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THE EXPLORATION OF FLORIDA AND SOURCES ON THE FOUNDING OF ST. AUGUSTINE

by LUIS RAFAEL ARANA

I

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO, Europeans made the first permanent settlement within the present limits of the United States. These were Spaniards who under Pedro Menendez de Aviles established St. Augustine in 1565, upon land discovered fifty-two years earlier. In the interval between discovery and colonization, the coast of Florida had been gradually charted and portions of the interior explored. Though all attempts at planting the civilization of Spain in the new land failed until Menendez appeared on the scene, the discoveries of Juan Ponce de Leon, Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, Panfilo de Narvaez, and Hernando de Soto gradually outlined the contour of the peninsula, brought it within the known lands of the world, and contributed to the eventual success of Menendez. This paper summarizes the accomplishments of those explorers and furnishes translations of the four contemporary accounts of the founding of St. Augustine.

PONCE DE LEÓN

In seeking new lands, Juan Ponce de Leon wanted compensation for the loss of the Puerto Rico governorship. His appointment by King Fernando had violated the prerogatives of the Colon family, as the Council of Castilla so ruled in 1511. The king, however, hoped that Ponce would discover and settle one of several islands rumored to be near Puerto Rico. Because of the stories told by the Indians, the former governor chose Bimini and remitted a proposal for colonization.¹ King Fernando drafted a patent,

1. Vicente Murga Sanz, *Juan Ponce de Leon* (San Juan, 1959), 73, 77-78, 99.

February 23, 1512, for the discovery and settlement which he hoped thirty-eight year old Ponce would accept.² According to his patent, Ponce would pay for the expenses of the expedition, be the governor and *adelantado* of Bimini and of any other lands he might discover, and exploit the wealth of the island. The king reserved for himself the construction and control of fortifications and the distribution of Indians. To spur Ponce on, Fernando remarked that Bartolome Colon would surely accept that task with less advantageous terms.³

Ponce de Leon would not have discovered Florida had he not accepted the Bimini patent promptly and arranged for the voyage. On December 10 the king informed the royal officials of La Espanola that Ponce was really needed in Puerto Rico, and he ordered them to cease negotiations with him and to bestow the patent on some one less interested in profit, Ponce, however, had already gone to La Espanola, had accepted the royal terms, and had fitted out two vessels, *Santa Maria de la Consolacion* and *Santiago*, for the voyage. He registered his ships on January 29, 1513, and quickly sailed for Puerto Rico where he added the *San Cristobal* to the expedition.⁴ The *Santa Maria* carried forty-one passengers including Ponce, and the *Santiago* had twenty-six persons aboard.⁵ Ponce was ready to sail before the king's change of mind became generally known.

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2. Ponce de Leon stated in September 1514, during the proceedings held in Valladolid to make him formally the *adelantado* of Florida, that he was forty years old. *Ibid.*, 118. If so, he was thirty-eight at the time of the drafting of the patent to discover and settle Bimini, and thirty-nine when he discovered Florida.
 3. *Ibid.*, 100-02; transcript from the original manuscript in *Coleccion de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonizacion de las antiguas posesiones espanolas en America y Oceania*, 42 vols. (Madrid, 1864-1884), XXII, 26-32, and Aurelio Tio, *Nuevas fuentes para la historia de Puerto Rico* (San German, Puerto Rico, 1961), 476-80; English translation in Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, 1513-1561* (New York, 1959), 437-41. Lowery (p. 135) as well as Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands* (New Haven, 1921), 6, erroneously state that the 1512 patent was granted by Charles V. Charles did not become king of Aragon until January 1516, and of Castilla until April 1516. Rafael Altamira, *Manual de historia de Espana*, 2d ed. (Buenos Aires, 1946), 311-12, 315, 341-43.
 4. Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 103-106.
 5. *Ibid.*, photographs of the registers covering the *Santiago* and the *Santa Maria de la Consolacion*, facing 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112.

The search for Bimini resulted in the discovery of Florida. Ponce departed from the Puerto Rican coast the night of March 4, and on Easter Sunday, March 27, he sighted an island (Abaco) which he did not recognize. A few days later, on April 2, the ships approached the Florida coast, sighting land at 30° 8' north latitude. Coasting northward, he anchored at nightfall. Within the next five days, Ponce landed and took possession of the territory in the name of his king. He named it Florida since it provided a very beautiful view of many cool woodlands, it was level and uniform, and it had been discovered on *Pascua Florida*, the feast of the flowers.⁶

On April 8 Ponce ordered the ships north again, but the following day he reversed his course and moved in a southeasterly direction down the coast of Florida. Passing the Cabo de los Arrecifes (Cape Kennedy), he met, on April 21, the full force of the Gulf Stream; then he put into Rio de la Cruz (Jupiter Inlet), where he made a stone cross and inscribed it. On May 8 he sailed past Cabo de Las Corrientes (Lake Worth Inlet), the easternmost bend of the coast, and until May 16 followed a course parallel to Los Martires, Ponce's name for the Florida Keys. The expedition then turned north northeast reaching a point on the lower Gulf coast above Charlotte Harbor on May 23. Then, coasting southward, Ponce stopped at two islands which stood out to sea (Sanibel and Captiva). Remaining in the area until June 14, he explored a harbor (Charlotte), watered his vessels, and traded and fought with the Indians. Many natives were killed on Matanza Island (Pine Island). On June 15 Ponce sailed southwestward and six days later reached Tortugas which he named.⁷

Unlike Florida, Bimini was discovered by someone other than

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6. *Ibid.*, 107-08; Tio, *Nuevas fuentes*, 333, 552-53, 558, 559-62, 564-66, 579; T. Frederick Davis, "History of Juan Ponce de Leon's Voyages to Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIV (July 1935), 16-17, 38-39.
 7. Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 108-12; Tio, *Nuevas fuentes*, 333-34, 553; Davis, "Ponce de Leon's Voyages to Florida," 17-21. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, 141, and Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands*, 8, confuse Cabo de las Corrientes with Cape Kennedy. Edward W. Lawson, *The Discovery of Florida and its Discoverer Juan Ponce de Leon* (St. Augustine, 1946), feels that the cabo is Jupiter Light, north of Lake Worth Inlet (p. 38); that the vicinity of Sanibel was the northern limit of Ponce's exploration on the southwest coast (p. 40), and thus the harbor explored is San Carlos Bay rather than Charlotte; and that Matanza is Estero, rather than Pine Island (p. 41).

Ponce de Leon. From the Tortugas, his ships coasted along north-west Cuba, searching for Bimini, but the journey among the Bahama Islands became so protracted that Ponce probably worried that others might report and lay claims to his own discoveries. Consequently, on September 17, he detached Captain Juan Perez Ortubia with the *San Cristobal* and ordered him to keep searching. The next day he set his own course for Puerto Rico, arriving there twenty-one days later. On February 20, 1514, Captain Perez appeared, announcing the discovery of Bimini which he described as a large cool island with many springs and woodlands, but no gold or silver was found.⁸

The legend about a fountain of youth seemed to have been connected with Ponce de Leon in Spain rather than in America. He and Perez reported in person their finds and discoveries to King Fernando in April 1514, but they could display no treasure or rare and valuable finds such as had come from the West Indian islands. Perhaps it was Perez who talked about the Indian legend, and in jest the Court said that Ponce had indeed gone searching for a fountain that guaranteed perpetual youth rather than mundane things like gold or precious gems. Whoever was the author of the report, it is true that as early as December 1514, Peter Martyr, the historian, was writing the Pope about the rumored existence in the New World of a spring whose water rejuvenated old men. Martyr, however, did not attempt to link or connect this story to Ponce de Leon.⁹ It was the historian Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, who in 1535, originated the story that Ponce had wasted time searching for the fountain of youth during his voyage.¹⁰ Escalante de Fontaneda,¹¹ survivor of the Florida shipwreck, exaggerated the legend so much in his report in 1575, that the historian Antonio de Herrera, in 1601, regarded

8. Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 112-14; Davis, "Ponce de Leon's Voyages to Florida," 22-23.

9. Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 114-15, 118-20.

10. *Historia general y natural de las Indias, islas y tierra firme del Mar Oceano* (Sevilla, 1535), libro XVI, cap. II, in *ibid.*, 119.

11. Memoria de las cosas y costa y indios de la Florida, que ninguno de cuantos la han costeado, no lo han sabido declarar, "Coleccion Munoz" (Real Academia de la Historia), LXXXIX; *Coleccion de documentos ineditos*, V, 532-46; translated into French as "Memoire sur la Floride," H. Ternaux-Compans, *Recueil de pieces sur la Floride* (Paris, 1841), 9-37; English translations in Buckingham Smith, *Letter of Hernando de Soto and Memoir of Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda* (Washington, 1854), 11-26; B. F.

the search for the fabulous spring as important as the true objective of Ponce's expedition.¹² Contemporary manuscripts so far uncovered do not mention the fountain of youth nor indicate that Ponce de Leon was even aware of the fantasy.¹³ Certainly if he had believed the Indian legend, he would hardly have delegated the search for Bimini, reputedly the location of the fountain, to another captain. He would certainly have saved such a great prize for himself.

ALVAREZ DE PINEDA

It was impossible to tell from Ponce de Leon's discovery very much about the geography of Florida. The next exploration there charted the rest of the Gulf coast and determined that the land was not an island but a peninsula. Anton de Alaminos, Ponce's former pilot, had first suggested the need to search for a passage dividing the mainland, and in 1519, Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, commanding four vessels belonging to Francisco de Garay, governor of Jamaica, took up the quest. Pineda first struck the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico at a yet unknown location, and then coasted east and southward along the west shore of Florida. He found he could not maneuver the south end of Florida because of adverse winds and the power of the Gulf Stream. He was forced to retrace his course, noting rivers and bays along the bay. From time to time he landed and took possession at various points, marking the limits of his discovery as he traveled. Alvarez coasted all the way to Panuco (Tampico) and then circled back. While Alvarez discovered the mouth of a large river, supposedly the Mississippi, he found no strait during his nearly nine-month cruise, indicating that Florida was part of a large land mass.¹⁴

PANFILO DE NARVAEZ

With the general shape of Florida's shore line thus delineated, penetration into the interior became the special achievement of

French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida*, 2d series (New York, 1875), 235-65; and David O True, *Memoir of D^o d'Escalante Fontaneda respecting Florida* (Coral Gables, 1945).

12. *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del Mar Oceano* (Madrid, 1601), decada 1^a, libro IX, cap. XII, in Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 127, note 37.

13. Murga, *Juan Ponce de Leon*, 119.

14. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, 149-51.

still another Spanish explorer, Panfilo de Narvaez. On December 11, 1526, he obtained a patent authorizing him to conquer, settle, and govern the mainland between Rio de las Palmas (near Tampico) and the Cape of Florida.¹⁵ Narvaez sailed from Jagua (Cuba) on February 20, 1528, and nearly two months later, on April 16, he reached Bahia de la Cruz (the mouth of Johns Pass, west of Pinellas peninsula) on the Gulf coast of Florida. Taking possession of the area two days later, he then probed northeast from his landing point and discovered a large bay (Old Tampa Bay) which swept inland and two Indian villages (Safety Harbor and Tampa).¹⁶

On a twentieth century Florida map, Narvaez explored the area from Tampa Bay to Wakulla County. The Spanish moved out on May 2, and quickly reached the Withlacoochee River, which they explored to the sea and found its mouth to be a shallow inlet with no harbor. Striking out northward on May 23, Narvaez and his men traversed the uninhabited country west of what is now Gainesville, apparently missing the Indians living in that section. North of the Santa Fe River, Narvaez turned toward the west, and on June 18 he crossed the Suwannee River between present-day Dowling Park and Ellaville. Moving across the Aucilla River between Lamont and Aucilla, he reached Ivitachuco village on June 25. Narvaez resumed the march on July 20 and eight days later, having traveled in a southwesterly direction, he arrived at the mound near Wakulla Springs. On August 3 Narvaez turned south, reaching the Gulf coast, perhaps near Piney Island.¹⁷

This first venture into Florida's interior ended with tragedy at sea. In the seven long weeks spent on the coast, the dispirited men having despaired of being rescued, used the crude tools at hand to construct five makeshift boats. On September 22 the party pushed out into the Gulf; their plan was to sail west until they reached Panuco, a fairly short distance away, they believed. One after the other the boats were lost and men died from drowning and exposure. Narvaez was himself blown out to sea and

15. *Ibid.*, 173.

16. *Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission* (Washington, 1939), 109-13. Cited hereafter as *Final Report*.

17. *Ibid.*, 113-16.

never seen again. Only four survivors, including Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, eventually struggled back to civilization to report on their harrowing experiences.¹⁸

Narvaez' vessels had been moving up and down the Gulf coast of Florida while he was exploring the interior. The ships first sailed northward from Bahia de la Cruz. Then, reversing course, they moved south about five leagues and discovered Tampa Bay, which had already been seen by land reconnaissance. Then, for many months the fleet tried unsuccessfully to find Narvaez and ultimately the vessels proceeded to Mexico.¹⁹

HERNANDO DE SOTO

A patent was bestowed on Hernando de Soto, April 20, 1537, permitting him to conquer, pacify, and settle all the lands that had been under the jurisdiction of Panfilo de Narvaez and Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon. He would finance the enterprise and lead it in person. As governor and captain general, *adelantado*, and high constable over 200 leagues of coast designated by him within the territorial concession, he would have power to "distribute Indians." The patent permitted de Soto to select for himself twelve leagues square of land, provided the tract included neither seaport nor principal town. He controlled the fortifications which he would build at his expense. To secure the necessary logistical support for his enterprise, de Soto was also made governor of Cuba.²⁰ Thus began a new expedition to Florida, the most extended exploration of the vast area that now makes up the southeastern part of the United States.

De Soto departed from Havana on May 18, 1539, and several days later he anchored outside Bahia del Espiritu Santo on the west coast of Florida. Having completed a hazardous passage through the channel into port, the army landed on a beach. Then, concentrating his men in a village on a nearby island, de Soto took possession in the name of his country on June 3. Later, he moved the camp to another village and sent an advance party inland. The *bahia* today is the south shore of Tampa Bay, and the

18. Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands*, 23-25, 36-37.

19. *Final Report*, 112.

20. *Ibid.*, 76-79.

channel is either Passage Key Inlet or Southwest Channel. Terra Ceia Bay is the port that he reached, and Shaw's Point was the landing beach. The island where the army first grouped was Terra Ceia.²¹

De Soto began the first phase of his exploration on July 15, after leaving a base and the small vessels at Terra Ceia Bay. De Soto reached Luca (between Dade City and Istachatta), where the advance party joined him on July 21. He then followed the west side of a league-wide swamp (Tsala Apopka Lake), and after crossing the Withlacoochee River in the vicinity of Stokes Ferry, veered northeastward. On July 29 de Soto entered the deserted capital of Ocale Province, located on the stream below present-day Silver Springs.²²

Departing from Ocale on August 11, de Soto moved out to the northwest, passing west of Orange Lake and through the narrow land between Levy and Alachua lakes. He then veered north at Alachua village, crossed the Santa Fe River between the mouths of Olustee Creek and New River, and reached Caliquen village (between the creek and the Santa Fe) on August 18. Moving out again on September 9, he took a northwest course, crossed Olustee Creek, and turned west after passing near present day Lake City. He reached Napituca village (near either Houston or Live Oak) on September 15. Eight days later, the Spanish continued their trek, crossing the Suwanee near Dowling Park, then on through the Lake Sampala area and Agile village, until they reached the Aucilla River which they crossed at a point between Lamont and Aucilla on October 3. Ivitachuco, the first Apalachee village they reached, was deserted, but de Soto ordered his force forward. They passed close to Mill Creek, and on October 6 they reached

21. *Ibid.*, 118-39. The location of de Soto's campsite at the village on Terra Ceia Island has been challenged by Ripley P. Bullen, *The Terra Ceia Site, Manatee County, Florida*, Florida Anthropological Society Publications, No. 3 (Gainesville, 1951), and "De Soto's Ucita and the Terra Ceia Site," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXX (April 1952), 317-23. The identification of the bay as Tampa Bay, and the entire de Soto route through Florida, has been challenged by Warren H. Wilkinson, *Opening the Case Against the U. S. De Soto Commission's Report* (Jacksonville Beach, 1960). At least two points raised by Wilkinson, the distances travelled daily and the meaning of the terms *ancon* and *decaidos*, indicate that de Soto's travel through Florida should be reinvestigated.

22. *Final Report*, 141-44, 148-52.

the empty Tallahassee area. Here de Soto decided to establish camp and spend the winter.²³

There was some minor exploration in Apalachee due to the change of base from Tampa Bay to Apalachee Bay: to the south of the camp, Wakulla Spring, and the coast back of Piney Island where Narvaez had built the boats a few years before. From the new Apalachee base site, Francisco Maldonado, during December and January, explored the Gulf coast to the west and discovered Bahia de Ochuse (probably Pensacola). De Soto closed the new base by dispatching the vessels to Havana, and was then ready to embark upon his travels through Georgia, South and North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. This part of the exploring journey began on March 3, 1540, when de Soto broke camp and ordered his force northward from Tallahassee.²⁴

The Florida exploration between 1513 and 1565 had many results. The east and southwest coasts and keys of Florida were first discovered by Ponce de Leon. Then in 1519, Alvarez de Pineda located and established the fact that this was a peninsula of the mainland. Thus, within six years after discovery, Florida was fully charted on the maps of the world. The interior remained *terra incognita* until 1528, when Narvaez opened the region between Pinellas peninsula and Wakulla County and his vessels moved into Tampa Bay. The interior frontier of this region was extensively enlarged when de Soto entered Florida in 1539. No less important, de Soto's vessels followed a portion of Alvarez de Pineda's twenty-year old track and discovered Pensacola Bay. While Ponce, Narvaez, and de Soto failed in the colonizing required by their patents, in little more than twenty-five years their explorations expanded geographical knowledge of Florida.

II

There are four contemporary Spanish accounts of the founding of St. Augustine by Pedro Menendez de Aviles. These include a letter written by Menendez himself, a narrative of the events in Florida by Francisco Lopez de Mendoza Grajales, an unfinished

23. *Ibid.*, 144-48, 152-60.

24. *Ibid.*, 161-66.

biography of Menendez by Gonzalo Solis de Meras, and another biography by Bartolome Barrientos.²⁵

MENENDEZ'S LETTER

The letter was the first source recorded. Dated September 11, 1565, it was the second communication that Menendez wrote from Florida to the crown. In it, he reported the landfall, the encounter with the French at the mouth of the St. Johns, the establishment of St. Augustine at Matanzas Bay, his prospective plan of operations, the disposition of the galleon unable to enter the bay, the need for logistical support from Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and Havana, the organization of his army, and the fact that the Indians living south of St. Augustine had some gold of varying quality.²⁶

The letter, together with six others written by Menendez about the Florida enterprise, became available in the United States through the efforts of Buckingham Smith who furnished copies to Francis Parkman. They were translated into English by Henry Ware in 1870, and were printed by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1894.²⁷ Meanwhile in Spain, the original letters and a vast amount of other Menendez material, had been published in 1893 by Eugenio Ruidiaz y Caravia.²⁸

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25. A "Relacion del suceso de la Florida," Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 231, 7 folios, (cited hereafter as AGI, Santo Domingo), may be regarded as a fifth contemporary source. This is an account compiled from letters written by Menendez to the crown dated September 10, October 15, and December 5 and 12, 1565. It is in draft form, penned by an official for revision by the king, and seemingly intended as a memorandum for the files. The draft bears the notation, "Well done, and clean copy can be made." The "Relacion" talks about Menendez's departure from Havana, the arrival in Florida, the encounter with the French at the mouth of the St. Johns, Ribault's move against St. Augustine, the surprise of Fort Caroline, the first massacre at Matanzas, and the Spanish construction of outposts for protection of the Caroline area. The death of Ribault which was already known, is not mentioned because Menendez had advised that it would be better if that fact became known in France much later. The "Relacion" is confusing in regard to the chronology of the events, and does not add to the data in the other contemporary sources about the founding of St. Augustine. The "Relacion" is on microfilm at Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, St. Augustine.
26. AGI, Santo Domingo, 6 folios.
27. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2d series (Boston, 1894), VIII, 415-68.
28. Eugenio Ruidiaz y Caravia, *La Florida: su conquista y colonizacion por Pedro Menendez de Aviles*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1893), II, 74-84.

This writer's English translation of the part of the September 11 letter which deals with the founding of St. Augustine has been made from a microfilm of the original:

... I resolved to come toward the Bahama Channel in search of a port where I could land near them [the French]; and eight leagues by sea from their port, and six by land, I found one, which is scarcely thirty degrees and a half, which I had reconnoitered previously on the day of St. Augustine. On the sixth of this month, I disembarked two hundred soldiers there, and on the seventh, three small ships came in with another three hundred and the married men with their wives and children, and I landed most of the artillery and munitions that I was bringing. On the eighth, the day of Our Lady, as another hundred persons, some artillery and munitions, and many provisions which had to be disembarked, were being landed, the French flagship and the admiral's ship came within half a league of us, showing combat signals and maneuvering about us. Remaining at anchor, we signalled them to board us. At three o'clock in the afternoon, they spread sail and went away to their port; and I went ashore and took possession in the name of Your Majesty, and the captains and the officials swore fealty to me as governor and captain general and adelantado of this land and coast, according to the instructions from Your Majesty. Many Indians were present, and among them, many leaders. They appear to be our friends, and it seems to us that they are hostile toward the French . . .

With the first two hundred soldiers, I sent two captains ashore, who were Juan de San Vicente, brother of Captain San Vicente, and Andres Lopez Patino, veteran soldiers, to dig a trench at the most suitable site, at which place the people who would land could gather together and fortify themselves for defense, should the enemy come upon them. They [the captains] did it so well that when I landed, on the day of Our Lady, to take possession of the land in the name of Your Majesty, it seemed as though they had had a month's time. They could not have done better with shovels, pick mattocks, and iron tools, although we do not have any of these materials, because the ship bringing them has not arrived. I bring blacksmiths and iron to have these tools made in little time, and I shall do so. As I have landed, we will inspect the site which seems to us most suitable to fortify, because where we are is not suitable. It will be well for us to do this as soon as possible before the enemy finds us. If

they give us eight days' time, it seems to us we will accomplish [this objective]. . . ²⁹

NARRATIVE OF FATHER LOPEZ

The narrative written by Father Francisco Lopez de Mendoza Grajales about the events connected with the establishment of Florida covers the period from the Cadiz sailing to the end of the first massacre at Matanzas. Lopez, chaplain of the expedition, penned the account shortly after the latter event. Three copies of the narrative in Spanish are found in different manuscript collections. ³⁰ A French translation by H. Ternaux-Compans was published in Paris in 1841; ³¹ the document was published in Spain in 1865; ³² and an English translation by B. F. French was published in 1875. ³³ Ruidiaz published it in Spanish again, together with other Menendez material, in 1893. ³⁴ The English translation by French has been reprinted singly. ³⁵

My translation of the passage connected with the settlement of Florida was made from the text in Ruidiaz:

. . . we went away on the lookout for the river and port which I mentioned above, where Our Lord and His Blessed Mother were pleased that we find our flagship and another vessel. Between themselves, they [the two commanders] had resolved to do the same thing that we did. Three companies went ashore, one being that of Captain Andres Lopez Patino and the other, that of Captain Juan de San Vicente, who is a very important gentleman. They were well received by the Indians, who gave them a rather large house belonging to a chief, which is near the river shore. Immediately, Captain Patino and Captain San Vicente, with their good industry and diligence, commanded that a moat be dug around this

29. AGI, Santo Domingo, folios 3, 4-5.

30. "Coleccion Munoz" (RAH), LXXXVII: "Coleccion Navarrete" (Deposito Hidrografico), XIV; Buckingham Smith Collection (New York Public Library), vol. for 1561-1593, 233-79.

31. H. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages, Relations et Memoires Originaux pour Servir a L'Histoire de la Decouverte de L'Amerique* (Paris, 1841), 165-232.

32. *Coleccion de documentos ineditos*. III. 441-79.

33. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida*, 191-234.

34. Ruidiaz, *La Florida*, II, 431-65.

35. Francisco Lopez de Mendoza Grajales, *The Founding of St. Augustine: Memoir of the Happy Result and Prosperous Voyage of the Fleet Commanded by the Illustrious Captain-General Pedro Menendez de Aviles* (Old South Leaflets, No. 89; Boston, 1896).

house, with adequate terreplein of earth and fascines, which is the material available in this land, because in all of it there is not a sign of a stone. To date, we have inside twenty-four bronze pieces, the smallest exceeding twenty-five hundred-weight. Our fort is about fifteen leagues from that of the enemy. The results accomplished by the industry of these two captains were so great that, with the finger nails of their soldiers, they built a fort to defend themselves, there being no other tools. When the General came ashore, he was astonished at what they had done.

Saturday, the eighth of the said month of September, day of the Nativity of Our Lady, the General landed with many banners waving and many trumpets and other instruments of [military music], and the booming of many artillery pieces. As I had been ashore since the previous day, I took a cross and went to meet them, [singing] the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. The General and all the others who accompanied him came directly to the cross, and kneeling on the ground, kissed it. A large number of Indians were looking at all these ceremonies, and they too did everything that they saw the others do. This same day, milord the General took possession of this land for His Majesty, and all the captains gave him their oath [as lord] of all this land, and as this was finished. . . .³⁶

BIOGRAPHY BY SOLIS

The third contemporary source about the settlement of St. Augustine is the unfinished biography of Menendez by Gonzalo Solis de Meras. Solis was Menendez's brother-in-law, came with him to Florida, and was one of the two men who actually killed Jean Ribault. Solis overlooks the latter fact, but Bartolome Barrientos later told it. The biography describes Menendez from his youth until his arrival back in Spain from Florida in July 1567. It was probably at this time that Solis began his writing, only to have it abruptly interrupted.³⁷

From a copy of the Solis manuscript in his possession, Andres Gonzalez Barcia extracted extensively for his *Ensayo cronologico para la historia general de la Florida* (1723),³⁸ which was trans-

36. Ruidiaz, *La Florida*, II, 450-51.

37. Lowery, vii; Jeannette T. Connor, *Pedro Menendez de Aviles: Adelantado, Governor and Captain-General of Florida* (DeLand, 1923), 10-11, 12. See also the facsimile reproduction with introduction by Lyle N. McAlister (Gainesville, 1964).

38. Lowery, *Spanish Borderlands*, ix.

lated into English by B. F. French in 1875.³⁹ Ruidiaz published the complete manuscript for the first time in 1893, using the copy in possession of the Count of Revillagigedo. He supplied the text missing in this torn copy and added four chapters to complete the biography by using information from Barcia.⁴⁰ Following the text furnished by Ruidiaz, Jeannette T. Connor, in 1923, published the first full English translation of the biography by Solis. To amend gaps in the manuscript, however, Connor supplied *verbatim* excerpts from Barcia.⁴¹

My translation of the Solis account of the founding of St. Augustine is from the text in Ruidiaz:

... he [Menendez] resolved without losing time to spread sail with his flagship and to order the others to do the same. He left for the port of St. Augustine, where he arrived on the eve of Our Lady of September. Immediately after arrival, he landed up to three hundred soldiers, and sent 2 captains with them, who would immediately at daybreak next day, reconnoiter the land and the sites which seemed strongest to them, so they might speedily dig a trench [to serve] until it was decided where they could build a fort, so that when the said Adelantado landed on another day, they would show him what they had seen and resolve the most suitable thing on the matter.

And on the following day, the day of Our Lady of September, the said Adelantado landed about noon, and found many Indians who were waiting for him there, because they had heard about him from other Indians with whom he had spoken four days before. He caused a solemn mass to be said for Our Lady, and when it was finished, took possession of the land in the name of His Majesty and received solemn oath from the officials of His Majesty's royal treasury, the Field-master, and the captains, that all of them would serve His Majesty with all fidelity and loyalty. This done, he caused the Indians to be fed, and the said Adelantado dined also. Immediately after finishing, he went to look at the sites which the captains he had sent had chosen for the trench, and leaving it marked out, he returned to the ships, having first held council and resolved that within 3 days everything which could be unloaded, would be taken off the ships . . .⁴²

39. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida*, 216-22.

40. Ruidiaz, *La Florida*, I (advertencia preliminar), 1-320.

41. Connor, *Pedro Menendez*, 9, 245, note 2.

42. Ruidiaz, *La Florida*, I, 79-80.

BIOGRAPHY BY BARRIENTOS

The biography of Menendez written by Bartolome Barrientos was the last recorded source. Barrientos was a professor of Latin at Salamanca University, and his penchant for mathematics earned him a reputation as a magician. He was born in Granada around 1518, but the date of his death is unknown, despite the deserved fame he enjoyed in life as a humanist. Barrientos finished his biography of Menendez in December 1568. Since he had not been in Florida, he utilized memorials, letters, decrees, and narratives.⁴³

For many years, there was doubt about the existence of a Barrientos manuscript since after its use as a source for a work published in 1613,⁴⁴ it had disappeared. Barcia knew it existed but was unable to locate it when he was writing his history of Florida.⁴⁵ Two historical writers in Mexico, one in 1755 and the other in 1816, expressed doubt of its survival.⁴⁶ Then, unexpectedly in 1885, the biography was offered for sale in Madrid by the reputable bookseller, Gabriel Sanchez, and it was purchased by Don Jose Maria de Agreda Sanchez.⁴⁷

The biography was published for the first time in 1902. Senor Agreda loaned the manuscript to Genaro Garcia, who edited and published it for presentation at the Thirteenth International Congress of Americanists held in New York City, October 20-25, 1902.⁴⁸ The first English translation is by Anthony J. Kerrigan.⁴⁹

This writer's translation of the passage in Barrientos concerned with the establishment of St. Augustine was made from the text furnished by Garcia:

That same day, the eve of Our Lady of September, the adelantado approached his port. Upon landing, he sent three hundred soldiers to reconnoiter the land and see where a

43. Genaro Garcia, *Dos antiguas relaciones de la Florida* (Mexico, 1902), iii, x, xi-xii.

44. Gonzalo de Illescas, *Historia pontifical y catholica* (Madrid, 1613), see Garcia, ix-x.

45. Garcia, *Dos antiguas relaciones de la Florida*, x.

46. Juan Jose de Eguilara y Eguren and Jose Mariano Berastain y Souza respectively, see *ibid.*, iv, note 1, XI.

47. *Ibid.*, xiv.

48. *Ibid.*, dedicatoria, iv, 1-152.

49. Anthony J. Kerrigan, *Pedro Menendez* (Gainesville, publication scheduled for 1965 by the University of Florida Press).

trench could be dug until they resolved where they would locate a fort. The following day he disembarked about noon, and many Indians who knew about him from others who had first seen and spoken to him were waiting. Having heard solemn mass for Our Lady, he took possession for His Majesty, swore in the officials of the Royal treasury, the field-master, and the captains, that they would serve our Catholic king in everything with the great fidelity and loyalty owed to such a lord. He saw the site chosen for the trench. Within three days he caused everything in the ships to be taken off . . .⁵⁰

The availability of the Spanish contemporary sources on the founding of St. Augustine and their English translations has made this event one of the best known in Florida history. This felicitous situation is manifestly the culmination of the work of several generations of students. Excerpts from the Solis biography were printed for the first time in 1723, but 152 years passed before they were translated. The publication of the complete Solis manuscript followed the excerpts 170 years later, and the complete translation, another thirty. Father Lopez's narrative, the source next published, came out 142 years after the excerpts, but fortunately was translated within ten years. Only one year intervened between publication of the Menendez letter in Spanish and in English. The translation, however, had been finished twenty-four years earlier. The source published last, the Barrientos biography, appeared 334 years after its writing and its translation is only just now available. Thus, the Spanish publication and English translation of the sources under consideration have been accomplished over a period of 242 years.

The rest of Spanish Florida history could be as well known as the founding of St. Augustine were it not for the language barrier. The need, interest, and motivation are present, but inadequate linguistic knowledge often prevents direct investigation in the best Spanish sources. The rich vein of data in the University of Florida's Stetson Collection and North Carolina's Spanish Records Collection waits to be tapped. At the same time, English translations are few and far between, and the lapse between availability of source material and workable translation is excessively long. All this retards the growth of reasonably definite knowledge of an earlier phase of history, and it is Florida's pitiful loss.

50. Garcia, *Dos antiguas relaciones de la Florida*, 46.