

**IMAGE OF STONE MARKED IN 1567 FOUND 1935 IN
SPARTANBURG COUNTY, SC**

Source: *The Hispanic American Review*, Vol. 16. No. 3 (August, 1936), pp. 447-450

[Editor's Note: This stone, now called the Pardo Stone, is on display at the Spartanburg Science Center, Chapman Cultural Center, 200 E. Saint John Street, Spartanburg, SC 29306.]

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See description and interpretation of this stone on the following pages.

**DESCRIPTION OF STONE AND ITS INTERPRETATION AS A RELIC FROM
JUAN PARDO'S EXPEDITION IN 1567**

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Editor, THE HISPANIC AMERICAN REVIEW :

SIR :

In June, 1935, there was turned up in the field of Mr. W. Bryson Hammett, three miles west of Inman, S. C., R. F. D. 2, and twelve miles northwest of the city of Spartanburg, S. C., a stone bearing marks that appear to be records of Pardo's expedition through South Carolina in 1567.

The circumstances of the discovery were as follows, as related to me by Mr. Hammett, who is a gentleman of keen intelligence and the highest integrity. He was harvesting grain with a binder drawn by a tractor. The ground being wet, the tractor skidded and dished out the ground to a depth of a foot. On driving the tractor on the return along the other side of the terrace, where the skidding had occurred, the tractor bogged. The binder was then detached, and a stone was placed under the front end of its tongue while the tractor was extricated. No one paid any attention to the stone, which had merely served to support the end of the binder tongue.

About ten days later, as Mr. Hammett was sowing peas on the same land, he picked up the stone to remove it from the path of the oncoming tractor. He now noticed that it bore peculiar markings, partly filled with the reddish clay of the field. The clearness of the markings is doubtless due to the fact that they had, until thus exposed, been protected underground.

When, a few days later, a gentleman connected with the federal soil service told me of the find, I at once drove to Mr. Hammett's, and found that he was already intending to bring the stone to me. I refrained from giving the matter to the local press, or even to its publication in any of our larger city papers, for the reason that I preferred to avoid all semblance of sensationalism by first announcing it through a professional journal. But for the pressure of other historical research closely engaging me, I would have done this earlier. It is source of regret that the discovery was not made in time for use in my History of South Carolina, which had come off the press only a few weeks earlier.

The stone is seventeen and a half inches long, twelve inches broad, and four to five inches thick, and is of the same composition as many other stones in the field, or that have been thrown out of it for facilitating cultivation. It is what is locally called rotten granite, *i.e.*, it appears to be of the composition of granite, but does not possess granite hardness. The accompanying photograph [see above] shows the injury done to the third digit by the tongue of the binder that was laid upon it. In the figure 1567 (admitting that the third digit is a 6), the arrow, and the parallelogram below the number remain apparently as clearly defined as when first incised. To the right there appear radiating lines somewhat injured, perhaps representing the sun. Above the parallelogram and apparently also below it is a line traversing the stone lengthwise, both of which appear to be part of the original engraving. The other streaks may have been made by harrows and other instruments scratching the stone long ago as it lay below the surface of the ground. All the markings except the injury to the figure bear the appearance of ancient earth coloring.

The third digit looks more like a 6 than appears from the photograph for the reason that the chipping off of the surface to the left of the injury (perfectly plain on the stone, and extending practically to the top of the 5) is hard to distinguish on the photograph.

On seeing the 1567 (admitting the third digit to be a 6), I of course thought of Pardo's expedition from the Spanish Fort San Felipe on Parris Island in the harbor of Port Royal, South Carolina, to Cofitatchiqui (apparently Silver Bluff on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River, about fifteen miles southeast of Augusta), and thence northward to the mountains, and thence far westward, and thence eastward to the Wateree, and thence back to Port Royal. It has long been known from Spanish records that Pardo in 1566, and again in 1567, traversed somewhere the part of South Carolina between the upper Savannah and the Wateree. Woodbury Lowery's *Spanish Settlement in the United States, 1562-1574*, narrates Pardo's Expeditions, with references to the Spanish sources of information. It is not impossible that Pardo's route lay across Spartanburg County, for the Cherokee path from their towns in northwestern South Carolina to the Catawba towns on the Catawba River, near the North Carolina-South Carolina line, as found by the English at a later date, crossed Spartanburg County, apparently some miles to the south of the point where this stone was found. The forests before the white man arrived, were threaded with such paths. That Pardo was following these paths appears likely from the fact that when in 1566, his return to Port Royal (the Spanish Santa Elena) was desired, there was no difficulty in getting a messenger to him.

I have consulted several persons familiar with surveyors' marks in this section, none of whom knows of surveyors ever having employed such markings as are on this stone.

Pardo was in 1567 revisiting Ft. San Juan, which he had built in 1566 at Juada at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, apparently in Pickens or Oconee County, S. C., some fifty miles west of the location of our stone. Our stone was found some fifteen miles south of the mountains.

I do not attempt to identify the parallelogram on the stone as a flag or a block house, nor the long lines as paths, nor the arrow indicating the direction of Juada. The engravings on the stone bears every mark of antiquity and genuineness. The spot in one digit which one historical expert remarked as showing up rather whiter than the rest of the clay-dyed surface is where one of my colleagues in Wofford College (the president or the dean) accompanying me on my first view of the stone scratched it with a stick the better to examine the nature of the substance. The suggestion that Mr. Hammett's laborers may have placed the stone in the field as a joke compliments the farm laborers of South Carolina with a familiarity with Spanish-American history and its critical dates that unhappily they do not possess. Mr. Hammett himself was entirely unacquainted with the history of the Spaniards in South Carolina.

The French are known to have followed the custom of burying leaden plates along their routes as evidence of their claiming the region for their sovereign. Pardo may have been more economical of effort in burying stones found on the spot.

Summing up what we know and what we may conclude: The carvings, bearing all the appearance of antiquity, could not have made by Indians; for they did not use Roman numerals. By whomever made, the carvings were made with a definite purpose, and expressed the figure 1567 (if the third digit is a 6, for some definite reason. The other markings likewise are indicative of definite purpose. If the stone is not a memorial of Pardo's expedition, known to have traversed about this region of South Carolina, what reasonable explanation of it can be given?

Respectfully, D. D. Wallace.

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