

1527 receipt for supplies to conquer Aztecs back in Mexico

BY ADEEL HASSAN
NYT News Service

About 30 years after it was discovered to be missing – and 500 years after it was written – the FBI has returned a document bearing the signature of Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés to Mexico.

The manuscript, a register of payments from 1527, is one of 15 pages believed to have been stolen from Mexico’s national archives between 1985 and 1993, the FBI said. It was signed by Cortés, who led the overthrow of the Aztec empire for the Spanish crown.

The FBI said that it returned the document Wednesday, and that no one would face prosecution in the theft because the document had changed hands many times since it vanished.

The document “outlines the payment of pe-

sos of common gold for expenses in preparation for discovery of the spice lands,” Special Agent Jessica Dittmer, a member of the FBI’s Art Crime Team, said in a statement, “so it really gives a lot of flavor as to the planning and preparation for unchartered territory back then.”

Those “spice lands” were eastern and southeastern Asia. European explorers sailed west in the hopes of finding a faster route to the region, and instead landed in the Americas.

In 1993, while archivists at the General Archive of the Nation in Mexico were creating microfilms of their collection of documents signed by Cortés, they discovered that 15 pages of the manuscript were missing.

The archive used a distinctive wax numbering system from 1985 to 1986, which helped FBI investigators to authen-

ticate the stolen page, the FBI said. The archivists had noted which numbered pages had been stolen and had recorded the precise rip pattern in the torn pages.

“This 1527 manuscript, signed by Hernán Cortés, captures a pivotal moment when the Pacific routes were opening and New Spain sought to connect the Americas with Asia,” a spokesperson from the Mexican Embassy in Washington said in a statement Thursday.

“Linked to an expedition to the Spice Islands (Maluku Islands, in present-day Indonesia), it is part of the legacy of the Hospital de Jesús, founded by Cortés.” Cortés founded the hospital in 1524.

Investigators said they believed that the archivists’ careful accounting would help them find the pages that were still missing.

They said that they had

added this missing page to the National Stolen Art File, an FBI database of artworks and cultural artifacts known to be stolen.

Though they did not detail their investigative process, they said that open-source research had revealed that the document was in the United States, though they did not say who had it.

Last year, Mexico asked that the Art Crime Team help to search for this particular page, the FBI said. The New York City Police Department, the U.S. Justice Department, the Mexican government and the FBI’s office in Atlanta took part in the investigation, officials said.

The document, dated Feb. 20, 1527, contains a full accounting of the logistical details related to Cortés’ journey to what would eventually become the territory of New Spain, which included

present-day Mexico and parts of the United States, Central America and the Caribbean, Dittmer said.

New Spain, a colonial territory of the Spanish Empire, was founded in the early 16th century and existed until Mexico declared its independence in 1821.

“Pieces like this are considered protected cultural property and represent valuable moments in Mexico’s history, so this is something that the Mexicans have in their archives for the purpose of understanding history better,” Dittmer said in a statement.

Cortés reached the shores of present-day

Mexico in 1519, aiming to overthrow the emperor Montezuma in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, which is now Mexico City.

The Aztecs initially beat back the Spanish invasion, but Cortés made alliances with local groups that opposed the Aztecs and returned in 1521.

His second siege was successful, and he took over the city after burning it to ruins. The Spanish ruler, Charles V, named Cortés the governor of New Spain in 1522.

This is the second Cortés document that the FBI has returned to Mexico in recent years. In 2022, the FBI discovered another page of the purchase order signed by Cortés that had made its way to private auction blocks across the United States.

The Art Crime Team is still looking for other missing pages from Mexico’s national archives.

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Legals & Public Notices

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Advertisement for Bids—Correction

Ambassador Building Community Improvement District Construction of Roadway & Intersection Improvements I-29 and Cookingham Drive—Project No. ST0159

Notice to Contractors:

Correction of date: Reference is hereby made to that certain Advertisement for Bids advertised in The Kansas City Star on August 14, 2025 for the project known as Ambassador Building Community Improvement District Construction of Roadway & Intersection Improvements I-29 and Cookingham Drive—Project No. ST0159. The date on which sealed bids shall be received, publicly opened and read is changed from September 4, 2025 to September 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM (prevailing Local Time). All other terms and conditions set forth in the above-mentioned August 14, 2025 Advertisement for Bids remain unchanged. The project will be awarded to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder. IPL0264562 Aug 17 2025

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Lee's Summit R7 School District

Masonry and Building Envelope Consulting Services

The Lee's Summit R7 School District is soliciting proposals for Masonry and Building Envelope design and construction projects. The RFP and supporting documentation will be available starting Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at <https://lsr7ebid.lionwave.net>. Interested bidders will need to register at this site for submission of bids. Please contact Kent Andersen (816-986-2431), for questions related to this RFP. Bid packages must be received via lonwave@lions7ebid.com by 2:00 PM, Tuesday, September 2, 2025. IPL0262362 Aug 10,17 2025

Public Notice for Bids

The City of KCMO will receive Bids by 2:00 PM, on **9/9/2025** at KCMO City Hall, 1st Floor 102W, Kansas City, MO 64106 for **Project No. 89004857 CMAQ 3001013 Linwood Traffic Signal Interconnect** IPL0261627 Aug 8,10-15,17-19 2025

Misc. Legals

Abandoned property at 9105 W. 72nd Street #304, Merriam, KS 66204

Sylas Canada's items will be disposed of on September 14th if unclaimed. Items include a phone, curtains, and a curtain rod. IPL0264559 Aug 17 2025

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