

University of South Alabama

**JagWorks@USA**

---

Anthropology Undergraduate Senior Theses

USA Anthropology Program

---

Spring 2005

## **French Colonial Archaeology: Structure 31 at Old Mobile**

Rani Dormaier

Follow this and additional works at: [https://jagworks.southalabama.edu/anthro\\_ugrad\\_theses](https://jagworks.southalabama.edu/anthro_ugrad_theses)



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

---

French Colonial Archaeology: Structure 31 at Old Mobile

Rani A. Dormaier


Senior Thesis

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work

University of South Alabama

Approved By:

  
Thesis Mentor: Dr. Philip J. Carr 2 May 05  
Date

  
Committee Member: Dr. Gregory A. Waselkov 2 May 2005  
Date

  
Committee Member: Dr. Marsha L. Hamilton 2 May 2005  
Date

## Introduction

Old Mobile (1MB94), a French colonial site dating from 1702 to 1711, is located in southwest Alabama, on the west side of Mobile River, which is now known as Twenty-seven Mile Bluff. Archaeological investigations of Old Mobile have been undertaken for the past sixteen years and this work has included the excavation of a number of structures. The artifact assemblage recovered from Structure 31, located on the northeast edge of the site near the Mobile River, was analyzed in an attempt to establish its function in relation to the larger community of Old Mobile. Detailed analysis of each artifact class was conducted and spatial distribution maps were drawn. The data generated will be compared with Structure 1, a possible domestic dwelling, and Structure 30, which may have been a soldiers' barracks (Waselkov 2002:13). The comparisons and artifact analyses will provide new information regarding the role of Structure 31 in the community of Old Mobile and aid in better understanding the French colonial presence in southwest Alabama.

## French Colonial Archaeology

Archaeology is the study of the human cultural past through analysis of the objects that they have left behind. The significance of archaeological research is in its ability to address considerable questions about the past, such as how people lived and why cultures have changed (Thomas 1997:560). A particularly significant time of cultural change was during the American colonial period. Colonial archaeology is important for the investigation of the relationship between the various cultures that occupied the New World and the process of community development. In particular, French colonial

archaeology can provide us with contributions to the increasing body of knowledge on frontiers and their related artifact compilations. "The late French sites may provide a unique laboratory to evaluate such complex factors as Euro-American ethnicity and acculturation" (Walthall 1991:3, 11-13).

French colonial sites provide a plethora of information on the Euro-American presence in many parts of the Eastern United States, where considerable settlement occurred well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Seventeenth-century European goods are available in large quantities, such as sheet brass made into animal effigies, clothing ornamentation, and glass beads ground into pendants. Colono-ceramics, made by Native Americans and Africans to imitate European form, are also present. Many sites contain large amounts of French pottery, such as coarse and refined earthenwares, French faience, tin-glazed fine earthenware, stonewares and porcelains. Starting in the 1580s copper and brass kettles were traded, which caused a decline in Native American pottery. A number of important collections from these sites have been found, such as glass beads, cast iron, lead pewter, silver, coins, weaponry, and organic remains. The variability in food ways is represented by the watermelon seeds, peach pits, and New World maize found at Indian sites, along with wheat, barley, peas, cucumber, fig, grapes, and thousands of beans. French colonial archaeology has also revealed that the first colonial buildings were made of wood and many have been found in the Mississippi valley, Illinois and Missouri (Waselkov 1997: 12, 14-19, 21, 23). Continued investigation of French colonial sites will provide more information concerning how these early settlers lived and their relationship with other peoples in the New World.

## A Brief History of Old Mobile

In 1699, Governor Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville established the colony of Louisiana, with creation of a post on Biloxi Bay (Waselkov 1997:8, 9). Iberville established "Mobile" in 1702, "to serve as the military, political, and economic center of the newly-founded colony of Louisiana" and was basically French Louisiana until 1711; at this time the site was abandoned for the new location at the head of Mobile Bay, where it remains today (Waselkov 2002:3). Prior to construction of the town, Iberville's Canadians began construction on Fort Louis, which was located overlooking the Mobile River. After the relocation in 1711 to the head of Mobile Bay, the original town site came to be known as Old Mobile. The spot today is called Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff and is located on the right hand side of the Mobile River, to the south of the Mobilian villages. The new settlement was named Mobile to honor the French allies, the Mobilian Indians (Waselkov 1999:1, 3, 5).

A depot constructed on Massacre Island, which later became Dauphin Island, created the heart for the village of Port Dauphin, which was the colony's main port-of-entry for the next twenty years (Waselkov 1999:3). Small boats and canoes were used to bring imported goods directly into Mobile's shallow bay; the goods had to be transferred from ocean going vessel to smaller boats at Port Dauphin (Waselkov 1999:3).

Between 1702 and mid-1711, Iberville's brother Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville led the French in consolidation of colonial control over the north-central Gulf Coast, while endeavoring to gain influence among the populous Native American societies inhabiting the vast area of the interior southeast. This new settlement, Old Mobile, brought them into contact with the Mobile Indians and the Tomehs, remnant

native populations devastated by Old World disease and the intertribal warfare endemic to the region (Waselkov 2002:4). The Mobilians, the local Native Americans, were very important because of their international language, called pidgin, which made them able to communicate with a variety of others, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. However, the Mobilians had a language that they spoke among their own peoples, which was distinct from the Mobilian pidgin, a simplified language for trade. The site on the Mobile River was chosen mainly to watch the English and influence the natives. The founding of “Mobile” also brought the colonists into contact with four great Indian tribes. These tribes were the Choctaws (located around the Mobile and Tombigee Rivers), Chickasaws (located between the Tombigee and the Mississippi), the Creeks (whom the French called Alibamons), and the Cherokees, among many other small groups (Hamilton 1946:9).

From 1698 onwards the Spanish presidio at Pensacola, being in close proximity, was very important in the development and survival of French Mobile. For the duration of the existence of Old Mobile, Spain and France were allies during the War of Spanish Succession and the two settlements depended on each other for food and munitions because of the scarcity of provisions (Waselkov 2002:5).

In 1702, Iberville brought four families over and the town of “Mobile” began to grow (Hamilton 1946:11). There were few women at first, so colonists purchased slaves, mostly Indian women and children as domestic servants and the situation remained this way until more French women arrived (Waselkov 2002:5). The colonists requested horses and oxen to cultivate the soil. “A traversier was built and plied regularly to Port Dauphin, and gradually all along the river, and even on the bay shore, French settlements arose, sometimes villages, but generally habitants with their little farms” (Hamilton

1946:11). The settlement was a place of trade and diplomacy with the Native American tribes. The French settlement on “Mobile” did not require walls or fortifications to hold at bay the Native Americans, as they were not considered a threat. There was a fort in the center but this was to protect against Europeans, not natives. “Mobile from its foundation, to the end of the French regime was the center of the Indian trade diplomacy, and only at one time was it in any danger from the natives, and that was long after it ceased to be the capital” (Hamilton 1946:11, 12).

### Structures at Old Mobile

French Mobile consisted of 100 private and public structures built on rectangular grids of standardized town blocks. The colonists’ homes consisted of “80 one story wooden houses with palmetto leaves or straw roofs” (Waselkov 2002:5). In 1704, a church was built near the fort’s west side containing a chapel. There was a well two blocks inland from the fort, and surrounding it the Marche, Mobile’s meeting place and parade ground. A “resort” rested on the banks of the creek and there was a cemetery in the woods behind the town (Hamilton 1946:11). During the land clearing that occurred in conjunction with expansion of this community, the most appropriate logs were allocated for the construction of bastions and curtains in the fort. These logs were squared up into beams, with a width of twelve to eighteen inches (with dovetailed corners), and then used in the double *pièce-sur-pièce* construction. The area between the double walls was packed with earth and red pine, the timber making up a majority of the wood used in construction. Red pine was the most common type of wood in the area, which was acquired from the bluff area, consisting of continuous forests on the west side of the fort. Once the walls and bastion foundations were set, Charles Levasseur began building

structure within the fort. The chapel, measured sixty-two feet long and sixteen feet wide; the king's storehouse, a long narrow building forty-two feet long and sixteen feet wide, was first completed to store goods. The most elaborate building within the fort faced the river and was sixty-eight feet long and sixteen feet wide. This building was intended as alternate quarters for the highest officials, as well as a meeting place for the managerial affairs of the colony. At the facade of the administrative building was a slender, elongated gallery, measuring a mere six feet wide, facing the river, constructed just over the curtain. Connected to the northwestern curtain was a forty by sixteen foot construction, which was separated into two standard sized chambers. These chambers, the first of which was placed facing the riverside, was a compartment for the storage of guns and ammunition, with a length of twenty-five feet, then near the western curtain, a small guardhouse was placed, which was fifteen in length and sixteen feet in width (Higginbotham 1997:49,50).

In September 1704, Sieur d'Bienville wrote to the French colonial minister about the Spaniards at Pensacola and their misfortune in their establishment. He spoke of them living on Indian corn for half of the year, and how they came to Mobile to trade for goods, without which they may have had to abandon their fort because of a lack of important resources (Coker 1999:13, 30).

By 1708, a large part of the population consisted of Indian slaves (Waselkov 2002:5). Indian neighbors with whom the colonists traded provided them a large amount of foodstuffs. In the end drawbacks to the town site caused the colonists to relocate to the present site of Mobile (Waselkov 2002:5). The town was relocated because the old location was very inconvenient and the environment was extremely swampy



(Waselkov 1999:3).

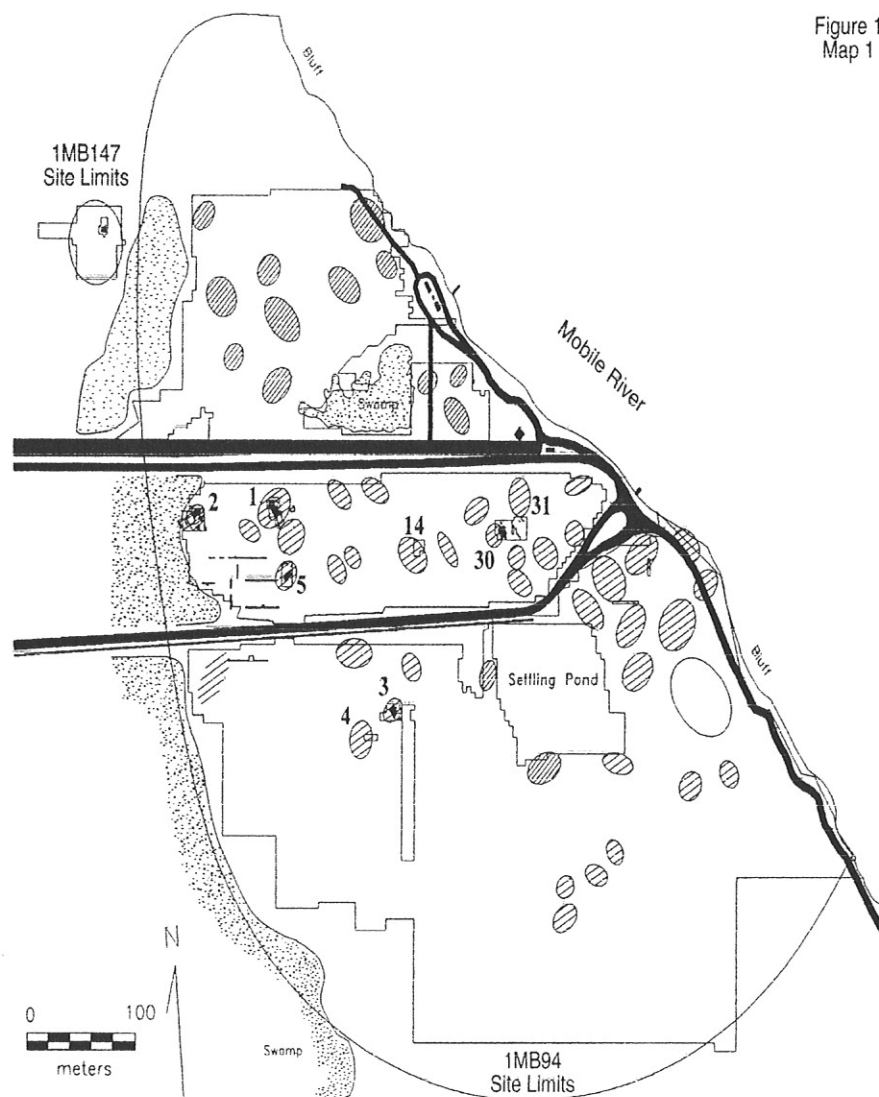
## Archaeological Investigations

Old Mobile was one of the first European occupations in southwest Alabama and has been the focus of increasing study during the recent past. Archaeologists from the University of South Alabama began work there in 1989. The initial work began with a survey strategy that involved the establishment of a grid that ran east-west and north-south and the excavation of shovel tests at intervals of 4 meters. A total of 15,035 shovel tests were dug to sterile subsoil and screened through ¼-inch mesh. The survey also included various remote sensing techniques, such as vertical aerial photography and ground penetrating radar (Waselkov 2002:6). These survey techniques provided important information for planning future investigations.

Nine structures have been excavated in Old Mobile, many to completion and some only in part at the present time. Three of the structures are thought to be domestic dwellings, which are Structures 1, 3, and 5. Mission priests are surmised to be the residents of Structure 1; and evidence at Structure 2 indicates a blacksmith's forge. Structures 4 and 14 may have been taverns, while Structures 30, 31, and 32 provide evidence of soldiers' barracks and seem to be in proximity to the fort. Additional excavations by Diane Silvia occurred at site 1MB147, a Native American habitation on the west side of Old Mobile (Waselkov 2002: 8). Figure 1(Map 1) shows the structure locations at Old Mobile which are numbered according to excavated structures (Waselkov 2002:8).

Structure 31 is located less than 100m west of the bluff above the Mobile River closer in proximity to the river than most of the town's buildings. Fort Louis is surmised

to be southeast of Structure 31. Based on the 1998 archaeological investigations, Structure 31 was constructed by a method known as *pieux en terre*, which uses upright poles in trenches to form walls, a method frequently used in small structures that was



**Figure 1: Map showing location of excavated structures at Old Mobile (Waselkov 2002).**

extremely vulnerable to decay. Structure 31 was a basic, rectangular building measuring 14.4x17.2 ft. (4.40x5.25m) and included an extension to the east, which measured 6 x 9.5 ft. (1.85x2.9m). The wall trenches are continuous which denotes no entranceway;

however, a centrally positioned door is indicated by a small difference in the soil stain in the west wall trench. Structure 31 consists of a pale colored soil within the wall trench, which lacks apparent post stains and contains few artifacts. The only feature excavated in 1998 was a clay extraction pit, Feature 1, located 4.9 feet (1.5m) to the west of Structure 31, and about 8x 11 ft. (2.4x3.4m) across and 29.5 inches (75 cm) deep. Artifacts from the pit include aboriginal ceramic fragments (one polychrome plate), four cannonballs, an abundance of gun spalls, and pieces of swords, including guards and a handle shaft pommel. Structure 31 was a small basic building. Brick hearths were present at all the domestic structures, but Structure 31 lacked bricks and contained few structural artifacts (Gums 2002:15, 16, 19-21).

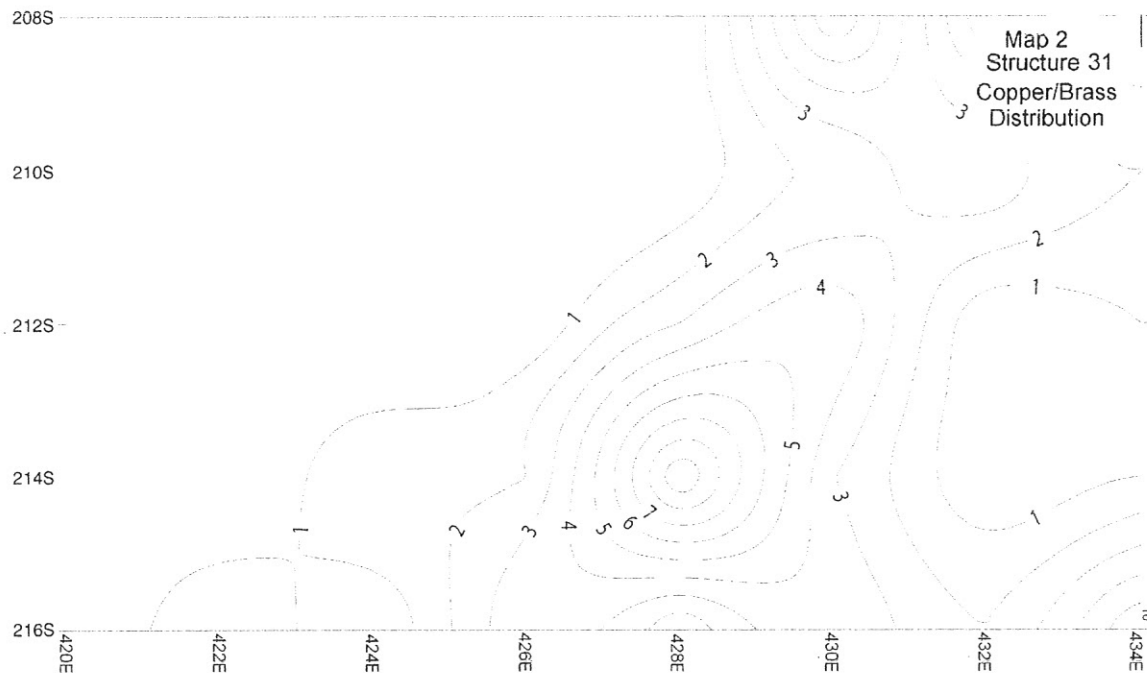
### Analysis of Artifacts from Structure 31

Artifacts from Structure 31 and Feature 1 had already been divided into categories according to type prior to beginning this research; these categories were based on material and function. I took each artifact type and identified the specific function, when possible, and recorded appropriate attributes. This analysis included the generation of distribution maps for each artifact type.

#### Metal artifacts

The first classification type included artifacts made of metal. These were separated by types of metal. These types are copper/ brass, pewter, iron, and personal items (jewelry). Some metal artifacts are discussed under other headings below. Copper/brass and pewter were separated by type of metal and function, such as sword hilts and buckles. Each artifact type was counted and weighed. Copper and brass artifacts are prevalent at Structure 31 and include three complete buckles, six buckle fragments,

and two shoe buckles. Copper and brass artifacts also include one eye-and-button back, fourteen buttons, and one cufflink. Figure 2 (Map 2) shows distribution of copper/brass artifacts, including weaponry.



**Figure 2: Copper/Brass Distribution**

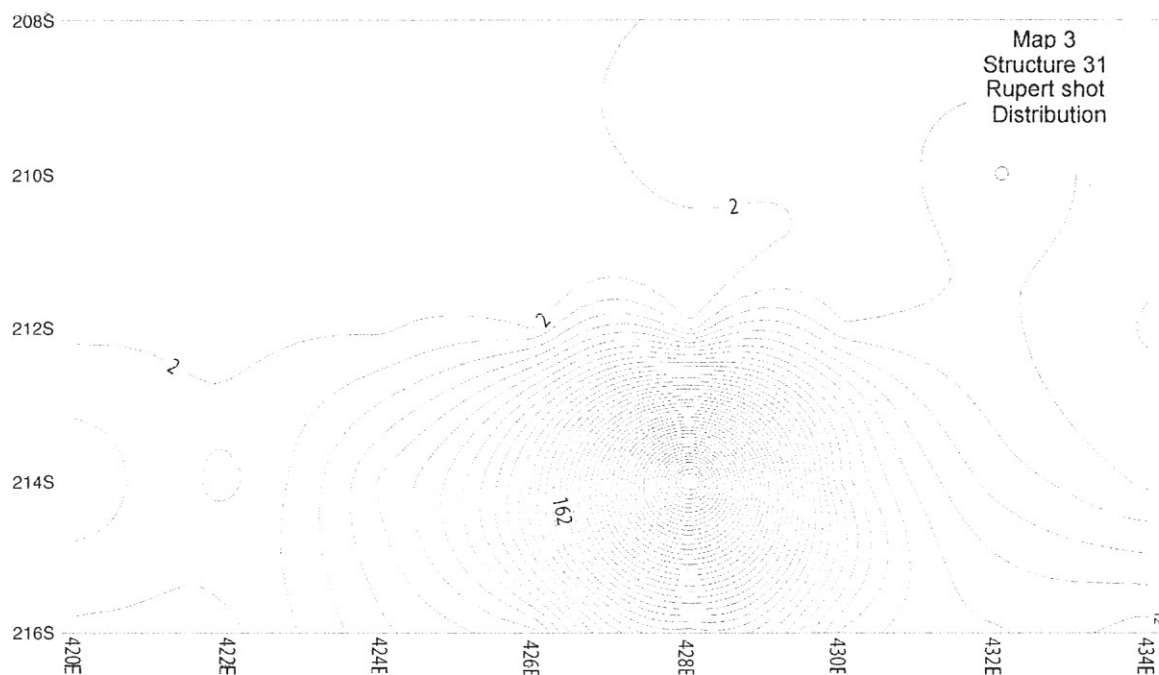
This map shows an even artifact distribution with concentrations mainly within Feature 1.

Personal items of metal (jewelry) include one silver buckle fragment, two silver earring or necklace fragments, and two ring fragments. One solitary silver cob coin, minted in Spanish Mexico City, was recovered from Structure 31 (Gums 2002:19). Four pieces of pewter were found, all unidentified fragments. Iron was classified as nails, clumps, flat pieces, or spikes and items were weighed separately. Iron artifacts were heavily corroded, mostly fragmented, and difficult to identify to function. Nails weigh 15,356.08 grams. Iron clumps come to 44, 87.01 grams, while flat pieces and spikes were found in smaller amounts. Flat pieces weighed in at 1,887.4 grams and spikes weighed 2,779.61.

## Weaponry

Weaponry is a special artifact class that includes different material types including metal and stone. Artifacts in this category include sword parts, lead artifacts, and gunflints. Items categorized as weaponry from Structure 31 include four brass sword hilt fragments from a Mousquetaire-style hilt, three brass sword grip fragments, and two brass sword guards.

Lead artifacts including spillage, tabular scrap, and sprues are plentiful, possibly because lead shot was produced and cast near Structure 31 (Gums 2002:19). Other lead artifacts were divided into four categories: Rupert shot, buckshot, cast shot, and musket balls which were used for different types of prey.



**Figure 3: Rupert Shot Distribution**

A total of 1,237 Rupert shot was present at Structure 31, as well as four buck shot, two cast shot, and fifteen musket balls. Figure 3 (Map 3) shows the distribution of Rupert shot consisting of major concentrations around Feature 1.

Gunflints were analyzed according to color and separated based on whether they are spalls, flakes, or blades. The core is the portion of lithic material that is struck, from which the piece is removed and the removed piece is a “spall,” or a “flake.” The distinction between spalls, flakes, and blades is made based on length, width and thickness. Spalls are roughly as broad as they are long, while flakes are at least doubly as wide as they are thick, and at least twice as long as wide. Blades are generally as broad as they are wide and minimally twice as long as wide (Hamilton 1980:138). The source of gunflints is usually determined by color. Black gunflints are typically of English origin and honey-color, blond, or dark brown flints are typically of French origin (Carruth 1991: 90). Once these distinctions were made gunflints were counted (n=143) and found to occur in moderate amounts in comparison with other artifacts. A large number of flake type gunflints (n=99) were found, of which 69 are blond in color and 22 are gray in color (i.e., burned). There are also one black flake (probably the only English gunflint), four mottled (gray/blond), and three that had been badly burned to a light gray color. Smaller numbers of spall type gunflints (n=43) were recovered, including 24 burned gray spalls and 1 blond spall. The remaining spalls are fragments, including five blond and thirteen gray (burnt) in color. One blond blade was recovered from Structure 31.

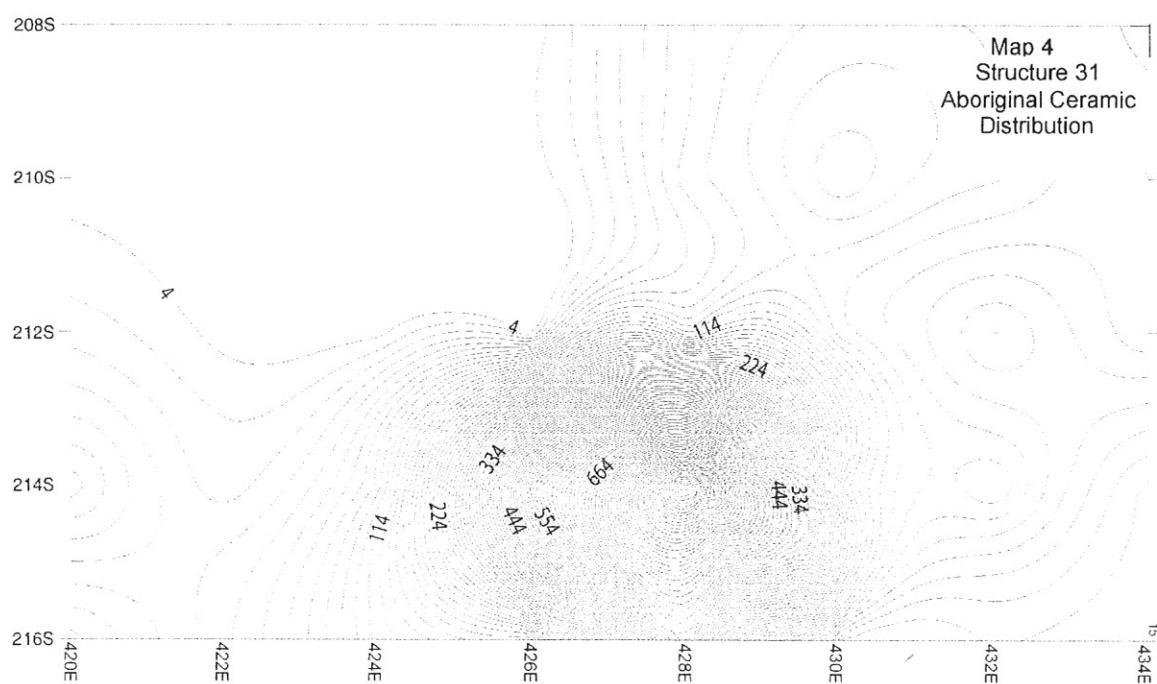
## Ceramics

European ceramics and aboriginal ceramics were both recovered from Structure 31. European ceramics were classified according to type based on paste composition and decoration. These types include lead glazed coarse earthenware, stoneware, majolica and other tin glazed wares. Historic ceramics analysis begins with differentiating between the paste types. Following the identification of these types, sherds must be distinguished

within each paste category by their dissimilar surface treatment. Coarse earthenware is subdivided and examined based on distinctive surface treatments. Some of these include, depending on paste type, whether it is undecorated, burnished, painted, slipped, lead glazed, or tin enameled. The division continues based on the exclusive decorative methods, motifs, and colors that differentiate between ceramic types within the exterior treatment groupings. In this context, “coarse earthenware” denotes pottery that has been fired at a temperature of about 1100 degrees to 1200 degrees Celsius, resulting in a somewhat soft paste. A fingernail can usually scrape coarse earthenware. The coarse earthenwares are usually distinguished by their use in storing, transporting, cooking, and washing. Majolica is a tin glazed Spanish earthenware characterized by its soft earthenware paste coated by an impenetrable lead glaze. The glaze contains tin oxide, which creates an opaque white appearance, which is also common to French faience and English and Dutch delftware. The distinction between them is made according to their divergent paste, glaze, color, and design motifs and attributes. The paste of Puebla majolica has a soft white to light peach hue, resulting from the combination of red and white clay, accessible in the surrounding areas of Puebla, Mexico. Perhaps, a finishing clear lead glaze was added in a separate firing to account for the lustrous white or creamy background enamel. The Talavera de la Reina influence is especially apparent in the black, lacelike designs of the type recognized as “Puebla Polychrome.” Stoneware has a salt-glazed exterior, a mottled pale brown hue, and is typically found in an assortment of large vessel forms, including bellarmine and disparities of the bellarmine form (Deagan 1987:26, 30, 53, 77, 78,103). These types were separated, counted, and compared to other artifacts they were found in moderate amounts. Two hundred and three sherds of

lead glazed coarse earthenware were recovered, including 11 Spanish colonial redware sherds. Stoneware is scarce, with only 17 sherds. Majolica consisted of 212 sherds, while 203 sherds of tin glaze (mostly faience) ceramics were identified. A large amount of aboriginal ceramics was found and these were cataloged according to weight and sherd count.

Table 1	
Structure 31 Ceramics	
Ceramic type(sherds)	Count
Lead glazed coarse earthenware	203
Stoneware	17
Majolica	212
Tin glazed (mostly faience)	203
Aboriginal	3,931
Total	4,566



**Figure 4: Aboriginal Ceramic Distribution**

No detailed analysis of these ceramics was undertaken at this time. A vessel analysis in



the future will provide us with further information regarding these ceramics. Presently, I have analyzed them by weight and count. Figure 4 (Map 4) shows a distribution of aboriginal ceramics with major concentrations surrounding Feature 1. Three thousand nine hundred thirty one aboriginal sherds were found in the Structure 31 assemblage weighing 21,963.69 grams.

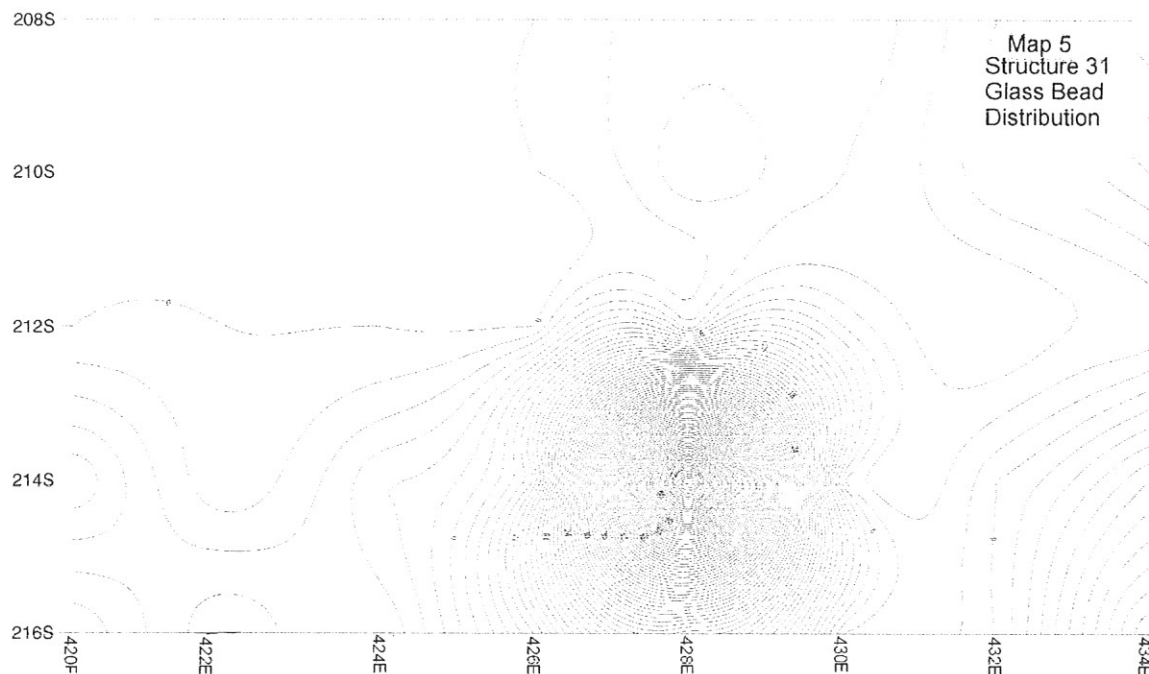
## Pipes

Pipe fragments were separated according to whether they were kaolin or aboriginal. Moderate amounts of kaolin pipe fragments were found, while only a small amount of aboriginal pipe fragments were found. Diameter of the pipe stems was measured using a drill bit classification system and pipes were then counted and used to generate distribution maps. Three hundred twenty kaolin tobacco pipes and fragments were analyzed. There are 166 undecorated stems and 16 spiral rouletted stems (2 with spurs). The remaining stems include sixteen that are rouletted, and two unidentified fragments. Most stems have a bore diameter of 5/64", while a few were 7/64" or 6/64", in diameter. Kaolin pipe bowls consisted of 59 fragments, 11 spurs and 50 bowls. Only ten aboriginal pipes were recovered. These include four pipe bowls (one with a faceted rim and one with a thickened rim), five bowl fragments (three faceted), and one pipe stem.

## Glass Artifacts

The final category consists of artifacts made from glass. These were separated into two categories: glass beads (includes exception of two stone beads and one quartz crystal bead) and bottle glass. Glass beads were separated by color and type using Munsell color charts, a comparative bead collection and the classification system for glass beads devised by Kenneth E. Kidd and Martha Ann Kidd. An explanation of how

beads were classified follows. The tube bead chart is separated into four quadrants. The beads in the lower quadrants (I and III) are basic tube forms and the beads in the upper quadrants (II and IV) have been tailored to a round shape by reheating. Quadrant I and II are “simple beads” which are mainly monochrome but may have adventitious exterior decoration. Quadrants III and IV repeat the classes included in I and II, but are layered, so they are regarded as compound instead of simple. The next classification chart includes wire wound beads, which are handcrafted. These are divided into three groups prefaced by the letter W. Group WI are monochrome and in the simple shapes of tube, round, oval, and doughnut, while group WII are monochrome but ornately shaped by pinching or molding. Group WIII shares the previously mentioned shapes but are not monochrome and often have adventitious exterior decorations and opposing colors (Kidd and Kidd 1970:223,225). Bead diaphaneity is expressed using the terms opaque, transparent, and translucent. Translucent beads diffuse light making object viewed through them unclear while transparent beads make object viewed through them plainly discernible. Shape nomenclature is defined by four categories: circular, round, flat, and tubular. Tubular beads have round cross sections. Circular beads are torus (ring) shaped and round beads are spheroidal, oblate, and barrel-shaped. Beads that are pressed flat parallel to the puncture while the glass was still viscid are flat “disc” beads, which come in oval and round shapes. (Karklins 1985: 11). All beads were analyzed according to bead charts and comparative collections. Glass beads were found in moderate amounts (n=233) compared to stone beads, of which there were only two. Figure 5 (Map 5) shows the distribution of glass beads found at Structure 31.



**Figure 5: Glass Bead Distribution**

Most of the distribution maps are similar showing an even artifact distribution with most of the artifacts concentrated around Feature 1. Only two stone beads and one faceted, oval, quartz crystal bead were found and analyzed, while 233 glass beads were recovered. Of the glass beads, 158 are small seed beads (Kidd and Kidd: 1970), generally white, blue and black. Other beads include two tubular beads, 4 oval, and five round beads, of which many are dark blue with white stripes. One oval, black, glass bead with gold overlay was also in this assemblage. Table 2 shows the glass bead types found at Structure 31.

Bottle glass was separated and weighed according to type of glass. There were three types: olive green, possibly liquor bottles, French blue-green, believed to be medicine bottles (*fioeles*) or case bottles, and clear lead, possibly stemware (Waselkov and Gums 2000:155). Olive green glass weighs 610.89 grams, and French blue green glass weighs 153.88 grams. The smallest amount of glass recorded is clear lead glass, which only came to 0.26 grams.

Table 2		
Structure 31 Glass Beads Types		
Type	Description	Count
Ia18	Teal blue tubular	1
Ila6	Black round	1
Ila7	Light shadow blue tubular	1
Ila7	Ultramarine seed	2
Ila7	Black seed	38
Ila10	White oval	1
Ila14	Oyster white seed	19
Ila14	Clear	1
Ila17	Yellow round	1
Ila36	Robin's egg blue round	1
Ila37	Ultramarine seed	5
Ila41	Robin's egg blue seed	14
Ila41	Oyster shell white seed	1
Ila41	Aqua blue seed	3
Ila41*	Robin's egg blue seed	5
Ila44	Shadow blue	1
Ila53	Shadow blue seed	47
Ila53	Dark teal round	3
Ila57*	Shadow blue oval	1
Ila57	Shadow blue oval	16
Iib*	Shadow blue with 8 white stripes	1
Iib70*	Shadow blue with white stripes	1
Iib17	White with 3 shadow blue stripes	1
IVa6	Redwood over apple-green seed	16
IVa11*	Blue-gray circular	1
IVa13	Oyster white seed	34
IVa13*	Oyster shell white seed	14
IVb25*	Shadow blue with 8 white stripes	1
WIIlb15*	Dark navy seed	1
WIIId	Black with gold overlay	1
Total		233
* Varies from bead described classification types (Kidd and Kidd 1970)		

### Structures 1, 30, and 31 Architecture

The historical record provides us with little information regarding the soldiers or colonists at Old Mobile. Common soldiers resided in the towns' less substantial buildings, had little access to supplies, and received inadequate compensation from the French government. Architectural features and artifact assemblages were compared

between Structures 1, 30, and 31 to identify differences between domestic dwellings and assumed soldiers' barracks. (Gums 2002:13, 14).

Structure 31 and 30 are located less than 100m west of the bluff above the Mobile River, closer in proximity to the river than most of the town's buildings. Fort Louis is surmised to have been located southeast of Structures 30 and 31. Structure 31 is about 17 meters east of Structure 30. Both Structures were constructed by *pieux en terre*, which uses upright poles in trenches to form walls, a frequent method used in small structures that was extremely vulnerable to decay. Archaeological evidence for Structures 30 and 31 consist of brown silt midden within the wall trenches, which lack apparent post stains and contain few artifacts. Structures 30 and 31 sit side by side and are analogous in size and construction methods, which suggest related purposes or occupations. Structures 30 and 31 were small basic buildings, which utilized a *pieux en terre* construction while Structure 1 is a large building, which utilized *poteaux sur sole* construction. Structure 1 is a more complex building, in comparison, with clay floors and brick hearths. A fence was attached to Structure 1 to demarcate nearby yards, which indicates functionally distinguished household lots. Brick hearths were present at all domestic structures, but Structures 30 and 31 lacked bricks and contained few structural artifacts (Gums 2002:19-21).

### Artifact Comparison of Structures 1, 30, and 31

Structures 1, 30, and 31 all contained similar artifacts such as household items, personal items, tools and weaponry, but in diverse quantities. Small amounts of artifacts were recovered from within the structures, and artifacts recovered from the immediate area surrounding the structures are included in the assemblages. All structures included

comparable quantities of pottery, excluding jars (sherds and vessels) which were frequent at Structure 30 and 31. Present in every structure are similar amounts of non-aboriginal ceramics, with the exception of French faience, Spanish colonial majolica, and Chinese porcelain, which are more common at Structure 1. Larger amounts of bottle glass were found at Structure 1 than at Structure 30 and 31, possibly because soldiers were restricted from imbibing alcohol at their quarters. Structures 30 and 31 had little stemware, which is frequently found at domestic

Table 3			
Artifacts from Structures 1, 30, and 31			
Artifact type	Structure 1	Structure 30	Structure 31
Buckle	5	10	11
Button	4	8	14
Cufflink	3	1	1
Glass Bead	676	291	236
Quartz Bead	0	1	1
Aboriginal Pipe	2	2	10
Kaolin Pipe	1001	687	320
Coin	12	1	1
Total	1703	1001	594
*Information regarding Structures 1 and 30 (Gums 2002: 23).			

dwelling. Items such as glass beads, white clay pipes, and personal items were less abundant in Structures 30 and 31 than in Structure 1. Table three shows comparisons of various artifact assemblages from Structures 1, 30, and 31. One silver cob was recovered at Structure 30 and one at Structure 31, while a dozen coins were recovered from Structure 1 (Gums 2002:22). Most structures contain artifacts associated with the military, including uniform buttons, gun parts, gunspalls, lead shot, sword and knife fragments, and cannonballs. Most have been found at all structures, but they are found in larger amounts in Structure 30 and 31 (See Table 4).

Table 4			
Weaponry: Structures 1, 30, 31			
Weaponry	Structure 1	Structure 30	Structure 31
Gunflints	38	33	143
Sword Parts	1	3	9
Rupert shot	639	1716	1,237
Cast shot	61	33	17
Cannonball	0	0	4
Total	739	1,785	1,410
* Information regarding Structures 1 and 30 (Gums 2002:23)			

### Soldiers at Old Mobile

Using these data, Structure 31 is interpreted as a soldiers' barracks, the inhabitants being French soldiers. Many of the soldiers were young and given little choice about becoming soldiers. Many had no trade skills and lacked reading ability. Some of the duties that were given to the soldiers included guard watch, transporting necessities for the fort, and construction responsibilities. Soldiers fit into the lowest socio-economic rungs of society and many soldiers and officers worked for years without pay. Two garrison companies served at Mobile with the expected number of 100 total, but this was not always met. By 1707, the Mobile garrison consisted of only 45 soldiers, many having died or deserted. Soldier life at Old Mobile was difficult, often resulting in lack of pay, little food, clothing, and munitions and inadequate shelter (Gums 2002:13, 14). Bienville in 1706 described the instructions given to groups of six soldiers to construct

barracks, although the number of groups was unclear. At this time, there were approximately 60 soldiers in the garrison's two companies. It is probable that each group constructed one building, and that these barracks were situated in a systematic fashion in a predetermined position in close proximity to Fort Louis. It is likely that these structures were small, basic, comparable in plans, and appropriate for communal living arrangements (Gums 2002:23).

### Conclusion

Structures 30 and 31 are surmised to have been barracks, housing the soldiers of Fort Louis. This is determined utilizing architectural data, artifact assemblage, and close proximity to the suspected fort. Figure 6 shows the location of Structures 30 and 31

Figure 6  
Map 6

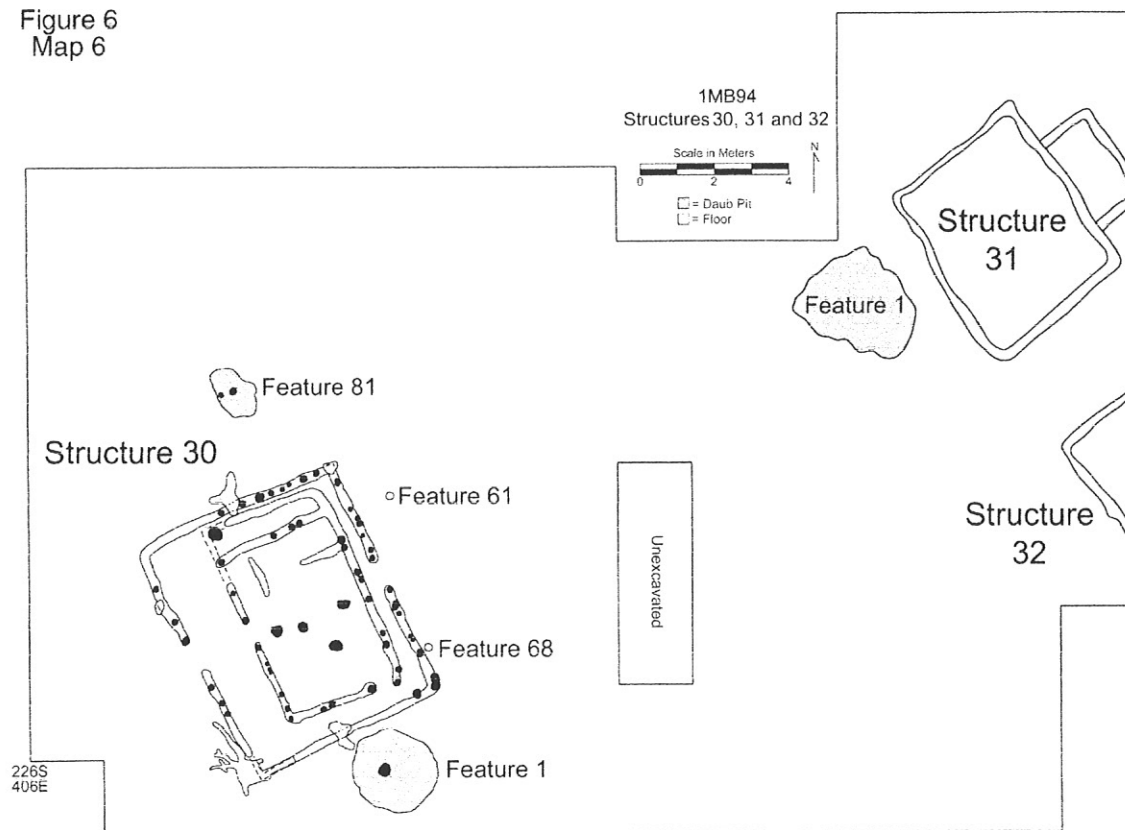


Figure 6: Structures 30 and 31 including surrounding excavated areas (Gums: 2002)



including the surrounding excavated areas (Gums 2002:16). Structure 30 and 31 were most likely briefly occupied because artifacts assemblages from these structures were found in small quantities. If the primary purpose of Structures 30 and 31 was mainly a sleeping quarters each structure could house six men. It is possible that the structures may have served other purposes, such as small storehouses utilized for provision and supplies. It is apparent judging from the presence of household debris (at both structures) and two smudge pits at Structure 30 that people resided there at one time. Structure 30 and 31 also lack fences, to demarcate separate lots, which indicates communal living. Structure 1 was enclosed by a fence, a common practice for domestic dwellings (Gums 2002:23, 24).

All of this data including architecture, artifact assemblages and close proximity to the suspected fort, supports the probability that Structure 31 was indeed a soldiers' barracks. Present excavations at Old Mobile continue to provide us additional information regarding the community of Old Mobile and aid in a better understanding the French colonial presence in southwest Alabama.

### Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes to everyone at the Center for Archaeological Studies, especially Dr. Gregory Waselkov, for use of the facilities and providing needed supplies. I would also like to thank my thesis committee members Dr. Gregory Waselkov, Dr. Marsha Hamilton, and Dr. Philip Carr my thesis mentor. Thanks to Bonnie Gums for her help with the analysis and Sarah Mattics for assisting with structure and distribution maps. Dr. Moira Amado Miller also deserves thanks for assisting with editing.

## References

- Coker, WS. 1999. Pensacola, 1686-1821. *Archaeology of Colonial Pensacola*. Pensacola, FL: University Press of Florida. p13, 30, 42-44.
- Carruth W. 1991. Artifact Assemblages. (Phase I: 1989-1991). *University of South Alabama, Anthropological Monograph*, No. 1. Mobile AL. p.84
- Deagan, K. 1987. *Artifacts of the Spanish Colonies of Florida the Caribbean, Vol. 1, Ceramics, Glassware, and Beads*. Washington DC. Smithsonian Institute Press. p.26, 30, 53, 77, 78, 103.
- Gums, B. 2002. Earth fast (Pieux en Terre) Structures at Old Mobile. *Historical Archaeology*. 1:13-16, 19-24.
- Hamilton, P J. 1946. *The Founding of Mobile, 1702-1718*. Mobile, AL. Colonial Mobile Bookshop. p 9, 11, 12.
- Hamilton, T. M. 1980. *Colonial Frontier Guns*. Union City. TN: Pioneer Press. p.138
- Higginbotham, J. 1977. Beginning the Establishment. *Old Mobile: Fort de la Louisiane, 1702-1711*. Mobile AL. Museum of the City of Mobile. p 49-50.
- Karklins, K. 1985. Glass Beads. *Levin Catalogue*. Parks, Canada. p.11.
- Kidd, KE. and Kidd MA. 1970. A Classification System for Glass Beads for the Use of Field Archaeologists. *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeological and History*. Ottawa, ON. p.223, 225.
- Thomas, DH. 1997. *Archaeology*. Urquhart Aw editor. U.S.A.: Wadsworth Thompson Learning. p 560.
- Walthall JA. Emerson TE. 1991. French Colonial Archaeology. In: Walthall JA, editor. *French Colonial Archaeology: The Illinois Country and the Western Great Lakes*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. p 3, 11-13.
- Waselkov GA. 1997. The Archaeology of French Colonial North America, English-French Edition. *Guides to Historical Archaeological Literature*. 5: 8,9,12, 14-19, 21, 23.
- Waselkov GA. 1999. Old Mobile Archaeology. *University of South Alabama, Center for Archaeological Studies, Archaeology Booklet*. 1: 1, 3, 5.

- Waselkov GA. Gums BL. 2000. Material Culture of a Gulf Coast Plantation. *Plantation Archaeology at Rivière Aux Chiens, ca. 1725-1848*. Mobile, Alabama: The University of South Alabama Center for Archaeological Studies. p 155.
- Waselkov GA. 2002. French Colonial Archaeology at Old Mobile: An Introduction. *Historical Archaeology*. 1:3-6, 8, 13.