



**Juan Ponce de León
&
The Fountain of Youth**

Florida

- **Ponce de León**
 - Lands on the coast of Florida in 1513 and claims it for Spain
- **Fountain of Youth**
 - A legendary spring that supposedly restores the youth of anyone who drinks or bathes in its waters.
 - Tales of such a fountain have been recounted across the world for thousands of years, appearing in throughout history.
 - Stories of similar waters told among the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean during the Age of Exploration, who spoke of the restorative powers of the water in the mythical land of *Bimini*.

Legend

- The legend became particularly prominent in the 16th century, when it became attached to the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León, first Governor of Puerto Rico.
- Legend has it that León was searching for the Fountain of Youth when he traveled to what is now Florida in 1513.



Bimini

- According to legend, the Spanish heard of Bimini from the Arawaks in Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.
- The Caribbean islanders described a mythical land of *Beimeni* or *Beniny* (Bimini), a land of wealth and prosperity, which became connected with the fountain legend.
- By the time of Ponce de Leon, the land was thought to be located northwest towards the Bahamas (called *la Vieja* during the Ponce expedition).
- The natives were probably referring to the Maya.
- Sequene, an Arawak chief from Cuba, purportedly was unable to resist the lure of Bimini and its restorative fountain. He gathered a troupe of adventurers and sailed north, never to return.

Historical Accuracy

- Ponce de León never mentions the fountain in any of his writings throughout the course of his expedition.
- While he may well have heard of the Fountain and believed in it, his name was not associated with the legend in writing until after his death.

Popular Culture

