

798.

Spanish St. Augustine

The Archaeology of a Colonial Creole Community

Kathleen Deagan

Florida State Museum
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

With Contributions by

JOAN K. KOCH

J. DONALD MERRITT

ELIZABETH J. REITZ and STEPHEN L. CUMBAA

STEVEN J. SHEPHARD

MICHAEL C. SCARDAVILLE



ACADEMIC PRESS

A Subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers

New York London

Paris San Diego San Francisco São Paulo Sydney Tokyo Toronto

1983

7

Beyond the Town Walls: The Indian Element in Colonial St. Augustine

J. DONALD MERRITT

Editor's Introduction

When the Spaniards arrived in Florida in 1565, they were met by and took refuge with the Timucua Indians. Within a year conflict had forced the Spaniards to form their own town away from the Indians. Despite this, a close relationship between the Spaniards and the Indians endured for 2 centuries. This relationship, which included trade, conflict, discrimination, forced labor, marriage, and religious conversion, was a primary factor in the developing Hispanic-Floridian tradition. The continuous and enduring nature of it set the Spanish colony apart from other European-American traditions.

The overriding emphasis in the archaeology of colonial St. Augustine has been upon the ways in which Indian influence was incorporated into the life of the Spanish town. Merritt's study is the only one that observes the Spanish-Indian interaction from the point of view of the Indian.

The Fountain of Youth Park site was inhabited by the Timucua Indians for more than 2000 years. By the late seventeenth century, however, the Timucua population was dying out and being replaced by a mixture of many southeastern Indian groups who had relocated because of European-induced change and conflict. It was, therefore, not directly with the Timucua that the St. Augustinians of the eighteenth century interacted, but the patterns of interaction had been established in earlier centuries through the relations with the Timucua.

Merritt's chapter explores the roots of these interaction patterns. His study of the Fountain of Youth Park site also provides our only archaeological depiction of historic-period Indian village life in the St. Augustine area, a depiction also completely absent in the documents of the time.



During its first 200 years (the First Spanish period, 1565–1763), the garrison town of St. Augustine and its extensions were the loci of interaction between the Spanish and the indigenous Indian populations. This interaction was dynamic and changing during this time, largely because of two ongoing processes: the increasing integration of the European and aboriginal populations, and the decline of the local Indian groups and their eventual replacement by nonlocal Indian populations. St. Augustine, for these reasons, provides an excellent focus for the study of social and cultural adaptations in an acculturative situation. Such a study requires examination of each of the discrete groups involved, as well as of the history of their interactions. Other chapters in this volume consider Indian–Hispanic acculturation from the European perspective, but this chapter will explore the nature of early interaction between the Spaniards and the native Eastern Timucua, with a primary emphasis on the aboriginal components. The archaeological basis of this study comes from site 8–SJ–31, the Fountain of Youth Park, in St. Augustine. This site has been the subject of recent archaeological investigation (Merritt 1977) and is the best-preserved aboriginal site in the city. The depiction of aboriginal life as seen from this site provides preliminary baseline data on the indigenous Indian element of colonial St. Augustine.

The earliest contact between the Timucua and the Spaniards was during slave raids on Florida's eastern coast after the settlement of the colonies in the Caribbean, but the most intense and continued interaction happened after the establishment of St. Augustine, which Dobyns (1980:10) has described as a "colonial primate city" and an important link in the coastal fortifications that guarded the shipping lanes to the Old World. During the Spanish occupation in St. Augustine there were two periods of Spanish–Indian interaction that can be distinguished both chronologically and by the nature of the interaction. The earlier phase of interaction lasted from 1565 to the end of the seventeenth century, during which the Spaniards were in constant contact with the Eastern Timucua groups, and an extensive chain of missions was established (Matter 1972). After 1680 large numbers of Christian Indians from the Guale province were moved south to St. Augustine due to enemy Indian attacks (Swanton 1922:136; Chapter 2). By the early years of the eighteenth century, after Colonel James Moore's attacks on the Spaniards and Indians in Florida, most of the surviving aboriginal groups from all of the previously missionized areas moved to the vicinity of St. Augustine for protection (Boyd *et al.* 1951). After this major population change and the decline of the mission system, the Indian element in St. Augustine became a more integral part of the town (see Deagan 1973). Thus although the first hundred years of contact was largely between the Spanish and the rather homogenous Timucua groups, the latter years were characterized by contact with the remnants of a variety of tribal groups. It is the earlier period

that is considered in this chapter, since it is the period best represented at the Fountain of Youth Park site and the one during which the basic processes and policies governing Indian-Spanish interaction were established.

In 1564 the French encountered at the mouth of the St. Johns River a group they called, after the local cacique, Saturiwa. Saturiwa was evidently a higher-level cacique who commanded a considerable army and was frequently at war with other caciques inland to the west (Laudonniere 1975; Ribault 1563). The Fountain of Youth Park site in St. Augustine and other sites in this area are close enough in both time and space to allow direct analogy between the archaeological remains and the ethnohistorical records with reasonable certainty.

Although the French were responsible for the first intense contact with the coastal Eastern Timucua peoples, the Spaniards were responsible for the most significant impact. Even before the intensive influence of the Spanish after the establishment of St. Augustine, the Indian populations throughout the entire Southeast had been devastated by the introduction of European disease (Milner 1980). It is not known how seriously disease affected the Eastern Timucua after the initial Spanish explorations in the Southeast, but epidemics were probably common among aboriginal groups by the end of the sixteenth century. In 1585 a disease spread through the Indian population around St. Augustine after Sir Francis Drake's punitive expedition against the Spanish (Crosby 1972). The depopulation caused by disease during this time period affected aboriginal cultures by reducing the number of individuals who could participate in productive labor as well as eliminating individuals who served in specific roles in the organization of society. The most profound effect of epidemic disease was the manner in which it weakened the aboriginal societies' resistance to the subsequent planned subjugation by the Spanish. Their goal was not simply to live on the coast and protect the Spanish fleet that passed nearby, but, as in other parts of New Spain, it was to convert the Indians to the Catholic Christian faith and way of life. This evangelistic mission required substantial cultural readjustment within native society. The primary Spanish instrument of reeducation was the mission system, which began at contact and reached its peak during the seventeenth century with a chain of missions that spread out from St. Augustine westward to the Apalachee region of northwest Florida (Gannon 1965).

Spanish Florida was never developed to the extent that Spain's colonial ventures in Central America were, and the Spanish population of Florida did not exceed 1000 until the end of Spanish occupation (Dunkle 1958).

European-Indian Interaction

burial features were found just east and west of the burial concentration. On the east side two semicircular sets of five postmolds were discovered. The arcs were open, facing each other, but no molds were found to connect the two. Three pit features were located on the west side. One of these was a fire pit containing charcoal and ashes; the size was not recorded. Three others (two were 5–6 ft. in diameter, the other 1 ft.) were filled with black soil, shell, and pot sherds. One animal skeleton (type not recorded) and one human skeleton intruded onto the features, indicating that the features probably predate the burials.

The artifacts collected in the 1930s excavation were not recorded according to provenience, but the surviving assemblage (which is no longer extant) was examined by Seaberg in 1951. Her inspection found orangeware series ceramics (Griffin 1945), St. Johns plain and check-stamped wares (Goggin 1952), San Marcos wares (Smith, H., 1948), unclassified grit- and grog-tempered sherds, as well as majolica and olive jar sherds. Other artifacts found with burials included one piece of glass with a chipped edge, one white projectile point, and five metal cone-shaped "tinklers." The most common artifact in the burials was beads. Seaberg's (1951:25) examination of over 500 of them showed that half were seed beads, 77 were made of shell, and the remaining glass beads included gooseberry, chevron, and a type resembling *Cornaline d'Aleppo*. Most of the beads were found in strings associated with children's skeletons.

By the 1950s, when the University of Florida excavations were conducted in the park, archaeological methodology and familiarity with material culture of the area had progressed to a point that allows comparison between the earlier excavations and the later ones in 1976. Neither the 1950s or the 1970s investigations excavated in the cemetery area; instead they explored the remainder of the park property. Outside of the cemetery over 95% of the artifacts recovered were ceramics. The few non-ceramic artifacts found were all in the upper levels and were all very small pieces. They were too small or too decomposed to identify with any precision beyond simple identification of material. Because of this, the only artifacts used in the following comparisons are ceramics.

In the spring of 1951 University of Florida students excavated 10 5-ft.-square units in the park. Of these, 3 were placed in the western half of the park among the buildings, and the other squares were placed in the southeastern quadrant of the park (Figure 7.4). Although the exact grid coordinates of these units were not recorded, they were plotted on a map to scale such that their approximate location is known in relation to those excavated in 1976. The 1951 units were all excavated in arbitrary 4-in. levels, and stratigraphy, features, and artifact proveniences were recorded. The 1976 excavations were concentrated in the eastern half of the park.

The western half of the park surrounding the cemetery has been heav-