



Fountain Of Youth

During the early 1500s, was it a search for the 'fountain of youth' or treasures that brought a Spanish expedition to St. Augustine, Florida? Juan Ponce de León and Admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and crew landed in 1513. De León was an explorer and conquistador, one of the first Spanish settlers of Puerto Rico and Florida. He was best known for his search of a mythological fountain during the Age of Discovery (15th to the middle of 17th centuries) and naming Florida for its flowers. He became the Spanish title holder of Florida and began a settlement in 1521. However, angry Calusa natives drove him off, abandoning his potential colonization of the area. Ponce de León returned to Cuba but died from a poison arrow during the melee in July 1521 at the age of 47. <thoughtco.com> <en.wikipedia.org>

The fountain of youth came from tales that began before the birth of Christ, that a spring when drunk from or swam in would restore youth. These tales came from writings or stories from Herodotus, Alexander, Crusaders and even the native peoples of the Caribbean. The restorative powers in the fountain of youth brought many explorers to search for its location. De León is believed to have learned of the legend from Native Americans while he was governor of Puerto Rico. <thoughtco.com>

St. Augustine is the oldest continuously occupied settlement of European origin in the United States. Admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés settled it in 1565 as part of entitlement by the Spanish Crown signed by King Philip II in March of that year. The territory was known as La Florida. Menéndez explored the coastline and established a permanent colony to defend it from others. <en.wikipedia.org>

St. Augustine was named after Christian theologian and philosopher Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, a seaport city in North Africa (Algeria). Augustine served the church during the early 400s AD. His life was filled with personal struggle, faith conversion, poverty, charity and educational experiences. Menéndez's hometown patron saint was Saint Augustine. <visitstaugustine.com>

Menéndez's defense was primarily focused on the French. King Philip II was aware that French Protestants (Huguenots) had built a fort called Caroline near present-day Jacksonville. Menéndez with a force of 500 men attacked the fort and massacred them and other settlements. The Spanish had constant clashes with natives. In 1586, Sir Francis Drake attacked St. Augustine, but did not stay. Other English buccaneers ransacked the city during the 16th and 17th centuries. <history.com>

The British ruled North America until the American Revolution. The treatment of slaves was oppressive, even though King Charles II of Spain gave slaves their freedom in 1693, if they converted to Catholicism. A settlement called Fort Mose became the "first legally sanctioned free black town in North America." <history.com>



At least 16 flags have flown over Florida. Pictured here are those over St. Augustine.

Left to right pictured at Castillo de San Marcos:

Spain 1565-1763 -The Castillo de San Marcos red Cross of Burgundy-during construction of the outpost.

Great Britain 1763-1784

Spain 1784-1821 Second Spanish Occupation

United States 1821

France 1564-1565

<museumsouthernhistory.com>

Florida's history has included Spain, France, English and American involvement. Ironically Britain returned the Floridas to Spain in 1784 within the same treaty that granted the colonies their independence. It was not until 1821 that Spain ceded Florida to the United States. Clashes between the U.S. government and Seminole Indians made St. Augustine the prison at Fort Marion, a structure the Spanish built in the 1600s. Other American Indian tribe prisoners were also held at Fort Marion during the conflicts during the U.S.'s westward expansion. <history.com>

Florida became a state in 1845. Fort Marion's role as a military prison was removed and the land consisting of 15 acres was run by the St. Augustine Historical Society and Institute of Science. In 1910 the National Park Service took it over. Fort Marion reverted to its original name of Castillo de San Marcos National Monument. It continues as a National Historic Landmark. <en.wikipedia.org>

In the 1880s, St. Augustine became a winter resort under the guide of Henry Flagler, whose Florida East Coast Railway, headquartered in St. Augustine helped grow Florida. Many historic and civic buildings were built by Flagler. <en.wikipedia.org>

St. Augustine was a milestone site for America's civil rights movement. St. Augustine's Freedom Trail included Fort Mose museum and the Historic Excelsior School built in 1925. It was the first public high school for blacks in St. Augustine. The residents of Fort Mose formed the "first Underground Railroad and the first black militia." <fortmosehistorical.com>
<en.wikipedia.org>

This photo program takes you back to 1990 and views of St. Augustine, Florida and a scene nearby St. Johns River.



Fort Marion/Castillo de San Marcos





The Old Jail served St. Augustine from 1891-1953.

It is now the St. Augustine History Museum. Henry Flagler wanted a fortress to house criminals. Built in Romanesque Revival style, it appeared as a Victorian house, but with barred windows. It was built by P.J. Pauley Jail Company, who built Alcatraz in San Francisco.

<visitsstaugustine.com>



Sources: <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/article/how-st-augustine-got-its-name>, <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/thing-to-do/fountain-youth>, <https://www.thoughtco.com/ponce-de-leon-and-the-fountain-of-youth-2136431> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_of_Youth_Archaeological_Park, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g34599-d110102-Reviews-Fountain_of_Youth_Archaeological_Park-St_Augustine_Florida.html, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Discovery, <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/history/>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Ponce_de_Le%C3%B3n, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_of_Youth, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-was-the-age-of-exploration-or-the-age-of-discovery.html>, <https://www.visitstaugustine.com/article/how-st-augustine-got-its-name>, <https://www.fortmosehistorical.com/>, <https://museumsouthernhistory.com/Flags%20of%20Florida.html>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_St._Augustine_Florida, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Florida>, <https://www.history.com/news/8-things-you-may-not-know-about-st-augustine-florida>, <https://www.oldcity.com/history-and-culture/>, <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/research/st-augustine/fort-mose/> and <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fort-mose-historic-state-park>.

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