



HISTORY MOBILE

GET EMAIL UPDATES

Like 15m



Vkrz v	Yghrv	Qhz v	Wrs lfv	Jdp hv	Vkrs	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
Wk.lvGd Iq K.lwru	Dvn K.lwR U\	K.lwR U\ Olw	K.lwR U\ Eaj	Kxqju K.lwru	Vshhfkhv) Dxgr		



RSS

Like History in the Headlines on Facebook

Lik

July 23, 2013

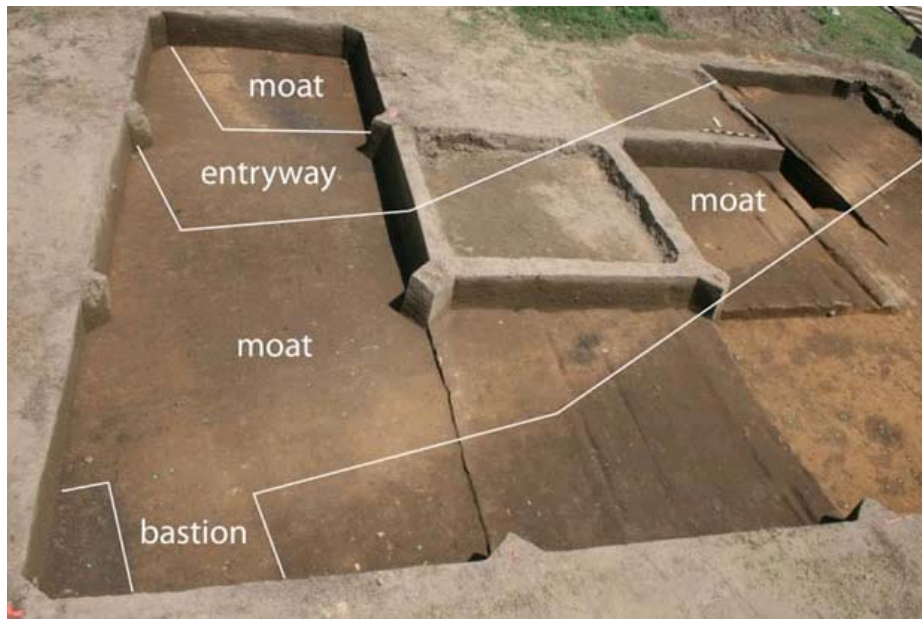
Advertisement

Dufkdhrcj lwG lfryhuR ghwFrarqdoIruwq X IV Iqwhuru

By [Barbara Maranzani](#)

<input type="button" value="Recommend"/> 938	<input type="button" value="Send"/>	95	<input type="button" value="Tweet"/>	<input type="button" value="StumbleUpon"/> 51	<input type="button" value="Email"/>
--	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------

This week, a team of archeologists announced the discovery of the remains of a long-lost 16th century Spanish garrison in western North Carolina that predates the earliest English settlements in North America by decades. Established in 1567, Fort San Juan was just one of at least six military installations built by the Spanish across the Appalachian mountain range, stretching from the coast of South Carolina to eastern Tennessee—and the only one of the forts scientists have located so far.



Layout of Fort San Juan excavation site. (Credit: University of Michigan)

In 1566, Spanish explorer Juan Pardo began the first of two expeditions along the southeast coast of North America, establishing a series of fortifications in what is now South Carolina. The following year, Pardo travelled west, journeying almost 300 miles into what is now North Carolina where he and his men constructed Fort San Juan and a small cluster of houses. Pardo named the settlement Cuenco, after his Spanish hometown.

Most Popular

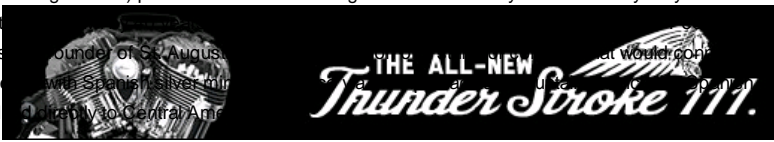
- [Lost World War II Bomber Crew Found After 69 Years](#)
- [The Hottest Day on Earth, 100 Years Ago](#)
- [Entire Army Sacrificed in Denmark Returns to the Surface](#)
- [9 Things You May Not Know About the Declaration of Independence](#)
- [5 Things You May Not Know About Lincoln, Slavery and Emancipation](#)
- [10 Things You May Not Know About Abraham Lincoln](#)
- [America's First Multi-Millionaire, 250 Years Later](#)
- [9 Things You May Not Know About Gerald Ford](#)

Top Categories

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ancient History | British History |
| American Civil War | Sports |
| Animals | Royalty |
| World War II | Space |

History.com on Facebook

Coming less than two years after the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine, Florida, Pardo's Fort San Juan (the first and largest of his six garrisons) predated Sir Walter Raleigh's doomed colony at Roanoke by 20 years and the English arrival at Jamestown. Menéndez de Avilés, founder of St. Augustine, had Spanish soldiers mistakenly believed to be the first to settle the interior of North America.



Of course, the Spanish weren't the first to settle in the Appalachian region. Long before their arrival, the Native American Mississippian tribe inhabited the area and established a settlement of their own, known as Joara, along with many of the nearby Catawba River. Interactions between the two groups went smoothly at first, but quickly soured and Spain's foothold in this region of the New World didn't last long. Just 18 months after Fort San Juan was built, the Mississippians attacked it, burning it and the surrounding buildings to the ground and killing all but one of the garrison's soldiers (Pardo had left months earlier for a different settlement along the coast). The Spanish soon gave up on the region. Early efforts at gold prospecting in North Carolina may not have panned out for the conquistadors, but it brought riches to later settlers. More than 200 years after Pardo's arrival, the discovery of the precious metal in Cabarrus County set off America's first gold rush—nearly 50 years before the more famous prospecting boom in California.

© 1996-2013, A&E Television Networks, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Nearly a decade ago, archeologists had found evidence of the soldier's housing at Cuenco, but had been stymied in their search for the fort itself. This summer's discovery, in fact, happened accidentally. The team, comprised of members from the University of Michigan, New Orleans's Tulane University and Warren Wilson College in nearby Asheville, North Carolina, was actually conducting research on the Mississippian-built mud mounds at the Joara site when they stumbled upon evidence of the fort's remains. When an initial dig turned up unusual soil disturbances at the site, the team brought in a magnetometer to "x-ray" the subsurface, allowing them to identify the outlines of the moat long believed to have surrounded the garrison, and additional large-scale excavations revealed its shape and size—a V-shaped area 5.5 feet deep, 12 to 15 feet across and up to 100 feet in length. In addition to the moat, the team recovered personal items belonging to the Spanish soldiers who lived—and died—at the fort, including pottery shards, nails and tacks and iron hooks used for fastening clothing and swords. They also believed they've located the garrison's graveled entry path and the possible location of "strong" house in a corner of the fort, where Spanish soldiers would have stored tools and weaponry. Further excavations of the site are planned for next year.

Recommend 938 Send 95 Tweet 51 Email

Categories: [Archaeology](#), [Colonial America](#), [North Carolina](#)

« Previous

Next »

More History in the Headlines



Archaeologists Discover "Lost City" in Cambodian Jungle



Hanging Gardens Existed, but not in Babylon



Evidence of Cannibalism Found at Jamestown



The Court-Martial of Paul Revere

More From History.com

- Jul 25, 1978: World's first "test tube baby" born (This Day in History)
Jan 15, 1951: The "Witch of Buchenwald" is sentenced to prison (This Day in History)
Feb 3, 1780: Early American mass murder changes common perceptions of crime (This Day in History)
Oct 12, 1915: British nurse executed in WWI

From Around the Web

- The Future of Energy Won't Be Oil (University of San Francisco)
Major Factors to Consider When Buying a Home (YouTube)
13 Things a Movie Theater Employee Won't Tell You (Reader's Digest)
Swimsuits Through the Years (Travel Channel)

Advertisement for History.com featuring 'FBI founded' (7/26/1908), 'Swamp People' (SEE IT NOW), 'Virmanas Video - Ancient Aliens - H2 on History.com' (5,142 people recommend this), and 'Shelby Packs His Guns Video - The Legend of Shelby the Swamp Man - History.com' (24 people recommend this). Includes navigation links like 'HISTORY en Español', 'HISTORY Shop', 'MILITARY HISTORY', and 'DressUpChallenge'. Also features a 'Facebook social plugin'.

More to Explore



Mountain Men
Follow Eustace, Tom and Marty as they devote their lives to surviving off the grid, on their own terms.



Ask History: Rosie the Riveter
Get the real story behind this famous World War II icon.



Gettysburg
Explore 7 ways the battle changed the course of the Civil War.



Swamp People: After the Hunt
Watch the exclusive web series.

25

LEAD STORY

World's first "test tube baby" born, 1978

On this day in 1978, Louise Joy Brown, the world's first baby to be conceived via in vitro fertilization (IVF) is born at Oldham and District General Hospi...

Shop HISTORY



The Bible - The Epic Miniseries DVD



Men Who Built America DVD \$29.95

See More

(This Day in History)

[Jan 24, 1972: Japanese soldier found hiding on Guam](#) (This Day in History)

[Dec 10, 1967: Music star dies in Wisconsin plane crash](#) (This Day in History)

[Confessions of Hotel Housekeepers](#) (AARP.org)

[20 Best Aquariums in the US](#) (Travel Channel)

Recommended by