

Florida State University

Archaeological Field Schools

1984-2002

FSU Field Schools

- From 1984 to 2002, FSU undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty were engaged in active investigations at several mission sites in the Tallahassee area, all on privately-owned property
- The FSU field schools were the first in the nation certified by the Society of Professional Archaeologists and the Register of Professional Archaeologists

Tallahassee Area Missions

- The Tallahassee area received Franciscan missionaries in 1633
- San Luis de Talimali served as the western “capital” of the mission chain that extended from St. Augustine
- A number of “outlying” missions, as many as a dozen or more, served the needs of the Apalachee Indians and others groups resettled in the Apalachee homelands

Acculturation

- Mission sites provide an arena in which acculturation – the changes that occur in cultures that come into contact – may be studied
- Acculturation is a complex dynamic in which local conditions, differing cultural repertoires and agendas, force and resistance all figure to some extent

The Spanish Mission Period

- In the Tallahassee area, the Mission period begins in 1633 and ends disastrously in 1704
- After the English settlement of Charles Towne is settled, slave raiding begins
- Carolina militiamen and their Creek allies destroy the missions in the Tallahassee area between 1702 and 1704

Spanish Mission Archaeology

- During the period 1984 to 2002, FSU students and faculty investigated three mission sites
 - Mission Patale (8Le152) – 1984 to 1994, 2000
 - O'Connell Mission Site (8Le157) – 1995 to 2000
 - Castro Site (8Le151) – 2000 to 2002

FSU and Mission Archaeology

- The following presentation involves only the research conducted at the O'Connell Mission site – 1995 to 2000
- This site was owned by Judge Stephen C. O'Connell, former President of the University of Florida
- The site was identified in 1969 by B. Calvin Jones of the Bureau of Archaeological Research

O'Connell Mission Site

- The mission site is believed to date to the late Mission period (AD 1690 to 1704)
- The property was owned by the late Stephen C. O'Connell, formerly President of the University of Florida
- Judge O'Connell graciously permitted us to work on his property from 1995 to 2000 at which time it was sold for development



- Laying in the site grid
- Each year, students laid in the site grid to control subsurface testing, topographic mapping, and excavation
- Here xxxxxxxx uses an engineer's transit and directs the work in 1997

Subsurface Testing -- 1999



Vicki Rolland and Takeshi Shirmaru dig and process a post hole test. Over 5,000 such tests were dug on the O'Connell property to determine the spatial extent of the mission.

- Some Mission sites are located in cow pastures
- Each year, we built a barbed wire fence around the excavation area to protect the open excavation units from cattle
- Tanya Peres and Chelsea Blackmore direct the work



Opening Excavations -- 1995



Excavation Overview -- 1995



Paper plates are placed over the western end of the northwest wall of the church. The nave (interior) is to the left of this line.

Excavation Overview -- 1996



This year, the church interior (nave) was excavated and over 100 graves were identified and mapped.

Excavation Overview -- 1996



Paper plates are set over the postmolds on the northwest and south west walls.

Beginning Excavation -- 1997



Melanie Damour removes the Zone 1 overburden at the beginning of the excavation.

Water-Screening -- 1997



Because of the soil types, water-screening was used to separate the Mission period cultural materials from the overburden.

- Excavations over the years have provided a bead and pendant inventory of over 4,000 glass beads
- Wendy Richard holds a Punta Rassa pendant recovered in 1996



Field School -- 1997



Mapping Features



1997 – O'Connell Mission Site

Field School -- 1998



Excavation Overview -- 1999



The southeast wall of the church is exposed in this overview and an interior paired row of posts that may indicate the entryway can be seen on the north end of the structure.

Excavation of Feature 116 -- 1999



A large trash-filled pit lay behind the *convento* and contained the friar's trash. Ceramics, iron nails, burnt clay, beads, one lead shot, and minor lithic debris were recovered. It was probably dug initially for clay, then filled with trash.



- In 2000, we excavated a cemetery area outside of the northwest wall of the church
- Grave features appear in the floor as darker, mixed soils against the red clay

Water-Screening -- 2000



Field Specimen Cataloging -- 2000



Window screen was used to separate overburden from Mission period materials. Students dry, separate, and bag artifacts for lab analysis.

Field School -- 2000

