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## An Appeal to Restore El Inca's Birthplace

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AN APPEAL TO RESTORE EL INCA'S  
BIRTHPLACE

By WYNDHAM HAYWARD

Garcilaso de la Vega is the subject of a new biographical study, published both in Peru and Spain in recent years, the Lima edition having been issued in 1945 and the Spanish, which has just come to hand, is the product of the Instituto de Cultura Hispanica presses in Madrid (1948). It is an interesting and scholarly volume of some 300 pages by D. Aurelio Miro Quesada y Sosa, noted Peruvian author and dean of the faculty of letters of the University of San Marco in Lima, which is the oldest university in the western world.

The Hispanic Institute in Florida, with headquarters in Winter Park, has received an appeal to contribute to the restoration of Garcilaso's recognized birthplace, which was damaged in the recent earthquake in Peru. The invitation came from Fr. Ruben Vargas Ugarte S.J., one of Peru's noted historians, who has contributed to Florida history through his *Los Martires de la Florida, 1566-1572* (Lima, 1940), and his "The First Jesuit Mission in Florida" in *Historical Records and Studies, United States Catholic Historical Society Publications* (New York, 1935). The Institute will gladly acknowledge any donations toward this purpose and will see that they are forwarded to the proper authorities in Peru.

Garcilaso, while never setting foot in Florida himself (he wrote his pleasant history of *La Florida* in advanced years in Spain after his retirement from the king's service) composed his work in the romantic historical manner which was so popular at the time. The book is one of the important sources for the history of the DeSoto expedition, and was first published in Spanish at Lisbon in 1605. It later was reprinted at Madrid and has seen numerous editions in various European languages, save the English, strange to say. No adequate and complete translation of the work has ever been published in English, although an English version of a French abridgement by Richelet was printed in Phila-

delphia in 1881. The Florida-Historical Society's library is fortunate enough to possess a copy of the original edition of 1605, through the generosity of the late Henry M. Flagler. A good modern Spanish text, as well as an adequate translation, is a definite desideratum.

Dr. Miro Quesada's new "El Inca Garcilaso" follows by some twenty-five years the excellent monograph on Garcilaso of 100 pages by Julia Fitzmaurice-Kelly: issued by the Hispanic Society of America. Recent years have permitted additional research into the life and times of Garcilaso, and there is important new material and illuminating information in the Peruvian work, notably on Garcilaso's literary background and personal life. Among the materials of particularly revealing nature in this biography are the accounts of Garcilaso's last will and testament and the list of books in the old soldier's library, taken from Spanish records. This last shows the Inca son of a Spanish conquistador and an Inca princess to have been a man of wide reading and culture, well worthy of his position as the first distinguished literary figure of Spanish-American birth.

Garcilaso, of course, is more famous in Peru for his *Historia General del Peru* and his later *Comentarios Reales de las Incas*, which are important sources on the life and history of the Inca empire and people. Excellent modern editions of . . . these works have been printed in recent years in Peru and Argentina.

While not an important figure in the main currents of world literature, Garcilaso remains as an interesting and significant personage in the field of early Spanish-American letters, and certainly his historical-romantic treatment of Florida and the DeSoto expedition deserves a better fate than it has had in the land he wrote about.

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The Hispanic Institute in Florida, mentioned above, has recently secured two important microfilms from Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid: an unpublished verse history of Florida by Alonso de Escobedo, and Fernández de Pulgar's *Historia General de Florida*.