IDENTIFYING FORT SAN JUAN: A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH OCCUPATION AT THE BERRY SITE, NORTH CAROLINA

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In January 1567, a Spanish expedition under the command of Capt. Juan Pardo arrived at the native town of Joara, located deep in the interior along the upper Catawba River in what is now western North Carolina. Here, Pardo founded a garrison, Fort San Juan, and manned it with 30 soldiers. Fort San Juan de Joara was occupied for nearly eighteen months and was the earliest European settlement in the interior of the present-day United States. This was the most important of several forts that Pardo built during the course of his expedition across the Carolinas and eastern Tennessee, but all were destroyed by natives in 1568. Archaeological research indicates that the Berry site (31BK22), located near Morganton, North Carolina, was the site of Joara and Fort San Juan. In this paper, we use documents from Pardo's expeditions to suggest material correlates for Fort San Juan; we then compare these specific correlates with archaeological data from the Berry site. These data include sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics and hardware which we have recovered in association with a compound of several burned buildings and large features. We conclude that this compound represents material remains from Fort San Juan.

Columbus's landfall in the Bahamas in October 1492 initiated what was perhaps the most dramatic century of cultural exchange in human history. Over two continents, the native peoples of the Americas withstood waves of explorers, colonists, and proselytizers from Spain, England, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, and other distant centers of European colonial aspiration. Of these nations, Spain was by far the most ambitious in its early efforts at exploration and conquest (Bray 1993; Deagan 2003; Thomas 1989, 1990, 1991). Archaeological research at the Berry site in North Carolina (Figure 1) sheds significant new light on this time of the first sustained contact between Europeans and the peoples of North America, as its borderland setting was the northern frontier of Spain's long reach (e.g., Hoffman 1990; Hudson 1990; Lyon 1976; Paar 1999). Here, in January 1567 at a native village named Joara, Capt. Juan Pardo founded a garrison, Fort San Juan, and manned it with 30 soldiers. Although occupied for little more than 18 months, until May 1568, this was the earliest European settlement founded in the interior of what is now the United States. Its founding also initiated one of the longest periods of sustained contact between Europeans and the native peoples of North America's interior until the seventeenth century. Our research into the long-forgotten episode of Fort San Juan's construction and subsequent fiery end promises to shed new light on the history of Spanish colonization along the Atlantic frontier and on the ethnogenesis of this region's historic period native societies.

The Juan Pardo Expeditions and Fort San Juan

During the first half of the sixteenth century, a succession of Spanish explorers failed in their efforts to colonize what is now the southeastern United States (León [1521], Ayllón [1526], Narváez [1528], de Soto [1539–44], and Luna [1559–61]). In 1565–66, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés finally succeeded in founding two small settlements on the southern Atlantic Coast: San Agustín, founded September 1565 in northern Florida, and Santa Elena, founded April 1566 on present-day Parris Island, South Carolina; the latter was to be the principal site of Menéndez's colonial aspirations (Hoffman 1990; Hudson 1990; Lyon 1976, 1984; Paar 1999). When Philip II learned of this success, he ordered reinforcements for the new colony. In July 1566, Capt. Juan Pardo arrived at Santa Elena with a company of 250 soldiers and began to fortify the settlement. As the Santa Elena colony was ill prepared to feed this large contingent of men for very long, however, Menéndez ordered Pardo to prepare half of his army for an expedition into the interior lands that lay behind the Atlantic Coast. Pardo's task was to explore the region, to claim the land for Spain while pacifying local Indians, and to find an overland route from Santa Elena to the silver mines in Zacatecas, central Mexico. Pardo departed with 125 men on December 1, 1566.

In January 1567, after having traversed much of the Carolina Piedmont along the Wateree and Catawba Rivers, Pardo and his soldiers arrived at Joara (Figure 2), a large native town located in the upper Catawba Valley at the base of the Appalachians (DePratter et al. 1983:132; Hudson 1990:25). In their original reconstruction of Pardo's entrada through this region, DePratter et al. (1983:132) located Joara at the McDowell site (31MC41), near the present town of Marion, North Carolina, 20 miles west of the Berry site. Since then, archaeological data—which we will discuss in this article—indicate that Berry, near present Morganton, is

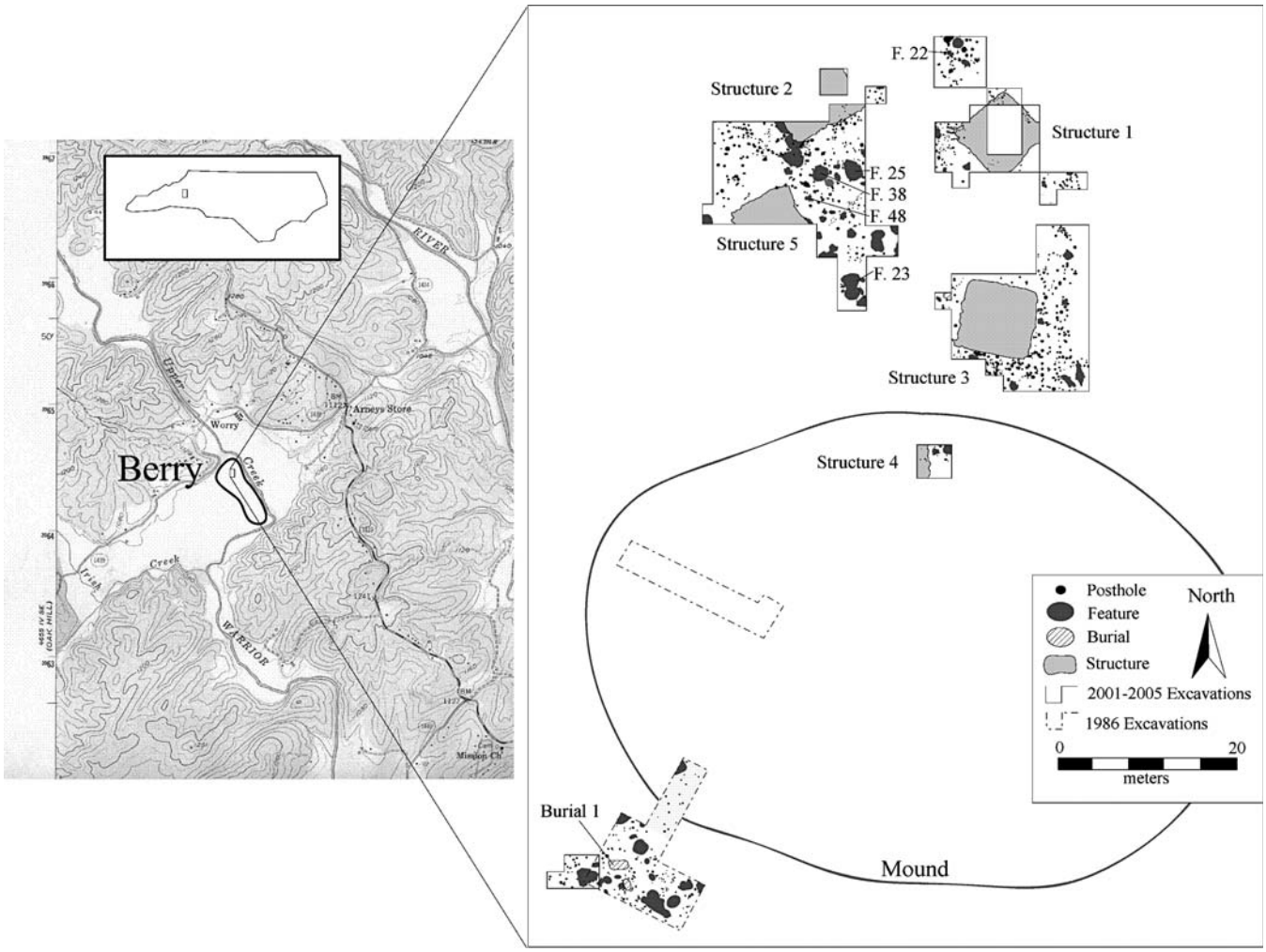

Figure 1. Berry site location; plan view, Berry site excavations.

the likely location of Joara. In his book-length study of the Hernando de Soto expedition, which passed through Joara in May 1540, Charles Hudson (1997:187, 480) has agreed with our identification of this town as the Berry site. The chief of Joara, referred to in the Pardo documents as Joara Mico (Mico being the native term for regional leader [Anderson 1994:96; Hudson 1990:62]), enjoyed some political authority over several neighboring communities within the upper Catawba Valley (Beck and Moore 2002:201). Pardo renamed this town Cuenca, after his native city in Spain. At Joara, he built a garrison, Fort San Juan, and manned it with 30 soldiers. This was to be the first and most important garrison along his proposed route to central Mexico (Hudson 1990:150).

Earlier Spanish expeditions in the interior had constructed seasonal encampments, such as the winter forts that de Soto made at Apalachee (1539) and Chicasa (1540), or had temporarily taken over native villages, such as Luna's appropriation of Nanipacana (1560), but Juan Pardo's founding of Fort San Juan was an explicit attempt to expand Santa Elena to the deep frontiers of La Florida and to simultaneously forge strategic alliances with local native leaders. In so doing, he founded what we suggest was the earliest European colony (i.e., a settlement having intended longevity or permanence) in the interior of what is now the United States. In his written account of the first expedition, Pardo recorded that Joara was "located at the foot of a range of mountains, surrounded by rivers" (Pardo 1990:312). There, he said that he "found a large number of Indians and caciques . . .. I made a fort where Boyano, my sergeant, and certain soldiers remained with their munitions of powder, matchcord, balls, and maize to eat" (Pardo 1990:312). As we have noted, de Soto visited this same village briefly in 1540, though documents from his expedition refer to the town as Xualla (Hudson 1997:187; Hudson et al. 1984:67).

Pardo left Joara and returned to Santa Elena on March 7, 1567. During the course of that summer, Sergeant Moyano (Moyano is the accepted modern spelling) went northwest across the mountains with 20 soldiers from the fort and a party of warriors from Joara to attack hostile chiefs in two different native towns (Beck 1997b).

San Juan itself was manned by a small group of 10 men until Pardo returned to Joara on September 24. Pardo received word at this time that Moyano was trapped at Chiaha, a native town in what is now eastern Tennessee, and he departed at once from Joara to the aid of Moyano and his men. Pardo arrived at Chiaha in time to relieve Moyano and his outnumbered force and then tried to continue exploring the Tennessee River Valley. Three days later, at the town of Satapo, he was informed of a plot to ambush the expedition, and so he wisely decided to turn back. At Chiaha, he and his men built a small fort and christened it Fort San Pedro. At a native town named Cauchi, probably on the upper Pigeon River in western North Carolina, they built another fort, San Pablo (Hudson 1990:40).

On November 6, Pardo's force returned to what his scribe Juan de la Bandera referred to as "the city of Cuenca and fort of San Juan which in the Indian tongue is called Joara, where he made a halt and remained twenty days because the people of his company were tired and poorly provided, that they might have a place to rest and to provide themselves" (Bandera 1990:277). Pardo again left 30 men at the fort before departing Joara. Along his return to Santa Elena, he constructed small forts at three other native villages, bringing the total number of forts to six. It is clear from their accounts that Pardo and his scribe Bandera considered Fort San Juan to be the most important of the settlements in the interior. First, this fort was manned with 30 soldiers, the largest contingent assigned to one of Pardo's frontier garrisons. Also, Bandera indicates that Pardo provided Fort San Juan with both a greater quantity of military and construction materials, and with a more extensive array of goods, than any of the other interior forts. Finally, Pardo left Alberto Escudero de Villamar in charge of Fort San Juan and ordered that Villamar was to have nominal authority over the officers left in charge of the other forts (Hudson 1990:150).

By May 1568, news reached Santa Elena that Indians had attacked all of Pardo's interior forts and that all had fallen. Only one Spanish soldier, Juan Martín de Badajoz, appears to have escaped the destruction. Although it is not known whether all of these forts were attacked at the same time, it is clear that none remained by June 1568 (Hudson 1990:176). Several factors may have had a role in the Indians' decision to destroy the forts, but two stand out: Spanish demands for food and the soldiers' improprieties with native women. Bandera recorded, for example, that "the captain commanded him [the corporal placed in charge of Fort Santiago] in the name of His Majesty ... that no one should dare bring any woman into the fort at night and that he should not depart from the command under pain of being severely punished" (1990:285). In any event, 130 soldiers and all six of the forts were lost, and with them Spain's only attempt to colonize the deep interior of northern La Florida. Indeed, no other Europeans are known to have penetrated this far into the southern Appalachians until the second half of the seventeenth century.

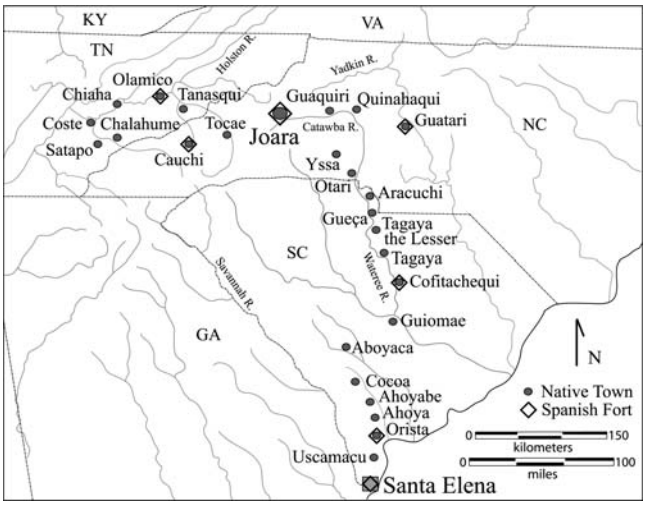

Figure 2. Native towns visited by Juan Pardo in the Carolinas and Tennessee, 1567–68.

The Material Correlates of Fort San Juan

The Pardo accounts offer several clues as to what kinds of material correlates we might find in association with the archaeological remains of Fort San Juan. There were two categories of architecture that the company used at Joara: defensive fortifications and the houses where the soldiers lived. None of the documents specifically described Fort San Juan. However, Bandera did describe the fortifications at Fort Santiago, which Pardo built at the native village of Guatari, located about 150 km east of Joara along the Yadkin River (Bandera was not present on the first expedition, when Fort San Juan was built). Pardo founded Fort Santiago after his departure from Joara in November 1567. Afraid that he and his men would be recalled to Santa Elena, Bandera noted that Captain Pardo spent five days at Guatari hurriedly building two *bastardos* (Bandera 1990:238), which Hudson identifies as "bastions ... of logs and earth" (1990:151). When no such summons came, Pardo's soldiers—along with the people of Guatari and neighboring towns—spent 17 more days building four tall *cavalleros* (Bandera 1990:239) of thick wood and earth, and a palisade of high poles and earth. Fort Santiago clearly required large amounts of earth and wood, including bastions and a tall palisade; given that Fort San Juan was to be the principal fort in the interior, we would expect Pardo to have invested no less effort in its construction.

During his first expedition, Pardo instructed the chiefs of several native towns, including Joara, to build houses

Table 1. Military and Construction Supplies Issued by Juan Pardo to Fort San Juan.

235 pounds of harquebus powder	4 crossbows	42 chisels
201 pounds of matchcord	240 crossbow bolts	6 shovels
235 pounds of lead	2 socketed axes	4 mattocks
34 pounds of nails	4 iron wedges	4 picks

Source: Hudson 1990:148–150.

for the soldiers who would be stationed in their towns along the proposed road to Zacatecas. When Pardo arrived at Joara during his second expedition, Bandera noted he "found built a new house of wood with a large elevated room full of maize, which the cacique of the village, who is called Joada [*sic*] Mico had built by the command of the captain" (1990:265). At several of the towns where Pardo ordered houses built, Bandera noted that the structures were large, and he likely meant this in relation to typical native dwellings (Hudson 1990:141). Houses were built for Pardo's expedition at several different native towns, and we might therefore expect such buildings to reflect different native construction techniques, as the social territory that Pardo and his men traversed was marked by distinct practices of house building. Bandera (1990:263), for example, specifically described the circular floor plan and mat-covered interior of the house built for Pardo at Guatari. This is not surprising, as Guatari was situated along the western edge of the Piedmont Siouan tradition, distinguished by circular houses (e.g., Ward and Davis 1999). Pisgah peoples in the Appalachian summit area west of Guatari favored square houses (Dickens 1976), and as we illustrate, data from the Berry site suggest that the Burke phase people of Joara also favored square houses (e.g., Beck and Moore 2002; Moore et al. 2004). We expect the houses built for Pardo's soldiers to reflect native construction techniques, but it seems likely that the Spaniards contributed their labor, experience, and ideas, as well.

Bandera also listed the supplies that Pardo left at each of the interior forts; these lists may provide one of the best sources of information regarding the material correlates of Fort San Juan. Most of the artifact classes on Bandera's lists are materials that never entered into Spanish-native exchange networks, so their presence on archaeological sites deep in the interior may be taken as strong evidence of extended Spanish presence rather than short-term contact or exchange (Worth 1994). Table 1 lists the military and construction supplies that Pardo issued to Fort San Juan during his two expeditions; these quantities exceed those left at any of the other forts (Hudson 1990:148–150).

In addition to the supplies that he specifically left at the fort, Pardo carried 878 pounds of biscuit and 72 liters of wine for provisions (Hudson 1990:126–127); while the biscuit was likely carried in linen sacks unlikely to be recovered in archaeological contexts, the wine was almost certainly transported in the ceramic vessels known as olive jars—the typical containers colonial Spaniards used for transport and storage. We may thus expect the archaeological remains of Fort San Juan to include artifact classes that did not enter into documented Spanish-native exchange networks and that are very uncommon—or altogether absent—on contemporaneous interior sites, especially lead shot, nails (of all Pardo's forts, only Fort San Juan was supplied with nails), and sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics (Worth 1994). Pardo gave gifts to many of the chiefs that he met on his expeditions, including iron knives and chisels, cloth, buttons, and glass beads (Hudson 1990:135–140); we should expect to recover such items at Joara.

In sum, we suggest the following architectural and artifactual correlates of Spanish Fort San Juan. It is probable that the construction of the fort included a palisade and possible earthen embankments. The nature of structures inside the fort is uncertain, though the accounts suggest that the presence of houses larger than those typically used by natives might reflect Spanish use or occupation. Unfortunately, the archaeological remains of these fort features may be difficult to discriminate from similar native structures. The presence of certain types of Spanish artifacts may prove a better correlate of Spanish occupation. Quantities of lead shot, wrought nails, and Spanish ceramics—items that did not enter the Spanish-native trade networks—could substantiate the direct and extended presence of Spaniards and the location of Pardo's forts. We turn now to examine the Berry site with respect to these expected correlates of Spanish occupation.

The Berry Site, Joara, and Fort San Juan

Archaeological and documentary evidence (e.g., Beck 1997b; Moore 2002; Worth 1994) indicate that the Berry site (31BK22) is the location of Joara and Fort San Juan. Berry is located along Upper Creek, a tributary of the upper Catawba River, in what is now Burke County, North Carolina (Figure 1); the site covers 4.5 ha and is located at the eastern margin of a 75-ha alluvial floodplain at the junction of Upper and Irish Creeks. Systematic surface collections indicate that Berry was one of the largest late prehistoric sites in the upper Catawba Valley (Beck and Moore 2002:200; Moore 2002:61). Berry was briefly noted in Cyrus Thomas's *Catalogue of Prehistoric Works East of the Rocky Mountains* as a "mound on the west Bank of Upper Creek 8 miles north of Morganton (about 15 feet high and unexplored)" (1891:151). Both the earthen mound and the surrounding site were regularly plowed, and in 1964 the mound was bulldozed to provide fill for a low-lying area to the west of the site—probably the original borrow pit—that was often prone to flooding. Today, the remaining

mound measures about 70 m in diameter and rises to a height of about 1.5 m above the surrounding field.

During the sixteenth century, the Berry site (i.e., Joara) sat at the northeastern edge of the Mississippian cultural world and at the northwestern edge of the Spanish colonial frontier. Berry was the political and ritual center of a Mississippian chiefdom, one of many similar polities that dotted the cultural landscape of the eastern United States from A.D. 1000 to 1600 (Anderson 1994; Beck 2003; Blitz 1999; Hally 1996; Knight 1990; Muller 1997; Smith 1978). Systematic survey north and south of Berry (Beck 1997a) yielded evidence of at least 25 other sites, some of which cover as much as 2.5 ha, and ceramic analysis suggests that many are probably contemporaneous with the Berry site. Together, we believe that these sites are the core of the Berry site's regional polity, or chiefdom (Beck and Moore 2002). Moore (2002) has defined this period of occupation along the upper Catawba River as the Burke phase (A.D. 1400–1600), and he identifies its highly distinctive Burke series pottery as a regional variant of the Lamar ceramic tradition (Hally 1994; Williams and Shapiro 1990). Burke series ceramics are soapstone tempered and characterized by a preponderance of plain and complicated stamped jars (Figure 3, top) and incised cazuela bowls (Figure 3, bottom). These attributes are largely restricted to the upper Catawba and nearby upper Yadkin Valleys and are a unifying element of Catawba Valley Mississippian in this area.

Our work at Berry, under the auspices of the Upper Catawba Valley Archaeology Project, includes systematic surface collection and gradiometer survey across the entire 4.5-ha site (Beck 1997a; Hargrove and Beck 2001; Schroedl and Moore 2002). Excavations total over 1000 m^2 to date and have focused on the 0.5-ha area (Figure 1) immediately north and south of the mound, where we have recovered a relatively large assemblage of Spanish ceramics and hardware. What is more, our excavations in this northern part of the site have revealed a compound of five burned buildings. In the following sections, we examine data from Berry with regard to the documented material correlates of Fort San Juan: Spanish material culture, and architectural remains.

Correlate 1: Sixteenth-Century Spanish Ceramics and Hardware

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of cultural materials recovered in this compound area are of native manufacture, including a predominance of Burke ceramics. As Deagan has recently stated, ''Easily identifiable European objects [and] artifacts may not be abundant or even present in Native American sites occupied early in the contact period'' (2004:603). In the particular case of Fort San Juan, Pardo's expedition had no horses—and there is no mention of porters—such

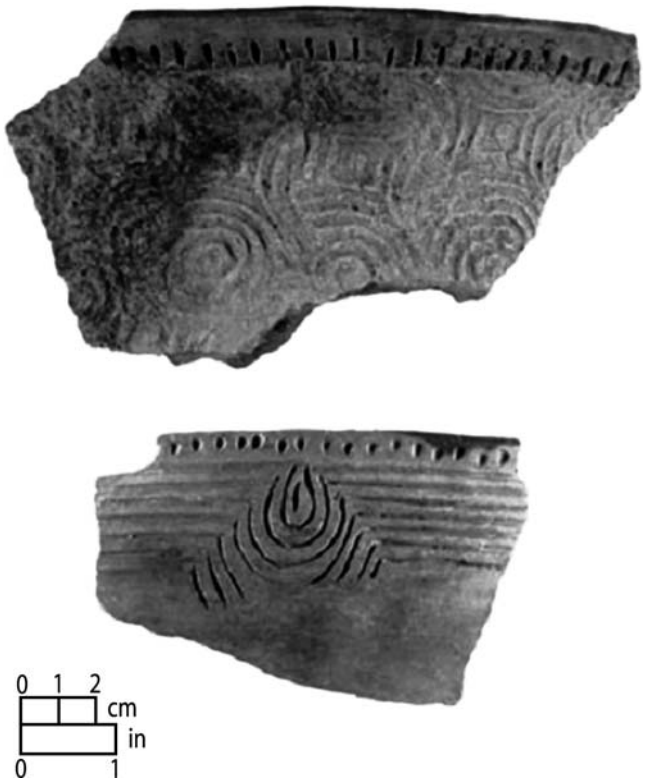

Figure 3. Burke ceramics from the Berry site.

that expedition members likely carried most of their provisions on their own backs. Nonetheless, we have recovered a relatively large assemblage of sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts from the area of the compound, both from feature and plowzone contexts. Features 22, 23, 25, 38, and 48, as well as Burial 1 and Structure 1, have yielded Spanish items (see Figure 1 and Table 2). To date, we have excavated 28 features and two burials within the compound area; of the 96 items we have identified as related to Spanish occupation, 39 are from these *in situ* deposits. Non-Spanish historic materials have been recovered from plowzone contexts, but the vast majority of these are small pieces of iron scrap. This group of material also includes several cut and wire nails, a few pieces of whiteware and porcelain, modern bullets, plastic, and modern hardware. None of these modern or more recent materials have appeared in undisturbed (i.e., feature) contexts.

Spanish ceramics from this area of the site include 13 sherds from at least four olive jars (Figure 4). Olive jars are the most ubiquitous ceramics recovered from Spanish colonial sites in the Americas, and their use spanned a period from the 1490s to the nineteenth century (Deagan 1987:28). These amphora-derived vessels were typically used for transporting and storing olive oil (hence the name) and wine, but were also used for transporting olives, lard, condiments, and vegetables like beans and chick peas (Goggin 1960:256). As we have noted, Pardo's provisions included 72 liters of

Table 2. Spanish artifacts recovered from the Berry site.

	F. 22	F. 23	F. 25	F. 38	F. 48	Bur. 1	Str. 1	Surface	Plow Zone	Totals
Ceramic types										
Mexican Red Painted	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	2	7
Caparra Blue majolica	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Olive Jar	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	6	13
orange micaceous	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
unidentifiable	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Iron artifacts										
knife	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
wrought auger bit	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
unidentified wrought iron	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	3
wrought clenched mail	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
wrought nail	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	5
wrought tack	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
iron wire/ chain mail	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	2
Copper/brass artifacts										
aglet	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	2	3
probable aglet	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
bead	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	5
cone/fragments	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4
scrap fragments	1	10	1	–	–	–	–	–	9	21
Lead artifacts										
lead shot	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5	6
quartered lead shot	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
sprue	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Glass beads	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	8
fragments	–	3	–	–	2	–	3	–	–	7
Totals	1	17	10	1	2	1	7	16	40	96

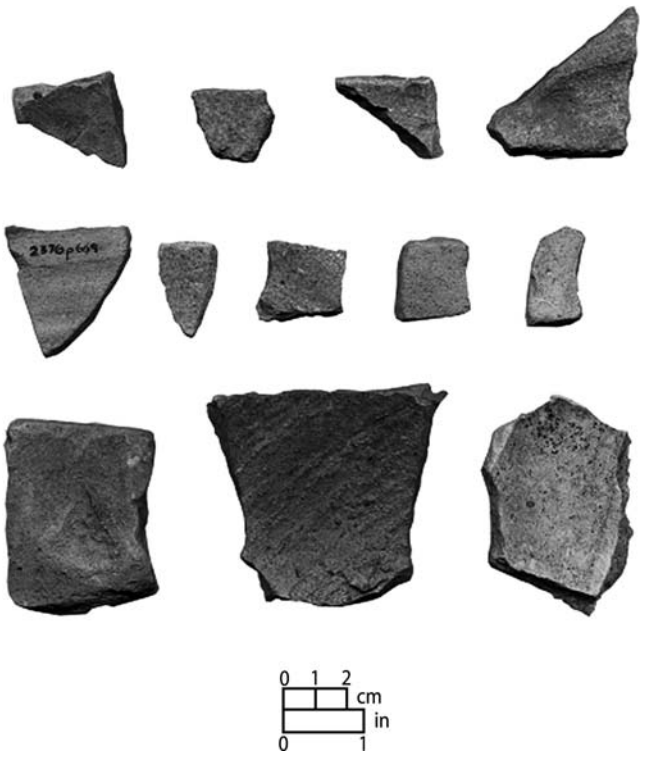

Figure 4. Olive jar fragments, Berry site.

wine, and this was almost certainly transported in olive jars. Olive jars are widely distributed throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America, and are occasionally found in the American Southwest. While common along the Atlantic coast, they are rarely found in the interior Southeast (excluding Florida).

Unfortunately, none of the olive jar sherds recovered at the Berry site are, in themselves, temporally diagnostic; lacking neck or handle fragments it is generally not possible to distinguish early-, middle-, and late-style jars (Deagan 1987:28–34; Goggin 1960). However, several sherds from Berry are quite diagnostic, including a sherd of Caparra Blue majolica (Figure 5). Caparra Blue majolica is a common-grade, tin-enameled earthenware (Lister and Lister 1982:61–62), and in the New World it has a temporal range of A.D. 1492–1600 (Deagan 1987:63). Caparra Blue is known to occur in but a single form: the *albarelo,* or ''drug jar'' (Lister and Lister 1982:61). These are small, carinated vessels marked by a slightly indrawn body, a short neck, a wide mouth, and a foot ring around the base. While never common, Caparra Blue has been recovered from many Caribbean sites, from sites in Mexico and Central America, from Nueva Cadiz, Venezuela, and from the southeastern United States at Santa Elena and sixteenth-century St. Augustine (Deagan 1987:63; Goggin 1968:135). Caparra Blue majolica has also been found at the Governor Martin site, location of Hernando de Soto's 1539 winter camp at present-day Tallahassee, Florida; there, it was found with early olive jars, Columbia Plain majolica, and other common-grade, sixteenth-century ceramics typical of those used on military expeditions (Ewen and Hann 1998:74).

The Berry assemblage also includes six small sherds of what appears to be Mexican Red Painted ware (Figure 6), all from a single vessel of indeterminate form. This ware was defined by Hale Smith (1949), based on its similarities to Aztec Red ceramics, and Deagan (1987:44) exhibits sherds from sixteenth-century St. Augustine. Mexican Red Painted was produced in Mexico and other production centers in the Americas. It is an unglazed coarse earthenware with smoothed surfaces painted or burnished red, and molded or relief decoration is sometimes present; a molded design is apparent on one of the sherds from the Berry site. Finally, we have recovered a probable sherd of orange micaceous ware, an unglazed earthenware with bright orange paste and mica temper; it has a temporal range of about A.D. 1550–1650 and was produced in Iberia (Deagan 1987:40–41). The temporal distributions of Caparra Blue, Mexican Red Painted, and orange micaceous overlap during the period from A.D. 1550 to 1600, suggesting that the assemblage of Spanish artifacts from the Berry site may be dated to a relatively narrow 50-year interval consistent with Juan Pardo's founding of Fort San Juan in January 1567.

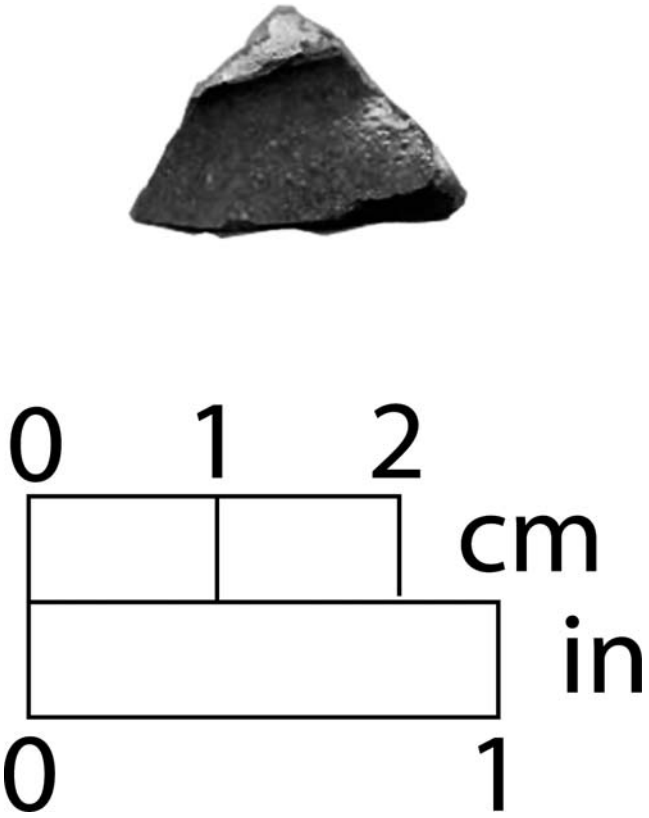

Figure 5. Caparra Blue majolica (A.D. 1492–1600), Berry site.

The assemblage of sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics recovered from the Berry site is distinct from other collections of Spanish material recorded from sites in the interior Southeast, as most collections consist primarily of glass beads and other non-utilitarian trade goods (Smith 1987). Sites in the interior (excluding Florida) have yielded only three sixteenth-century Spanish sherds: a fragment of Columbia Plain majolica from the Pine Log Creek site in central Alabama (Little and Curren 1989:183), a sherd of unidentified majolica from the McMahan site in central Tennessee (Smith 1987:50), and one fragment of orange micaceous earthenware from the Lyon's Bluff site in northern Mississippi (Peacock and Hogue 2005:53). Significantly, two of these (all but the specimen from Lyon's Bluff) had been altered by native people into non-utilitarian forms such as ear spools or gaming disks. That none of the Spanish ceramics recovered from the Berry site exhibit such alterations suggests that these were simply discarded as utilitarian debris. Also, as Worth (1994) notes, the presence of multiple sherds from several different olive jars suggests that these were broken at the site, having arrived intact as part of a Spanish occupation.

In addition to the Spanish ceramics, this section of the Berry site has yielded examples of other artifact classes that we would expect to find at the location of Fort San Juan, including lead shot, quartered lead shot, and lead sprue (Figure 7), all in the same caliber range as the shot

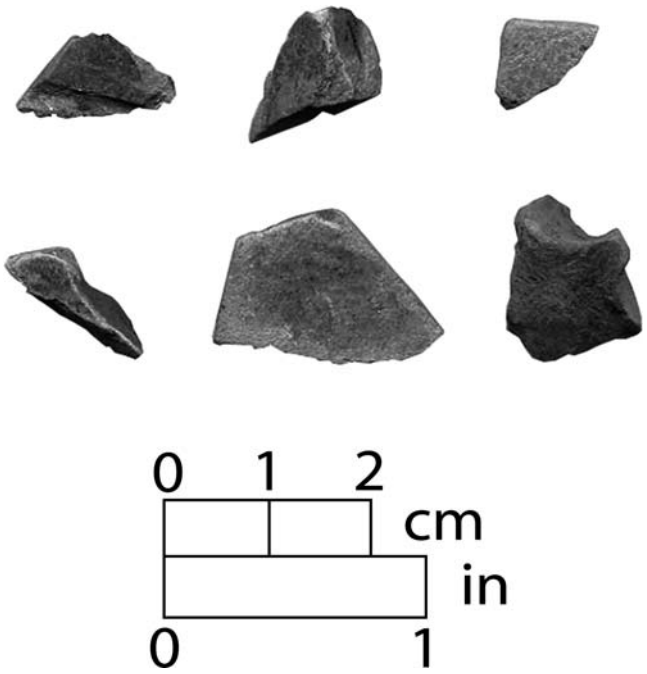

Figure 6. Mexican Red Painted ware (A.D. 1550–1750), Berry site.

and quartered shot from Santa Elena (South et al. 1988:75–87). Wrought-iron nails from this part of the site (Figure 8) can be classed as the Barrote type, based on their length and weight, and were used for finishing work such as flooring, matting, and other projects that required little strength (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988:39–40). We have also identified brass aglets or lacing tips (Figure 9) similar to those from Santa Elena (South et al. 1988:135), as well as numerous fragments of brass scrap and several brass cones.[1] This scrap may

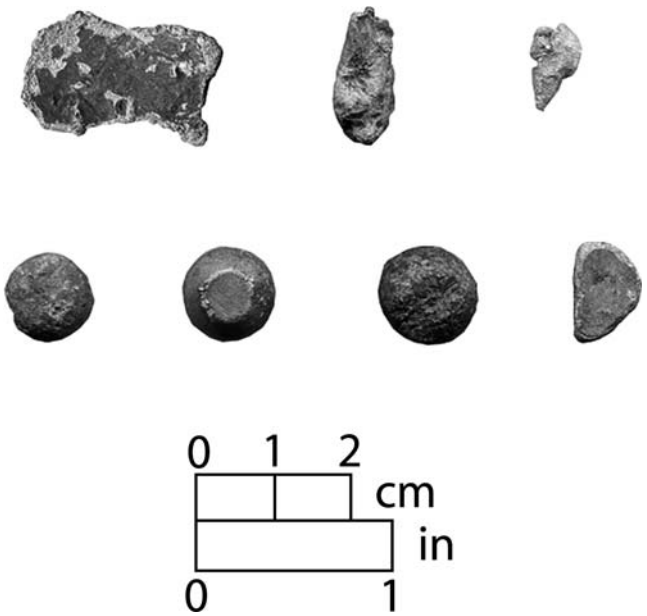

Figure 7. Lead shot and quartered shot, Berry site.

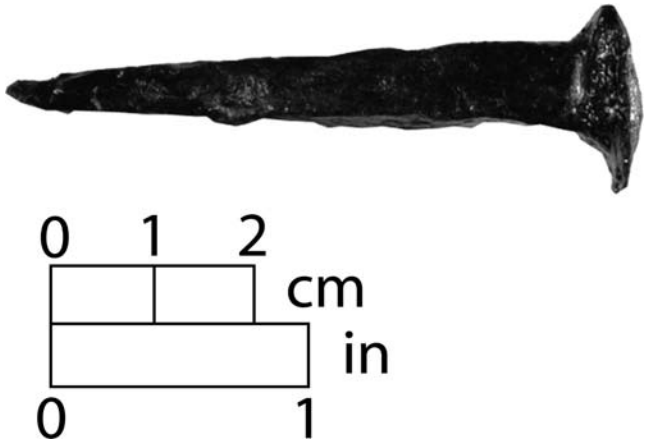

Figure 8. Barrote-type nail, Berry site.

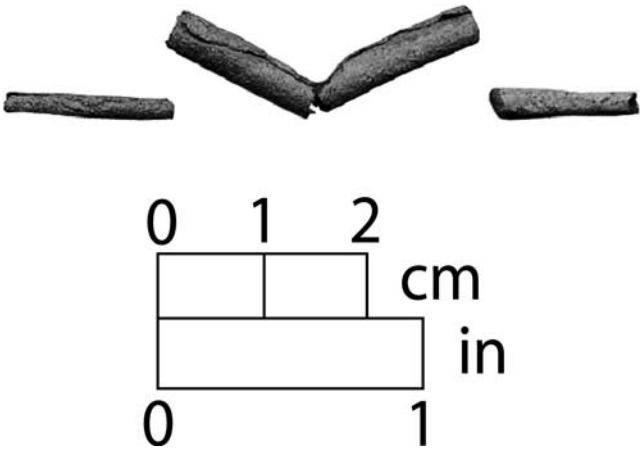

Figure 9. Brass aglets from Berry site.

reflect aboriginal use or alteration, but it also may be a byproduct of Spanish alteration or recycling. Of 31 brass items, 14 are from undisturbed feature contexts. Several glass beads have also been found in feature, structure, and plowzone contexts, but none of these are temporally diagnostic. In 1986, Moore (2002:237–239) discovered an iron knife in the burial of a fully extended adult male, located just to the south of the remnant mound. A burial bundle that consisted of a turtle shell container, a clay elbow pipe, projectile points, and stone abraders accompanied this individual. Similar bundles were recovered in sixteenth-century burials at the King site in northwest Georgia (Hally 1994:243) and at Toqua in eastern Tennessee (Polhemus 1987:478–430). Pardo presented eight knives to Joara Mico as gifts for his "subjects" (Bandera 1990:265), and this knife from the Berry site may have been one of those gifts.

Correlate 2: Architectural Remains

In 1997, gradiometer and auger testing revealed the presence of four burned buildings as well as several large features, in the 0.5-ha area north of the remnant mound (Hargrove and Beck 2002); subsequent gradiometer survey of the remaining 4 ha of the site yielded no clear evidence of burned buildings (Schroedl and Moore 2002), suggesting that burned architecture is restricted to that part of the site where most of the Spanish materials have been recovered. Since 2001, we have exposed more than 900 m^2 in this area, defining a "compound" of five burned buildings that form an oval pattern around what was probably a courtyard area. Large pit features—from which we have recovered brass lacing tips, glass beads, small iron fragments, and scrap brass, as well as faunal remains and native-made Burke ceramics—occupy the spaces between buildings (Best and Rodning 2003). Lines of posts located adjacent to Structures 1 and 3 suggest that a palisade may have enclosed the compound, which we believe constitutes the remains of Fort San Juan. All of the structures were built in semisubterranean basins that cut into the subsoil, and as they burned, their collapsing remains filled their respective basin pits. All of the buildings are approximately square: Structures 1, 2, 3, and 5 each measure ca. 64 m^2 (8 m on a side); the size of Structure 4 has not yet been determined; see discussion below).

We have entirely exposed Structure 3 (Figure 10), and large parts of Structures 1, 2, and 5, to the base of plowzone. We have only opened one 2-×-2 m unit to expose the top of Structure 4 (see Figure 1). All of the buildings exhibit clear evidence of destruction by fire (i.e., bright red soils, large sections of carbonized wood and cane, carbonized upright posts), and none show any evidence of post-burning construction activities (notwithstanding the possibility that Structure 4 was buried underneath later episodes of mound construction). We have conducted subplowzone excavations into one of the five buildings, Structure 1, to determine the nature and depth of intact deposits within the structure.

Fieldwork during 2001 and 2002 exposed most of the top of Structure 1 to the base of the plowzone, revealing doorway trenches in its west corner. In 2003, we exposed a 6-×-2 m (12-m^2) section across the entry area from north to south, in three contiguous 2-×-2 m units approximately 1 m inside (east of) the doorway trenches. At the base of plowzone, we divided the 2-×-2 m units into 1-×-1 m squares. First, we removed a sterile, homogenous brown soil along the perimeter of the building, just outside the burned posts and fired soils of the wall. This deposit, Zone 1, was a fill that sealed the gap between the completed building wall and the edge of the semisubterranean basin cut. Zone 2 is the soil deposited between the base of the plowzone and the uppermost layer of carbonized wood, cane thatch, and other organics *inside* the structure. Zone 3 is soil between the uppermost layer of burned organics and the structure floor. Zone 4 is the very thin lens of the structure floor, and Zone 5 is the sterile subsoil below

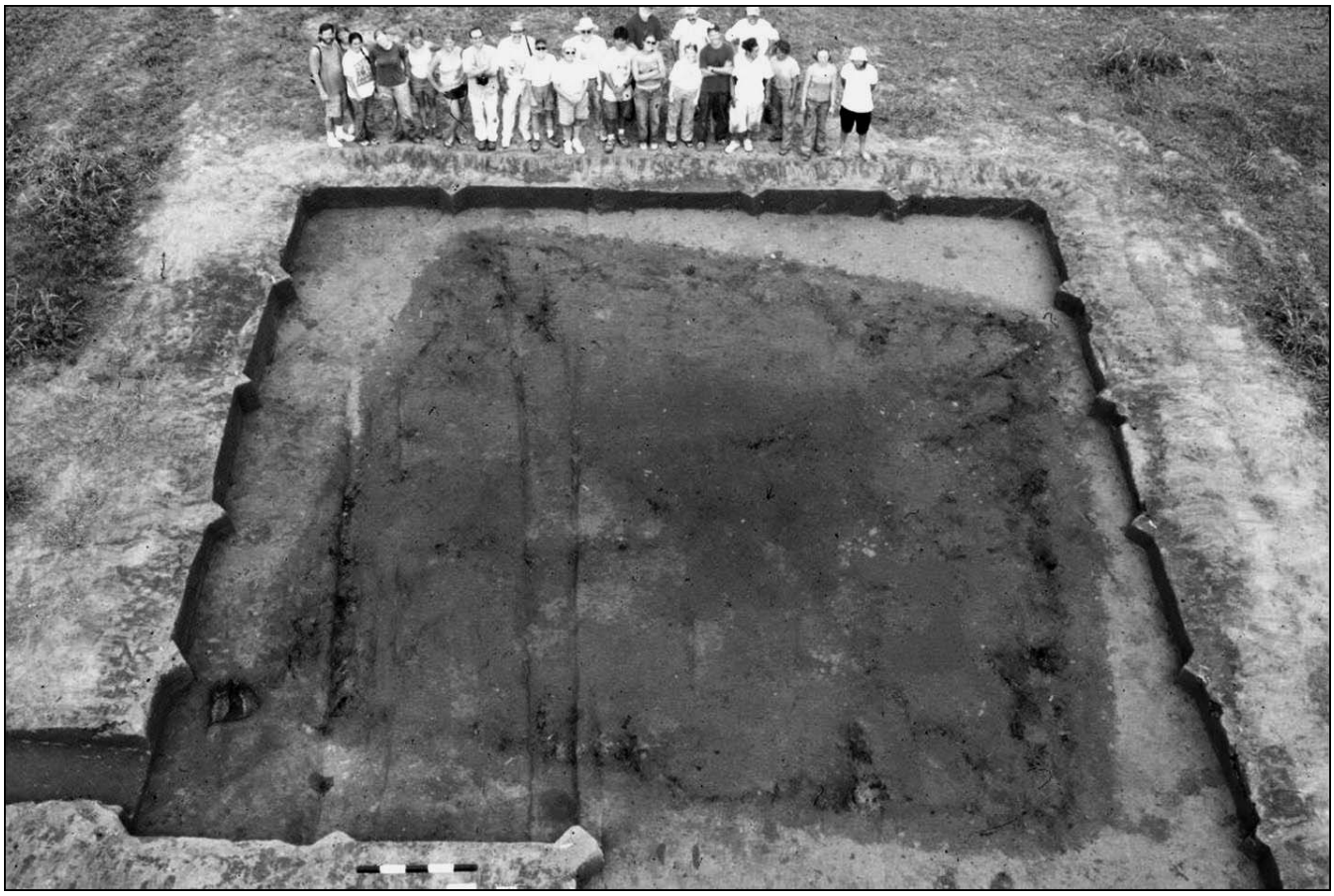

Figure 10. Plan view of Structure 3, looking north, following plowzone removal.

the floor. Zones 1 and 2 were additionally subdivided into arbitrary levels. We only excavated a single 1-×-1 m unit, located just inside the doorway trenches, through the Zone 4 floor to the Zone 5 subsoil.

These excavations, though relatively limited in extent, have yielded abundant information about the building's construction and use history (Figure 11), such as carbonized wood posts and timbers from its walls and roof, possible cane matting from the walls and floor, and architectural furniture such as a wooden bench along the wall. Two lines of data suggest that Europeans may have helped to build the structure, and may subsequently have spent time inside it. First, though the general style of Structure 1 is consistent with native techniques and technologies, at least two of its timbers appear to have been cut by metal tools. The first of these (Figure 12) is marked by a deep notch, V-shaped in profile, which is strikingly similar to a metal axe cut, in that the notch is too steep and narrow to have been cut with a stone axe. The second timber (Figure 13) is cut by what seems to be a square-cut notch. This notch has straight, regular edges and would likely have been difficult to achieve with stone axes. Moreover, this square-notching technique seems more likely to have been a European construction practice. While Structure 1's overall plan and organization therefore match native practices, conceptions, and techniques of house construction, such timbers suggest that Spaniards worked with native craftspeople to build the structure.

Second, excavations in the southwest corner of Structure 1, above the floor surface (Zone 3, Level 2) and next to the wall bench, yielded two pieces of twisted iron wire (recovered during waterscreening) that Stanley South and Chester DePratter have identified as pieces of chain mail (2003, personal communication). Links of mail routinely separated from armor—archaeologists found many such fragments, for example, at the aforementioned Governor Martin site (Ewen and Hann 1998: 78–79)—and the fragments from Structure 1 at Berry (Figure 14; compare with Ewen and Hann 1998:Figure 5.10) may have been lost on the seat of the bench or else ended up under the bench on the floor of the building. The recovery of chain mail fragments and the presence of what are probably metal cut timbers provide strong support for our interpretation of this building as a quarters for members of the Pardo expedition.

The sequence of depositional events across Structure 1 indicate that its collapsed remains slumped shortly after

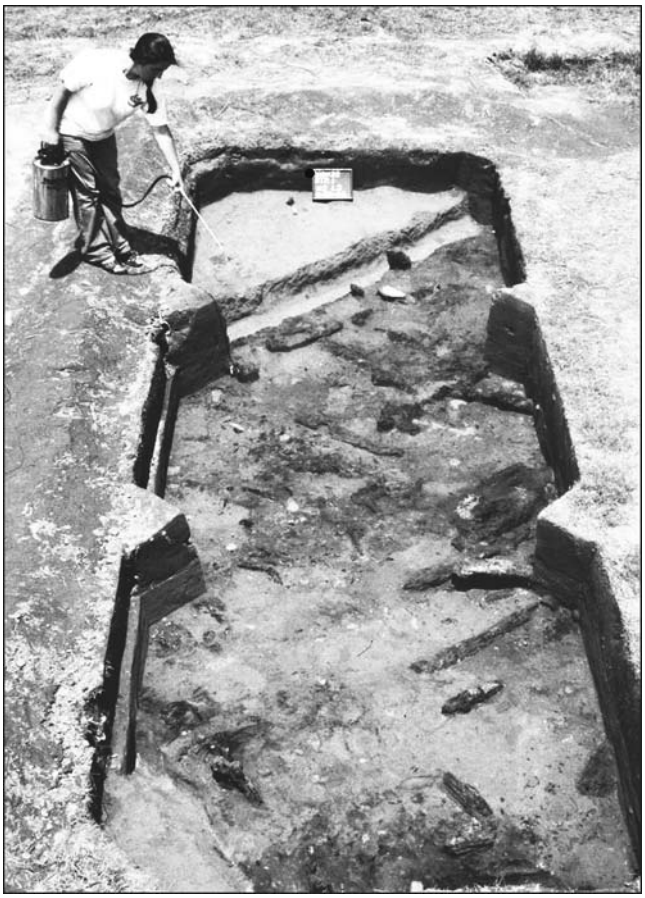

Figure 11. Plan view of excavation trench across Structure 1, looking north.

the building burned to the ground, and that they were subsequently covered by a layer of homogenous fill that leveled the surface over the building. This deposit was clearly intentional, given the presence of a smashed Burke phase vessel within its matrix, and may have served the functional purpose of leveling the slumped portions of the structure. However, it may also have

Figure 12. Structure 1, timber with V-shaped notch.

Figure 13. Structure 1, timber with square-cut notch (notch measures 12 cm long by 5 cm deep).

served to bury the structure's remains—and to have removed all traces of the associated events from view—through an act of ritual purification. It bears repeating in this regard that there is no evidence of later construction activity over this or any of the other buildings.

There is a complex and as yet poorly understood relationship between Structure 4 and the mound, as may be inferred from Figure 1. If the building is part of the Spanish compound (as we currently expect), then at least one stage of mound construction may have postdated the burning of the garrison. Data from Moore's 1986 excavations offer intriguing support for this possibility. Two olive jar fragments (Figure 4, second row, first and second sherds from left) and one piece of lead sprue (Figure 7, upper left) were recovered from a partially intact humus zone overlaying moundfill

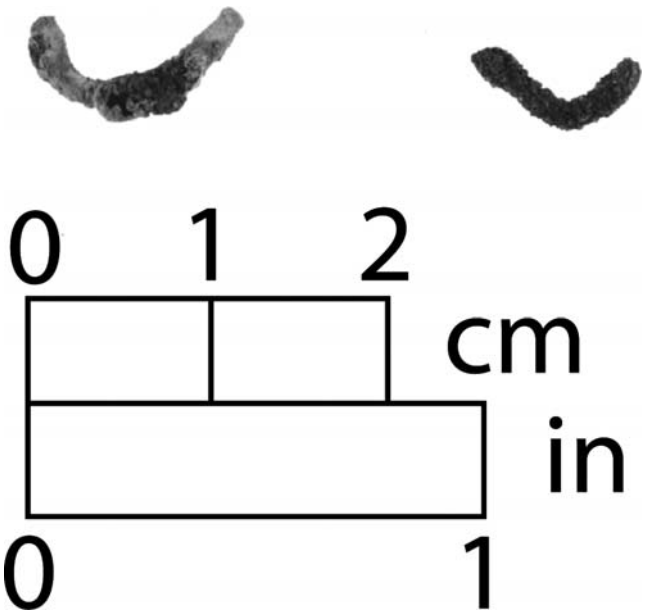

Figure 14. Chain mail fragments, Structure 1, Berry site.

on the south margin of the mound. At the time that this humus zone was forming, the mound seems to have been less than 1 m high (Moore 2002:Figure 23). This suggests that most of the mound's volume was added *after* the humus zone had formed—and thus after the olive jar and lead sprue were deposited—since the mound eventually reached a maximum height of 4–5 m (Thomas 1891:151). Although it is possible that these Spanish artifacts are intrusive (the mound had been plowed in areas, likely by horse- or mule-drawn plow [Moore 2002:218]), it is also possible that the mound reached its maximum height only after the fort's destruction, and that Structure 4 was built alongside, or perhaps into, a much lower earthwork than the mound described by Cyrus Thomas in 1891. Future stratigraphic analysis and excavations in this area of the site will help to resolve the chronological relationship between Structure 4 and the mound.

Conclusions

Archaeological and documentary evidence presented in this article suggest that the Berry site, situated in the upper Catawba Valley of western North Carolina, is the location of Joara and the 1567–68 garrison of Fort San Juan, the earliest European settlement in the interior of what is now the United States. Spanish artifacts recovered from the northern 0.5-ha section of the site constitute an occupation—rather than trade—assemblage and consist primarily of ceramics, brass, and hardware. Ongoing excavations in this same part of the site have revealed a close compound of five burned buildings possibly surrounded by a palisade, with numerous large features spaced around the buildings. Moreover, gradiometer surveys conducted over the remaining 4 ha of the site suggest that these are its only burned buildings. Excavations inside Structure 1 have yielded fragments of chain mail and timbers that may have been cut with metal tools; European materials recovered in the features include brass aglets or lacing tips, brass scrap, iron fragments, and glass beads. Based upon the expected archaeological correlates of Fort San Juan that we derived from the various accounts of the Juan Pardo expeditions, we suggest that this compound represents the material remains of Fort San Juan, and that these structures are the houses that quartered Pardo's soldiers. That all of the buildings were burned may serve as a chilling testament to how relations between the Spaniards and the people of Joara ended tumultuously in 1568.

The arrival of the sixteenth-century expeditions under Hernando de Soto and Juan Pardo undoubtedly altered the historical trajectories of Mississippian chiefdoms in the Catawba Valley. At the same time, the contents of Structure 1 and the other burned buildings promise to shed light on how Spanish soldiers maintained their European identities in a faraway place, while they were simultaneously incorporating features of native lifeways into their daily practices. The Berry site allows us to directly examine these aspects of contact as we inquire into the nature of the Spanish presence at the site. By illuminating the changing relationships between Spanish soldiers and the native peoples of Joara, continued research at Berry will offer unique insights into the beginnings of European colonialism in this borderland region. Moving beyond Berry, Spanish documentary sources provide a beginning point for learning more about the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century social landscape of the area. Ultimately, we hope to better understand how the process of contact contributed to the apparent depopulation of the entire upper Catawba Valley by the early decades of the seventeenth century, and to the ethnogenesis of the historic period native peoples of the Carolina Piedmont, especially the Catawba Indians (Davis and Riggs 2004; Moore 2002).

Notes

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[1] While we use the term *brass* in reference to this material, we recognize that it may also be copper of European origin; the important point is that this material is almost certainly not of native origin, though some of it may have been used or altered by native peoples.

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