

The 1559 Luna Colony: What Would the Actual Archeological Site Look Like?

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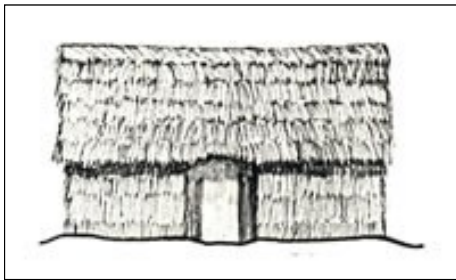
The University of West Florida (UWF) claimed in 2015 that they had found the 1559 Spanish Luna Colony at the Emanuel Point Site (8Es1) on Pensacola Bay. They based their claim on surface finds and Spanish artifacts mixed with Native artifacts. It is not that simple. For an archeological site to be the legitimate Luna Colony location, certain subsurface archeological features are required. The necessary archeological criteria might eventually be found at the 8Es1 site but to claim a major site after only two months of fieldwork with no features present is not prudent.

The colony of over 1500 people lived at the colony site intermittently for over two years. They would have built structures, buried their dead, built numerous fires hearths, and likely dug numerous garbage pits. These criteria have not been substantiated by UWF.

We can look to other early Spanish colony sites in the Southeastern United States for examples of subsurface features relative to what might be found at the Pensacola Bay Luna Colony site, wherever it might be located. The following data and images exemplify such features by category and sites.

Structures

St. Augustine, Florida: This Spanish colony was founded on the Atlantic Coast in 1565. Subsurface structure remains have been found at the site. (images from : Historical Archeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History Website).



Artist reconstruction of a Spanish thatched structure: drawing by Albert Manucy



Structure Remains and Features



Large, Burned, Posthole

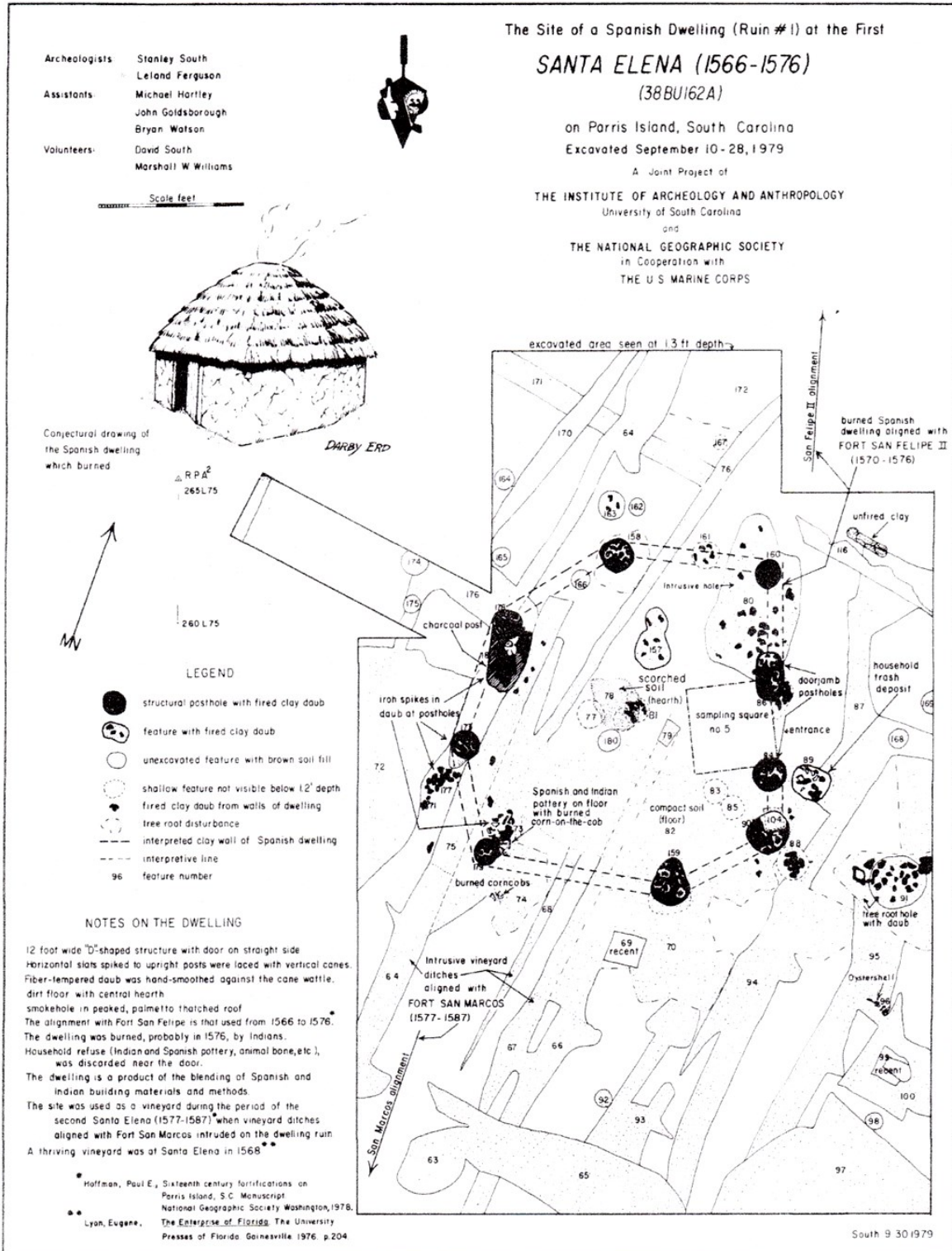


Fountain of Youth Park Site, 1565

Fort San Juan, North Carolina: This Spanish settlement was founded in 1567. Subsurface structure remains have been found at the site. (Beck, Robin, August 20, 2013. "[Finding Fort San Juan in the Appalachians](#)". Cambridge University Press. 2013.)



Santa Elena, South Carolina: This Spanish settlement was founded in 1566. Subsurface structure remains have been found at the site. (Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina).



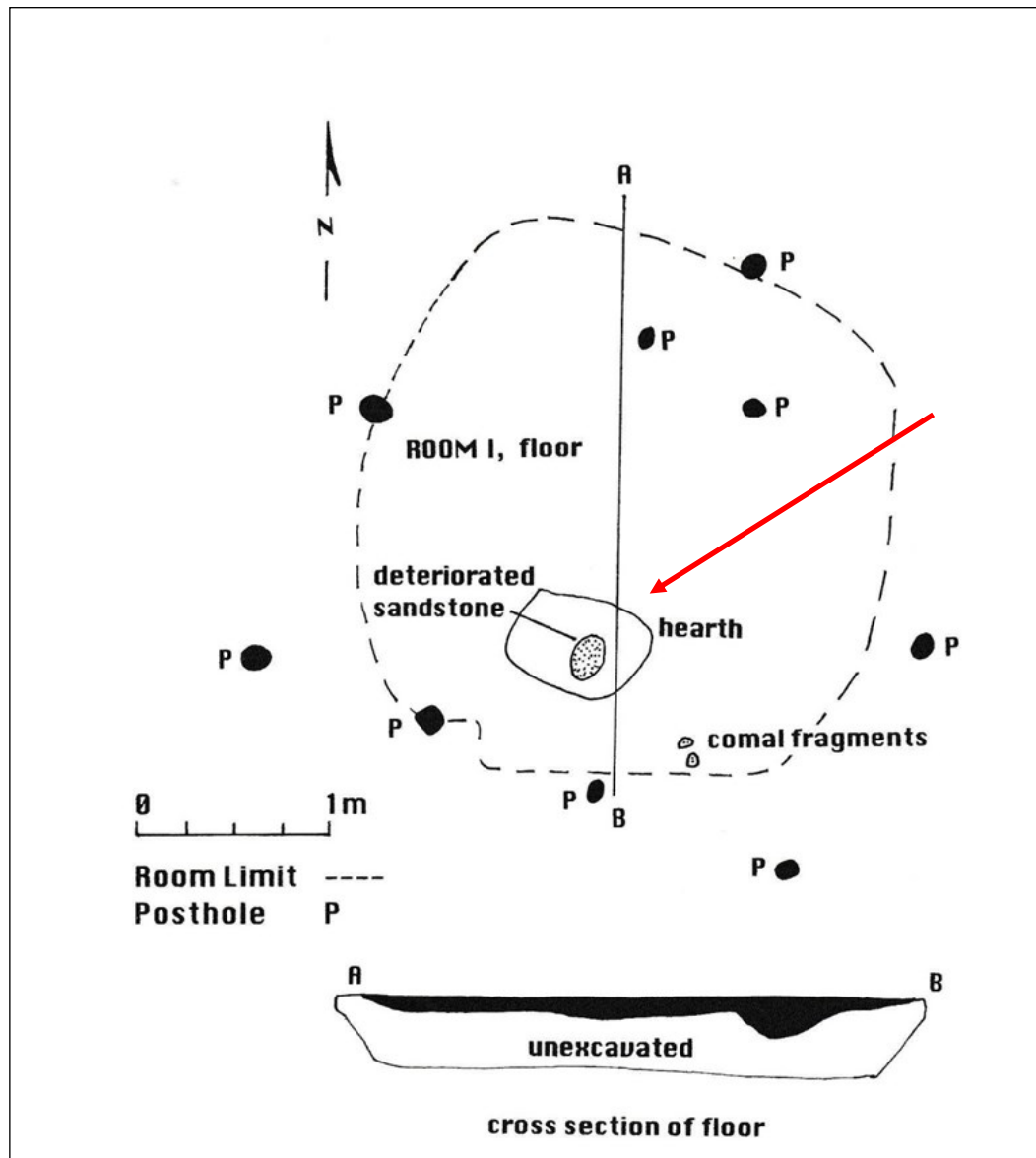
Burials

St. Augustine, Florida, Fountain of Youth Park: This Spanish colony was founded on the Atlantic Coast in 1565. Subsurface Spanish burial remains have been found at the site. These date from 1572-86. (images from : St. Augustine Register, First Coast News; Carl Halbirt, St. Augustine City Archeologist).



Fire Hearths

Coronado Campsite, New Mexico: This Spanish expedition journeyed into the current U.S. Southwest in 1540. A campsite of numerous structures was found by archeologists. Fire hearths were evident among the remains. (image from : Vierra and Hordes, in, *The Coronado Expedition to Tierra Nueva*, University Press of Colorado, 1997. Adapted from illustration by Ann Noble and Ron Stauber.)



Garbage Pits

Spanish Colonies from South Carolina and Florida: These garbage pits are from the Spanish Colonies of: (upper) Santa Elena in South Carolina (1566) and (lower) St. Augustine (1565). (images from: Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Stanley South and Chester DePratter archeologists; The City of St. Augustine, Carl Halbirt archeologist).



Conclusions

Contact Archeology Inc. is exploring the time period of the first Spanish expeditions into the current southeastern United States. It was a fascinating and complex time in human history. European countries were vying for control of vast territories in the New World of north and south America. Native empires were posturing one with another and against the new threat of strangers from the east. Both cultures, east and west, were unsure of what tomorrow would bring.

The Spanish Expedition of 1559, led by Tristan de Luna, was but a small cog in a very large wheel of international intrigue. It is, however, a real chance for us, as modern day researchers to catch a glimpse of the lives of the Natives and Spaniards on the Northern Gulf Coast in the years of the 1500s.

It is important that we “get it right” relative to the locations of these early Spanish settlements. By doing so we establish geographic and cultural lynchpins to further the studies of this intriguing time period. We accomplish this by solid, scientific hypothesis testing, not by sensational news releases

Subsurface archeological features will “tell the tale.” Where are the Spanish structures, the burials, the fire hearths, the garbage pits ... ? Find them and there will be the Luna Colony.

