

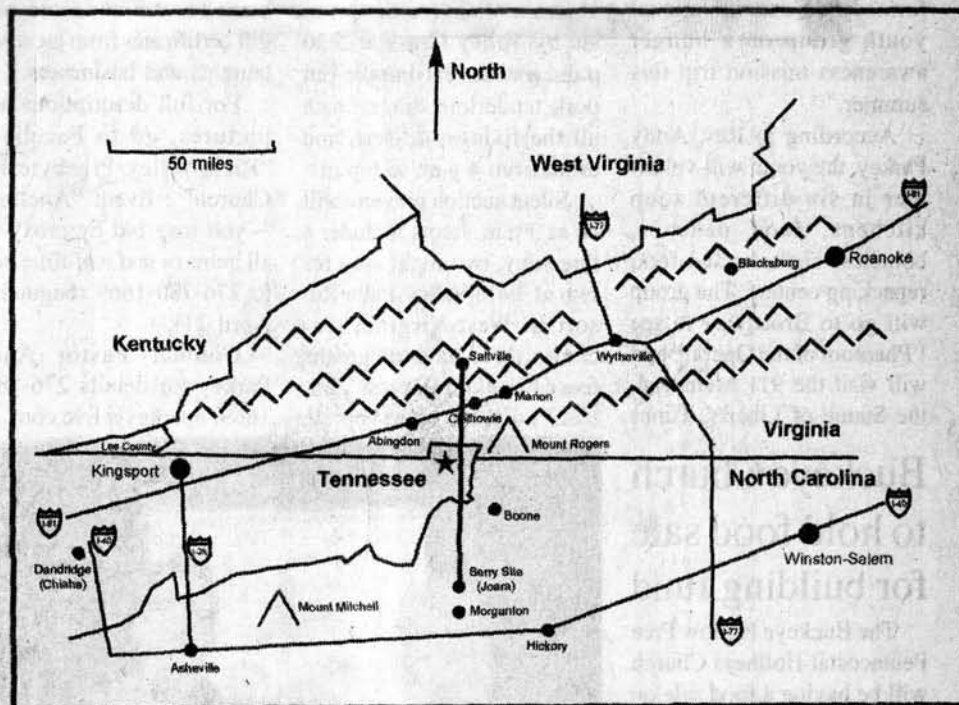
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"WHERE THERE IS NO VISION - THE PEOPLE PERISH"

Saltville PROGRESS



THE TRAIL MOYANO TOOK TO MANIATIQUE in 1567 was called the Cherokee Trail To Virginia by William E. Myer in his *Indian Trails of the Southeast* published in 1925. It ran from northern Georgia past Joara and Fort San Juan and followed present-day State Highway 91 from Mountain City, Tenn., to Saltville. This latest discovery confirming the 2004 story about Spanish Conquistadors in Saltville has been given exclusively to the *Saltville Progress* by our good friend Jim Glanville. It will be expanded upon for publication in *The Smithfield Review* in the spring of 2014.

Conquistador found buried less than twenty miles from Saltville

By JIM GLANVILLE

Recently discovered newspaper articles report stunning, documentary evidence for conquistadors being at Maniatique (Saltville) in 1567. Articles published in 1869 in the *Bristol News*, and reproduced here, tell that a dead conquistador who almost assuredly participated in the 1567 Spanish expedition to Saltville died on the journey and was buried near the present Appalachian Trail, less than 20 miles south of Saltville.

The *Bristol News* articles confirm that the first Europeans known to be on the ground within the perimeter of the future state of Virginia

were Hernando Moyano and his soldiers in Saltville in 1567. Sketchy evidence suggests members of the de Soto expedition reached Lee County in 1541. Compelling evidence places Hernando Moyano and his soldiers in Saltville in 1567 and the newly-found evidence strongly supports that conclusion.

In a 2004 review article exploring the archeological and documentary evidence, I answered an emphatic yes to the question were there "Conquistadors at Saltville in 1567?" (on line at <http://goo.gl/rk0w9>).

Since then, the story of conquistadors being at Saltville forty years before the

founding of the Jamestown Settlement has become part of the orthodox history of Virginia. The Library of Virginia's on line chronology states for the year 1567 "A Spanish party under the command of Hernando Moyano attacked a Holstonia town at the site of Saltville in Washington County" (on line at <http://goo.gl/VRFxA>). Virginia Tech history professor Peter Wallenstein included the story in his now standard one-volume Virginia history book *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007). Furthermore, over the past

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Conquistador remains found near Saltville...

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decade, reports of the conquistadors at Saltville have appeared in such newspapers as the *Washington Post*, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, and *Roanoke Times*.

Back in 2004, I never expected to be presented with confirming evidence. The chance of ever finding such evidence seemed exceedingly slim. For a decade I pursued every lead and every hint that came to me: all led to dead ends. Then, out of the blue a month ago, the confirming evidence arrived via an afternoon email message in which an acquaintance sent me the transcript of a short article from the December 31, 1869 issue of the *Bristol News*. My acquaintance has a friend who reads microfilm of the *Bristol News* (I believe in pursuit of genealogical studies). Bells went off when "De Soto" showed up in one of the films.

Later that day I ascertained that the *Bristol News* is digitized and on line at the Library of Congress. By that evening, after some heavy-duty searching, I had found and downloaded the 24 December 1869 article. I found and downloaded the 31 December 1869 article the following morning.

The 24 December 1869 *Bristol News* article was headlined "Mysterious Discovery in Iron Mountain—Opening of a Curious Sepulchre" and appeared on page 2, column 3 of the issue. It is viewable on line at the link <http://goo.gl/wPVfb>. A clipping of the article and its transcription is reproduced here. The article takes the form of a 524 word letter-to-the-editor written by T. C. King. It describes the excavation of a burial mound (tumulus).

The 31 December 1869 *Bristol News* article was headlined "The Iron Mountain Mystery." It is viewable

on line at the link <http://goo.gl/96BFY>. The article is a short (110 words), anonymous follow up to the King letter of the previous week. It suggests that one of the bodies is that of a member of the 1541 De Soto expedition.

Interpreting the 1869 Articles

The summary interpretation of the 1869 articles is that a Spanish soldier was buried in Sullivan County near where today runs the Appalachian Trail.

The presence in the burial of the coin bearing the word-fragment "Espa" (España = Spain) on one side and the (presumably Christian) cross on the other suggest that the Sullivan County burial was of a Spaniard. The presence of the "Decayed implements evidently those of war" would appear to confirm him as a Spanish soldier.

Modern studies place the route of the De Soto party in 1541 some dozens of miles below the southern boundary line of Virginia and marauders from that mission who went north would have entered Virginia well to the west of Saltville. The burial is much more plausibly interpreted to be that of a member of the Hernando Moyano party.

As described in "Conquistadors at Saltville in 1567?," in that year Hernando Moyano and a party of soldiers left Fort San Juan at the Indian town of Joara, located slightly north of present-day Morganton, NC, to attack the home village of a Chisca (Yuchi) chief who had threatened to march to Joara to eat Moyano and his dog. The as-the-crow-flies, straight line on the map from Morganton to Saltville runs a distance of 75 miles and almost directly due north. The burial site of the Sullivan Spaniard lies less than 10 miles west of that direct line, and only a mile or

two from today's Appalachian Trail.

The accompanying map is a modification of the one originally published in 2004. The vertical line near the center of the map runs from the Berry archeological site at Joara to Saltville. The star shows the approximate location of the buried Spanish soldier.

The approximate position of the burial mound can be deduced reasonable well from Mr. T. C. King's descriptions of the place. It is a mile or two north and a little west of the point where Route 421 crosses the Appalachian Trail at the Sullivan-Johnson County line. The two branches of Jacob's Creek originate on the eastern edge of Sullivan County, near the Appalachian Trail, and flow down into the present South Holston Lake. Examination of topographical maps shows that there are a number of places near the headwaters of the two branches that could be described as being a "gorge," as King describes it. Investigations in the Sullivan County archives could per-

haps precisely locate "the residence of Mr. F. Wright" in 1869.

Future Studies

If this site can be located, its excavation will be a major study opportunity. Such an opportunity demands competent, expert archeologists. In the first instance, a well-qualified local person such as Dan Kegley or Charles Bartlett (both former presidents of the Archeological Society of Virginia) should be called on to make preliminary location assessments of the burial site. This is not a job for amateurs. Not only is disturbing land in a National Forest completely illegal, this mound is of such great importance for Virginia history that it deserves to be studied by first-rank archeologists. If the site can be located, I would hope for it to be studied by the team of excavators of the Berry site: David Moore, Christopher Rodning, and Robin Beck. Maybe, for such an important project, we can even dream that National Geographic Society funding would be forthcoming (as it was for Berry).

Mysterious Discovery in Iron Mountain— Opening of a Curious Sepulchre

Special Correspondence of the News
Near Holston, Sullivan. Co , Tenn, Dec., 15th '69

Messrs. editors, Gents: — Knowing that you are interested in all matter of news and moreover that the greater part of your time is passed in catering to the reading public, I have determined to send you a short account of a very curious discovery that I, in company with some other gentlemen, had the good fortune of making, some days ago. Being in the mountains (Iron) on a hunting excursion chance led our party into a deep and gloomy gorge, flanked on either side by beetling walls of granite, adown [sic] whose side the “forked lightnings” have played these many centuries; with here and there a stunted tree, to relieve the vision, while at its base a little stream flowed, or rather floundered on its way, here forming in a deep crystal pool, and the next moment creeping threadlike among the boulders. Whilst sitting near this little stream, I happened to cast my eye around and observing a rather singular mound at a short distance, I arose and on examination became convinced that it must have been erected by men at some period anterior to this. With the assistance of my companions I at once began to remove the earth and stones from the surface, and we were soon rewarded with a sight into its interior, for at the place where we began removing earth, &c., the crust, so to speak, was not exceeding 2 feet in thickness. Having made a cavity of a foot or more in diameter, we could at first distinguish nothing in the interior save the decayed remains of bodies the nature of which—owing to the imperfect light—we could not de-

termine, curiosity being excited we determined to unearth the mystery at all events. Accordingly we dispatched one of our party to the nearest house for implements and on his return set to work, and soon succeeded in removing *totum jugum tumuli*; On entering this “habitation of the dead,” for such it proved to be, we found several human skeletons in various stages of decay; but with one exception all in a very imperfect state. This one underlying the others, at first presented the appearance of a corpse in complete preservation; but on examination the fleshy parts we found to be of a sort of cheesy consistence [sic], and readily yielded to the touch. Decayed implements evidently those of war were found intermingled, and one medal or coin the inscription of which was so effaced that nothing could be deciphered, except the word “Espa,” or, I should say part of a word for there was an appearance of other letters, on the reverse the figure of a cross could be plainly seen, its presence owing to the concavity of the side. One skull which I examined is evidently that of a Caucasian; or, at least differs widely from that of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country. You will probably aid in throwing a new light on the early history of this country by giving publication to this in your excellent paper.

This tumulus is near the residence of Mr. F. Wright on Jacobs Creek, Sullivan County.

With respect, I remain yours,

T. C. King

The Iron Mountain Mystery

The communication of Mr. T. C. King, in our last issue has attracted much attention. The remains found by him, in a gorge of the Iron Mountain, while very ancient are evidently those of European persons. That they must date their sepulchre beyond the settlement of the County is plainly evident. It has been suggested that they are those of a portion of De Soto's party, in its journey to the Mississippi River in [blank space, 1541 intended?] and we regard this conjecture as not only plausible, but probably true. The spot will be visited by gentlemen of our town, and perhaps by one of the editors of the News.

Clippings from the 1869 Bristol News

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