

UWF Luna Colony Discovery or Mistaken Identity?

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The University of West Florida (UWF) has claimed the discovery of the 1559 Luna Colony location at the Emanuel Point Site (8Es1) on Pensacola Bay. They may be right but if they are it is not due to scientific testing of various hypotheses, rather, it is a premature statement followed by a brilliant media campaign.

The Smithsonian Institution originally reported the Emanuel Point Site in 1885. Based on the Smithsonian study, the site was definitely a Native village site with two burial mounds. The recent UWF research has revealed that the site also contains 16th-Century Spanish artifacts. The question is ... how did the Spanish artifacts get there?

Unfortunately, UWF proposed no hypotheses to be tested at the Emanuel Point Site. Within two months of the discovery of 16th-Century Spanish artifacts at the site the Luna Colony claim was made by UWF. An astute media campaign by UWF convinced most people that the site was the Luna Colony. However, scientific method calls for developmental hypotheses to be employed and tested in a timely manner. Hypothesis development and testing takes years, not just two months.

Consequently, Contact Archeology Inc. has taken on the task of the scientific development and the testing of hypotheses relative to the Emanuel Point Site. The tests are based on artifacts and features recovered or to be recovered by UWF archeologists excavating at the site. The sources of the archeological data are, currently, comprised of UWF news releases, social media, and papers read at archeological conferences. Regretfully, no technical reports have been released by UWF.

The Contact Archeology Inc. investigations are completely independent of the conclusions of the University of West Florida. Contact Archeology Inc. is simply using the UWF archeological recovery data that is available to test hypotheses concerning the Emanuel Point Site.

The Hypotheses:

1. The site is the location of Santa Maria, the 1559 Luna Colony.
2. The site was an active Native village during the 16th-Century. The Natives obtained the Spanish artifacts through trade, gifts, or salvage relative to 16th-Century Spanish expeditions, possibly those of Pineda (1518), Narvaez (1528), Soto (1539), and Luna (1559).
3. The site was a Native village during the Luna Expedition that was used by parties of Spanish shipwreck salvors from the Luna Colony located elsewhere on the bay.

Testing the Hypotheses:

1. Determine if any legitimate 16th-Century Spanish structures, firehearths, burials, and refuse pits are present at the site and if so, how many.
2. Determine the age of the 16th-Century Spanish artifacts that have been found mixed with Native artifacts in the general midden at the site. Are they from the time of Luna Colony or earlier or even later or throughout the 16th-Century?
3. Locate the anchorage of the Luna fleet based on the presence of scattered in-situ anchors. The anchorage of the fleet was reported by the Spanish to be near the colony. Find the anchorage and use it as a clue to find the colony site.

The developing conclusions of the Contact Archeology Inc. hypothesis testing, based on UWF excavations at the Emanuel Point Site, will be periodically posted on the Archeology Ink website (archeologyink.com).