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SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH-SPANISH RIVALRY IN LA FLORIDA

by J. LEITCH WRIGHT, JR.

FOR MANY YEARS after its discovery *la Florida* was a vague geographical concept. Discovered by Ponce de Leon in 1513, it was first considered an island, though later recognized to be a diminutive tail wagging an immense dog. During much of the sixteenth century it embraced a large part of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and stretched mysteriously inland an infinite way. Ponce de Leon was followed by numerous other conquistadors such as Vazquez de Ayllon, Panfilio de Narvaez, Hernando de Soto, and Tristan de Luna y Arrellano, but they garnered little gold or silver and endured many privations, shipwrecks, and attacks by hostile Indians. Thus it was not unnatural that the main stream of Spanish conquest and colonization flowed to Mexico and Peru rather than to unrewarding Florida.

England also during the early years had shown interest in the New World and in the vague region soon to be called Florida. John Cabot in his second voyage of 1498 coasted as far south as the Chesapeake Bay, possibly even to the Florida peninsula. Spanish officials protested to Henry VII that the "new-found-land" discovered by this "Genoese like Columbus" was in the realms of the Spanish monarch.¹ But because of hazy geographical conceptions, because of contradictions at this time between the Papal Bulls of 1493 and the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494,²

1. Pedro de Ayala to Ferdinand and Isabella, London, July 25, 1498, in *Letters, Despatches, and State Papers relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, preserved in the Archives at Vienna, Brussels, Simancas, and Elsewhere* (London, 1862-1954), I, 176-177.
2. By a series of Bulls in 1493 the Pope divided all the unknown heathen lands between Spain and Portugal. The next year Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Tordesillas extending the line of demarkation two hundred and seventy leagues westward, and it was expected that the terms of this treaty shortly would be confirmed by another Papal Bull. The expected Bull was not forthcoming until 1506, and until then for non-Iberian countries there was some confusion as to which, if any, demarkation line was valid. An excellent discussion of the Papal Bulls is in H. Vander Linden "Alexander VI and the Demarkation of the Maritime Colonial Domains of Spain and Portugal, 1493-1494," *American Historical Review*, XXII (October, 1916), 20.

and because of the reluctance of the Catholic Henry to pay attention to temporal papal decrees, Spanish remonstrances proved futile. This being the case, the Spanish monarchs ordered Alonso de Ojeda to follow up his recent Caribbean discoveries and to continue northward toward the region where the English had been.³ Cabot's discoveries, plotted by the efficient Spanish cartographer Juan de la Cosa on his famous world map of 1500, not only in themselves were disturbing, but also Ojeda in his first voyage to the Indies had surprised an unknown English vessel in the "vicinity of Coquibacoa."⁴ Among other things the Spanish mariner was instructed to sail northward and to plant the arms of Castile along the coast, thereby forestalling any English advance in this region.⁵ Hostile natives in the West Indies and disputes among his subordinates prevented Ojeda from carrying out this portion of his instructions.

Apparently, however, it made little difference, because for the next half century after the Cabot voyages, England played a relatively passive role in the New World. Some Bristol mariners followed Cabot's wake to the "new-found-land," usually to fish but sometimes to search for the northwest passage. Others enjoyed a profitable, legitimate trade with the Indies, regulated by the mercantilistic Casa de Contratacion or House of Trade at Seville. However shortly after Henry VIII broke with Rome and divorced Catherine of Aragon, Charles V began to discriminate against English merchants. The shift from legitimate trader to free-booter soon followed.⁶

After Henry's death, England's relations with Spain fluctuated, influenced to a large degree by the status of de Protestant reformation sweeping England. Relations worsened under the

3. Reales cedula en que se contiene el asiento hecho con Alonso de Hojeda, Granada, June 8, 1501 in Joaquin Pacheco, Francisco de Cardenas, Luis Torres de Mendoza, *et al.*, editors, *Coleccion de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonizacion de las posesiones espanolas en America y Oceania, sacados, en su mayor parte, del Real Archivo de Indias* (Madrid, 1864-1884), XXXVIII, 470.

4. Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *Los viajes de John Hawkins a America, 1562-1595* (Seville, 1947), 13. Coquibacoa is the region around the Gulf of Venezuela.

5. Reales cedula . . . con Hojeda, June 8, 1501, *op. cit.*, 470.

6. Gordon Connell-Smith, *Forerunners of Drake, A Study of English Trade with Spain in the Early Tudor Period* (London, 1954), xiii-xiv.

ultra-Protestant Edward VI; next there was a *volte-face* when Catholic Mary, wife of Philip II, assumed the throne; then there was a compromise when the youthful Elizabeth began her memorable reign. Aply counseled by her advisors, William Cecil and Francis Walsingham, she followed a moderate course, neither neglecting English interests nor unnecessarily offending Spain, at least at the beginning. She could easily have become the champion of struggling Protestants throughout Europe; instead she merely gave some of them undercover aid. In the Indies she progressively followed a more aggressive course. Respectable English traders—"corsairs," as the Spaniards would have them—appeared in ever-increasing numbers: the day of Hawkins and Drake was dawning. In making their voyages to the Indies, English seamen usually had the tacit approval, if not financial support, of the Queen. But should they be captured by the Spaniards, they could expect Elizabeth to disavow their voyages and to do little in saving them from the Inquisition and the galleys.

An early example of increased English activity in the Indies and Elizabeth's disingenuous policy can be traced in the remarkable career of Thomas Stucley. Born in England, possibly an illegitimate son of Henry VIII, Stucley during his lifetime served England, France, Spain, and the Pope, betraying each in turn except the latter. By 1562 his career had included fleeing England to France, betraying France and returning to England, being placed in the Tower for debt and treason in England, and privateering occasionally when funds were low.⁷ Now once again his fortune was depleted, and he was alert for some scheme to replenish his barren coffers.

Providentially, just at this time the French Huguenot adventurer, Jean Ribaut, was returning to Europe from recently erected Charlesfort at Port Royal Sound on the South Carolina coast. He rendered glowing accounts of the fertility and affluence of *la Florida*, described the excellent harbor at Port Royal, and did not fail to point out its nearness to the Spanish Indies and to the return route of the annual Spanish plate fleet. The Protestant-Catholic struggle had rendered France almost prostrate, and it seemed wiser upon returning for Ribaut to land in England where there was more chance that Protestant Elizabeth would aid him

7. The best account of Stucley is in Richard Simpson, editor, *The School of Shakespeare* (London, 1878), I, 1-156.

than his former mentor, Admiral Coligny, leader of the hard pressed Huguenots.

Stucley probably had been at Le Havre in 1562 while Ribaut was preparing his expedition, and the Florida enterprise was followed with acute interest. As soon as Ribaut landed in England, Stucley hurriedly made contact both with him and with the Queen, and a plan soon was formulated to supply Charlesfort the next year. It would be a joint venture: Stucley to supply two ships; Ribaut, one; the Queen, one; and one to be chartered.⁸ Elizabeth offered to pay, and apparently Ribaut accepted, a handsome subsidy to turn Charlesfort over to England. Later reflection upon what he had done possibly was too much for the nationalistic Frenchman, since he and three of his pilots attempted to flee to France. They were apprehended, however. The impulsive Ribaut was imprisoned, and his three pilots were placed in chains aboard Stucley's ships.⁹ The expedition would continue, but without the services of Ribaut.

Elizabeth had subsidized Ribaut and furnished supplies out of royal stores with occupation of Florida as the main objective. Settling Florida was merely a sideline to privateering as far as Stucley was concerned, though quite naturally either course was detrimental to Spanish interests. Always alert for a better bargain, the intriguing Stucley kept the Spanish ambassador in London informed of the whole project, expressing devotion to Philip II and intimating that the whole fleet might be turned over to Spain for a price.¹⁰ Stucley maintained he was boring holes in his ships and making them take water, thereby delaying the enterprise until he could get a reply from Philip.¹¹ Spanish officials, however, considered it better to rely on force than on Stucley's word to insure Florida's safety. The Spanish ambassador did complain to Elizabeth, but he was put off by protestations that this voyage was in no way prejudicial to Spanish interests.

Amid popular acclaim and poetical plaudits, Stucley's fleet sailed from England in 1563:

8. Bishop Quadra to Philip II, London, May 1, 1563, Martin Fernandez Navarrete, Miguel Salva, Pedro Sainz de Baranda, *et al.*, *Coleccion de documentos ineditos para la historia de Espana* (Madrid, 1842-1895), LXXXVII, 512-513.

9. *Ibid.*, June 26, 1563, 531.

10. *Ibid.*, June 19, 1563, 524-525.

11. *Ibid.*, Guzman de Silva to Philip II, Oct. 22, 1565, LXXXIX, 216-217.

Now Stucley, hoist thy sail,
 Thy wished land to find,
 And never doe regard vain talke,
 For wurds they are but wind.¹²

But the vessels of "lusty Stucley" never reached Florida. Piracy in home waters had proved more alluring as French, Spanish, and Portuguese ships suffered alike. Elizabeth realized she had made a bad bargain and had wasted royal funds, and with reluctance she commissioned ships to overtake Stucley.¹³ Eventually he was captured off Ireland, brought to trial in London, but, through the influence of powerful friends, not convicted. Thus Elizabeth's first colonization attempt in the New World was a fiasco. Embittered, Stucley returned to Ireland, became involved in Irish-Catholic plots, defected to Spain, and eventually died fighting for the Pope at the battle of Alcazar in North Africa.¹⁴

Ribaut's colony at Port Royal, his English account of Florida, and Stucley's activities, all revived interest in North America—interest that culminated in the Jamestown settlement. Charlesfort had failed, but in 1564 another French colony was established by Rene de Laudonniere on the St. Johns River. There are indications that had he not gotten there first, John Hawkins—now making his second grand slave trading sweep of the Indies—would have built an English fort himself. The Spanish ambassador in London even reported that Hawkins had founded such a colony.¹⁵ Although this was not true, Hawkins, employing a Frenchman who had been at Charlesfort in 1562 as pilot, had sought out the new French fort on the St. Johns River. Here the English visitors found the colony disorganized, almost devoid of provisions, and threatened with mutiny. Despite Hawkins's readily supplying bread and wine, and despite the outward cordiality between Hawkins and Laudonniere, there was mutual distrust. Ostensibly because of the colony's critical state, Hawkins offered to take all the survivors back to France. The French leader thanked him profusely but was concerned lest this be a

12. J. Payne Collier, *Old Ballads from Early Printed Copies of the Utmost Rarity* (London, 1840), 77.

13. Guzman de Silva to Philip II, London, Dec. 1, 1564, Navarrete, *et al.*, *Documentos ineditos, Espana*, LXXXIX, 63-64; Challoner to Cecil, Dec. 24, 1564, *Cal. State Papers, For., Elizabeth*, VII, 272.

14. Simpson, *School of Shakespere*, I, 39 ff.

15. Guzman to Philip II, London, Aug. 27, 1565, Navarrete, *et al.*, *Documentos ineditos, Espana*, LXXXIX, 178.

ruse to get the Frenchmen out of Florida merely to make room for Anglo-Saxons. Instead it was ultimately agreed that the hard pressed colonists would purchase a ship and provisions from Hawkins, and then shortly after he had gone, they too would follow. Laudonniere paid for these purchases with his artillery rather than with his secreted chest of silver, unsuccessfully trying not to impress Hawkins with Florida's desirability.¹⁶ After the English ships had sailed, but before the French colonists were ready to depart, Ribaut arrived with a fleet and supplies from France. Though the massacre of most of these Frenchmen by the audacious Spanish captain, Pedro Menendez de Aviles, has been narrated countless times, it is interesting to note that because of the many rumors caused by Stucley's preparations in 1563 and because Hawkins actually had been at Fort Caroline in 1565, Menendez was uncertain whether he would have to deal with Frenchmen, Englishmen, or both until he actually landed in Florida.¹⁷

When Hawkins returned to England he reported to the Queen that he had examined much of *la Florida* and that it was an exceptionally promising region.¹⁸ Although there were no silver mines as in Mexico and Peru, significant quantities of precious metals and pearls had washed and no doubt would continue to wash upon Florida's gently sloping beaches from the wrecks of Spanish galleons. Aside from this, the enterprising trader pointed out to the Queen how easy it would be to cultivate grapes and maize, how quickly cattle would multiply, and how the Queen herself should exploit this fertile region—a region larger than any single Christian nation could maintain.¹⁹ Two years later, in 1567, Hawkins once again was in *la Florida*, though not leading an expedition such as Stucley's, and this time the visit was

16. "Laudonniere's Historie of Florida," in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1598-1600), IX (1903 edition), 77-81.

17. Declaracion de lo que vino de la Florida, Cadiz, July 6, 1565, AGI 2-51/22, Stetson Col., University of Florida Library; *ibid.*, Royal Decree, July 30, 1565, AGI 44-4-4/14.

18. Hawkins to Elizabeth, Padstow, Sept. 20, 1565, in *Report on the Pepys Manuscripts, Historical Manuscripts Commission* (London, 1911), 66.

19. John Sparke, *Voyage Made by the Worshipful M. John Hawkins . . . 1564*, in Clements R. Markham, editor, *The Hawkins' Voyages during the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and James I* (London, 1878), 56-63.

not even of his own choosing. He had been surprised and defeated at San Juan de Ulloa; his remaining ships and survivors, crippled and without provisions, landed somewhere on the Gulf Coast. About one hundred, or half of those remaining, decided to take their chances ashore rather than risk the torments at sea in disabled vessels and without food. Although many of them were ultimately captured and sent to Mexico City, one, David Ingram, made a journey rivaled only by the Spanish wanderer, Cabeza de Vaca. An eleven month, two-thousand mile overland trip took Ingram from the Gulf to Newfoundland where he was picked up by a French fishing vessel. Unfortunately the narrative of his experiences is inaccurate, much of it a product of his imagination.²⁰

Stucley and Hawkins were but precursors of increased English activity in the Indies. Within a decade English corsairs had included St. Augustine at least twice on their pillaging itinerary and at the same time continued to prey on Spanish vessels and cities in the Caribbean. All types of rumors circulated in Europe -many of them true- about New World enterprises by the English. There was speculation of their finding the northwest passage, or of their making a settlement in North America or perhaps in South America. For awhile Spain even considered Ingram and his companions the nucleus of a colony in *la Florida*.²¹

Ever since the Cabot voyages, England had been seeking the elusive northwest passage. In the 1570's, however, the tempo of the search quickened perceptibly, and a host of English ships soon were unsuccessfully probing the northern shores. Among the first was Martin Frobisher, who searched for this northwest passage in a series of voyages from 1576 to 1578. Though, as it turned out, he failed in extracting gold from the New World and in finding a passage, another immediately tried to succeed where he had failed. Humphrey Gilbert had been fascinated by North America since the days of Stucley and Hawkins. He envisioned founding a colony on the Atlantic Coast to serve many ends: it

20. David Ingram, *The Land Travels of Davyd Ingram and Others in the Years 1568-9 from the Rio de Minas in the Gulph of Mexico to Cape Breton in Acadia*, in C.J.P. Weston, editor, *Documents Connected with the History of South Carolina* (London, 1856), 5-24.

21. Guerau de Spes to Philip II, London, Feb. 14, 1569, Navarrete, *et al.*, *Documentos ineditos, Espana*, XC, 185.

could be used as a base to raid the West Indies, to attack the Spanish Newfoundland fishing fleet, or to discover the northwest passage.²² In 1578 Gilbert received a typical patent authorizing him to discover and occupy lands not possessed by a Christian prince. Little is known of the 1578 voyage-discreetly accompanied by Spanish Ambassador Bernadino de Mendoza's agent²³ -except that it failed.

Undaunted, Gilbert outfitted another expedition. Persecuted Catholics, assured of liberty of conscience and other concessions, were enlisted as colonists. Mendoza used his influence to prevent their going, asserting that this was against the wishes of the Pope and Philip, that if they went, only Ribaut's fate awaited, and that by leaving England they would drain "the small remnant of good blood [from] this sick body." The majority heeded the ambassador's words; a few "reckless and useless ones" did not.²⁴

Optimistically Gilbert began his westward voyage - "for where the attempt on vertue dooth depend, no doubt but God will blesse it in the ende"²⁵ -and initially Mendoza thought the English objective was lower Florida where first a fort would be erected, later to be reinforced by ten thousand men from the Queen.²⁶ Soon he discovered the true design of going to Norumbega (southern Canada and New England). In the summer of 1583 Gilbert arrived at St. Johns Harbor, Newfoundland. Mounting a hill overlooking the harbor dotted with English, Portuguese, and Spanish vessels, he took possession for the Queen "by digging of a Turffe and receiving the same with an Hassell wand."²⁷ Shortly after this his main supply ship with most of her crew was lost, and it was decided to abandon the expedition. But all of the remaining vessels did not reach England safely. Gilbert, himself, was last seen calmly reading aboard the diminutive ten-ton *Squirrel*.

22. Humphrey Gilbert, "A Discourse How Hir Majestie May Annoy the Ring of Spayne," Nov. 6, 1577, in David B. Quinn, editor, *The Voyages and Colonizing Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* (London, 1940), I, 172-174.

23. Mendoza to Gabriel de Zayas, Aug. 14, 1578, Navarrete, *et al.*, *Documentos ineditos, Espana*, XCI, 271.

24. *Ibid.*, Mendoza to Philip II, London, July 11, 1582, XCII, 396-397.

25. "George Peckham's True Report," Nov. 12, 1583, in Quinn, *Gilbert*, II, 437.

26. Mendoza to Philip II, London, Apr. 26, 1582, Navarrete, *et al.*, *Documentos ineditos, Espana*, XCII, 358.

27. "Peckham's Report," *op. cit.*, 445.

When Gilbert's ships were outfitting in Plymouth they were by no means the only ones disquieting to Mendoza. During this period others were taking on supplies for voyages to the Caribbean, to Brazil (now under Spanish control), and even to Spanish possessions in the Pacific. At the same time as the Gilbert voyages, Francis Drake was sailing through the Straits of Magellan, robbing heavily laden Spanish vessels along the Pacific Coast, and laying claim to "Nova Albion" in California.

Mendoza incessantly fumed over Drake's plunderings, and now, what was worse, there was new cause for alarm. Humphrey Gilbert's half brother, the talented, egotistical, many-sided Walter Raleigh, had been identified closely with both the 1578 and the ill-fated 1583 Newfoundland expeditions, and at once he began to take over where his half brother left off. Raleigh's settlement in that part of *la Florida* soon to be known as Virginia was part of the overall anti-Spanish policy.

Relations with Spain had been worsening steadily. She considered England the center of Protestantism and was well aware of the aid dispatched to the revolting Dutch and Huguenots. The early and mid 1580's were critical years. Drake, one of the survivors of Hawkins's disastrous defeat at San Juan de Ulloa, as has been seen, was wreaking his vengeance on the Indies. In effect there was a full-scale war in the New World which was soon to spread to the Old. Philip delayed openly declaring war, hoping that domestic intrigue would place Catholic Mary Stuart on the English throne. In 1587 Elizabeth executed Mary; 1588 was the year of the Armada.

Members of the extreme anti-Spanish faction in England, such as Raleigh, Walsingham, Richard Hakluyt, and Drake, considered that an English settlement on the mid-Atlantic coast would play an important role in reducing Spain's power in the Indies. Was it not true that Mexican and Peruvian silver underwrote many of Philip's ambitious European projects? Raleigh's colony, at least in the beginning, would be little more than a fortified port, allowing English corsairs to prey more easily on the plate fleet, providing them a year round base in the New World, and reimbursing the backers with rich Spanish prizes. This would be only one of several blows aimed at Spain's empire in the Indies. In conjunction with this colony the tempo of Eng-

lish attacks on Spanish shipping in Peru, New Spain, and Newfoundland would be increased.²⁸

In 1584 the Queen gave Raleigh his patent—generally similar to Gilbert's. At once he dispatched Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow to make a preliminary reconnaissance, and soon they returned with favorable news of the North Carolina banks and sounds. Preparations in England in 1585 boded ill for the Spanish Indies. Not only was Raleigh outfitting Richard Grenville to occupy Roanoke Island, but also Drake with a Royal Commission was preparing for his voyage to the West Indies.

Grenville, with his fleet of seven vessels, escorted the one hundred odd settlers to Roanoke. He took the traditional route to the Indies—that used by Columbus—south to the Canaries, due west under the constant trade winds, and then up the North American coast via the Gulf Stream. While in the West Indies, they stopped at Santa Domingo and Puerto Rico, replenishing their water casks and securing horses and cattle. Spanish officials here became justifiably suspicious of English designs on *la Florida*.²⁹ After reaching Roanoke Grenville left Ralph Lane in charge, then returned to England for supplies, capturing a rich Spanish vessel laden with ginger and sugar en route.³⁰

Accounts of the first year at Roanoke are meagre, but one thing is certain: summer was fast approaching and Grenville had not returned with the much-needed provisions. Though he was on his way, another fleet, that of Drake, dropped anchor at Roanoke first. Drake was returning from his devastating West Indian voyage. He probably had set out with the mission of capturing the plate fleet; in this he had failed. Therefore he assuaged his disappointment by sacking and demanding ransom for the strategic ports of Cartagena and Santo Domingo.

28. Richard Hakluyt, "Discourse on Western Planting," in Edmund Goldsmid, editor, *The Voyages of the English Nation to America before the Year 1600, from Hakluyt's Collection of Voyages* (Edinburgh, 1889-1890), II, 199-201; David B. Quinn, editor, *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590, Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584* (London, 1955), I, 32.

29. Licentiate Aliaga to Crown, Santo Domingo, Nov. 30, 1585, in Irene A. Wright, editor, *Further English Voyages to Spanish America, 1583-1594, Documents from the Archives of the Indies at Seville Illustrating English Voyages to the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, Florida, and Virginia* (London, 1951), 16.

30. Grenville to Walsyngham, Plymouth, Oct. 29, 1585, *Cal. State Papers, Dom., Eliz.*, II, 281.

After threatening Havana, he entered the Bahama Channel, and in May his twenty-nine ships appeared menacingly off St. Augustine. At once artillery was put ashore to batter the crude wooden fort. The Spanish force here was outnumbered many times, and the fort's garrison, "through the thoughtfulness of our General," fled to the woods.³¹ Surrender or death were the other alternatives.

St. Augustine suffered proportionally more than the other cities ravaged by Drake. The English found about two hundred and fifty houses in the town, "but we left not one of them standing."³² Next the fort and a caravel in the harbor were put to the torch. Only the small vessels, miscellaneous hardware, and other supplies possibly needed by the Roanoke colony were saved.³³ After finishing their work, Drake's men departed for the Spanish fort at Santa Elena (Port Royal) contemplating a repetition of St. Augustine's fate. Fortunately for this second Florida garrison, the English admiral refused to risk navigating the treacherous channel without a pilot, and, according to Spanish reports, could not even find it.³⁴ Whatever the reason, Santa Elena was by-passed, and the fleet finally dropped anchor off Roanoke Island. It is probable that Drake ravaged St. Augustine so completely-only fortune saved Santa Elena from the same treatment-in order to better insure the security of Raleigh's colony. In any case this was the opinion of the Spaniards.³⁵

Lane and his compatriots were overjoyed at the arrival of the English fleet. Quickly arrangements were made whereby a vessel and sorely needed supplies would be furnished by Drake. Among these we must assume were included the hardware and small craft from St. Augustine and the two hundred and fifty Negro slaves

31. Alonzo Santos Saez to Crown, St. Augustine, July 11, 1586, Brooks Col., L.C.

32. *Discourse and Description of the Voyage of Sir Francis Drake and Mr. Captain Frobisher Set Forward the 14th Day of September, 1585*, in Julian S. Corbett, editor, *Papers Relating to the Navy during the Spanish War, 1585-1587* (London, 1898), 25.

33. Gabriel de Luxon and Diego Fernandez de Quinones to Crown, (Havana, July 1, 1586, Wright, *English Voyages, 1583-1594*, 185.

34. *Ibid.*, Juan de Posada to Crown, St. Augustine, Sept., 2, 1586, 205; Quinones to Crown, Havana, Sept. 1586, in Irene A. Wright, editor, *Historia documentada de San Cristobal de la Habana en el siglo XVI, basada en los documentos originales existentes en el Archivo General de Indias*, Havana, 1927, II, 65.

35. [?] to King, Seville, Sept. 3, 1586, AGI, 42-1-8/3, Stetson Col.: *ibid.*, Consulta de consejo, Spain, Nov. 8, 1590, AGI 140-7-35

captured at Santo Domingo and Cartagena. A sudden severe storm wrecked Lane's ship and supplies, while Drake's vessels barely weathered gale winds and a heavy sea in the poor haven off Roanoke. Rather than risk remaining with only limited provisions, Lane and his followers decided to return with Drake. Shortly after the fleet reached England, the indefatigable Hakluyt eagerly sought out and examined two of the Spanish prisoners captured at St. Augustine and later published their favorable accounts of *la Florida*.³⁶ As it turned out Lane should have remained at Roanoke, because shortly after leaving, Grenville arrived only to find the colony deserted. Nevertheless one fact now was obvious: there was no harbor at Roanoke which would serve as a suitable base from which to raid the Spanish Indies.

Undaunted by this setback, Raleigh immediately outfitted another expedition. Since the harbor at Roanoke had proved unsatisfactory, the new colony was instructed to settle on the more promising Chesapeake. Because of the failure to finance his first colony from Spanish prizes, Raleigh now placed more emphasis on colonization and exploitation. This second colony, headed by John White, was back in Virginia by the summer of 1587, though again at Roanoke instead of on the Chesapeake as had been planned. The subsequent history of the lost colony is well known. White himself returned to England for supplies. The Spanish Armada delayed his return for three years, and when he did return, there was no sign of the colonists.

Spain had received many general indications of Raleigh's designs. The vessels bound for Roanoke had passed through the West Indies, and the Spanish ambassador had supplied additional information from London. While Drake was sacking St. Augustine, several of his Negro prisoners escaped, disclosing to the Spaniards that they were to be used as laborers in the new English colony.³⁷ There was no dearth of signs that there was an English settlement in *la Florida*. But where was it? What was its strength? These were questions asked by Florida governors for the next fifteen years and never answered definitely until Jamestown was founded.

36. "Relation of Pedro Morales and Nicholas Burgoignon," in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, IX, 112-115.

37. Quinones to Crown, Havana, Sept. 1586, AGI, 54-2-4, Connor Col., L. C.

At first after Drake's attack, Menendez Marques, now Governor at St. Augustine, had more than he could do just to provide for his destitute garrison. "We are all left with the clothes we stood in, and in the open country with a little munition. We are without food of any sort except six hogsheads of flour which will last twenty days."³⁸ Marques had had no choice when he fled before Drake's onslaught. But to provide for a more effective defense in the future he consolidated the garrison of Santa Elena with that at St. Augustine.³⁹ Experience had shown, with disastrous results, that they were too far apart to be mutually supporting. Actually at this time officials in Spain were even considering abandoning Florida or perhaps maintaining a single fort near the Keys to pick up shipwrecked seamen.

As soon as Marques recovered sufficiently from Drake's raid, he set out in a frigate and two smaller vessels to determine the location of the supposed English colony. Coasting as far north as the Bahia de Santa Maria (Chesapeake) in 1587, he detected no signs of Raleigh's settlement. Yet this is not surprising. Roanoke Island, securely nestled behind the Carolina banks, had as one of its assets its inaccessibility, as had the Jamestown peninsula two decades later. A storm came up while he was at the Bahia de Santa Maria, preventing Marques from entering, and, after losing one of his vessels, the Spanish Governor was driven back to the Bahamas.⁴⁰

Though Marques did not find the English colony, Spanish officials still were convinced there was one. English corsairs were in the Indies in 1588. Would they be permitted to leave England at such a critical time? Highly improbable—instead they must be using a New World base. Also there were fresh reports that Englishmen had made a settlement somewhere near Newfoundland.⁴¹ Was this a follow-up to their capture of the entire Spanish fishing fleet in 1585?⁴²

38. Marques to President of House of Trade, St. Augustine, June 17, 1586, Wright, *English Voyages, 1583-1594*, 164.

39. Marques to Crown, St. Augustine, Dec. 12, 1586, Brooks Col., L.C.

40. Marques to [?], Havana, June 22, 1587, Wright, *English Voyages, 1583-1594*, 232-233.

41. Marques to Crown, Florida, July 17, 1588, AGI, 54-5-9, Lowery Col., L.C.

42. In 1585 in retaliation for the arrest of English citizens and the impounding of English goods in Spain, a large portion of the Spanish Newfoundland fishing fleet was captured by Bernard Drake. *Cal. State Papers, For., Eliz., XIX*, 573.

To answer these questions, Vicente Gonzalez and thirty men set out from St. Augustine. They too coasted up to the Bahia de Santa Maria, sailed within the capes, and made an extensive reconnaissance, but there was no sign of English habitation. On their way back a heavy wind came up and forced them to seek shelter off the North Carolina coast. Thus it was only accidental that they stumbled upon signs of Raleigh's abandoned colony—a shipyard, barrels, debris, etc. Now for the first time there was definite proof of an attempted English settlement.⁴³

Through information supplied by Gonzalez, by an English seaman who had been with Grenville and later was wrecked in the West Indies, and by a Spanish mariner who had been captured by Grenville and later escaped, the Spaniards were gradually able to piece together the story of the Roanoke failure.⁴⁴ Definitely there was no settlement here. But whether Raleigh's colony was at a new location or whether England had founded other settlements, Marques was unable to answer with any degree of certainty.

The Anglo-Spanish War did not end with the Armada but continued relentlessly until 1604. English corsairs were active in the West Indies, and there were clashes with Spanish ships in Newfoundland. Spain never knew if any of these English vessels bound for the New World might not be planning to reinforce an existing colony or to settle a new one. When returning to seek news of Roanoke in 1590, John White was forced to use a ship whose main interest was privateering rather than concern over Raleigh's colony. Spain did not know this and was disturbed over the prospect of reinforcements for an existing English colony.⁴⁵ The next year Christopher Newport commanded a fleet which preyed on Spanish shipping in the West Indies. Before returning home he stopped at Florida to obtain water and food and to seize any unsuspecting Spanish vessel.⁴⁶ In fact somewhat later the Spaniards surprised another English vessel at Santa

43. Luis Geronimo de Ore, *Relation of the Martyrs of Florida* (Madrid, 1617?), in Quinn, *Roanoke Voyage Documents*, II, 802-816.

44. Vasques y Obros to Juan de Ybarra, Havana, July 22, 1588, AGI, 54-1-34, Sp. transcripts, L.C.; *ibid.*, Consejo del Rey to Ybarra, Mar. 31, 1589.

45. Diego de la Ribera to Crown, Havana, Aug. 24, 1590, Wright, *English Voyages, 1583-1594*, 258.

46. Voyage of Christopher Newport, 1591, in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, X, 189-190.

Elena while taking on water.⁴⁷ These and other hostile ships off the Florida coast kept the undermanned garrison at St. Augustine in a constant state of alarm.

Testimony of an Irish soldier here in 1600 and other indications convinced the new Governor, Gonzalo Mendez de Canco, that Englishmen had taken root in Jacan (Virginia). While exhorting the nearby Indians to find out if this were true, Canco pleaded for one thousand men to wipe out the settlement, after which he would establish a fort.⁴⁸ For the next six years the Spanish Crown considered this project. They also considered another-complete abandonmem of Florida. Philip III was almost bankrupt, and Florida was a drain on his purse. It appeared quite possible that additional funds and troops would be required just to pacify the Indians. Thus Canco would not have his dreams fulfilled, but neither was Florida abandoned. The effective work of Franciscan missionaries among the Indians was steadily improving the Spanish position. And well it might. For fifteen years Spain had been in doubt as to whether England had a colony in Jacan. The Virginia Company's settlement at Jamestown was no secret and ended all speculation.

47. Thomas Edmonds to Ambassador Cornwallis, June 22, 1606, British Museum, Additional MSS, Cotton Vespasian, IX.

48. Canco to Philip III, St. Augustine, Feb. 28, 1600, in Katherine Reding, "Letter of Gonzalo Menendez de Canco," *Ga. Hist. Quar.* (Sept., 1924), VIII, 215-228.