

3-2005

Charlesfort/Santa Elena National Historic Landmark Dedication Ceremony

Chester B. DePratter

University of South Carolina - Columbia, cbdeprat@mailbox.sc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/sciaa_staffpub



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#)

Publication Info

Published in *Legacy*, Volume 9, Issue 1-2, 2005, pages 17-17.

<http://www.cas.sc.edu/sciaa/>

© 2005 by The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

This Article is brought to you by the Archaeology and Anthropology, South Carolina Institute of at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty & Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu.

Charlesfort/Santa Elena National Historic Landmark Dedication Ceremony

By Chester DePratter

On September 21, 2004, the U. S. Marine Corps, Parris Island Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, hosted a dedication ceremony for the Charlesfort/Santa Elena National Historic Landmark Site. The site was designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior on January 3, 2001, but a planned ceremony had to be delayed because of the events of September 11, 2001.

Activities on September 21 began at 10:00 AM at the Charlesfort/Santa Elena site, located at the golf course on the southern end of Parris Island. Following remarks by a series of speakers, including representatives of the Marine Corps, National Park Service, and archaeologists Stanley South and myself, the National Historic Landmark plaque was unveiled. South and myself then led a tour of the site.

It is appropriate that this dedication occurred on the 25th anniversary of Stan South's initial work at the Santa Elena site. In the summer of 1979, he went to the site with a small crew that included his family and a few advocational archaeologists, who



Brigadier General Richard Tryon, NPS Superintendent John Tucker, Stan South and Chester DePratter at dedication. (SCIAA photo)

volunteered to excavate a series of test units intended to obtain an artifact sample and definitive proof that the site was indeed the 16th century Spanish town of Santa Elena. In that one-week-long project, he and his crew not only recovered an artifact sample, but they also discovered the remains of Spanish Fort San Felipe (occupied 1566 to 1570) on the high ground along the marsh edge.

South's subsequent excavations at the site have included all of the remaining interior of Fort San Felipe (half of the fort has been lost to erosion), excavations in the town on

two lots belonging to Santa Elena's last governor, and limited work in Spanish Fort San Marcos (1583 to 1587) among many other projects. In 1993, South and I discovered and excavated a Spanish pottery kiln, located near the present golf course clubhouse, and in 1994, we conducted a systematic sampling project that determined that the site covers approximately 15 acres. In 1996, we announced the discovery of French Charlesfort (1562 -1563) that we found buried beneath the remains of Fort San Felipe.

Despite 25 years of archaeology on the site, there is still a great deal of work remaining to be done at Charlesfort/Santa Elena. The site's designation as a National Historic Landmark is an important moment in its history, because it will help assure its preservation for future generations. Please visit Charlesfort/Santa Elena to see the monument plaque. A new trail with very informative interpretive signs are now established at the site. This landmark dedication is a great tribute to Stanley South's long-term dedication to working on this unique archaeological treasure.



Chester DePratter, Jonathan Leader, Stanley South, and Steve Wise at the National Landmark Dedication. (Photo courtesy of Marion Rice)