

Here They Once Stood

The Tragic End of the Apalachee Missions

by

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SECTION III.

Excavations at the Site of San Luis

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Spanish mission settlement : 1690 - 1704

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pedreros. The problem is to decide which type of gun is represented.¹ Since *pedreros* are usually small guns with thin walls, they may probably be discounted as a possibility.² The bore diameter of nearly 3 inches approximates that of three-pound guns of the eighteenth century, and is smaller than the 3.75-inch diameter of six-pounders of that century and earlier.³ Remembering that artillery of the late seventeenth century was not highly standardized, it seems reasonable to consider the fragment to be a portion of one of the four-pounders mentioned in the armament of Fort San Luis.

More confusing than the cannon itself are fragments of hollow projectiles, eleven in number, which were found in our excavations. The fragments found range from 6 to 11 mm. in thickness and suggest either diameters approximating the cannon fragment found, or slightly larger diameters which might fit the six-pounders at the site. One specimen has a fuse nipple. Although explosive shells date as far back as the fourteenth century, their manufacture in a small size is a much later phenomenon. According to Albert C. Manucy, "Shells filled with explosive or incendiary mixtures were standard for mortars after 1550, but they did not come into general use for flat-trajectory weapons until early in the nineteenth century. . . ."⁴ Manucy and Harold Peterson, both of the National Park Service, have examined these fragments and suggested that they are from grenades rather than from artillery projectiles.

Armament is further evidenced by the presence of a pistol barrel with its muzzle burst and incomplete. The surviving portion of the barrel is 12.5 cm. in length and 2.4 cm. in diameter. The bore was apparently about 14 mm. (or about .58 caliber), but oxidation makes this measurement somewhat uncertain. The butt end of the barrel is octagonal, but apparently the barrel rounds toward the muzzle. Although slightly heavier, and apparently larger, this barrel is basically similar to the one found by Smith (Pl. VI, 8).

Three lead balls were found at this site. The first of these, somewhat irregular, is about 13 mm. in diameter. The second, somewhat flattened and irregular, and with three sharp parallel cuts on one side, is about 15 mm. in diameter. The third, faceted on all sides as though whittled from a piece of lead, is nearly the same size. All these balls, but particularly the first one, are of a size approximating the bore of the pistol barrel. The inventory of accessories for firearms at San Luis includes five gunflints, all but one of which are of a gray-brown flint that does not appear to be native to the region.

The remaining specimen is about 30 mm. square and fashioned from silicified fossil coral.⁵ The specimen is of the same size as the undoubted gunflints, but differs in being uniformly double convex in section. It does not resemble any aboriginal form, and may probably be interpreted as a gunflint made on the site of native material.

While the fragments of artillery weapons and firearms give evidence of the military nature of Fort San Luis, the religious aspect of the frontier mission-military post is exemplified by a large portion of a broken rosary which we found. The portion recovered consists of thirty-nine beads, mostly in strands on links of copper wire (Pl. V, 2). The beads, which are of glass, were apparently originally blue, but they are now so thoroughly oxidized and iridescent that color determination is difficult. The shape is that of an elongated barrel, about 13 mm. in length and 4.5 mm. in diameter, with the surface covered by spiraling longitudinal depressions and ridges. Each bead is on a separate piece of wire which is looped at both ends and usually connected to the loop of the next bead. However, some longer separations occur, with three links of chain separating beads. The longest strand has eight beads, a three-link separation, a bead link from which the bead has disappeared, a three-link separation, and six more beads.

A rosary is supposed to have five units of ten beads each, called decades, each unit separated from the next by a single bead, which usually differs from the majority in size, shape, or material.⁶ Pendant from the loop of the decades are five beads, like those separating the decades, from which the crucifix is suspended. The modern rosary has, therefore, fifty-nine beads. Part of the recovered rosary consists of a chain-link triangle with bead attachments at each corner. This is undoubtedly the portion from which the beads of the decades loop, and from which the crucifix and its companion beads are suspended. Examination of item 2 on Plate V will disclose chain separations above the triangle on either side, a blank bead link, a three-link separation, and the beginning of a strand of beads. This linking and the separation bead is lacking on the modern rosary, and may mean that the one from San Luis originally had sixty-one beads. It is interesting to note that in all four cases of links set apart by chain, the bead link itself is empty. This would seem to indicate that these spaces were occupied by beads of another type than those of the main portion of the rosary.

One may speculate on why these portions of a rosary were in the filled moat of the fort. A rosary is very unlikely to be thrown away

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by a Catholic, although when badly broken it might be destroyed. Fire may have been the agent employed in an attempted destruction of a broken rosary at San Luis, and may account for the heavy oxidation of the glass beads, which are not, however, misshapen by heat. Of course, it is always possible that the rosary was merely lost. Other possibilities include the finding of the piece, and its discard, by non-Catholic Indians after the abandonment of the post, or the discard of the piece by a mission Indian who had drifted away from the Church. But it is really impossible to determine whether priest or soldier, Spaniard or Indian, owned the piece.

Hardware found at San Luis, in addition to the nails mentioned above, was similar to that of the Scott Miller site. Two hasped hinges, ornamented exactly like those from Scott Miller (Pl. VIII, 5-6), interestingly enough, still function.⁷ Another double pin had an iron ring attached (Pl. VIII, 9). A keyhole plate from a lock was found in Square O. There were four strap-like sections of iron, and fourteen miscellaneous scraps of rusted iron.

The excavations yielded no iron tools, but of considerable interest was a scraper chipped from a heavy piece of green glass (Pl. VI, 6).⁸ It was 57 mm. long, 36 mm. wide, and 11 mm. in thickness, with the greatest thickness lying near the nose of the artifact. This interesting example of the extension of aboriginal techniques to European materials was undoubtedly made from a portion of a heavy bottle. Three pieces of sandstone, whose concave surfaces gave indication of their use as grindstones, and a fragment of a chipped stone projectile point or knife complete the list of tools from the site.

Ornaments were of copper, brass, and glass. Two pieces of copper tube were found, one being about 60 mm. long, the other slightly longer (Pl. IX, 5). These had been fashioned from sheet copper, the edges of which met, but did not overlap, and were probably used as beads. A smaller tubular copper bead, 15 mm. in length, had overlapping edges. All three specimens were about 4 mm. in diameter. Another piece of copper, 26 mm. long and 10 mm. wide, with one side turned under for 3 mm., had been incised and perforated in the center (Pl. IX, 9). This piece is apparently aboriginal in execution. Another thin strip of copper, 4 mm. wide and about 30 mm. long, was found twisted in a loop. It probably was a crude finger ring. Several parallel-sided strips of copper apparently served as raw materials for articles of the type described above.

Another ornament was an embossed brass plate about 65 mm. in

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length, ornamented with a floral design and beaded along the edges (Pl. IX, 8). Wood fragments adhered to the rear of this piece, and it probably represents an inlaid ornament on a wooden chest or box.

Among the beads was one of "jet," 11 mm. in diameter, flattened on the back and faceted on the face. The bead was penetrated by two holes, passing through the bead from the sides, and set at right angles to one another. Eight other beads, not including those from the rosary discussed above, were made of glass. Three of these were seed beads, 3 to 5 mm. in diameter; two were opaque light blue; and the other was translucent amber. There was one translucent light-blue oblate-spheroid bead, 5.5 mm. in diameter, and a fragment of another light-blue, probably elongate-spheroid, bead. The longitudinal half of an opaque white bead, 12 mm. long, with groups of three spiraling blue lines was found (Pl. IX, 6). Two other beads of this same type were fused together. Except for the opaque white beads with blue spirals and the jet bead, all the beads are of types found in other historic sites in Florida.⁹

Domestic containers, other than pottery which will be described shortly, consisted solely of glass. Altogether ninety-two pieces of glass came from the excavation. Some of these no doubt date from the American period, but the vast majority of the fragments would appear to belong to the period of Spanish and Indian occupancy. Almost without exception the color of the glass is green, and many of the pieces have the iridescent patina associated with old glass. Thickness ranges from 3 to 13 mm., and the curvature of most of the specimens indicates that they came from bottles, some of which were apparently square, while others were of the squat round "wine bottle" variety found by Smith at the Higgs site.¹⁰ One bottle neck in particular is identical to those from the Higgs site. Nothing more of a non-ceramic nature remains to be mentioned except some molten pieces of lead and brass and one tablet-shaped fragment of brass, which was 34 mm. long, 23 mm. wide, and 10 mm. in thickness.

The ceramics of the Leon-Jefferson Period, to which San Luis belongs, have been described in detail by Smith in the preceding paper, and will be discussed here only in general terms to note their occurrence at the site and the differences which exist between the type descriptions and the San Luis specimens.

Unglazed olive-jar, or *tinaja* sherds, represented by 918 examples, are the most numerous non-aboriginal ceramic specimens. Exterior surfaces range from white through buff to terra cotta. Several speci-

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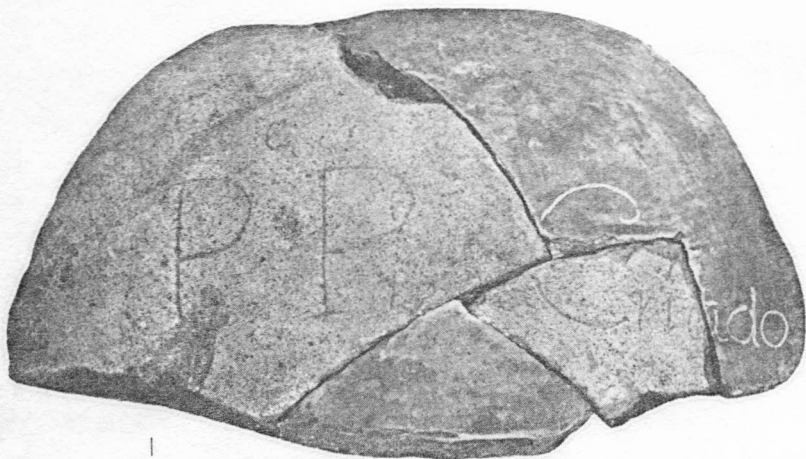
Trait	San Francisco				Total	San Luis
	A	D	E	Surface		
Square spring lock			I	I	2	
Keyhole plate		I	I		2	I
Key				I	I	
Ornate wrought-iron hinge		I	I		2	2
Fragmentary hinge		2			2	
Double-L bracket		I			I	
Slide bolt				I	I	
Chest handle		I			I	
Single pin		I			I	
Double pin		I			I	
Rings on pins			2		2	I
Iron ring			I		I	
Miscellaneous iron		I			I	18
<i>Objects of Copper, Brass, and Lead:</i>						
Corpus from crucifix, brass	I				I	
Brass fragments	x	x	x	x	x	x
Embossed brass ornament						I
Censer fragment (?)			I		I	
Copper bead links and chain						strand
Tubular copper beads						3
Copper ring						I
Copper ornament						I
Copper fragments			I		I	x
Lead (?) finger ring			I		I	
Lead impressed with matting		x			x	
Lead fragments		x			x	x
Lead musket or pistol balls				I	I	3
<i>Objects of Glass:</i>						
Glass fragments	4	35	I	x	40+	92
Glass scraper						I
Seed beads						3
Light-blue bead, oblate						2
Blue bead, white lines	I				I	
White bead, blue spirals						3
Rosary beads						39
"Jet" bead						I
<i>Objects of Stone:</i>						
Gunflints	I	I	I		3	5
Marble (altar stone?)				I	I	
Small triangular point	I		I		2	
Large triangular point		I			I	
Large notched point		I			I	
Broken projectile point						I
Small chert scraper	I				I	
Pounders, granite and quartz		I	4		5	
Grindstones		I	x		1+	3
Limestone awl-sharpener			I		I	
Granite maul fragment	I				I	
Stone discs	I		x		1+	

PLATE V

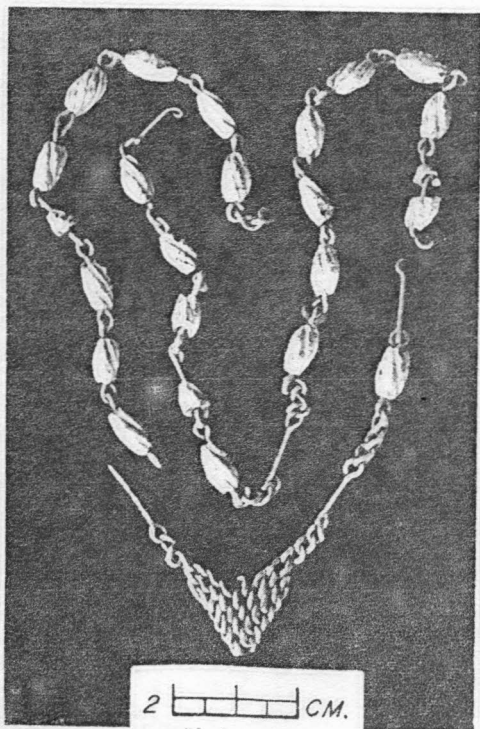
Religious Objects

(Scale variable)

1. Sherds of a Spanish olive-jar, incised with letters believed to be the name of Father Domingo Criado. Darker section, with a portion of the *C* and *a*, and the letters *do*, is hypothetical. Total length, 18 cm. San Francisco.
2. Fragmentary rosary, found in the moat of San Luis. Scale on photograph.
3. Corpus from crucifix, somewhat misshapen by fire. Height, 11 cm. San Francisco.



1



2



3

PLATE IX

Ornaments and Miscellaneous Objects

(Scale variable)

1. Spur rowel, 8.5 cm. diameter. San Francisco.
2. Brass, possibly part of a censer. 8.5 cm. maximum breadth. San Francisco.
3. Pottery disc, 3.5 cm. diameter. San Francisco.
4. Ring of lead, 2.5 cm. wide. San Francisco.
5. Rolled copper "bead," 6 cm. long. San Luis.
6. Blue and white glass bead, 1.2 cm. high. San Luis.
7. Ring on pin, 5 cm. maximum diameter. San Francisco.
8. Ornamental brass inlay, 6.5 cm. long. San Luis.
9. Copper ornament, 2.6 cm. long. San Luis.
10. Iron chest handle, 8.75 cm. wide. San Francisco.
11. Iron chest handle, 10.25 cm. wide. San Francisco.
12. Small keyhole plate, 2.5 cm. high. San Francisco.
13. Reconstructed Miller Plain vessel, 27.5 cm. diameter. San Francisco.
14. Small key, 6.5 cm. long. San Francisco.

