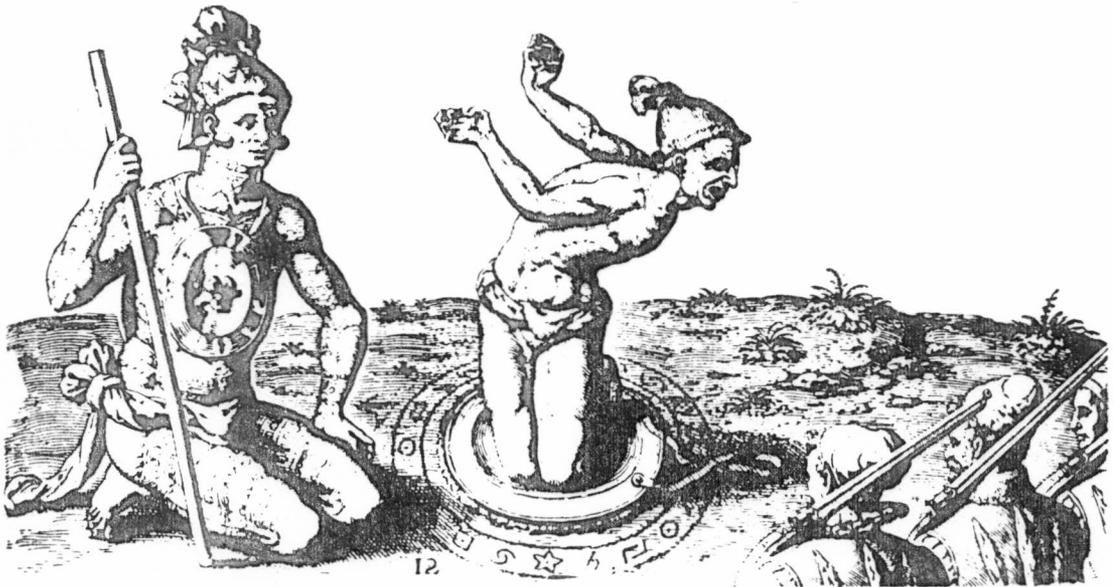


# Fig Springs: The Mid-Seventeenth Century in North-Central Florida

KATHLEEN A. DEAGAN



## INTRODUCTION

The Fig Springs site (Co-1) has produced one of the few archeological assemblages of the Spanish contact period in north-central Florida, an area first defined by John M. Goggin (1947:124). The site is located in what is believed to be the area of the Western Timucua — Utina Indians, about whom very little is known from either archeological or documentary sources (Goggin 1953:9 Milanich ms).

Fig Springs is a small tributary spring near the head of the Itchetucknee River in Columbia County, Florida. It was apparently a refuse dump for a Spanish-Indian habitation site, and documentary evidence indicates that this was the site of the mission of Santa Catalina de Afuerica. The mission site itself has not been located on the surrounding land, although the high land overlooking the spring seems to be a likely spot for the location of a mission village.

From 1949 to 1952 John Goggin and University of Florida students collected the material in the spring. Over 4,000 aboriginal and European sherds were recovered, along with whole and partial vessels and a large variety of both European and aboriginal non-ceramic artifacts.

Because all of the material was recovered from the refuse dump, no evidence for provenience or features is available for the site. The bulk of the material, however, indicates that the spring was used as a dump mainly during the 17th century.

The material from Fig Springs belongs to the historic cultural period known in Florida as the Leon-Jefferson period (A.D. 1650-1725) (Smith 1948). It is an important site for this period since it is one of the easternmost of the known Leon-Jefferson sites, and it appears to be somewhat intermediate between the cul-

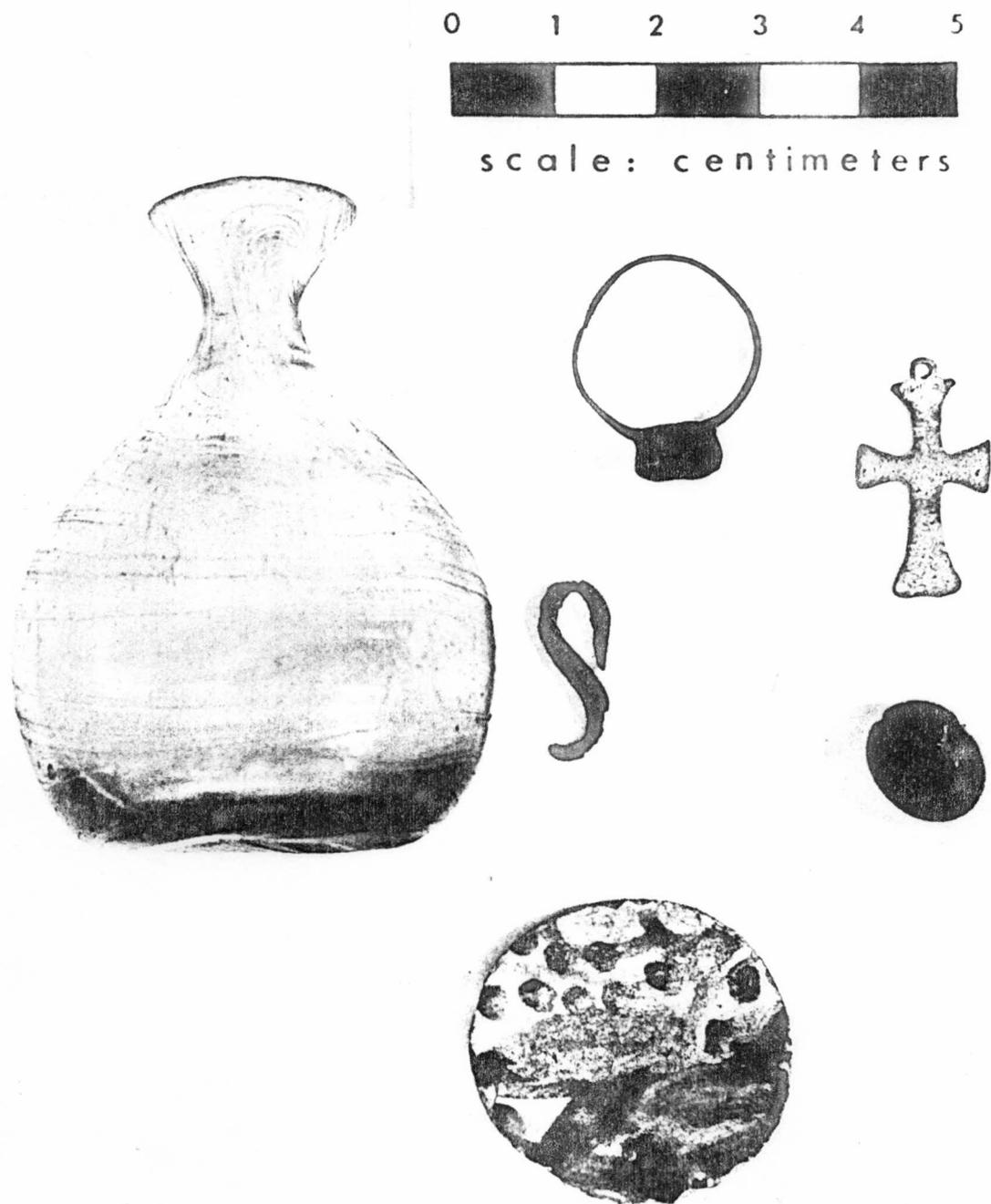


FIGURE 8. *Miscellaneous Spanish Artifacts from Fig Springs. (L-R) Glass Vial; Brass Finger Ring; Lead Cross; Iron Link; Grooved Black Glass Bead; Majolica Disc.*

high, sloping shoulders. One of the base fragments bears the inscription: "W. GEDDES \* GLASGOW \*".

Twelve of the glass beads from the site were cylindrical, medium-blue beads with longitudinal stress lines in the glass. These measure from 4 to 6 mm in length, and were opaque. The other beads included:

- 1 medium blue clear bead (6 mm)
- 1 dark blue clear bead (spherical)
- 1 medium blue seed bead
- 1 lavender blue rectangular bangle (1 cm x .8 cm)
- 1 grooved, asymmetrical black bead (Figure 4)

#### NON-CERAMIC ARTIFACTS — EUROPEAN-ABORIGINAL

At most historic contact sites, artifacts which exhibit combinations of European and aboriginal methods and materials are found. These may include combinations of form, material, manufacturing technique and the manufacturer; to produce artifacts which show varying degrees of change in the cultures of the groups involved (See Quimby 1966). These effects are commonly exhibited in ceramic form and decoration, and examples of this are found at Fig Springs (see p. 11).

One example of a non-ceramic artifact of this type was recovered. This is an embossed iron disc, 19 cm in diameter, with a perforated hole in the center and a border of embossed circular design around the outer circumference (Figure 7). Embossed copper discs identical to this were present in late prehistoric and early historic times, and were of aboriginal manufacture and material. Such discs were also fashioned from European metals, such as the iron one from Fig Springs, as well as silver and gold. Examples of these ornaments have been recovered from Mt. Royal, Spruce Creek Mound and Cook's Ferry Mound in Florida (Goggin 1952: Plate 12), and are frequently pictured in Le Moyne's drawings (Figure 2).

Another disc of European and presumably aboriginal manufacture was made of majolica. This was the same kind of disc as those of aboriginal ware which were found at this site (p. 15), presumed to be gaming discs. This disc is made from a sherd of Tallahassee Blue-on-

White majolica, and is 3 cm in diameter (Figure 8).

#### SUBSISTENCE REMAINS

Although no excavation was carried out at the site itself, a considerable amount of information about the subsistence practices of the inhabitants was obtained from material in the spring. A combination of horticulture, hunting and gathering is suggested as a subsistence base.

Vegetable remains include charred corn cobs, gourd fragments, hickory nuts and peach pits. The peach pits were recovered in large quantities; nearly a bushel came from the spring. Accounts of the area in the 1820's and 30's report wild fig trees growing (Smith 1956:50). Neither figs nor peaches are native to the area, and were presumably planted during the Spanish occupation. Additional evidence for corn farming at Fig Springs during the Spanish period is provided by the iron hoe head. (Figure 7).

Animal bone from Fig Springs is listed below. There is no way to determine whether these faunal remains were deposited during the mission period, since most of the animals listed could have been deposited naturally in the spring. It can be assumed, however, that since most of these animals inhabit the Itchetucknee area (with the obvious exceptions of cow and dog) they were hunted or gathered by Indians living there. Fish and snake, which abound in the area, were probably also exploited as a food source.

#### Faunal Remains

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Chrysemys sp.</i>	pond turtle
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	gopher tortoise
<i>Kinosternon sp.</i>	mud turtle
<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	alligator
<i>Didelphis marsupialis</i>	opossum
<i>Lutra canadensis</i>	otter
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	deer
<i>Canis familiaris</i>	dog
<i>Bos taurus</i>	cow

Shellfish remains in the collection are of both marine and freshwater species. Large marine shells include *Busycon sinistrum* and *Vasum muricatum*, both large whelks. These