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## Berry site prompts author to dig deeper into early settlements

By **Julie n. Chang**

Fascinated by the archaeological findings at the Berry site, local Larry Richard Clark decided to delve a little deeper into the history of the Native Americans and Spanish attempts at colonization.

Clark's latest book release is "Spanish Attempts to Colonize Southeast North America, 1513-1587." The book looks at how Spain's failed attempts to colonize southeast North America shaped U.S. history and regional foundations.

"It's just a fascinating story of how the U.S. almost didn't exist because of the Spanish attempts to colonize southeastern U.S. as they succeeded in the southwest," Clark said of the book. "Spain's failure opened the door for the English to come."

Clark, a dean emeritus at Western Piedmont Community College, said he became increasingly fascinated with the Native American population and its history after archaeologists discovered 16th century artifacts at the Berry site.

Archeologists believe the Berry site contains the Native American village Joara and Capt. Juan Pardo's Fort San Juan. It's possible the location is the first European settlement in North Carolina and the U.S.

Clark began to wonder about Pardo's explorations that lead to further reading and research. He started working on this book about five years ago, and spent the last three years writing draft after draft.

The book starts with Juan Ponce de Leon's discovery of Florida and his attempt to establish a colony there, Clark said. For the next 70 years, the Spanish made further attempts across the southeast.

The last two chapters of the book focuses on the findings at the Berry site, Clark said.

The book is available at Muses Bookstore, 820 W. Union St., and online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

