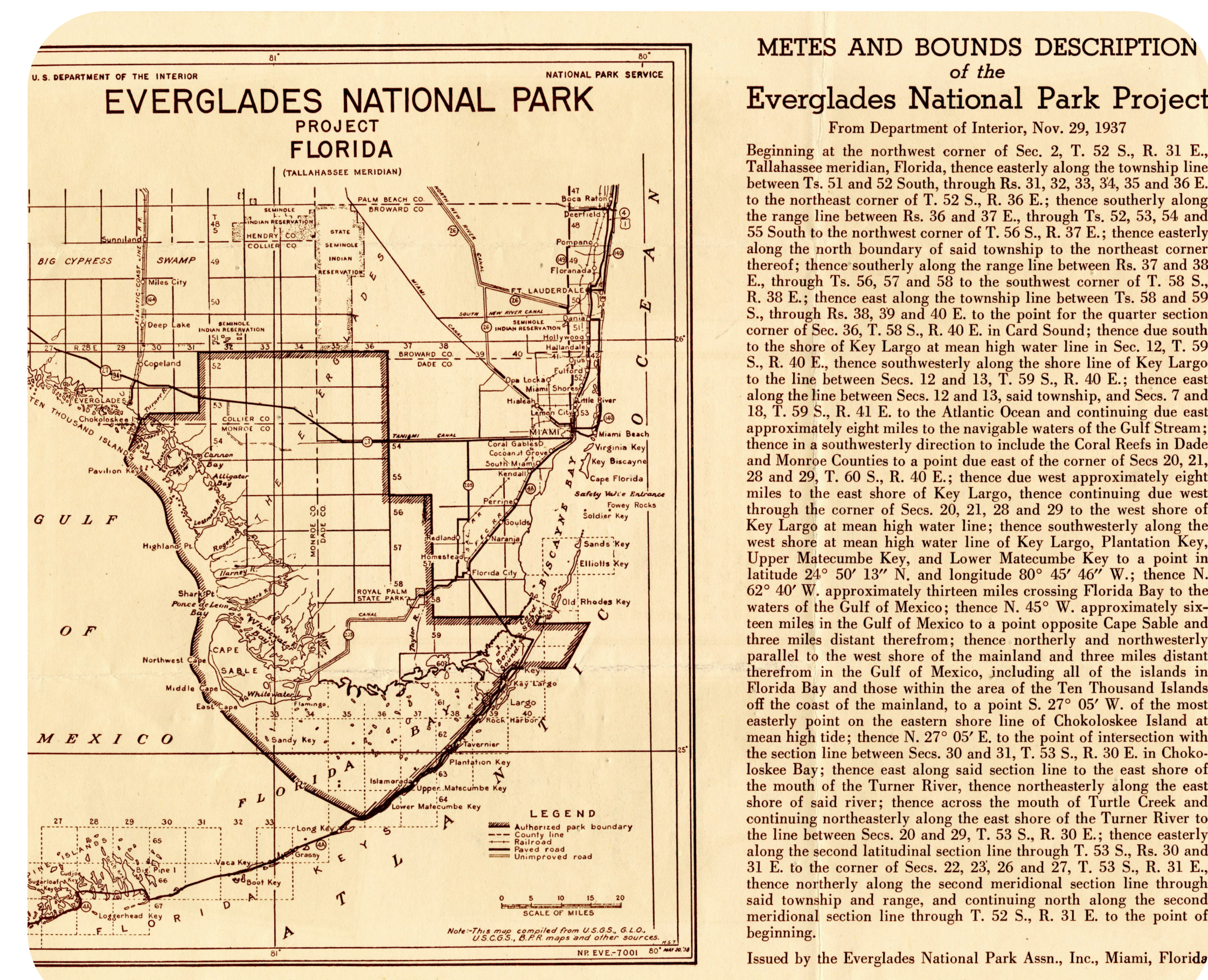
Methods of Research

- Access to resources through digital libraries of Florida State University, Florida International University, Florida Atlantic University, and University of Virginia.
- Analysis of congressional records, hearing transcripts, commission papers, land reports, and letters.
- Portable document format (PDF) word search tools to locate and measure approximate use of the words: “Indians”, “Natives”, “Seminoles”, and “Miccosukee”.



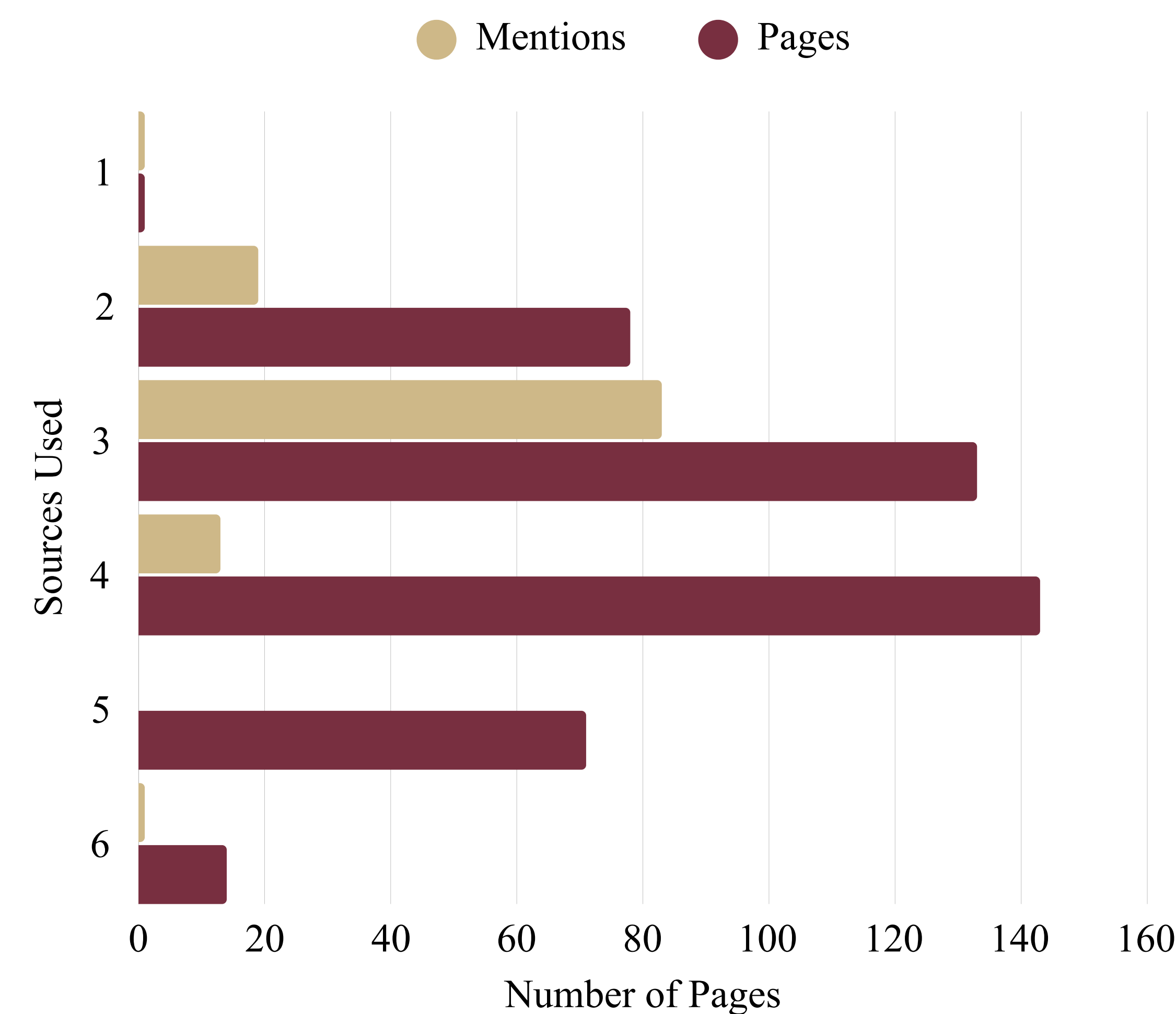
³Florida Memory, Photographs, *Seminole Indians in the Heart of the Florida Everglades*, ca. 1938.

Results



⁴Florida Memory, *Letter from Ernest Coe to Governor Millard Caldwell*, 1947.

Approximate References to Natives within Documents



⁵73d CONGRESS, SESS. II, CHS, 370, 371, 1934.

⁶Establishment of Everglades National Park, Hearings on H.R. 1238, 1930.

⁷The Committee on Public Lands, Bill No. 338, *To Authorize the Draining of the Everglades*, 1848.

⁸Senate, Doc. 63-379, *Report of the Florida Everglades Engineering Commission*, 1913.

⁹Office of Managing Director, *Everglades National Park Commission Papers*, 1946.

¹⁰National Parks Association, *The proposed Everglades National Park: Report of a special committee of the National Parks Association*, 1932.

Conclusion

- References to the Seminole and Miccosukee people were extremely limited relative to the extensive federal material on the creation of Everglades National Park.
- This disparity indicates that Indigenous communities were treated as peripheral concerns rather than central stakeholders in government planning.
- Re-examining these documents highlights consistent patterns of marginalization, directly addressing the research question concerning tribal acknowledgement and treatment.
- The findings align with prior endeavors identifying governmental neglect and reveal significant consequences for tribal sovereignty and land rights.
- Despite limitations caused by restricted disclosures, the research underscores the need for continued investigation, particularly involving environmental legislation and modern development pressures.

Acknowledgments

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References



¹“Seminole History”, Seminole Tribal Historic Preservation Office, 2025.

²“Timeline of the Florida Seminoles”, Florida Memory, 2025.