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TRISTAN DE LUNA AND OCHUSE
(PENSACOLA BAY) 1559

by CHARLES W. ARNADE

THE CONQUEST OF AMERICA by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century was a momentous event which had profound consequences in world history. Portugal was the leader of the age of exploration during the fifteenth century, but Spain became the principal contender in conquest during the next century. It was she who blazed the trail of European penetration in South, Central and North America. It was she who left the first European footprints on Florida's soil. It was she who unfurled the first flag over Pensacola Bay, and it was she who planted the first cross, symbol of Christianity, on the shores of that Bay. Hence it was Spain and her soldiers who gave paternity to Pensacola history. To her and to them should go our thoughts during the celebration of the city's four hundred years.

Spain was eminently equipped for the conquest of the new continent. She had been the crossroads of invasion since immemorial times. She was the most Roman of all the provinces, contributing greatly to the success of the Roman Empire. On her soil developed one of the most active Germanic kingdoms. While civilization after civilization succeeded each other on the peninsula, Spain slowly developed characteristics of her own, creating a nation made of the best and strongest elements of the transient nations. Catholicism provided the unifying force of the divergent historical elements. Finally the brilliant and dynamic Arab civilization swept over the peninsula, pushing the Christians into the mountains. From there they recovered their land at a snail-like pace. It took seven centuries until the Arabs abandoned the peninsula. War became the life of the peninsula and peace was abnormal. The battleline became the Spanish

(This article is not based on original research. Herbert Ingram Priestley in his *The Luna Papers* (DeLand, 1928), 2 vols., and his *Tristrin de Luna* (Glendale, 1936) has carefully compiled the original documents and sketched De Luna's life. For further bibliographical data about the expedition consult Priestley's footnotes in his two-volume work. Information about Priestley is available in Lesley Byrd Simpson, "Herbert Ingram Priestley, 1875-1944," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXIV (1944), 2-3.)

frontier, an institution just as important as in United States history. There was eternal war against the Moors, but those men and women who prayed to Allah left a profound imprint upon Spain. The Spanish nation was recast in a Moorish mold, giving origin to a new character that was an amalgamation of Africa and Europe. At the crossroad between these two continents was finally created a nationality most appropriate and typical of its geographical location. It was a nation full of energy, ready to turn the page. She would now go in pursuit of conquest instead of having to serve as unwilling host to conquerors.

The page was turned in 1492, one of the most memorable years in world history. The last Arab soldier left Europe, and peace came to Spain. Many veterans, whose ancestors for ages had made a living of fighting along the frontier, became unemployed. Peace could bring a complete social and economic dislocation. But good luck was with Spain. This same year a little-known sailor by the name of Columbus opened up a new frontier across the ocean in the Indies, later known as America. The seven-century War of the Reconquest was continued after 1492 in America. Instead of the Moors the American Indian became the target. Strategy, institutions, veterans and their sons were channeled to America from the Moorish war. The Arabs had been a highly civilized people and Spanish war efforts against them recognized this and adjusted their policies accordingly. Therefore Spanish institutions had been created by the impact of a high civilization against another equal one. These same institutions, mode of behavior and veterans were used against the Americans. Consequently when the Indians were highly civilized as in Peru and Mexico the conquest was most successful. When the natives were in a more primitive stage the Spanish march was usually a failure. Florida is a typical case. The first intended settlement of Pensacola is an example *per se*.

With this in mind as an introduction to our story we must ask ourselves from the very beginning whether the various events of the conquest owe their failure or success to political, military and economic behavior or to the personality of a single man. Were the illustrious campaigns of Mexico and Peru due to the fact that Spanish colonial conquest encountered the most suitable

conditions for their men, armies and institutions? Or was it because of a Cortes and Pizarro? Was the failure of the conquest of Pensacola Bay due to completely unsuitable conditions? Or was it that Tristan de Luna was unequal in strength and personality to Pizarro or Cortes? There is no clear-cut answer. Men and circumstances both played a role in the final outcome. The conqueror, the place, the events in themselves, all contributed a share, but the shares were far from equal. De Luna, Pensacola Bay with its sparse and savage Indians, and the chronology of the story of the occupation: all are an integral part of the picture. All must be sketched to make the story complete.

On August 14, 1559, the story of Pensacola history began when the De Luna expedition reached the Bay. It was not the first effort to settle Florida and it was not the first time that Pensacola Bay saw Spaniards. Forty-six years of constant and heroic probing of Florida's land and shore line had already passed. A quick survey of these events will focus the De Luna episode and Pensacola history within proper chronological context.

The first European to step on the shores of Florida remains unknown; he is lost in unrecorded history. With Juan Ponce de Leon begins the continuing line of our Florida history. It is conceivable, indeed very probable, that other Europeans had reached Florida before Ponce de Leon. But the gallant caballero from Leon is the historical father of Florida. In 1513 he sailed up our east coast, stepping ashore at an undetermined place in the neighborhood of the site of St. Augustine. He then turned around and followed the Florida coastline, ascending the more mysterious west coast. It remains unknown how far north Ponce de Leon sailed, but there is a possibility that he may have reached Pensacola Bay. If he did go that far, he did not step ashore.

Again we are left in the dark in determining who was the first European to step on the ground where the modern city of Pensacola stands. A safe guess is that he was a Spaniard. The two Miruelos, uncle and nephew, are said to have been the first to sail into Pensacola Bay, probably in 1516.

In 1519 the Spaniard, Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, in company of the younger Miruelo, sailed along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico and located the mouth of the great Missis-

sippi. He m have seen or entered our bay. None of these courageous ors established any settlement on the west coast but the ba s known to some of them.

Among the conquistadores was a certain Panfilo de Narvaez who had made himself famous, or infamous, in Spanish America. Later he acquired great wealth in Cuba. Narvaez then left for Spain to petition for a kingdom, and the Crown gave him permission to try his luck in wild Florida. Panfilo de Narvaez took six hundred hardy colonists to Florida in 1528. His chief executive officer was the colorful Don Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca.

The Narvaez expedition landed on the Florida shore near Tampa Bay and claimed possession of all the vast lands of Florida. They then began their march into Florida in a northerly direction in search of the mystic Apalache, a land of great riches according to native rumors. The fleet went along the coast but lost the men who were marching overland, and returned to Mexico in dismay. The land expedition was a miserable failure and the majority had to be buried in the Florida sand.

In Apalache (today's north-central Florida) they did not find the promised riches, nor did they find their accompanying fleet. With rudely constructed boats made of Florida pines they embarked on the Gulf and were the first Europeans about whom we have exact records of entering the present Pensacola Bay. Here they ran into not too pleasant natives. From here, in almost interminable wandering, one after another of the Spaniards perished; but Cabeza de Vaca reached Mexico after crossing the whole American southwest; and his narrative is one of the world's greatest epics. The bay had definitely been discovered, but also had served as a grave for many courageous Spaniards.

The next one to try his luck in Florida was the valiant Spanish conqueror, Hernando de Soto. His friends said that "he was gentleman by all four descents." In 1537 the King conferred on him the lands of Florida, covering twelve degrees of latitude. In May, 1539, he and his men landed on Florida soil along the west coast, in or near Tampa Bay. A few months later he too left for the intriguing interior, going first in the direction of the supposedly rich north Florida. The first long stop was in Anica Apalache, more or less where Tallahassee stands today, to winter over. A side expedition under Captain Maldonado in 1540

reached Pensacola and Maldonado was deeply impressed by the value of this spacious bay.

On his return to Anica Apalache, De Soto's Maldonado back to Cuba to get more provisions and then return directly to Pensacola Bay where he would meet him. Maldonado sailed to Cuba and returned in late 1540 to Pensacola to rejoin his chief. He was not there and Maldonado waited in desperation for De Soto, who had gone north into Alabama, tempted by the rumors of much gold. Maldonado sailed all along the coast in search of his beloved superior, leaving letters posted on the trees. In 1541 and 1542 faithful Maldonado again returned with his boats to Pensacola Bay, hoping that De Soto would be there. But ambitious De Soto had died in the vastness of the North American continent and the waters of the great Mississippi had received his body. *Captain Maldonado was the first European to stay for a lengthy period on the shores of Pensacola Bay.* He might be considered Pensacola's earliest resident.

Seventeen years passed after the failure of the De Soto expedition before another concerted effort was made to conquer and attempt to settle Florida. The popularity of Florida decreased with this latest effort. Survivors of the great De Soto thrust spoke of Florida as "a land full of bogs and poisonous fruits, barren, and the very worst country that is warmed by the sun." Even so, the coast of Florida was not to be forgotten and semi-private adventurers, with or without the permission of the Crown, sailed along the Florida shoreline. Some victims of shipwrecks survived in Florida. It is quite possible that someone again entered the harbor of Pensacola. The records of these freelancers have vanished, or maybe were never written.

More important was the ever-increasing zeal of the religious friars to go to Florida in search of Indian souls. One of them, the Dominican, Fray Luis Cancer de Barbastro, together with Father Gregorio Beteta, wanted to conquer Florida by peaceful means. Cancer did not reach farther than the coast of Tampa Bay where the natives butchered him cruelly in 1549. Another, Father Andres de Olmos, was more earthly-minded and wished to conquer the souls of Florida by the sword. He was much interested in Pensacola Bay. He and Father Pedro Canillas thought that the bay was an ideal place from which to begin the conquest of Florida.

Neither friar made it to Florida, but their thinking was important in later policies. The Church fathers continued to exert their pressure for a quick settlement of Florida. In 1555 the powerful bishop of Cuba came out for the conquest of Florida. He thought that Florida native women could relieve the urgent need for females in Cuba to bolster the decreasing native population. These pleas plus the continual shipwrecks of Spanish vessels along both coasts of Florida and a possible threat of French, Dutch and Scottish colonization of Florida convinced the Crown of its importance.

By 1558 it had been decided that Florida again should be settled. The exact reasons for this action still remain somewhat cloudy. Two possibilities stand out. First there was the ever-present religious motive pressed by the various religious orders and agencies. The motherland with its separate regional tendencies had found Catholicism the best unifying force. It was the cement that held the diverse regions together; Catholicism was the single item that every Spaniard shared. Catholicism would also be the unifying force of the conquest. Again, it was shared by every conqueror. It was more than a mere religion; it was also political, social and economic in nature. The Church built up a tremendous hierarchy which most certainly wanted a voice in the conquest. It wanted the conquest to go on for several reasons. First, there was the genuine desire to save souls. Then it needed more souls for its ever-growing bureaucracy. And it was most reluctant to let the Protestant nations take away the souls of the Indians. Florida had Indians, and therefore the Church lobbied hard to extend again the conquest to Florida. It was unwilling to see that land lay untouched by them when it was so near Cuba and Mexico where Spanish rule had been deeply established.

The other motive was unquestionably lay in nature. There was a great awareness in Spain that other European nations such as France, Scotland and England would show an interest in America, and that they might concentrate their efforts on North America. Geographically Florida was an undetermined region stretching all the way from Newfoundland to the Keys. Along the western side no adequate definition was even given. Apparently it was to reach to where Mexico ended. Spain and the other nations had not yet adequate maps and were unaware

of the tremendous expanse of North America. But they were aware of the importance of the Florida peninsula that pointed like a sharp dagger into the very heart of the Caribbean Sea, the nerve center of the Spanish American empire. Any foreign outpost on the peninsula would endanger Spain's hegemony. Furthermore, the sea route of the home-bound convoys of Spain with the valuable goods from America was parallel to the Florida east coast. It became vital to establish a Spanish outpost along this coast. The importance of the *Gulf* coast in Spanish eyes at this time remains doubtful. They knew of its closeness to the Mexican shores and had some vague ideas about a huge river network that emptied into the Gulf along this coast. But basically the Spaniards were more interested in the east coast.

In their various previous attempts to settle Florida and in the many probing expeditions the Spaniards had come to value two bays. Strangely enough they knew little about these bays and a sort of tradition began to develop about them. On the Gulf coast the bay of Ochuse, which was Pensacola Bay, was considered the best. We are still in the dark as to who was responsible for Ochuse's reputation and who used this name first. Moreover, the Spaniards before 1559 were completely confused as to the difference between the bays which later became Mobile and Pensacola. Either they knew only one of them, or knew of both but used Ochuse to identify the two bays. Furthermore, Ochuse was also a river which emptied into the bay. Anyhow, Ochuse, often referred to as Ichuse, was considered the bay on the Gulf coast.

The second bay, now Port Royal, was called Santa Elena and was located on the Atlantic coast north of where Ponce de Leon had first touched land in 1513. Ochuse (Pensacola) on the Gulf coast and Santa Elena on the Atlantic commanded the imaginations of the lusty Spanish sailors of North American waters. Consequently, when Spain decided to occupy North America she directed her eyes toward these two places in the hope that they might become the cornerstones of the new colony.

The story of the yet greatest attempt to occupy Florida has its beginning on December 29, 1557. On this day, by a royal cedula that as always came from the King, the huge Spanish bureaucracy was told to settle Florida. King Philip ordered that La Florida "shall be settled and placed under orderly government,

both to the end that the natives thereof, who are without the light of faith, may be illuminated and taught, and that the Spaniards may be benefited and may become established." The King instructed the Honorable Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico) "to give orders that the province of La Florida and the Punta de Santa Elena be settled." The King made it very clear "that a strong settlement shall be made at the Punta de Santa Elena." The Viceroy was ordered to name a governor for Florida "who shall seem suitable to you, one fearful of God, our Lord, and zealous in our service." Another command was to include priests in the forthcoming expedition.

In summary, the responsibility for the conquest of Florida was put squarely on the Viceroy of Mexico. He was given all authority to fulfill the order and he had much leeway as to the particulars of the expedition. There were only two specific things he had to do. One was to send priests with the army into Florida, and second he was to establish the main Florida base at Santa Elena. In October of 1558 the governor of Florida was officially appointed by the executive of New Spain.

In 1550 Luis de Velasco had become the second viceroy of New Spain with his capital in Mexico. He was a man of great ability, ambition and ideas, and he was interested in Spanish expansion. In 1556 he came out for the occupation of Florida when other voices in Cuba were demanding it too. Therefore it was most appropriate that Velasco was charged with the responsibility of occupying Florida when the King issued his royal cedula in 1557. His first task would be to appoint a man in charge of the operation with the title of Governor of Florida. In this way the Viceroy would create a new *conquistador* who, if successful, might repeat the glories of a Cortes, Pizarro, Ponce de Leon and Hernando de Soto.

The conquistadors were the prime force in the conquest of America. Those who believe that history is made by leaders, see in the Spanish conqueror a good example of their hero-worship. The Spanish conquistador represents a necessary chapter in the history of the Americas. Florida became a field of action for them. The new governor of Florida would become a conquistador since his task was to occupy vacant land over which no Spanish flag waved and where previous conquerors had failed.

On October 30, 1558, Viceroy Velasco appointed *Tristan de Luna y Arellano* governor "of the people who are sent to

colonize . . . the settlement which is to be made in the province of La Florida and Punta de Santa Elena." He was not only named commander of the expeditionary forces but also "governor of the said provinces." In his nomination Velasco simply said that his appointee "is a gentleman, an hidalgo, zealous in the service of God, our Lord, and of His Majesty. And in him are combined the qualities which are required." In this way De Luna was appointed by superior instruction. In this he differs from most of the other conquistadores who applied for their commissions. This was particularly true in the case of Florida. All the men before De Luna, such as Ponce de Leon, Narvaez and De Soto, ventured into the land of their own volition after receiving permission to do so. De Luna was not accepting the new challenging task out of duty to his country. It is quite possible that he sought the appointment and he got it because of influence and money. But an evaluation of De Luna's qualifications are necessary in view of the failure of the expedition, for which he was widely accused.

Professor Priestley tells us that "the choice of Luna was apparently a wise one, judging by his experience, age, position and previous services." Tristan de Luna y Arellano came from an old-line Castilian family of long service to the Crown. He was an heir to a large fortune. Around 1530 we find that Tristan had left Castile and had marched off to America. He had as his "sailing companion" none other than Hernan Cortes who was returning to Mexico. Little is known of De Luna's activities in his first five years in America.

By 1535 Tristan was back in Spain, since in that year he returned to New Spain accompanying the first viceroy, the celebrated Antonio de Mendoza, who was his cousin. In Mexico we can safely assume that De Luna moved in the highest circles and was a man of importance. We learn that everyone in the city of Mexico "has esteemed and honored him for the character and goodness of his person." The fact that he did not remain in Spain indicates that he was satisfied with his progress in America. In 1545 he married a rich woman, and probably spent most of his time managing his properties. But apparently the life of a wealthy magnate was not entirely to his liking.

Five years before his marriage he had already joined an adventurous enterprise, the Coronado expedition into the wilds of western North America in search of the mystical seven cities of

Cibola. For two years he shared all the excitement, endurance, successes and failures of this expedition. Often he and his men were the first Europeans to see the many wonders of the American Southwest. His body showed great physical stamina and he was brave and enterprising. Although it was his first military adventure he rose rapidly to the rank of colonel and held most responsible commands. He belonged to the immediate staff of Coronado. One man who knew De Luna tells us that during the Coronado expedition he "was one of those who served best . . . placing his person in the greatest dangers to life, and being many times wounded with severe wounds from which he was at the point of death."

He returned from the expedition a seasoned soldier of the conquest. Yet his health had been affected and in the next year he rested from the past two years' exertion. In 1548 he rendered his second public service of which we have record. Many Indians of the Oaxaca area rebelled over long accumulated mistreatments. All peaceful measures by the Spanish authorities failed and the natives were ready to sack and slaughter. The Spanish settlers in the area retaliated cruelly under fear and a bloody racial war developed. Viceroy Antonio Mendoza called his friend, De Luna, and appointed him to suppress the rebellion. The millionaire equipped his own army and resolutely moved into Oaxaca. One contemporary correspondent tells us that he "at his own expense went to them with many soldiers and pacified them, executing justice, and left the said provinces and the Indians thereof pacified and quiet, as they have always been ever since." De Luna stayed until 1551 in Oaxaca.

In the meanwhile a new viceroy had arrived, the venerable Velasco, and De Luna saw to it that his relations with the new executive were good, if not friendly and intimate. Therefore when the order came from Spain to occupy Florida, De Luna was the person to undertake this task. He had shown intelligence and temerity on the two occasions when he was in the Crown's service. He had money to recruit his own army. The governor was indebted to him for the Oaxaca campaign. Furthermore, he was well liked and had no apparent enemies in high places. Besides, De Luna seemed to be most willing to invest his fortune in the Florida adventure and assume the governorship. The man was the right choice for the job.

Although De Luna's official nomination is dated October,

1558, it seems evident that he was informally offered the job many months earlier and that he accepted it then. Even before the official nomination was signed, Velasco gave orders to the experienced sailor, Guido de las Bazares, to sail to the Gulf coast and to the Punta de Santa Elena to verify the bays that would serve as bases for the De Luna expedition. Bazares left Vera Cruz in September, 1558, and spent a long time along the Texas coast where he discovered new bays. Along the Mississippi Gulf coast he found no adequate bay. Sailing eastward along the coast he failed to identify the Mississippi River but entered Mobile Bay which he named the Bay of Filipina. Bazares liked the bay, with its surroundings full of trees and wild plants. It has to be said that there is some divergent opinion as to the location of this bay. Woodbury Lowery strongly believed, and made a good case, that this was Mobile Bay, while Bishop Shea assumed it to be Pensacola Bay. Bazares continued east in search of the mystical Santa Elena but bad weather forced him to return to Mexico. Apparently he by-passed Pensacola Bay. The Bazares expedition added little information and even increased the already existing confusion about the two talked-about bays on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

Accepted and approved as governor of Florida and Santa Elena, De Luna was officially inaugurated on All Saints Day, November 1, 1558. In the true sense of the word it was the ceremony by which De Luna took the oath and covenant of homage. Celebrated in the cathedral of Mexico City, it had all the aspects of a colorful medieval ceremony. Present were all the dignitaries of the large governmental apparatus led by the Viceroy and the royal judges of the high court. Present were all the gentlemen and ladies of the sumptuous society of the capital. And present were the powerful religious hierarchy in their colorful vestments, led by the archbishop. In a long discourse De Luna swore to fulfill his duty, bringing Florida under the Spanish banner, to settle it and protect the land and its inhabitants for His Majesty the King of Spain. Thus by November 1, 1558, Florida with its savage Indians again had a Spanish governor although no Spaniard was on its soil. Yet the march for Florida was on.

The months following the inauguration were spent in assembling and organizing the expedition. This was an arduous job

if compared with our modern means. De Luna gave his full attention to the task and the Viceroy himself dedicated many hours of his busy schedule. It seemed that he considered the expedition as most vital enterprise of his administration. The Dominicans would be part of the expedition. Seven sturdy friars were chosen under the leadership of Fray Pedro de Feria. Father Gregorio Beteta, was permitted to join the expedition. Father Barandalla, who turned out to be a troublemaker, was appointed secular priest. Whereas the Dominicans were to instruct and convert the natives, Barandalla was in charge of the religious duties of the Spanish settlers and soldiers.

The next task was to appoint military officers, either of the infantry or the cavalry. In selecting these men not so much attention was given to their military qualifications as to their ability to gather men and finance their units. De Luna found a host of good men, many of whom had distinguished records in various theaters of war. One of them, Captain Juan Jaramillo, had fought in Tunis and later had been on the Coronado expedition. Another captain was De Luna's nephew, Cristobal Ramirez y Arellano, who recruited his men in Oaxaca. These captains, in search of men, crossed the whole viceroyalty. By March, 1559, about one hundred men had been gathered in Mexico City.

Then the soldiers of De Luna broke out in riot against the local administration. A soldier was arrested, apparently for disorderly conduct. His fellow soldiers, supported by their captains, went to his aid. Quick intervention by the Viceroy and De Luna stopped this disagreeable incident. Yet it showed that De Luna was assembling a rough and tough bunch. By the middle of April the De Luna army that had been assembled in Mexico was ready to march toward the coast. It had nearly two hundred cavalry soldiers and roughly three hundred infantrymen. Then there were the many civilians who had joined the force. Most of the soldiers had one or even two servants. Farmers, artisans, Indians, Negroes, honest married women, many with children, and others of dubious reputation rounded out the expedition. When they left the capital loaded with equipment and food, the Viceroy and the Archbishop were present and accompanied the caravan beyond the city limits. Early in May the expedition stopped to regroup in Tlaxcala. There they were joined by the Viceroy who had decided to make a last-minute inspection. Velasco, being a first-rate administrator, was not adverse to criti-

cizing some aspects of the expedition. He said that there were too many disreputable people among the civilian force. Also he was critical of the many servants that the armed forces had, and he was disturbed about the "dubious women" who had made their appearance. He asked De Luna to correct this situation.

Their port of embarkation was San Juan de Ulloa, which is today's Vera Cruz. By June 11, 1559, the expedition was ready to sail for Florida. Five hundred soldiers made up of "cavalry, arquebusiers, shield-bearers and crossbowmen" and one thousand civilians embarked in thirteen ships. Furthermore, 240 horses, "supplies of corn, biscuit, bacon, dried beef, cheese, oil, vinegar, wine, cattle for breeding were already on board," notes Herbert Priestley. Tools and weapons were also stored in the ships. Velasco, who had come to Vera Cruz to see the departure, gave a farewell address in which he requested "a speedy conquest for the glory of both Majesties, God and their King," and reminded the expeditionists not to mistreat the natives of Florida. After hearing Mass, the shouts of slaves and many prayers and the hoisting of the royal standard, the ships lifted their anchors and took to the sea in search of the bay of Ochuse.

The plan for the expedition was to occupy Ochuse Bay on the Gulf coast, which was thought to be easily accessible to Havana and Vera Cruz. A town was to be built there of 140 house-lots. One hundred lots were to be reserved for the families of the soldiers. The remaining forty would belong to the Church and the government. There would be a church, monastery and governor's residence which would be located on the square.

This then was the blueprint of the projected town. But this Gulf bay base was to be considered only the first step toward the ultimate goal which was Santa Elena on the Atlantic coast, to which he was supposed to move overland. It was thought that the distance from the one to the other was but 250 miles and that Santa Elena was easier to approach by land than by sea. Truly, the Spaniards had forgotten where the bay was. Furthermore, De Luna in his march to the east coast, was to go across land covered by De Soto and mystically identified as Coosa. This area, today's Alabama, was supposed to be a land full of riches; for precious stones, tasty fruits, nutritious grains, valuable metals and rich Indians made up the myth of Coosa.

The sailing to Florida was relatively smooth for those days.

Having favorable winds for seventeen days, they came within sixty miles of the Gulf coast near the mouth of the Mississippi. Contrary winds drove them back in a southwest direction as far as the reefs of Yucatan, but they were able to take a northeast course again, reaching the Florida coast at latitude 29°30'. They stopped for water and wood and then continued west along the coast. They did not find Ochuse but entered Mobile Bay. De Luna knew that Ochuse was east and he was determined to locate it rather than disembarking at Mobile, which was Bazares' Filipina Bay. Since about one hundred of the horses had died, the only serious misfortune of the journey, it was decided to disembark the surviving ones and transport them overland to Ochuse. The boats left Mobile on August 14 and on the same day sailed into Ochuse. It was "the vesper of the Ascension of the Queen of the Angels" and for this reason the bay was named Santa Maria Filipina.

The place where De Luna anchored was, according to his report, nine miles wide and the entrance through the bar was less than two miles in width. The fleet dropped its anchors by a reddish bluff "which divided the eastern side of the bay." De Luna was enthusiastic about the place and he told the Crown that his seamen believed it to be "the best port in the Indies." He wrote that the country "seems to be healthy. It is somewhat sandy, from which I judge that it will not yield much bread. There are pine trees, live oaks, and many other kinds of trees." De Luna said little about the natives because there were very few of them and those who showed up were quite friendly. He identified them as "only a few fishermen." In this respect De Luna was luckier than his predecessors such as Ponce de Leon, Narvaez, De Soto and Father Cancer who had to face savage Indians ready to butcher the intruders.

The first undertaking of the Spaniards was to choose a site for the first settlement. De Luna wrote to the King that "the site which has been selected for founding the town is no less good, for it is a high point of land which slopes down to the bay where the ships come to anchor." In this way the town would "command a view of the anchorage." And De Luna considered his chosen port safe from bad storms. On this spot the Governor intended to build the town so that "the eighty or one hundred persons who will remain here will be safe." He told the King

that he expected to take the rest of the expedition "inland." This was not because of restlessness or pressure to begin the march through Coosa but because the food supply in the bay area was very meager. But considering everything, the initial task had been a great success and the future looked bright.

De Luna sent a galleon back to Mexico to report news of the successful landing. The lay brother Bartolome Mateos was scheduled to go to Spain directly from Pensacola to recruit more colonists and priests. The Governor gave orders to the business manager, Luis Daza, to return to Mexico and collect more tools, weapons, ammunition, food and horses. Two scout parties were sent into the interior in search of food. One of them sailed up the (later) Escambia River. Both expeditions had friars with them and the fathers clashed sharply with the officers over the treatment of the Indians. This was the first serious disagreement among the expeditionaries since the departure from Mexico.

This controversy was the beginning of the end of happiness and good luck. The scouts failed to find sufficient food or large Indian villages. Searching vainly for something, they overstayed their ordered time and ran short of provisions. De Luna became worried about the prolonged absence of his men. Furthermore, the business manager's boat was lying in the harbor, waiting only for the scouts to return to inform him about the food situation. He hesitated to depart before their arrival as he needed their report to judge his food requisition to be presented in Mexico. Everyone was becoming somewhat tense and nervous. But before the scouts arrived with their bad news a catastrophe struck the main expedition.

On the night of August 19 a terrific storm blew from the sea for twenty-four hours and scattered the ships in all directions, sinking many of them. Father Padilla tells that one ship was lifted by the wind and carried "an arquebuse shot's distance from the shores." De Luna reported to the Viceroy that "all ships which were in this port went aground, save only one caravel and two barks. There was a great loss of seamen and passengers, both of their lives as well as their property." The ships had not yet been unloaded and much of the reserve food, already scarce, went down with them. The ship on which Fray Mateos was ready to sail for Spain was also lost with all its occupants. De Luna sent an urgent message to Velasco, requesting aid. The Governor made it clear that his situation was so desperate that

he might be forced to abandon the bay and move with his men into the interior in search of provisions.

Soon the low spirits of the survivors were further strained when the two scouting expeditions returned empty-handed. De Luna immediately organized a new contingent made up of four companies of horses under the command of Sergeant Major Mateo del Sauz and De Luna's nephew, Cristobal Ramirez y Arellano. Two sturdy Dominicans were assigned to this army. It was to penetrate even deeper into the hinterland in search of food. They penetrated deep into "a desolate and uninhabited wilderness" of today's Alabama. Following the Alabama River they encountered an Indian village called Nanipacana. It was deserted since the Indians had taken to the woods, but contained some stores of food. Woodbury Lowery believed the place to be in today's Monroe County of Alabama near the headwaters of the Escambia River. De Luna was informed of the happy find of food.

Back in Pensacola "the suffering from hunger was great." Further explorations into the woods and along the rivers proved fruitless. In November two ships arrived with the business manager Daza, bringing some provisions but surely not enough to put the settlement on a going basis. The scouts in Alabama advised De Luna to shift his camp to Nanipacana. The Governor was not over-enthusiastic in giving up Pensacola without having established a permanent town. Yet the hoped-for reinforcements and additional provisions from Mexico failed to arrive. All this was aggravated by a heavy fever that struck De Luna and gave him delirious spells. He began to lose the confidence of his men, and the Spaniards in Alabama were wondering why the Governor hesitated to move north. Priestley described the sick De Luna as a "pathetic figure." The misfortunes of the last months had weakened the Governor and made him easy prey to disease. But as De Luna's biographer put it, "in spite of all disaster and ill will, he never swerved from his purpose to complete his mission, lacking perhaps only the adroitness or the easy conscience of a Cortes to bring his orders to execution."

By February, 1560, it was decided in a council of war in which the head Dominican participated, to move to Nanipacana. The march into Alabama proved to be difficult, but 1500 people reached the interior village which was named Nanipacana de Santa Cruz. At Pensacola De Luna left a lieutenant together

with fifty soldiers and some Negro servants. The doings, plight and adventures of these men who stayed in Pensacola is not told to us in documents. A fair guess is that their status did not improve. As to the bulk of the expedition now in Alabama, their condition became even more desperate than on the Florida coast. The food was inadequate and by early spring of 1560 the colony again had its usual food shortage. A large military unit with two priests pushed farther into Coosa, maybe with the intention of blazing a trail to the Atlantic and finding food. Crisscrossing the interior of Alabama, the Coosa unit had all kinds of adventures and vicissitudes which are beyond the scope of this history. In the final end they accomplished nothing and only made enemies out of the natives. Furthermore, the strain of the march had weakened the nerves of the participants who began to quarrel. The constant moral sermons of the friars added little to the harmony of the group. When finally, after several months of wandering, they returned to Santa Cruz, they found the village empty and De Luna and his settlers had departed for the coast in desperation.

Things had gone from bad to worse in Santa Cruz. Not only was food short but disciplinary problems became acute. De Luna was blamed for the plight of the soldiers and expeditionaries. The Governor, tired and in ill health, failed to use tact and diplomacy to calm down the tempers of the men and women. He quarreled with his immediate officers. At one point he overruled the advice of his officers and proposed to move deep into Coosa. After many hours of quarreling, and seeing unanimous opposition, he gave up the idea. Instead he yielded to the desire of the people and staff officers to go back to the coast. De Luna's popularity had reached its lowest point. Santa Cruz was evacuated at the end of June, 1560. A letter was left in an urn in case the Coosa party should return. The road from the Alabama River was one of hardship with many drowning in the midst of starvations. Heavily decimated, the expedition finally reached Pensacola, after an apparent lengthy stopover at Mobile Bay, having gained nothing from its march north.

The second stay at Pensacola was hardly better than the previous one. The Viceroy in Mexico had done his utmost to send food and reinforcements but without success. Only one ship made it to Pensacola, arriving about one week after De Luna had come south from Alabama. Its supply "brought scant

comfort for gnawing stomachs." The ship also brought a new royal order to immediately occupy Santa Elena on the Atlantic. The King had learned of a possible French threat and had decided that the Atlantic occupation was of prime urgency. De Luna, a strict disciplinarian, immediately laid plans for the fulfillment of the King's order, even though his men were dismayed. Two frigates and a small bark were dispatched on August 10, 1560, to the Atlantic coast to claim Santa Elena for the King of Spain. The three ships never made it into the Atlantic but had luck enough not to go down in the storms they encountered. Stripped and damaged, they sailed to the Mexican Gulf coast. The Viceroy in Mexico was very upset about this failure and blamed De Luna for a hastily done job. Further complications were in store.

All but two of the priests had left the expedition to return to Mexico either on business or for good. Two fathers who had gone into Coosa were still in Florida. Other people had also made it back to Cuba and Mexico. Strong complaints from these men about De Luna reached the Viceroy, who began to show some irritation with his friend's inability to dominate the situation. But Velasco was too experienced an administrator to take at full value the various complaints. He knew that the priests were always eager to challenge the civil authorities at the slightest provocation and he was aware that their complaints were unquestionably exaggerated. But as stated, the Viceroy realized that things were not going along well in Florida. He was not yet ready to intervene but rather made efforts to supply the expedition with more goods, a task that can be classified as a failure for bureaucratic and geographic reasons.

Indeed, affairs turned from bad to worse in Pensacola. During the winter of 1560 into the early months of 1561 the morale of the soldiers, officers, settlers and slaves completely collapsed. A grave mutiny broke out, the responsibility of which lay both with the men and the Governor. De Luna, growing weaker and more irritable, became obstinate and punctiliously demanding. His men were unable to understand the grave moral and physical suffering of the Governor and his iron determination to fulfill his duty and orders, even in the face of insurmountable obstacles.

Soon after De Luna had returned to Pensacola part of the men who had moved into Coosa in the company of the two

priests, returned to Santa Cruz and finding it empty, then descended to the coast. De Luna, encouraged by some reports from Coosa, decided to go with the whole expedition into that land. He was nearly unanimously opposed, including the two priests who had returned. Ordering the men to get ready for the march northeast he was disobeyed and mutiny broke out. He condemned some officers to death, but requested the royal scribe to legally record what had happened and permit appeal of the sentence to Mexico. By September, 1560, the Governor had lost complete control of his men and the dissatisfied men had dispatched messengers to the Viceroy which included the report of the scribe.

On January 30, 1561, Viceroy Velasco relieved De Luna of his command and requested him to go to Spain or come to Mexico "to give account to His Majesty of what has happened." Angel de Villafane was appointed as the new governor. The Viceroy also ordered that some of the leaders of the mutiny be returned to Mexico "to investigate their disobedience." Villafane had orders to go to Pensacola and evacuate most of the people to Havana where reinforcements were to be gathered for a new try to occupy Santa Elena on the Atlantic. Only a small contingent was to stay at Pensacola Bay to maintain Spanish sovereignty. Villafane left Mexico early in February, 1561, and did not arrive in Pensacola until the first week of April. Until that time De Luna was unaware of his demotion.

With the coming of the new year the delicate situation did not improve in Pensacola. Food was still very scarce and De Luna isolated himself from his men. The two Dominicans were sympathetic to the mutinous men and treated the Governor quite harshly. As time passed and tempers sharpened the Dominicans showed more and more antipathy toward De Luna. They assailed his uncompromising stand in not calling a staff meeting. The fathers and officers had hoped that in such a meeting they could clearly outvote the Governor and demand their retreat from Florida. De Luna, aware of his extreme minority position and determined to fulfill the royal orders, was unwilling to be maneuvered into a *Junta de guerra*. The issue came to a head on Sunday, March 7, 1561, when during Mass Father Domingo de la Anunciacion gave a sermon in which he requested the Governor to call a meeting. After Mass the two fathers stopped De Luna at the church door and urged him to follow their advice. De Luna refused and he was then heckled by officers and

soldiers who had witnessed the affair. The Governor and a few faithfuls left the scene instead of disciplining the mutineers, which was a show of weakness. Returning later for the evening service, Father Anunciacion requested De Luna to leave the church and told him that he was being barred from any religious service until he called a meeting. This was a gross abuse of power by the friars and was strictly against the Church's rules. No single priest has the right of excommunication. Furthermore, the reasons cited against the Governor were of no concern to the priest. The right to call or not to call a war council or staff meeting lay within the sole jurisdiction of the Governor and was completely beyond the realm of the friars.

We know nothing of the subsequent events in Pensacola except that on Palm Sunday some kind of conciliation took place in the church. The Governor took communion and publicly asked "forgiveness as the aggressor and guilty one." Father Padilla, the historian who relates to us the incident, says that De Luna shed tears and that afterward the rebellious officers came to embrace him. On Holy Tuesday Villafane, in the company of the famous Father Gregorio Beteta, arrived in Pensacola with the news of the Governor's dismissal. De Luna took the grim news gracefully, and Villafane, a man of moderation, showed respect toward his predecessor and addressed him as "Your Lordship".

During the first part of April, 1561, De Luna left Pensacola to start his journey to Spain via Havana. So came to a sad and inconclusive end the career of a conqueror. In Spain he elapsed into oblivion, scorned by the Crown which whisperingly held him responsible for the failure to settle Florida. The glamour of a Ponce de Leon dying from wounds inflicted by Florida Indians, of a De Soto being buried in the waters of the Mississippi, or of Cancer walking straight into death are not found in De Luna. He is a conqueror who failed.

His successor, Villafane, a man of distinguished record and proven courage, did not fare better than the millionaire conquistador De Luna. The end of the Pensacola adventure was approaching fast and Villafane could not stem the tide of defeat and misfortune. He began to put into effect the Viceroy's instructions. He politely brushed aside the demands of some officers to trace an inland route to New Spain. On April 10, 1561, the new governor called his officers and men together and informed

them that he had been ordered to occupy Santa Elena. He ordered the men to take an oath of allegiance but made it clear that none was compelled to go to the Atlantic. With the exception of four men they all expressed the wish to participate in the new venture. Villafane then ordered about sixty men under Captain Diego de Biedma to remain at Pensacola Bay and hold it for the King of Spain. All the other people, about two hundred in all, were embarked in three vessels and carried to Havana for the eventual journey to Santa Elena. Villafane soon departed from Havana for his destination with three boats. He had only seventy-five men with him, the others having deserted him in Cuba. The expedition arrived safely and in good spirits at Santa Elena, rediscovering the often-mentioned cape. Villafane took possession of the place in the name of the King of Spain. On June 14, while Villafane was searching for a better harbor, a storm of hurricane force arose and decimated the fragile expedition. Having suffered severe damages, Villafane, happy to have saved some lives and the ships, decided to give up the venture and returned to New Spain in defeat. This was the end of the first Pensacola expedition.

What occurred at Ochuse or Pensacola Bay after Villafane left for the Atlantic remains completely unknown. It is said that on his way back from Santa Elena with his damaged ship Villafane stopped at Pensacola. Again we are in the dark as to what happened. It is feasible to believe that Villafane picked up the men there and brought the Spanish occupation of Pensacola Bay to an end. If any men remained behind for whatever reason they do not appear in the annals of history. We can be reasonably sure that by July, 1561, the story of the Pensacola expedition had terminated.

Thus another episode of the conquest of America ended. This one did not culminate in victory or success. But it was the accumulated experience from these probing expeditions which laid the basis for better fortune. The tragic ending of the ventures of Ponce de Leon, Narvaez, De Soto, Cancer, De Luna and others finally resulted in the multiple victories of Menendez and the permanent occupation of Florida.

Naturally the big question remains, what were the causes for the failure of the Pensacola venture. No single answer is acceptable. The elements of nature, geographical ignorance, in-

adequate planning, sheer bad luck, irresponsible participants due to a deficient recruiting policy, dispirited officers, haughty priests: all these were contributing factors. Blame must also rest with the Governor. To be sure he had the best of intentions and his past qualifications were outstanding. But during the Pensacola expedition he faltered in many ways. He showed a certain instability and stubbornness. This can be excused because of his physical disability. All these factors taken together blocked the road to success.

It remains that the De Luna expedition was a great epic in the conquest of North America. It was a vital chapter of Florida history and marked the beginning of the written history of Pensacola.

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