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Fort Mosé: Earliest Free African-American Town in the United States

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Fort Mosé—or Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé—was established near St. Augustine, Florida, in 1738 and is generally held to be the first legally sanctioned free black town in the United States. Since 1986 it has been the focus of a multidisciplinary historical archaeology research program carried out by the Florida Museum of Natural History and funded by the State of Florida. Our discussion describes the inception and chronological development of the Mosé project, summarizes the most pertinent documentary and archaeological information, and concludes with some of the insights gained through the Fort Mosé project.

Context and Development of the Fort Mosé Project

Research at Fort Mosé has been erratic and frequently plagued by misunderstanding and bias. The ruined fort site was still in evidence as late as 1860, when the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) coastal survey by Orr noted the ruins on a map of that year. In the early part of this century, the St. Augustine Historical Society placed a commemorative marker at the correct location and purchased the site, but by 1965 it was decided that this was, in fact, not the site of Mosé (see Arana 1973).

The property was purchased in 1968 by F. E. Williams III, a resident of St. Augustine and avocational military historian, who believed that the location of the historical society marker (in spite of the society's disclaimer) was in fact the correct site of Mosé. In 1971 Williams contacted the late Professor Charles Fairbanks of the University of Florida about the site, and Fairbanks brought the University of Florida archaeological field school to Mosé for a two-day test project. The work verified that mid-eighteenth-century remains were deposited at the southernmost portion of Williams's property, and Fairbanks concluded that this was the probable location of Fort Mosé (Spencer 1972).

A more extensive survey was carried out in 1976 by the Florida State University archaeological field school under the direction of Kathleen Deagan, who had been

a first-year graduate student at Fairbank's field school. The 1976 work confirmed Fairbank's original suggestions. It also eliminated from consideration several other areas of the property that yielded no remains from more than a hundred subsurface tests.

It was not until 1985 that ongoing efforts to secure funding for the extensive excavation of Mosé were successful. In that year Florida state representative Bill Clark of Fort Lauderdale visited the site and was both moved and impressed by its importance to African-American history. After discussions with Florida Museum staff, Clark introduced a bill in the Florida legislature that provided funds for the historical and scientific study of Fort Mosé. That work began in 1986, with Deagan serving as principal investigator.

The first six months of the project were devoted to historical research by Jane Landers (1987, 1988) and were followed by two field and lab seasons (1987–88) under the direction of Deagan and the supervision of John Marron of the University of Florida (Marron 1988, 1989).

It is noteworthy that the original impetus for interest in the site—for landowner Williams as well as for nearly all previous owners and researchers—was the Anglo-American military significance of Mosé, rather than the fact that it was the first legally sanctioned free African-American community in the country. We comment upon this because it has been a significant factor in the social and political context of our research at Mosé and has affected the way that research has been conducted.

Two historical events provided the focus for most public interest in the Mosé site before the current project. We might even speculate that the data leading to the location and identification of the site might not have been available or preserved had it not been for these other events in Mosé's history. The first occurred in 1740, during Oglethorpe's raid on St. Augustine. Mosé was captured and occupied by Colonel John Palmer of Oglethorpe's force. A short time later the Spaniards and their Indian and African-American allies captured and destroyed the fort. This battle was a turning point in the raid, ending in Oglethorpe's retreat.

Some seventy-two years later, during the territorial period in Florida, Mosé was again used as a base camp for Anglo-Americans hoping to capture Florida. This time it was the "Florida Patriots," a group of Americans who, during the war of 1812, unsuccessfully tried to capture Florida for the United States (Patrick 1949). It is interesting to note that on this occasion African-American militias operating as guerrillas were Spain's most effective force on the frontier (Landers 1988).

Both of these events have loomed large in local interest in Mosé. Although the presence of a black community was acknowledged, it did not figure importantly in the research at Mosé until the 1970s. St. Augustine has had a troubled history of race

relations over the past century (Colburn 1987), and negative reaction to the presence of a very important site in African-American history continues to the present. Both Deagan and Landers have been accused publicly of fabricating spurious research in order to revise history, as well as of placing artifacts in a nonexistent site (letter of William Walton, *St. Augustine Record*, 1 Jan. 1989; "Woman Challenges Archaeologist's Findings on Fort Mosé," ibid., 12 Dec. 1987; "Ms. Houston Contends Her Property Was Site of Historic Fort Mosé," ibid., 1 Nov. 1989).

We must in fairness point out that these attitudes reflect the positions of a small, vocal group of residents, and that there has also been considerable support for and interest in the project, particularly among the historical organizations and the African-American community in St. Augustine. It is evident, however, that the idea that free African Americans made important contributions to the defense and culture of St. Augustine is an unfamiliar and difficult concept for many residents, for whom slavery remains the dominant (if not exclusive) paradigm for black history.

The current stage of the project is intended to begin correcting this situation, on both the local and the national level. Funds were secured from the legislature in 1987 to prepare a large traveling exhibit on Fort Mosé and African-American colonial history in Florida. The exhibit opened in February 1991 at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and after touring nationally—accompanied by curriculum materials for primary schools, brochures, tabletop exhibits, and a video—it will take its place among the permanent exhibits there. Since the opening of the exhibition, a monograph (Deagan and MacMahon 1995) geared toward a general audience has been published which nicely complements the exhibition. Those working on the Fort Mosé project share the strong mandate and commitment of our many colleagues working in African-American history and archaeology to translate and disseminate—without delay and in popular and accessible formats—the results of scholarly research.

Research at Mosé

The focus of research at Mosé has been the African-Spanish occupation of 1738–63, although both documentary and archaeological evidence for the many previous and subsequent occupations, spanning the period of ca. 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1850, has been recovered and recorded. The investigation of Mosé has been a continuous exchange and interplay between historical and scientific inquiry, with each data category informing the other at different stages. It was, for example, the specific needs of the archaeological program that provided the impetus and resources for the historical research on Mosé. This research, furthermore, emphasized certain spatial and envi-

ronmental elements that might not typically have been part of a historical research project—land alteration activities, postoccupation impacts, and a strong focus on physical and environmental data, for example.

The documentary research in the Archivo General de Indias, in Seville, the Archivo Nacional in Madrid, and the Archivo General de Simancas, all in Spain, and in the superb microfilm collections of Spanish documents at the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida was carried out before the archaeological work and provided the basis from which the archaeological field research program was designed. Hypotheses regarding the site's location, configuration, and postabandonment alteration were developed from the historical data; and appropriate recovery strategies were designed to locate the kinds of ephemeral architectural and material remains documented in the historical research.

This interplay has continued in subsequent stages of the project. Once the site was located and uncovered, for example, the documentary information about the fort itself was sufficiently detailed to allow direct comparison with the archaeological remains, and this permitted the site to be verified beyond doubt or disclaimer as Mosé. Archaeological information obtained from remote sensing and used in combination with historic maps allowed us to more specifically identify the excavated site as the second Fort Mosé and to locate the first Fort Mosé—facts unappreciated before the project began. And the archeological remains have, predictably, provided a means of assessing and verifying the reliability of a series of maps on which Mosé and the St. Augustine landscape were depicted over the years.

The archaeological remains—when considered in the context of the historical data—have also informed our understanding of ecology and environment at the site and of the dramatic but largely undocumented ecological changes that have occurred there since Mosé was occupied. Analysis and reanalysis of documentary maps and accounts have verified that Mosé was surrounded by farmland during the period of occupation by blacks. Today the second fort is surrounded by inundated marshlands, and the first fort is underwater. These findings have important implications for the overall study of sea-level rise in Florida and its potential impact on human settlement in the state.

The archaeological research at Mosé, however, has contributed far less than has the documentary information to what we know specifically about the lifeways and community at the black town. To date, the most important contributions of the research project at Fort Mosé have been the identification and verification of the site, the reconstruction of its physical setting, the recovery of a somewhat limited array of material remains from the black occupation, and the sponsorship of the archival research that has given us most of the substantive details of life at Mosé that we now know.

Both the historical research and archaeological verification were costly and time-consuming; however, they were essential, we contend, because of the community context within which we conducted research into Mosé. Local reluctance to identify and commemorate Mosé as an African-American town made it critically important to establish beyond doubt that this site was the Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé known to historians, and a greater-than-usual proportion of project resources was devoted to this objective.

Archival Background

Relatively little archival research into Florida's African-American colonial community had taken place before Landers's doctoral research and subsequent work as historian on the Fort Mosé project (we acknowledge here the pioneering work of Irene Wright [1939], John TePaske [1975], and Luis Arana [1973]). Florida's "borderland" location between Anglo North America and the Spanish Empire to the south and west as well as its misleading but long-lived reputation as a stagnant backwater has meant that few scholars of either North American or Latin American colonial history have thought it worthy of study. Research on colonial Florida is at an added disadvantage in that most of the primary materials are in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spanish, and many are in Spain. Moreover, because of the biases and interests of royal officials who generated the historical record, documentary evidence for the underclass is difficult to "unearth," often being scattered throughout a wide variety of archival record groups. Nevertheless, the variety of historical documentation available for Mosé—including a census; maps; treasury accounts; militia lists; baptism, marriage, and death registers; petitions to the governor and the king; and other civil and judicial records—is in stark contrast to that available for Africans in many other European colonies. The Spanish colonial records represent an important patrimony for a people too long considered "voiceless" or pathologically affected by the slave experience. They are an affirmation of African presence—as tangible as the artifacts uncovered at Mosé.

Mosé's History

Mosé was born of the initiative and determination of Africans who, at great risk, manipulated the extended Anglo-Spanish conflict over the "debatable lands" between St. Augustine and Charleston to their own advantage. The community was composed of former slaves who escaped from British plantations and made their way south to Spanish Florida, where eventually they secured their freedom. That they became free was not unusual, for Spanish law and custom allowed many routes

out of bondage, and free Africans had played active roles in Spain long before the voyages of Columbus. Africans were also critical to the exploration and settlement of the so-called New World, especially in the inhospitable coastal areas of the circum-Caribbean.

From the founding of Charleston in 1670 onward, African Americans were embroiled in European struggles to control the Southeast. Following Caribbean precedents, Spain employed free Africans in Florida to further imperial objectives, that is, to populate and hold territory threatened by foreign encroachment. Africans, both free and slave, were also regularly employed in military operations, and a black militia was established in St. Augustine by 1683 (Second Lieutenant Domingo Masias, Roster of the Free *Pardo* and *Moreno* Militia of St. Augustine, Santo Domingo 226, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain).

In 1686 a Spanish force, which included Africans and Indians, raided English plantations at Port Royal and Edisto and captured thirteen Africans, two of whom escaped back to Carolina; the next year a group of fugitives—including eight men, two women, and a small child—arrived by canoe in St. Augustine, where they were given sanctuary and protection from extradition on the basis of their religious conversion to Catholicism (Landers 1987, 1988, 1990a). By 1693 the Spanish Crown had decreed that all such escaped fugitives would be given sanctuary and, eventually, freedom in Spanish Florida, "so that by their example and by my liberality, others will do the same" (royal edict, 7 Nov 1693, John B. Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History). African slaves in the English colonies took immediate advantage of this opportunity, and increasing numbers successfully made the dangerous and difficult journey to Florida through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Although the Carolinians set up patrol systems and placed scout boats on water routes, slaves still escaped to St. Augustine in a variety of watercraft, by horseback and on foot, and they were often assisted and accompanied by Indians.

The sanctuary policy dealt an economic and psychological blow to the English, and it enhanced the economic and defensive resources of the Spanish colony. Africans proved to be fierce and effective fighters. It is possible some had acquired these skills in Africa. Others had fought for years alongside the Yamassee in their war against Carolinian settlers, and on more than one occasion Florida's black militias served bravely in the defense of the Spanish colony against the English (Landers 1987, 1988, 1990a, 1990b).

By 1738 more than a hundred African refugees had arrived in St. Augustine, and in that year Governor Montiano of Florida formally established the town of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé, about two miles north of the Castillo de San Marcos.

Mosé was strategically located to block land and water access to St. Augustine from the north and served as an outpost against anticipated British attacks. The freedmen understood this and vowed to be "the most cruel enemies of the English" and to spill their "last drop of blood in defense of the Great Crown of Spain and the Holy Faith" (Memorial of the Fugitive Slaves, 10 June 1738, Santo Domingo 844, on microfilm reel 15, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History). While Mosé served obvious political and defensive functions for the Spaniards, it also served the interests of the new homesteaders who had the most to lose should the British take the colony. In Spanish Florida they gained free status, an autonomy at least equivalent to that of Spain's Indian allies, and a town of their own. They built their own shelters and a walled fort described in British reports as constructed of stone "four square with a flanker at each corner, banked with earth, having a ditch without on all sides lined round with prickly royal" (South Carolina Archives 1954:25). These documents also state that a well, a house, and a lookout were built inside the walls (ibid.). Thirty-eight men, most of them married, lived at Mosé and were expected to farm their new lands as well as man their fort. They planted fields and harvested the shellfish and fish that were said to be plentiful in the saltwater creek that ran nearby.

Mosé was considered a village of "new converts" and treated administratively in much the same way as the Indian mission towns located on St. Augustine's periphery during the eighteenth century. Both African and Indian towns were served by Franciscan priests and were provided with similar supplies from government stores. Both Africans and Indians established militia units to defend their homesteads and the Spanish city of St. Augustine, and they served many of the same peacetime functions on the frontier—scouting; tracking escaped prisoners; serving as interpreters; hunting, fishing, and trapping; herding cattle; and rounding up wild horses. They also worked on government construction projects—on fortifications and public buildings.

The initial settlement at Mosé lasted less than two years. In 1740 the forces of General James Oglethorpe laid siege to St. Augustine and occupied Fort Mosé. The settlement's inhabitants were evacuated to St. Augustine but later joined in the successful recapture of the fort. They also conducted dangerous reconnaissance missions for the Spaniards within the walls, as did members of the Indian militia. In the course of the occupation and battle, the fort at Mosé was so badly damaged that its former residents thereafter lived in St. Augustine, where they probably led lives similar to those of free blacks in other Spanish port cities. Men from the Mosé militia took part in a Spanish counteroffensive against Georgia in 1742 and also transferred their military skills to the sea, accepting corsairing commissions that took them throughout the Atlantic (Landers 1990a).

In 1752 the new governor, Fulgencio García de Solís, reestablished the fort and settlement of Mosé, but he faced resistance from the former inhabitants. They had blended into the city life of St. Augustine, and many of the men had formed unions with slave women living there. The freedmen and women were also reluctant to return to a dangerous frontier still under periodic attack by Indians. Governor García punished the protesters and enforced the resettlement. The people of Mosé built a second fort very close to the location of the first, but larger and of a different configuration. The governor provided cannon and an armed guard to assist in the town's defense (Landers 1987, 1988). In 1762 the men of Mosé added an earthwork and moat extending from the fort to the San Sebastian River some two miles distant. They also rebuilt their homes of palm thatch huts, which were described as "like those of the Indians," the buildings within the fort, including a large parish church of wood and thatch (Solana 1759).

A Spanish census of 1759 lists twenty-two households and sixty-seven residents at Mosé, including thirty-seven men, fifteen women, and fifteen children. By this time Mosé's population surpassed the combined total of the allied Indian villages. As might be expected of a frontier outpost, males predominated by more than two to one, but surprisingly, children under the age of fifteen represented almost a quarter of the population. Thirteen of the twenty-two households were composed of nuclear or nuclear-extended families, and almost 75 percent of the total population lived with immediate members of their families (Landers 1988, 1990a).

The leader of the community was a Mandingo who took the name Francisco Menéndez at his baptism. He was literate and signed with a flourish several petitions to the king. Menéndez was appointed captain of the black militia in 1726, a role he held until at least 1763, and he was commended for bravery in the battle to retake Mosé in 1740. He was acknowledged by the Spaniards as the "casique" of Mosé, and in his correspondence the governor referred to the townspeople as the "subjects" of Menéndez.

The Mosé community represented a diverse ethnolinguistic group. At least one man was married to an Indian woman with whom he had fled from Carolina, and others married Indian women who maintained residence in their own villages. In addition to Mandingas, other Africans at Mosé included Congos, Carabalís, Minas, Gambas, Lucumís, Sambas, Gangas, Araras, and Guineans. Many of the newcomers were *bozales*—unacculturated Africans who had escaped from Charleston and Savannah. The governor complained of their "bad customs"; the priests noted their religious "backwardness" and despaired over those who continued to pray in their native language. Many of the residents had previously lived among the English and Yamassee, and Mosé was a remarkably polyglot community incorporating a wide variety of cultural traditions.

During their urban interlude some male residents of Mosé married female slaves in St. Augustine while others married women from the nearby Indian villages. Meanwhile, the core group of Carolina fugitives formed intricate ties among themselves—marrying within the group for at least two generations, serving as witnesses at each other's weddings and as godparents for each other's children. As new Africans filtered in from Carolina and Georgia, they were also incorporated into the settlement at Mosé. Although the settlers shared in the general misery and deprivation of the colony in the postwar years, the freed men and women of Mosé managed to shape a viable community under extremely dangerous conditions.

Mosé was occupied until 1763, when, by the Treaty of Paris, Florida became a British colony. The thirty-four families then at Mosé—eighty-seven individuals in all—joined the Spanish evacuation and left for Cuba with the rest of the Florida colonists. There they became homesteaders on another rough frontier in Matanzas (Landers 1990a). Mosé was partially dismantled by the English, but it was still described as a "stronghouse" by Spanish officials in the late eighteenth century. Although engineers recommended refurbishing the fort and defense works, this was never done, and private citizens instead used Mosé's remaining structures to house slaves near their fields.

The Archaeological Program

The physical setting of Mosé today, apart from the site of the second fort itself, is almost completely inundated and increasingly crosscut by tidal creeks (fig. 13.1). The fort, located on the site of a long-occupied Indian shell midden, has escaped such inundation.

The location indicated in figure 13.1 is the second Fort Mosé. This identification was originally determined by scaling contemporary aerial photographs and historic maps showing Mosé (figs. 13.2, 13.3) and producing an overlay that placed the fort in the location shown in figure 13.1. Subsequent topographic mapping activities further verified this, in that the original earthen walls of the fort are still topographically evident, except for the southwest corner, which has been eroded by tidal water activity.

The earthwork walls were about 8 feet tall, faced on the outer side with marsh clay and planted along the top with prickly-pear cactus. The moat was 2 meters wide and about 2 1/2 feet deep. Although it has long since been filled in, its configuration is clearly evident in profile, as is the layer of clay along its inner slope.

Contemporary maps have provided considerable information about the configuration of the second fort and have indicated that it contained several buildings (see fig. 13.3). Archaeological evidence has not modified these data. None of the build-

ings is identified on the maps, nor has the village itself ever been indicated. It is likely, given the convergence of documentary and archaeological evidence as well as the prevailing frontier conventions of the era, that the people of Mosé lived inside the confines of the fort. This area today encompasses about 2 1/2 acres.

Excavations in the fort have revealed construction details of the structure itself, including the moat (located in three places), part of the earthwork curtain, and the posts from large and small interior wood-post structures (see fig. 13.1). The structures include what was probably a watchtower with posts some 45 centimeters in diameter, as well as a smaller oval or circular wood and thatch structure, roughly 12 feet in diameter, which may have been residential.

Archaeological evidence for the Mosé occupation is extremely ephemeral, and subsequent construction activity at the fort during the British (1764–84), Second Spanish (1784–1821), and American Territorial (1821–45) periods had severe impact upon Mosé deposits. The site was excavated and water-screened in 5-centimeter levels, to be certain of isolating the approximately 15 to 20 centimeters of deposit and feature initiation that represented Mosé (fig. 13.4). Some 112 discrete deposits dating to the Mosé occupation have been recovered, including sheet-deposit levels, post molds, the moat fill, pits, and other features (Marron 1989).

The area surrounding the fort itself has been of equal interest, in that it was initially a candidate for the location of the village and fields. Traditional archaeological methods for a ground-search survey are inappropriate here, because the earth was submerged during most of the field investigations. In an attempt to recover more information about the area and possible human-deposited soils, the project arranged to acquire multispectral imagery data on the region through NASA's National Space Center Institute for Technology Development obtained through the use of a aircraft-mounted Daedalus Multispectral Scanner. The scanner produced a series of images measuring various light spectra, as well as thermal holding properties of the earth. The thermal data were the most useful: they indicated the approximate location of the original 1738–40 fort, a colonial road, and probable agricultural fields. However, no evidence for a midden or shell-bearing deposit that might reflect village occupation outside of the fort was indicated.

The area around the fort also has been cored as extensively as inundation has permitted, but thus far this activity has yielded no evidence of human occupation in any of the areas targeted in the thermal imagery. Given the negative results of the ground reconnaissance and remote sensing activities, the striking contrast in the extent of remains from inside and outside of the fort, and the specific statements of at least two contemporary observers that the village was within the walls of the fort (Solana 1759; Puente 1763), we are left with the deposits from inside the fort itself as the primary archaeological evidence for human activity during the Mosé occupation.

Research by architectural historian Albert C. Manucy (retired, National Park Service) and historian Luis Arana (Castillo de San Marcos National Monument) has suggested a settlement configuration with residential structures interspersed with those having military and religious functions. The partial oval structure noted previously dated to the Mosé era (Marron 1989) and is believed to have been residential. This was a post structure with a roughly oval shape, measuring approximately 4 meters (12 feet) in diameter. The absence of large quantities of nails, plaster, or clay daub suggests that it was constructed of thatch.

Material Remains

The interpretation of material patterns based on the artifact assemblage from Fort Mosé is difficult and tentative at best, owing in large part to archaeological considerations. The village occupation of Mosé was brief (eleven years) and resulted in very few deposited artifacts. It is possible that much of the household refuse was discarded in the adjacent creeks and thus did not survive in the archaeological record of the site. Out of 3,190 artifacts recovered from the site as a whole, only 110 artifacts were recovered from undisturbed proveniences that could be assigned confidently to the Mosé occupation (table 13.1).

The Mosé-era proveniences at the site account for about 17 percent of both excavated soil (volumetrically) and recovered faunal remains (by weight). Some 10 percent of the shell at the site came from Mosé proveniences, but only about 4 percent of the total site artifacts. Given that the archaeological recovery techniques were identical for all site deposits, this statistical profile may reflect either disposal practices or a material assemblage with very few durable remains. The latter proposition is more supportable from the archaeological record, since it seems unlikely that durable artifacts would have been separated for disposal in the creek while faunal and shell refuse was deposited in the ground. Elizabeth Reitz's analysis of faunal remains from the site (Reitz 1990, 1994) revealed an abundance of faunal remains in the Mosé proveniences as compared to other contemporary sites—indicating that much faunal refuse was not discarded in the creek—and supports the notion of an artifact-poor material assemblage.

The small number of artifacts also exacerbates the difficulty of interpretation, particularly comparisons between the Mosé assemblages and those from contemporary sites in St. Augustine (table 13.2). The sample size of the Mosé assemblage is in no way comparable to that from even the smallest assemblage from the town (although the faunal sample is), and this factor, along with the potential for differential deposit processes in the two areas, requires that any interpretation of these data be considered with extreme caution.

The solidly dated Mosé assemblage comprises ceramics, lead shot, bottle glass, pipestems, nails, and a very few beads and buttons. Some 56 percent of the material consists of non-European and aboriginal ceramics. This overall proportion of ceramics in the assemblage is dramatically lower than that found in any of the contemporary Spanish St. Augustine sites.

This circumstance obviously affects the statistical profile of the Mosé assemblage, in that categories of nonceramic wares make up a greater proportion of the artifact assemblage. Architectural remains (nails), for example, although few in number (twelve), were proportionately more frequent at Mosé (11 percent of the assemblage), owing at least in part to the relatively small percentage of ceramics present and to the small size of the sample. However, this statistic may also reflect the fact that wooden architecture (as opposed to the masonry of the town) prevailed at Mosé.

Another material category in which Mosé shows a sharp contrast to the sites of Spanish St. Augustine is that of military-related items. The two military-related items from Mosé contexts make up 1.7 percent of the assemblage, more than twice the proportion of similar items found in St. Augustine. This is not unexpected at a military outpost, although the sample-size factors noted above must also be considered.

In both proportion and composition, the ceramic assemblage is also quite distinct from that found on contemporary Spanish sites. The Mosé-era proveniences, for example, yielded only forty-one non-European sherds, or some 35 percent of the assemblage. This is dramatically lower than the proportion of aboriginal wares at even the highest-status sites in St. Augustine (see table 13.2). In eighteenth-century St. Augustine, furthermore, the Guale Indian-affiliated San Marcos series dominates the Spanish household assemblages (see Deagan 1983), while at Mosé we find primarily the Timucua-affiliated St. Johns ceramics.

It is likely, however, that the presence of these Timucua ceramics is at least partly a result of redeposition of earlier remains into the Mosé deposits at the site, because the Timucua were largely extinct by the time the second Fort Mosé was established (see Deagan 1978:115). It is worthy of note, however, that the last Timucua Indian lived at "Mosa" with a remnant group of Apalachee Indians in 1729, some years before Mosé was established (ibid.; Valdez 1729).

Material interaction between the Mosé community and the Guale immigrants from Georgia is suggested in the assemblage, which contains only a single sherd of San Marcos (Guale-affiliated) pottery. This single San Marcos sherd stands in sharp contrast to the St. Augustine sites, where the great majority of the material assemblage is comprised of Guale ceramics.

Previously undescribed sand-tempered plain and incised wares compose 13 percent of the assemblage. No sherds of this group have been large enough to permit

either formal analysis or design analysis; thus, the cultural origin of these wares is impossible to determine until more samples are available.

It is also perhaps noteworthy that in the very small assemblage of European ceramics at the site, British-made wares overwhelmingly dominate the assemblage. Forty percent of the European wares are of English origin (delftware, white salt-glazed stoneware, North Devon gravel-tempered wares, etc.), 40 percent are of undetermined origin (coarse unglazed wares), and 20 percent are of Spanish origin. This tends to support the suggestion made earlier by Deagan (1983:240) that the locally available British ceramics, although often cheaper and superior in quality to Spanish wares, were not preferred by Spanish residents in St. Augustine. They are more abundant at Mosé than elsewhere in the town, and British ceramics may have been part of the supply pattern for outlying dependencies.

No materials suggesting African influence have yet been recovered from the excavation. However, a small handmade pewter religious medallion was found in the creek adjacent to the fort site. The medallion depicts St. Christopher on one side and on the other bears a design reminiscent of the mariner's compass rose. The only other items of possible religious affiliation are glass beads, which could have been used either in a rosary or as adornment. Rosary chain links, possibly dating to the Mosé occupation, have been found in later contexts at the site.

Elizabeth Reitz's analyses of the dietary remains from the Fort Mosé occupation reveal a diet dominated by locally available estuarine fish and shellfish, although domestic mammals were occasionally consumed. The size of the fish suggest that they were caught by line rather than in nets, and that they were not acquired by commercial purchase.

Overall, there is a heavy dependence on wild, locally available foods; Reitz suggests a dietary pattern sharing some traits with patterns documented among the local Amerindian groups and some traits with dietary patterns of the St. Augustine residents. The Mosé dietary pattern, however, like the material assemblage, is quite distinct from those of both groups. While maintaining a cautious assessment of the nature of the assemblage, we might suggest that the residents of Mosé shaped and sustained a distinctive material identity, even in the absence of familiar African elements. Although they had available to them essentially the same range of local resources as did the other white and Indian colonists, the people of Mosé made certain "grammatical" choices in combining these resources into a distinctive pattern.

Discussion

The archaeological study of Fort Mosé is essentially in a preliminary stage. A considerably larger sample of Mosé-era materials must be recovered before assertions about Mosé or reconstructions of life there can be made with confidence. It is clear,

however, that the material assemblage recovered so far is dramatically different from contemporary assemblages in St. Augustine. A much lower proportion of aboriginal interaction is indicated materially in the Mosé assemblage, and a much higher proportion of non-Spanish European wares is present at Mosé than at Spanish sites in St. Augustine.

This emerging pattern may be affected by cultural circumstances in the past, such as poverty and isolation from the town center, trash disposal in the adjacent creeks, the use of perishable materials (wood, basketry) at the expense of durable materials, or rejection of both European and Amer-Indian templates by the people of Mosé. We must also note that the patterns suggested in the assemblage have almost certainly been affected to some extent by the size of the sample, which is extremely small by archaeological standards for sites in St. Augustine.

Nevertheless, the maintenance of an arguably distinct material identity at Mosé—if supported by future work—may hold lessons about social identity for us as historians and archaeologists. It suggests that colonial African Americans not only maintained an identity apart from that of other colonial American groups but also made material choices that helped define and reflect this distinction. The concept of more or less passive adjustment to the restrictions imposed by a dominant (white) group does not adequately explain the assemblage from Mosé, where utilitarian wares of neither Spanish nor Indian origin were used. Unlike Amerindian groups, the people of Mosé apparently used European tablewares, but these were predominantly non-Spanish in origin. A preference for wood, leather, and basketry as containers may have operated at Mosé.

Methodologically, the situation at Mosé underscores the essential linkages in the historical-archaeological research process among the archaeological, documentary, and biological data sets. None of these data sets alone could have provided a basis for these preliminary interpretations, but taken together, they provide important convergent evidence upon which to generate a hypothetical explanation that can be tested further.

Perhaps the most important contributions of the historical-archeological program at Mosé, however, have been to stimulate innovative historical research, to heighten local national consciousness of the free African presence in the past, and to focus attention on the physical site. As a tangible symbol of African-American history, self-determination, and participation in colonial American life, Mosé has generated a kind of public fascination and governmental commitment that is rarely achieved when a story is told with words alone.

Table 13.1. Artifact remains from first Spanish-period Fort Mosé

Group/Item	No.	%
Ceramics		
Spanish majolica		
B/W: UID	1	
POLY: UID	1	
Total	2	.010
European utilitarian ceramics		
Black lead-glazed coarse earthenware	1	
Lead-glazed coarse earthenware	1	
North Devon gravel-tempered	2	
Green-glazed olive jar	1	
Unglazed, UID coarse earthenware	10	
Total	15	.130
European tablewares		
Creamware	1	
Delftware	1	
Jackfield ware	1	
Refined earthenware, UID	1	
Rhenish stoneware	1	
White salt-glazed stoneware	1	
Tin-enameled, UID	2	
Total	8	.070
Aboriginal ceramics		
Grit-and-shell-tempered plain	2	
Grit-tempered stamped	5	
Sand-tempered plain	6	
Sand-tempered decorated	1	
Sand-tempered incised	1	
St. Johns plain	7	
St. Johns stamped	18	
San Marcos stamped	1	
Total	41	.370

Table 13.1.—*continued*

Group/Item	No.	%
Food preparation items—nonceramic		
Glass fr.	1	
Green glass	5	
Dark green glass	1	
Clear glass	2	
Total	9	.080
Architectural items		
Iron nails	12	
Iron tacks	2	
Total	14	.12
Military items		
Lead shot	2	.010
Personal items		
Shell bead	1	
Pipestems	3	
Total	4	.030
Activities		
Projectile point	1	
Wire	2	
Chert debitage	2	
Total	5	.040
Total artifacts	110	

continued on next page

Table 13.1.—*continued*

Group/Item	No.	%
Weighed substances (in grams)		
Metal fragments		
Brass	.06	
Iron	129.46	
Lead	7.8	
UID	8.3	
Construction materials		
Brick	205.2	
Mortar	38.4	
Coquina rock	441.4	
Mortared coquina	31.2	
Plaster	15.1	
Other substances		
Faunal bone	1,257	
Charcoal	108	
Sand concretion	509	
Rock	14	
Shell	522,947.2	

Table 13.2. Comparison of Fort Mosé assemblage with first Spanish-period sites in St. Augustine

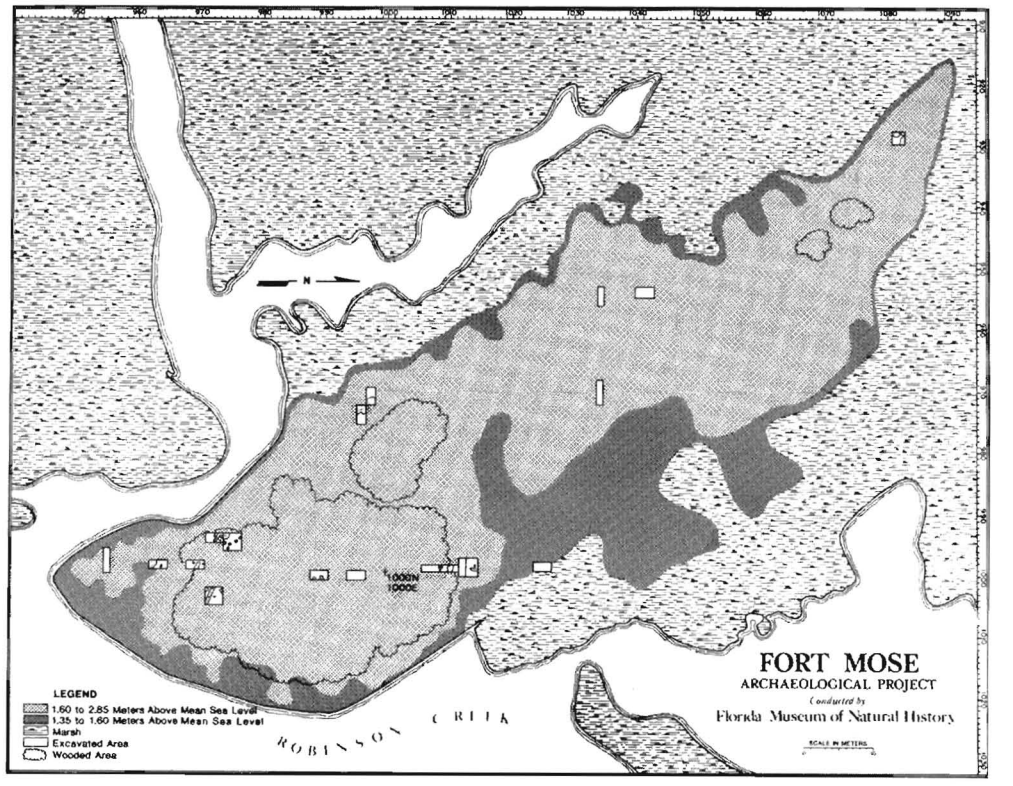
	Mosé		SA16-23		SA7-4		SA7-5		SA36-4	
Group	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Spanish majolica	2	.010	237	.025	670	.106	284	.136	698	.123
European utilitarian ceramics	15	.130	153	.016	844	.133	234	.112	916	.162
European tablewares	8	.070	103	.011	393	.062	72	.035	293	.052
Aboriginal ceramics	41	.370	8,363	.883	3,520	.555	805	.386	2,791	.493
Total ceramics	66	.600	8,856	.936	5,427	.856	1,395	.669	4,698	.830
Food preparation nonceramic items	9	.080	138	.015	293	.046	269	.129	608	.107
Architectural items	14	.12	421	.044	589	.099	383	.183	307	.054
Military items	2	.010	11	.001	3	.0005	19	.009	20	.004
Personal items	4	.03	9	.0009	24	.037	5	.002	11	.020
Activities	5	.04	31	.003	3.	.0005	10	.004	8	.014
Furniture	0		0		1	.001	5	.002	5	.009
Total artifacts	110		9,466		6,340		2,086		5,657	

SA16-23: 18th-century low-income mestizo site (Deagan 1983, chap. 6). Occupied by María de la Cruz (Guale Indian) and Mexican soldier Joseph Gallardo. Income: 91 pesos. (*Mestizo*: mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry)

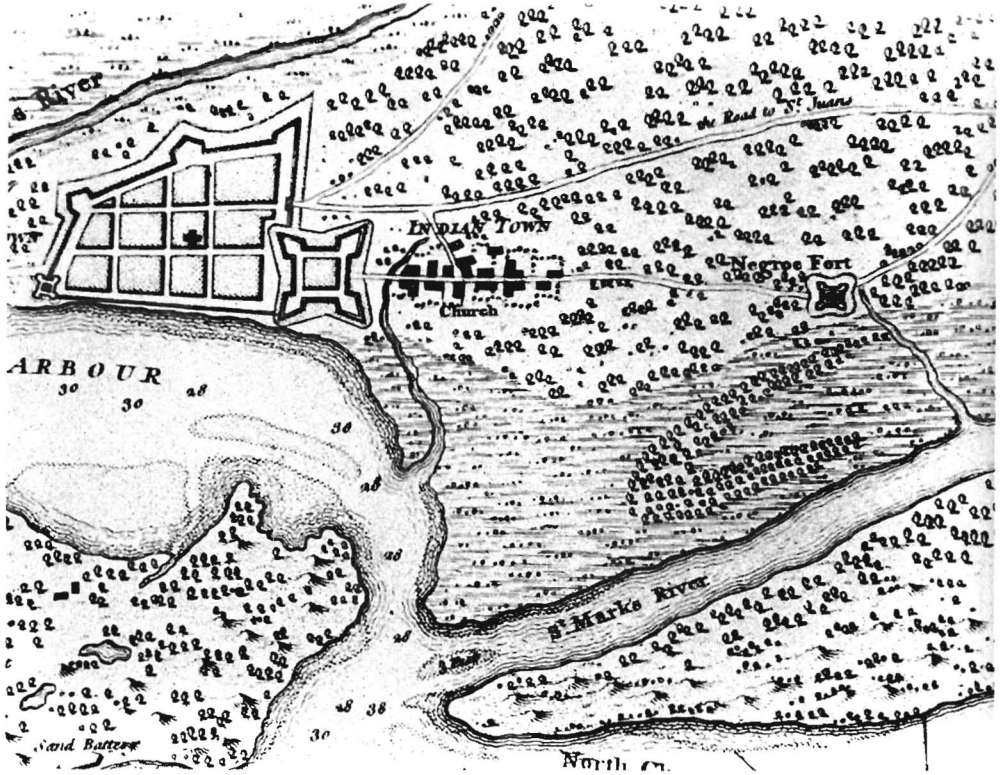
SA7-4: 18th-century low-income *criollo* site (Shephard 1983 in Deagan 1983, chap. 5). Occupied by Geronimo de Hita, *criollo* infantry soldier who served as the daytime commandant of Mosé, and *criolla* Juana de Avero. Income: 264 pesos. (*Criollo*: Of Spanish ancestry, born in the Americas)

SA7-5: 18th-century high-income *criollo-peninsulare* site (Deagan 1976). Occupied by the royal storehouse official, *peninsulare* Joaquin Blanco, and *criolla* Antonia de Avero. Income 590+ pesos (*Peninsulare*: Spaniard from Spain)

SA36-4: 18th-century upper-income *criollo* site (Deagan 1983, chap. 10; Poe 1978). Occupied by Francisco Ponce de León, the sergeant major of the presidio. Income: 480 pesos.



13.1. Archaeological base map, Fort Mosé site. (Florida Museum of Natural History)



13.2. *St. Augustine: capital of East Florida.* Map by Thomas Jeffries, 1769. (Collections of the St. Augustine Historical Society)

13.3. Enlarged detailed of Fort Mosé from the Pablo Castello map of 1756. (Collections of the St. Augustine Historical Society)

13.4. Representative soil profile at the Fort Mosé site, showing the level of the black community's occupation