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MESTIZAJE IN COLONIAL ST. AUGUSTINE

by

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ABSTRACT

Although the Spanish occupation of Florida left no apparent mestizo population segment as in modern Latin America, the *mestizaje* process did occur. Documentary data concerning Indian-Spanish interaction, the St. Augustine Cathedral Parish Records, and archeological data are used to more fully define the process and results of *mestizaje* in colonial Florida, and to formulate an hypothesis with archeologically-testable implications to explain this process.

The decimation of American Indians in the face of Spanish conquest is a widely recognized fact of the contact period. This was particularly evident among the aboriginal populations of both New Spain (Mexico) and Florida during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Recent estimates of population decline in New Spain (Cook and Borah 1960) have suggested that between 1519 and 1605 the aboriginal population of Mexico fell from approximately 25,000,000 to approximately 1,000,000; and in Florida we know that between 1600 and 1727 the Timucua Indian population fell from approximately 6-10,000 to fourteen (Valdes 1729).

Although the structures of contact in Mexico and in Florida were considerably different, many of the same detrimental influences were at work on the Indian populations of both areas. The primary factor in the population decline was European-introduced epidemic disease. Smallpox, measles, influenza, dysentary and syphilis were rampant among Mexican Indian tribes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Dobyns 1963), and although documents are less specific for Florida, we do know that there were several epidemics of "peste" and "pox" during the seventeenth century. We do not know to what extent the Indians of Florida suffered from European

diseases before the actual establishment of a colony in 1564. War, enslavement and rebellion very likely accounted for a considerable number of Indian deaths.

The most striking difference between the situation in Mexico and that in Florida, however, is apparent in the population composition of the two areas today. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in New Spain, the process of Indian annihilation was paralleled by that of miscegenation, or *mestizaje*. Intermarriage and intermingling between Spaniard and Indian were extremely widespread, and resulted in modern population consisting almost totally of mestizos (Morner 1970:1).

In Florida on the other hand, the mission system as the sole medium of contact, and the presence of a single settlement throughout the seventeenth century, combined to inhibit widespread miscegenation. This did not mean, however, that there were no Indian-Spanish unions with mestizo offspring. Archeological and ethnohistorical evidence do indicate that this occurred frequently in colonial St. Augustine, although on a much more limited scale than in Mexico.

Today in Florida, however, there is no apparent mestizo population segment. Two reasons may be suggested for this: 1) The Indians of Florida, besides being fewer in number, were semi-sedentary, part-time agriculturalists, with loose tribal confederations (see Swanton 1922:320-398), while the Spanish in Mexico encountered a pueblo dwelling, sedentary agricultural group already accustomed to being politically dominated and paying tribute. The Spaniards in Florida could not simply step into the existing system, take over the key positions and exploit the Indians while living side-by-side, as they were able to do in New Spain (see Service 1955). The only intensive side-by-side-living came after the relocation of the Florida Indian population in St. Augustine around 1700. 2) It was only within this situation in St. Augustine that *mestizaje* occurred to a significant degree, and this was brought to a premature end with the removal of the Spanish from Florida in 1763.

This little known chapter in the history of race relations in North America has been, and can further be illuminated by processual archeology and problem oriented ethnohistory in St. Augustine, a major locus of *mestizaje* in Spanish America outside of Mexico.

Ethnohistoric Background of *Mestizaje* in Florida

The structure of Indian-Spanish interaction prior to 1700 was built on the mission system. While the Indians were exploited to a slight degree as laborers at the *presidio*, soliders in the garrison and providers of corn, this

contact was reluctant and erratic on the part of the Indians. Except for those living in the immediate vicinity of St. Augustine, the only long term, daily contact with Spanish culture for most Indians came through the missions. While the missionaries attempted to change certain social and religious aspects of Florida's native cultures, the technology and subsistence systems were virtually unaffected, and intermarriage did not occur to a discernable degree.

After 1700, however, there was a major change in the structure of Spanish-Indian relations. By 1704, nearly all of the aboriginal population of Florida was located in the vicinity of St. Augustine, as a result of the raids of James Moore and his Carolinians from 1702 to 1704, and this considerably increased contact. It was also after Moore's activities in Florida, and the increasing British encroachments on *La Florida* that Spanish interest in the Indian population shifted from being strictly religious and economic, to being militarily oriented as well. The Spanish now welcomed any Indians, Christian or infidel, who might act as allies or buffers against the British, and they entered the competition for aboriginal favors through gifts.

Throughout the eighteenth century the Indian population of St. Augustine increased and also moved closer to the *presidio* itself as enemy Indian harassment increased. Although the Indians in St. Augustine were segregated in villages by tribal group, and even until 1728 continued their semi-sedentary existence (Doctrineros 1728), they undoubtedly provided a labor pool and a farming segment for the Spanish population of St. Augustine, increasing the exchange of cultural elements and the incidence of *mestizaje*.

It was through the marriage or concubinage of Indian women with Spanish garrison soldiers that the most viable channel for the exchange of cultural elements was provided. As a garrison town in a remote and undesirable frontier, St. Augustine could boast few Spanish women. Of the 1200 men in Menendez' party who actually arrived in 1565, one hundred were married and brought their wives (Dunkle 1958:4). Thirteen years later a request for three hundred men, but only six women was made (*ibid.*), suggesting that many of the garrison soldiers had found mates among the Indian women in the area. The trend toward marrying women who were native to St. Augustine, whether white, mestizo or Indian, was continued throughout the first Spanish period. The St. Augustine Parish records reveal that practically all of the women who married in St. Augustine were already residents of the town. The extent to which Spanish wives accompanied their husbands to Florida has not been documented, but the proportions in the party of Menendez might be considered representative, although probably slightly higher than in the succeeding centuries.

In other areas of the Spanish New World, liaisons between Indian women and Spanish men were formed immediately and continued throughout the period of Spanish occupation (see Morner 1970:21). In New Spain a

marriage or other permanent arrangement with a Spaniard was a source of prestige for an Indian woman and her family (Morner 1970:24), and it may be presumed that this was also the case in Spanish Florida. As early as 1598 there is a record of the Cacica of the Indian town of Nombre de Dios near St. Augustine marrying a Spanish soldier (Canzo 1598). Maria Melendez was a staunch supporter of the Spanish and their Catholicism, and was highly praised in the documents (Canzo 1598). It seems probable that early in the contact period the Spanish encouraged such marriages for the purpose of gaining allies and converts among the Indians.

In the area of religion, at least, Indian women exhibited less cultural conservatism than the men. Frey Francisco Pareja noted in 1605 that Indian women were the most fervent and enthusiastic converts, and were used as chatechists to help convert other Indians (Geiger 1937:253). From this, and the regularity of intermarriage of Indian women with Spaniards, it might be suggested that women were more receptive to Spanish culture, and were the primary agents of the acculturative processes.

The Indian population of St. Augustine increased sharply after 1680, when the Christian Indians of the Guale province were relocated there for protection against enemy Indians (Swanton 1922:136). When Calderon, Bishop of Cuba, visited Florida in 1675, he noted only three Christian Indian towns in the vicinity of St. Augustine; Nombre de Dios, Tolomato and Salamatoto on the St. Johns River (Salazar 1675). Assuming that the population of Nombre de Dios is typical, there would have been ninety to one hundred Christian Indians living near St. Augustine at that time. By 1703, however, at least eight villages containing Indians of Timucua, Apalachee, Guale and South Florida had been established. These included Nombre de Dios Chiquito, Timucua, Tama, Jororo, Costa, Tolomato el Nuevo, Nombre de Dios and Macariz (Valdes 1729). By 1714 the Indian population of St. Augustine was 401 (Cedula 1714), and by 1726 it had grown to 1101 Indians in at least ten villages (Valdes 1729). It was a heterogeneous group of tribal affiliation and language including Yamassee, Guale, Chiluca, Timucua, Pojois, Apalachee, Costa and Jororo Indians. However 564 of these were Guale or Yamassee, more than fifty percent of the total Indian population (*ibid.*). Some of the villages were as far away as twelve leagues from the fort in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, but increasing slave and war raids by the "Chiscas and Chichumecos" forced most of the pueblos within a gunshot of the fort, and the Indians into the Castillo to sleep by 1760 (Solana 1760).

While this situation forced the Spanish and the Indians into closer contact by the middle of the eighteenth century, it also probably reduced the usefulness of the Indians to St. Augustine. Not only had the outlying towns provided a line of defense against the English, but the Indians had cultivated

fields on the periphery of the city. In 1760 Solana complained that the Negroes and the Indians had abandoned the cultivated lands (Solana 1760), and indeed earlier maps indicate Indian villages in the area of farmland (Chatelaine 1941:Map 10). Also by 1760, the Timucua and Apalachee population of Mose in 1729 had been replaced by free Negroes (Solana 1760). While the Indians in the vicinity of St. Augustine probably provided a labor pool, served in the garrison, and possibly provided a source for craft industries such as pottery, all of them were subsidized by alms from the governor's coffers at the time of departure in 1763 (Puente 1770).

It was during the eighteenth century that intermarriage and *mestizaje* occurred at a significant rate in St. Augustine. Between the years 1735 and 1750 there were 306 marriages performed in the parish cathedral (St. Augustine Parish Records). Of these 55 (18%) were between blacks or mulattos; 217 (71%) were between Spaniards or white creoles and 34 (11%) were between mestizos and Indians, Spaniards and Indians or Spaniards and mestizos. (These will be referred to as "mixed marriages.")

During the same period (1735-1750), 1423 baptisms were recorded. These included 411 (27%) black or mulatto births, 976 (70%) white births and 36 (3%) mixed Indian-white births. This indicates that during this fifteen year period, at the height of Spanish-Indian interaction, there were roughly five births recorded to every marriage of blacks, six births recorded for every white marriage and one mixed birth for every mixed marriage recorded in the city.

While the data on which these figures are based is scanty, and the thoroughness of the Spanish records unknown, some suggestions about population in eighteenth century St. Augustine can be made. We know 1) that St. Augustine was a closed community; that is, there was little or no movements of populations into or out of St. Augustine and 2) the emphasis on religion was very strong, and we can assume that both the marriage and birth records reflect the total Catholic population within the city, and probably therefore the total population. The Parish records also recorded illegitimate births and stillbirths. The unknown variable in the relationship between the marriage and birth records is the extent to which parents of children baptized were or were not married. In other words, do the total number of births reflect the births per marriage? Modern population statistics indicate a higher number of births for unmarried parents of ethnic minority groups than for the dominant white (WASP) population. If this were true also in eighteenth century St. Augustine, it would be reflected in a higher number of births per marriage for mixed bloods and blacks. This is not the case, however; as the black and white births per marriage are nearly the same, while the mixed births per marriage are considerably lower. Either the mixed blood birth rate was actually much lower than that for blacks or whites in St.

Augustine, or cultural factors distorted the documentary record. The latter suggestion seems the most plausible, since stillbirths and newborn deaths are also included in the baptismal records. We must therefore look elsewhere for an explanation of the low mestizo birth records; possibly the children of Indian mothers (the less acculturated group) were born and baptized in the Indian *doctrina* homes of the mother, in which case they would not appear in the St. Augustine cathedral records. Marriage was a Spanish Catholic institution involving the Spanish (male) member of the union, and would necessarily be performed legitimately, probably in the parish of residence. The birth of a child, however, was in the eighteenth century an area of women's culture that would be dealt with in a manner culturally familiar to the mother.

Certain assumptions may also be drawn from this data concerning the population makeup of St. Augustine. In 1760 there were roughly 3,000 people in St. Augustine, including 551 military, 392 Negroes (slave and free), 24 Germans, 246 Canary Islanders and 83 Indians who were residents of the Indian *doctrina* (Dunkle 1958:5). This would leave an undifferentiated group of roughly 1700 people, including Spanish women and children, and mestizos. In a stable population situation such as St. Augustine, we may use the proportions by race of marriage as a very rough index to the proportions of the population as a whole. Using the black marriage rate (eighteen percent), we can compare this to the known proportion of blacks in the 1760 population (ca. fourteen percent) as a check on the accuracy of the index. Assuming from this that the marriage rate reflects a slightly higher racial proportion than that of the actual population, a percentage of from eight to ten percent of the total population can be suggested to have been mestizo, or 240 to 300 people.

Continued documentary work in the parish records over a span of several generations will support or refute this estimate, and as more is learned about cultural factors in the population as well as the exigencies of record keeping in the eighteenth century, the population makeup will be more fully revealed.

During the fifteen year period between 1735 and 1750 only two instances of Indian-Negro marriages were recorded, and both of these involved a mulatto male and a mestizo female. In no instance was a match between an Indian male and a white female noted. Although we know that in 1729 there were a number of tribal groups in the St. Augustine area, all of the mestizos or Indians in mixed matches, whose place of origin was mentioned, were Guale or Yamassee Indians, with the exception of two Apalachee women. The Jororos were in the village of Jororo, the Costas were in the village of Costa, the Timucua and Apalachee were in the village at Mose, leaving Palicia, La Punta, Tolomató and Macariz for the Guale and Yamassee

(Valdez 1729). In the parish records, nine women were from Palicia, four were from Tolomato, two were from La Punta and one was "of Iguala." The Guale and Yamasee had been in St. Augustine since 1680, and their villages were beneath the walls of the *presidio* (Valdes 1729), so that their contact with the garrison and the townspeople was greater in both duration and intensity than the other Indian tribes. This is also reflected in the predominantly Guale ceramics which are found in eighteenth century St. Augustine sites.

Mixed blood statistics were included not only in the Book of the Parish Mayor, which recorded white marriages, but also in the Book of Pardos, which recorded Indian, Negro and mulatto statistics (St. Augustine Historical Society). The social position and treatment of mestizos and acculturated Indians in St. Augustine during this period is unclear, and a tremendous amount of documentary correlation and research is needed. If the *mestizaje* process in the rest of New Spain is typical, we would expect mestizos to occupy a marginal social position (Momer 1970). There appear to be ambivalencies in St. Augustine, however, probably due to the isolated, military nature of the town. On one hand, there is the frequent intermarriage of Spaniard, mestizo and Indian, and both documentary and archeological evidence indicates that there were mestizos who enjoyed at least a material well-being (see Section 3, this paper). On the other hand, there are comments such as that of Governor Zuniga, That "there are some negroes, mulattos, Indians and mestizos and other dastardly persons" in St. Augustine (Zuniga 1702) which is revealing of subtle attitudes toward this segment of the population. An hypothesis that needs documentary testing is that mestizo and Spanish-Indian families were segregated into certain residential areas, such as those near the fort, rather than in the center of town where the plaza, governor's house and Bishop's residence were located. We know that there were a number of mestizo families living in one quadrant near the fort, but further archeological and documentary correlation will be necessary to determine the settlement patterns of the colonial town.

It appears that those Indians and their mestizo children who intermarried and resided in the town for a period of generations, became integrated into the town life to an extent not yet determined, and in a manner only now being revealed through archeology.

Archeological Correlates of *Mestizaje*

It is through archeology that details of the lives of the mestizo segment of St. Augustine are revealed. The excavation of site SA-16-23 by Charles H. Fairbanks in 1972 (MacMurray n.d.), was a departure from the orientation of

archeology traditionally done in St. Augustine. Instead of being carried out primarily for reconstruction purposes or historical interest, SA-16-23 was to yield information about the economic and social life of eighteenth century St. Augustine. Documentary evidence revealed that the inhabitants of the lot were the descendants of Maria De la Cruz, an Indian woman who had married a Spaniard (St. Augustine Historical Society Vital Statistics File) and in the next lot lived Clemente Ylario, a mestizo. The data provided by the excavation of the lot, along with documentary data, makes it possible to construct hypotheses concerning the nature of the *mestizaje* process, with archeologically testable implications.

The site revealed an admixture of Spanish and Indian material cultures. This was most strongly reflected in the ceramic assemblage, which was made up of English earthenwares, Spanish Majolica and aboriginal pottery. San Marcos ware (Smith 1948) was the predominant ceramic type at the site, and it was virtually the only utilitarian ware present (Otto and Lewis 1973). This was an Indian-made ware, no doubt easily accessible for the inhabitants of St. Augustine to use as kitchen pottery and which would be more inexpensive and easily replaced than European utilitarian pottery, which is scarce in St. Augustine sites.

Closely related to ceramics is food preparation technology. Although no identifiable cooking hearths or ovens were located at SA-16-23, it was apparent from the soot darkened pieces of San Marcos ware that this aboriginal pottery was being used for cooking. Since food preparation is an area generally tended to by women and absent from the cultural repertoire of seventeenth century men, it would be expected that on sites of mixed Indian-Spanish occupation, food preparation techniques and technology would be predominantly aboriginal, with a minimum amount of Spanish influence. The only exceptions to this would be on sites where the Spanish element was female.

Food preparation was largely dependent on the available food sources. In colonial St. Augustine, getting enough food on which to subsist was a major concern of Spaniard, Indian and mestizo alike. This situation reached a peak after Moore's raids, which destroyed the cattle ranches on which St. Augustine depended for meat (Franciscans 1722). Farming was not successful in the areas around St. Augustine, and the situation was unreliable at best. Mestizo or Indian households would certainly have had an advantage in the knowledge of aboriginal subsistence and procurement techniques, which would be reflected archeologically in a higher proportion of wild foods than imported or domestic foods, as well as the presence of food preparation equipment such as for aboriginal plant food processing, collecting containers, and possibly butchering methods. In two trash pits at SA-16-23, both dating on the basis of ceramic comparison from approximately the same time, 4.3%

of the animal food remains were domestic (*Bos taurus*), while the other 95% were of wild food sources (Clauser n.d.). Both pits contained considerable amounts of shellfish remains. This might be interpreted as a subsistence system based on aboriginal foods, but utilizing European sources when they are available.

In mixed Spanish-Indian households with European male, areas of material culture normally associated with male activities would be expected to show little aboriginal influence. These might include hunting and military equipment, house construction techniques and house styles. The houses at SA-16-23 were built of tabby and coquina, in what is termed the "St. Augustine Plan," one of three plans used for Spanish homes of this period (Manucy 1962). No areas which could be definitely identified as a kitchen was located, but it might be expected that such an area would be apart from the main part of the house, and would contain evidence of open fire cooking, rather than a formal oven.

Another class of artifacts which we suspect would show little aboriginal influence in a mestizo household is that referred to as socio-technic (Binford 1962-95). These artifacts serve to define and function within certain specific social sub-systems (aristocrat, warrior, etc.). In a mestizo situation, socio-technic items of European origin would be selected over aboriginal items because of the greater prestige associated with the European in a mestizo milieu. This was the case at SA-16-23, where thirty-five European beads and one stone cross pendant were the only ornamental artifacts recovered.

An hypothesis with archeologically testable implications, arrived at from the observation of documentary and archeological data, may be suggested for the process of *mestizaje* in a colonial town. This can be stated specifically: Given the interaction structure of eighteenth century Florida, acculturation was largely manifested by Indian women in Spanish or mestizo household units within a predominantly male-oriented cultural milieu.

The testable implications of this hypothesis are:

1. Acculturation consisted primarily of Indian women's activities affecting Spanish cultural features. This would include the areas of:
 - a. food preparation techniques
 - b. food preparation equipment and location
 - c. household activities
 - d. basic food resources
 - e. child-related activities
2. Crafts of women (such as ceramics) would be primarily Indian.
3. Male related activities would reveal less evidence of Indian infusion. These would include:
 - a. house styles
 - b. house construction techniques

- c. military-political affairs
 - d. hunting weapons
4. Socio-technic items would be largely Spanish as more prestigious.
 5. Through time, Indian elements will be increasingly absorbed into Spanish forms and functions.

St. Augustine, Florida, provides a number of sites representing eighteenth century Spanish-Indian interaction and mestizo emergence, some of which are being excavated at the time of this writing by the authoress, to test the implications of the hypothesis stated above, and clarify some of the processes in the early stages of *mestizaje*.

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Abbreviations:

- AGI - Archivo General de las Indias, Sevilla
SCUF - Stetson Collection, University of Florida, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.