Santa Elena-450th Anniversary: 1566 - 1587

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Santa Elena 1566-1587
450th anniversary

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In 1584, the English made their first effort to claim part of Spanish Florida by settling in Florida, and this wife and her attendants settled there in 1571. In August, 1572, Santa Elena was sold. Soldiers suffered greatly as a result. Short supplies caused the residents of Santa Elena to turn to local foodstuffs. The location of a second Spanish fort was verified in 1979, during the initial archaeological testing of the site. There are large and diverse assemblages of small finds such as buttons and beads. Excavations at Santa Elena have led to about a number of three sites, and records have been completely excavated. The remains of the site have been preserved under the historic site table and appear to be a good representation of the site as it was in the 16th and 17th century. In August, and during the Civil War, both Union and Confederate troops were stationed on the island, and the site was used as a training camp for recruits. The military aspect of the site was verified in 1916-1920 period. The United States purchased all of the private property remaining on the site.

The Artifact Collection

The Chaifetz Ban-a site artifact collection is an impressive example of the material culture of the 17th-century Spanish frontier. It documents the struggles for two of a culture who called the Bay of Pigs Island home during the early 16th century. The site of Santa Elena was originally established as a Spanish fort in 1566 by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. In 1564, Menéndez, by popular approval of the Florida Legislature of the United States, purchased all of the private property remaining on the island.