

HERITAGEDAILY

(<http://www.heritagedaily.com>)

[Home \(http://www.heritagedaily.com\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com)

[Archæology](#)

[Palæontology \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/palæontology-2\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/palæontology-2)

[Palæanthropology \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/paleoanthropology\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/paleoanthropology)

[Anthropology \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/anthropology\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/anthropology)

[Heritage \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/heritage\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/heritage)

[Natural World \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/natural-world\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/natural-world)

[Featured \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/featured-articles\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/category/featured-articles)

[About](#)

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

Search

Oldest European fort in the inland US discovered in Appalachians



Posted by: [HeritageDaily \(http://www.heritagedaily.com/author/heritagedaily\)](http://www.heritagedaily.com/author/heritagedaily), July 24, 2013

The remains of the earliest European fort in the interior of what is now the United States have been discovered by a team of archaeologists, providing new insight into the start of the U.S colonial era and the all-too-human reasons spoiling Spanish dreams of gold and glory.

Spanish Captain Juan Pardo and his men built Fort San Juan in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in 1567, nearly 20 years before Sir Walter Raleigh's first colony at Roanoke and 40 years before the Jamestown

HeritageDaily

Heritage Daily is an independent online academic magazine, dedicated to the heritage and history of the world.

We identified the need for a central resource offering the latest news in archaeology, palæontology and associated disciplines.

[Popular](#)

[Recent](#)

[Comments](#)



<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/04/stonehegeologists-overturn-standing-theory-about-the-standing-stone/89>

[Stonehenge: geologists overturn standing theory about the standing stone](#)

<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/04/sgeologists-overturn-standing-theory-about-the-standing-stone/89>

April 7, 2011



<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/10/new-1/5>

settlers established England's presence in the region. Oldest European fort in the inland US ...

Fort San Juan and six others that together stretched from coastal South Carolina into eastern Tennessee were occupied for less than 18 months before the Native Americans destroyed them, killing all but one of the Spanish soldiers who manned the garrisons, said University of Michigan archaeologist Robin Beck.

Beck, an assistant professor in the U-M Department of Anthropology and assistant curator at the U-M Museum of Anthropology, is working with archaeologists Christopher Rodning of Tulane University and David Moore of Warren Wilson College to excavate the site near the city of Morganton in western North Carolina, nearly 300 miles from the Atlantic Coast.

The Berry site, named in honor of the stewardship of landowners James and the late Pat Berry, is located along a tributary of the Catawba River and was the location of the Native American town of Jbara, part of the mound-building Mississippian culture that flourished in the southeastern U.S. between 800 and about 1500 CE.

In 2004, with support from the National Geographic Society and the National Science Foundation, Beck and his colleagues began excavating several of the houses occupied by Spanish soldiers at Jbara, where Pardo built Fort San Juan. Pardo named this small colony of Spanish houses Cuenca, after his own hometown in Spain. Yet the remains of the fort itself eluded discovery until last month.

We have known for more than a decade where the Spanish soldiers were living, Rodning said. This summer we were trying to learn more about the Mississippian mound at Berry, one that was built by the people of Jbara, and instead we discovered part of the fort. For all of us, it was an incredible moment.

Using a combination of large-scale excavations and geophysical techniques like magnetometry, which provides x-ray-like images of what lies below the surface, the archaeologists have now been able to identify sections of the fort's defensive moat or ditch, a likely corner bastion and a graveled surface that formed an entryway to the garrison.



Credit : University of Michigan

Excavations in the moat conducted in late June reveal it to have been a large V-shaped feature measuring 5.5 feet deep and 15 feet across. Spanish artifacts recovered this summer include iron nails and tacks, Spanish majolica pottery, and an iron clothing hook of the sort used for fastening doublets and attaching sword scabbards to belts.

Fort San Juan was the first and largest of the garrisons that Pardo founded as part of an ambitious effort to colonize the American South. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, who had established the Spanish colonies of St. Augustine and Santa Elena in 1565 and 1566, respectively, spearheaded this effort. Of the six garrisons that Pardo built, Fort San Juan is the only one to have been discovered by archaeologists.

During the brief time the Spaniards were at Jbara, Beck says, they were actively prospecting for gold but never found it. Yet the gold was there: in the early 1800s, American settlers found so much just lying on the surface near rivers that a 17-pound gold nugget was used as a doorstop and a U.S. mint was established in Charlotte, triggering the first gold rush in U.S. history.

Had the people of Jbara given Pardo's soldiers more time to discover this gold, Spain would probably have launched an expedition in 1567 of 19624, England would have had difficulty establishing its foothold

technologies-challenge-old-ideas-about-early-hominid-diets/12162)

New technologies challenge old ideas about early hominid diets

(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/10/technologies-challenge-old-ideas-about-early-hominid-diets/12162) October 14, 2011



(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2012/08/odyssey-marine-and-cameron-peer-out-of-control-on-hms-victory/49961)

Odyssey Marine and Cameron Peer Out of Control on HMS Victory

(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2012/08/cmarine-and-cameron-peer-out-of-control-on-hms-victory/49961) August 3, 2012



(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2012/07/the-myth-of-roman-britain-part-one/47692)

The Myth of Roman Britain? Part One

(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2012/07/the-myth-of-roman-britain-part-one/47692) July 19, 2012



(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/05/an-interpretation-of-the-ancient-egyptian-concept-of-death-and-dying/3610)

An Interpretation of the Ancient Egyptian Concept of Death and Dying

(http://www.heritagedaily.com/2011/05/an-interpretation-of-the-ancient-egyptian-concept-of-death-and-dying/3610) May 29, 2011

Facebook

Find us on Facebook



Archaeology News

Like You like this.

You and 16,730 others like Archaeology News.



Facebook social plugin

at Jamestown and the entire southeastern part of what is now the US might instead have become part of ...
Latin America.

Why did the Mississippians wipe the Spaniards out so quickly? Beck and colleagues argue that originally, the Spanish bartered with the natives for food.

“The soldiers believed that when their gifts were accepted, it meant that the native people were their subjects,” Beck said. “But to the natives, it was simply an exchange. When the soldiers ran out of gifts, they expected the natives to keep on feeding them. By that time, they had also committed what Spanish documents refer to as ‘indiscretions’ with native women, which may have been another reason that native men decided they had to go. So food and sex were probably two of the main reasons for destroying Spanish settlements and forts.”

Moore said the significance of Fort San Juan extends far beyond the Carolina Piedmont.

“The events at Fort San Juan represent a microcosm of the colonial experience across the continent,” he said. “Spain’s failure created an opening that England exploited at Jamestown in 1607, when America’s familiar frontier narrative begins. For Native Americans, though, this was the beginning of a long-term and often tragic reshaping of their precolonial world.”

Header Image Credit : University of Michigan

Contributing Source : [University of Michigan \(http://www.umich.edu/\)](http://www.umich.edu/)

HeritageDaily (<http://www.heritedaily.com>) : Archaeology News : Archaeology Press Releases



<http://www.archtools.eu>


Share! Tweet 9 Like 65 0

HeritageDaily


About the author (<http://www.heritedaily.com/author/heritedaily/>)

Heritage Daily is an independent online archaeology magazine, dedicated to the heritage and historical sector. We identified the need for a central resource offering the latest archaeological news, journals, articles and press releases.


Related Posts

 (<http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/replica-of-10000-year-old-mesolithic-dwelling-built-by-ucd-experimental-archaeologists-on-campus/96841>)
[Replica of 10,000 year old mesolithic dwelling built by UCD experimental archaeologists on campus \(http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/replica-of-10000-year-old-mesolithic-dwelling-built-by-ucd-experimental-archaeologists-on-campus/96841\)](http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/replica-of-10000-year-old-mesolithic-dwelling-built-by-ucd-experimental-archaeologists-on-campus/96841)

Archaeologists from University College Dublin have built a replica of a Mesolithic or Middle St ...

 (<http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/texas-state-excavates-centuries-old-gulf-of-mexico-shipwreck/96842>)
[Texas State excavates centuries-old Gulf of Mexico shipwreck \(http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/texas-state-excavates-centuries-old-gulf-of-mexico-shipwreck/96842\)](http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/texas-state-excavates-centuries-old-gulf-of-mexico-shipwreck/96842)

Researchers from The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University, in ...

 (<http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/university-archaeologists-unearth-well-kept-secrets/96766>)
[University archaeologists unearth well-kept secrets \(http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/university-archaeologists-unearth-well-kept-secrets/96766\)](http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/university-archaeologists-unearth-well-kept-secrets/96766)

<http://www.heritedaily.com/2013/07/university-archaeologists-unearth-well-kept-secrets/96766>



<http://www.archtools.eu>

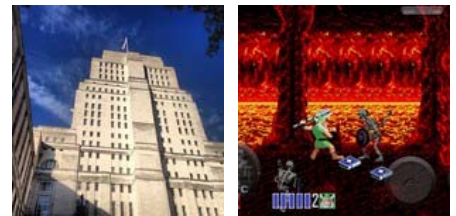
HeritageDaily Instagram



<http://instagram.com> <http://instagram.com>



<http://instagram.com> <http://instagram.com>



<http://instagram.com> <http://instagram.com>

Social

2193 FOLLOWERS 16731 FANS
<https://twitter.com/HeritageDaily> <https://www.facebook.com/HeritageDaily>



Archaeologists from the University of York say a virtually intact Late Roman well discovered ne ...



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/archaeologists-to-lift-lid-on-mysterious-stone-coffin-at-richard-iii-site/96423>)

Archaeologists to lift lid on mysterious stone coffin at Richard III site

(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/archaeologists-to-lift-lid-on-mysterious-stone-coffin-at-richard-iii-site/96423>)

Archaeologists are hoping to discover who was buried in a 14th century stone coffin found near ...



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/classical-temple-in-maryport-the-most-north-western-in-roman-world/96416>)

Classical Temple in Maryport the most north western in Roman World

(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/classical-temple-in-maryport-the-most-north-western-in-roman-world/96416>)

An archaeological excavation team, led by Professor Ian Haynes and Tony Wilmott, has been peeli ...



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/discovery-of-stone-monument-at-el-peru-waka-adds-new-chapter-to-ancient-maya-history/96401>)

Discovery of stone monument at El Per€Waka€adds new chapter to ancient Maya history

(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/discovery-of-stone-monument-at-el-peru-waka-adds-new-chapter-to-ancient-maya-history/96401>)

Discovery of stone monument at El Per€Waka€adds new chapter to ancient Maya history

3 comments



(<http://livefyre.c>)
13 people listening

Sign in or Post as Guest

Comment input area with a text box, a '+ Follow' button, and a 'Post comment as...' dropdown menu.

Newest | Oldest



katethegreat

1 day ago

Please define what "U-M" is before you start abbreviating it! Is it University of Maine? That's certainly not the abbreviation they use.

Like Reply



Griff

1 day ago

@katethegreat Please read the story thoroughly before posting awesome comments like this one! It says University of Michigan like 4 times on this page. Why did you think University of Maine and then go on to correct him on for incorrectly abbreviating it? The author could however add significant credibility to this source by correcting "University of Michigan" as is written twice above.

Like Reply



Griff

1 day ago

@katethegreat Please read the story thoroughly before posting awesome comments like this one! It says University of Michigan like 4 times on this page. Why did you think University of Maine and then go on to correct him on for incorrectly abbreviating it? The author could however add significant credibility to this source by correcting "University of Michigan" as is written twice above.

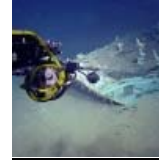
Like Reply



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/replica-of-10000-year-old-mesolithic-dwelling-built-by-ucd-experimental-archaeologists-on-campus/96841>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/extinct-ancient-ape-did-not-walk-like-a-human-study-show/96849>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/texas-state-excavates-centuries-old-gulf-of-mexico-shipwreck/96842>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/universi-archaeologists-unearth-well-kept-secrets/96766>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/the-archaeology-of-morphine-michael-jacksons-darkest-hours/96609>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/archaeo-to-lift-lid-on-mysterious-stone-coffin-at-richard-i-site/96423>)



(<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/classical-temple-in-maryport-the-most-north-western-in-roman-world/96416>)



<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/universi-researchers-discover-lost-elizabethan-craftsmanship-to-match-21st-century-technology/96412>)



<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/museum-in-china-harbouring-thousands-of-fake-artefacts/96407>)



<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2013/07/discover-of-stone-monument-at-el-peru-waka-adds-new-chapter-to-ancient-maya-history/96401>)



ADVERTISE
HERE

EMAIL
info@heritagemedia.net