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THE ENTERPRISE OF FLORIDA

by EUGENE LYON*

KNOWLEDGE OF FLORIDA history tends to cluster around certain key events. Thus, the Spanish colonial period is marked by the Ponce de León and De Soto landings, the Drake raid of 1586, and the building of the Castillo de San Marcos. Interpretation of the first successful settlement of Florida by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is centered upon the diplomatic and military drama culminating at Fort Caroline and at Matanzas. Woodbury Lowery and Henry Folmer have shown the Spanish-French clash of 1565 in its international setting. The spiritual aspect of the Menéndez conquest has been developed by a host of historians: Felix Zubilaga, Michael Kenney, Clifford Lewis, Albert Loomie, and Michael Gannon. Some information about the founder of Florida has been contributed by the Asturian writers, Eugenio Ruidiaz y Caravia and Ciriaco Miguel Vigil. The modern reproduction of the Barrientos, Barcia, Solís de Merás, and Mendoza Grajales narratives, as well as the works of Jean Ribault, Rene de Laudonnière, and Dominique Gorgues, has added depth to our knowledge of the Menéndez years. The picture, however, remains incomplete.

The founding of Florida was an enterprise, an undertaking of vast scope done in large measure by private interests. The Menéndez conquest of Florida began entirely as the enterprise of an adelantado. It was after the contract for this had been signed in Madrid that the Spanish Crown first learned that Laudonnière had established Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River. With this threat to Spain's interest, royal support was added for the Florida effort. This led five years later to a regular subsidy. The underlying basis of conquest, however, remained the personal leadership and financial support of the adelantado and his Asturian associates. Florida was an adelantamiento in the period from 1565 to 1577. Its founding was directly in the tradition of Spanish expansion by contract. According to accepted practice, Menéndez, as proprietor, was to furnish certain

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services and to receive certain benefits under his conquest-contract with Philip II.

For more than sixty years prior to 1565, the expansion of Spain into the Western Hemisphere had been accomplished chiefly by adelantados. The juridical origins of the Castilian institution of the adelantado can be traced back at least as far as the twelfth century. It was an essential ingredient in the reconquest of Spain, and it was later transferred, legally intact, to the New World.¹ For Florida, the Ponce de León, Vázquez de Ayllón, de Narváez, and de Soto contracts were of a piece with more than sixty other Indies asientos. Only the de Luna and Villafañe expeditions did not fit the pattern. Each contractor in conquest received a license to explore and exploit Crown lands in return for financing and manning expeditions of fortification, evangelization, and settlement. For one to three lives, the government of the lands concerned was to be in his hands or those of his heirs. He possessed the power to appoint the officials of local government and justice; the appeal of all civil and criminal cases came only through him. No viceroy or audiencia could interfere with an adelantado, who dealt directly with the King and the Council of the Indies. He would receive titles, land grants, monopolies, tax exemptions, and a percentage of royal revenues. To check upon the stewardship of its adelantados, the Crown relied upon its treasury officials, the sending of visitors and auditors, and the institution of residencia. By 1563, when the contracts had been largely standardized by usage, royal ordinances were enacted fixing the concept of private conquest into Spanish law.²

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1. *Leyes XIX and XXII of the Siete Partidas*, reproduced by Marcelo Martínez Alcubilla in *Códigos Antiguos de España*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1885), I, 301-02. The equality of Castilian and Indies *Adelantados* was reaffirmed in the consulta of November 28, 1671, from Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain (hereinafter referred to as AGI), *Santo Domingo* 231, photostat in the John B. Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. Hereinafter such photostats of AGI documents will be cited SC. See also the article by Roscoe R. Hill, "The Office of Adelantado," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXVIII (December 1913), 646-68, especially 646-51, for a discussion of medieval Iberian origins of the institution.
 2. The contract of Ponce de León for Bimini is found in *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento . . . en América y Oceanía*, 42 vols. (Madrid, 1864-1884), XXII, 26-32 (hereinafter DI). The asiento of Ayllón of June 12, 1523 is in AGI *Indiferente General* 415, fol. 32-40. The contract with Narváez is also from that legajo, as is the

Philip II learned in mid-February 1563 of Ribault's visit to Florida the previous year and the French settlement at Port Royal. He ordered the governor of Havana and his general of the fleet, Pedro Menéndez, to erase the French threat. In June 1563, the King also determined to counter the French with a preventative settlement on the North American mainland. He granted a contract to Lucas Vazquez de Ayllón, son of the earlier Florida adelantado. Disgraced by debt, Vazquez de Ayllón never sailed for Florida. Instead he fled Santo Domingo in 1564, where his expedition broke up, a failure.³

In the meantime, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, a vigorous Asturian seaman, came to the fore. Menéndez had a long background as a privateer in the Bay of Biscay and service in Crown-paid fleets as a subordinate and then as captain-general. He had also become a ship-owner and freighter in the Indies trade. His marriage into the influential Valdés family and his ties to the Velascos and other noble houses of Asturias helped gain him both advancement at Court and commercial advantage in Spain and in the Indies. Because of his trading ties in Cádiz and in the New World and his Asturian origins, Menéndez became involved in a bitter rivalry with the merchants' guild of Seville. Accused of carrying contraband in 1556 and 1561, he was convicted of that and other offenses in 1563 by the House of Trade, and confined to Seville for almost one year. In July 1564, Menéndez broke jail and brought his case to Madrid, where the Council of the Indies reconfirmed most of the sentences against him later that year. In early February 1565, however, the Council reversed its earlier rulings and began negotiations with Menéndez for the Florida contract.⁴ An agreement was signed March 15,

agreement of April 20, 1537 with Hernando de Soto. The first royal ordinances governing conquest, issued at Segovia on July 13, 1563, are entitled "Ordenanzas sobre descubrimiento nuevo e población," and have been reprinted in *DI*, VIII, beginning at p. 508.

3. See Philip II to Pedro Menéndez and to Diego de Mazariegos, February 13, 1563, AGI *Indiferente General* 427. The second Ayllón asiento, June 4, 1563, is in AGI *Contratación* 3,309. Vazquez de Ayllón's difficulties are described in a letter from *Licenciado* Echegoyen to the King, Santo Domingo, August 10, 1564, AGI *Santo Domingo* 71, SC.
4. One valuable witness about the early days of Pedro Menéndez is the adelantado himself, particularly in his memorial of 1564 from AGI *Patronato* 257, No. 3, *ramo* 2, SC. An early Indies voyage of Menéndez is recorded in AGI *Contratación* 2,898, 1550 *Ida* and *Venida*, and in

1565, and the formal royal copy was issued, together with enabling decrees, five days later.⁵

The Menéndez contract was standard, with only a few special sections tailored to his particular wishes and needs. He would receive the title of adelantado for himself and for his heirs perpetually, and that of marquis if his Florida services warranted. He was granted 500 slave licenses free of duties and short-term exemptions from the royal customs duties and quinto. Menéndez would receive six and two-thirds per cent of all royal profits in Florida in perpetuity, and he was given the rights to two fisheries. He would receive an immense land grant, more than 5,500 square miles, in a place or places of his own choosing, and could give lands for farms and ranches as estates to his supporters. He was granted valuable shipping privileges— the right to put four vessels into the Indies trade and to sail with ten others in his Florida commercial monopoly. He also received an open-ended letter-of-marque, enabling him to take prizes without limit for the duration of the asiento.

In return for these benefits, Menéndez was required to underwrite and perform the conquest, exploration, pacification, and settlement of Florida. The Crown's only payment would be a 15,000 ducat bonus, if Menéndez sailed before May 31, 1565. He was required to bring 500 men on the first expedition, 100 of them settlers. Within three years, 400 more colonists had to be imported. Menéndez was required to carry the men and their requisite supplies and munitions in eleven ships. The King also ordered Menéndez to interrupt the trading voyage of his large galeass, *San Pelayo*, to back up the Florida voyage. The adelantado had to build two to three towns and import 1,100 head of varied livestock. Menéndez immediately began preparation for his expedition.

another memorial of 1553 from AGI *Santo Domingo* 71, SC, filed with 1567. Menéndez's troubles with the *Casa de Contratación* and the Seville merchants are recorded in AGI *Justicia* 842, 855, 865, 868, 872, and 970.

5. A signed copy of the Florida contract agreed to on March 15, 1565, by Menéndez and Dr. Juan Vázquez de Arce of the Council of the Indies is found in AGI *Patronato* 257, No. 3, *ramo* 3, SC. Formal royal approval was given in the contract of March 20, 1565, a signed copy of which is in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-A. Other copies exist in Spanish archives.

In the meantime, Rene de Laudonnière had landed in Florida and had built Fort Caroline. Rebels from his garrison sailed to the Spanish Indies in late 1564 in three small vessels to seek their fortunes. The Frenchmen were captured in three groups: at Arcos harbor in Cuba, near LaYaguana in Santo Domingo, and in the harbor of Santiago de la Vega in Jamaica. Although the governor of Havana dispatched the first news to Spain of the French settlement in Florida, it did not reach Seville until March 26, 1565. By that time, of course, the contract with Pedro Menéndez was already signed. After the message was received, royal aid in the form of troops and supplies was added to the effort of the adelantado.⁶

In preparing his first expedition, and during all of the dramatic years of the Florida conquest, Pedro Menéndez had to find and equip ships, raise and pay large numbers of troops for his own account, and purchase and send supplies to Florida. In Cádiz, the adelantado made a contract with Pedro del Castillo, his relative and a merchant of considerable standing. Castillo was granted rights in the slave licenses and shipping privileges given in the Florida asiento. In return, he advanced more than 20,000 ducats for the arming of the Florida expedition, and he agreed to manage the business side of the conquest from Spain. Menéndez and Castillo erected a paper structure of letters of credit to back up the Florida effort in Spain and the Indies, but ultimately the credit was itself backed by money from Indies trade and funds due Menéndez from the Crown.⁷ Other relatives

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6. The voyage of the rebels from Laudonnière's fort is described in "Information of Governor Blas de Merlo," from AGI *Justicia* 212. See also the Spaniards' interrogation of the prisoners on December 22, 1564, from AGI *Patronato* 267, No. 1, *ramo* 37, and "Rojomonte's deposition," from AGI *Patronato* 19, No. 1, *ramo* 14. This writer has analyzed the fate of the French prisoners in "Captives of Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, L (July 1971), 1-24. For proof of the crucial point that news of the existence of Fort Caroline did not reach Spain until after Menéndez's contract was signed, see Casa to Crown, Seville, March 26, 1565, AGI *Contratación* 5,167 and Crown to Casa, August 26, 1565, from AGI *Contratación* 5,012, SC. For the Crown aid later authorized for Menéndez, see Philip II to *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo and to the governor at Havana, April 5, 1565, AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-Á. See also Philip's letter to Pedro de Ruelas, May 9, 1565, *Indiferente General* 1,966.
7. Menéndez's contract with Pedro del Castillo is dated June 25, 1565, and is found (together with later *poderes*) in Archivo de Protocolos de Cádiz. *Escribanía* of Alonso de los Cobos, 1565.

and friends advanced money, furnished ships, and provided men. The conquest of Florida was a family affair and a regional enterprise. More exactly, it was the affair of some nine major Asturian families, intricately interrelated by blood and marriage. The whole of the northern Spanish coast from Galicia to Vizcaya took part in the preparation of the northern Menéndez expedition. Most of the chief civil and military subordinates of Pedro Menéndez were Asturian, and all of these were related in some way to the adelantado. The familial network extended as well to the Indies ports of San Juan, Santo Domingo, Havana, and Bayamo in Cuba, to Vera Cruz and Cartagena, and to the viceregal city of Mexico.⁸

In addition to the men and material supplied by Menéndez and his associates, the Spanish Crown also contributed its share of the soldiery and supplies. In 1565, the King sent 300 soldiers in addition to foodstuffs and munitions. A reinforcement fleet brought 750 additional men to Florida in 1566, and another supply vessel sailed that year. Two ships arrived with food and arms in 1568, and another expedition came in 1571. When the original three-year term of Menéndez's contract expired in 1568, he was given an extension of his trade privileges in return for continuing to direct the enterprise and place settlers in Florida. The King then agreed to furnish funds for 150 of the soldiers in the garrisons, who would be paid from the fleet treasury. This became a regular annual subsidy in 1570, paid from the Tierra Firme or New Spain revenues of the Crown.⁹

For his part, Pedro Menéndez had done far more than simply

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8. The family aspect of the Florida conquest is discussed at some length by this writer in "The Matrix of Conquest," from "The Adelantamiento of Florida: 1565-1568" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1973), 129-37.
 9. The sending of the Archiniega relief fleet was authorized by Philip in an order to the *Casa de Contratación*, July 30, 1565, from AGI *Contratación* 5,012, SC. It sailed in April 1566, and was followed in late June by the supply ship *Pantecras*. See AGI *Contraduría* 294, No. 2b, 6. The renewal of Menéndez's trade privileges was granted in a letter from Philip II to Antonio de Abalia, sent from El Pardo on August 17, 1568, from AGI *Indiferente General* 1,967. The 150-man support was announced in a royal order of July 15, 1568, summarized in AGI *Contraduría* 548. On November 15, 1570, the subsidy was formally established in a letter from the King to the royal officials of Tierra Firme; this is found in AGI *Santo Domingo* 2,528, SC.

expel the Frenchmen from Florida. As a result of his coastal explorations, Menéndez had established a supply route by sea connecting the towns of Santa Elena and St. Augustine and the other forts with Cuba, Yucatan, and various Indies points. His vessels made many trips carrying corn, wine, seabiscuit, oil, and meat to the Florida garrisons. His supply efforts were not always successful, as he struggled with rebellious soldiers, stormy seas, and financial reverses. Often he found himself furnishing supplies for the royal troops as well as his own, for the projected Crown aid often came too late and sometimes never arrived. After his largest and finest ships were lost in the enterprise of Florida, it was difficult for Pedro Menéndez to continue his efforts.¹⁰ After 1567, he was heavily occupied in the Royal Armada, while Florida was left to be managed by his associates and his sons-in-law.

In late 1567, Pedro Menéndez filed suit against the Crown, seeking recompense for services and for his heavy losses in Florida. For the shipwrecked *San Pelayo* alone he asked 25,000 ducats. The Royal Fiscal and the chief accountants closely examined Menéndez's performance in Florida. Although the substantive issues of the dispute were not settled at that time, the adelantado in 1567 and 1568 received major benefits as an outgrowth of the lawsuit; the revenues and title of Comendador of Santa Cruz de la Zarza, a property of the military order of Santiago, located near Palencia in Castile; a 10,000-ducat grant from Philip II; the governorship of Cuba, and the corollary disgrace and punishment of his enemy, former Governor Garcia Osorio; and the position of captain-general of the Royal Armada, a guard fleet for the Spanish trade system. This office not only guaranteed him a salary and prize money under a special arrangement with the King, but he also had an excellent chance to engage in contraband activities. The legal case over Menéndez's performance in Florida did not end, however; it continued another sixty-five years.¹¹

10. For details of Menéndez's supply of his Florida adelantamiento, see the data from 1566-1572 from AGI *Contaduría* 1,174, and "Despachos que se hicieron," in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-A. The ship losses of the adelantado are detailed in "Memorial de los navios cargados de bastimentos y municiones que se perdieron el Adelantado . . .," from AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-A.

11. The body of the lawsuit by Menéndez against the Spanish Crown over the conquest of Florida is found in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-A.

The adelantado and his supporters had a grand design for the development of their patrimonies in Florida— it was a dream modeled after other developments in the Spanish Indies. Although the search for mines and bullion recovered from shipwrecks never ended, the Florida plan was essentially agricultural and commercial. Every settler, whether noble or commoner, hoped to acquire estate. Menéndez envisioned himself as marquis of lands as vast as those of the Cortés fiefdom in the valley of Mexico. Every Spaniard wanted land to farm, either by himself or with Negro or Indian workers. According to the plan the corn paid in tribute by the Indians would feed both the livestock and the settlers, and hides and sugar would be produced for export. The municipal councils, or cabildos, would grant town and rural lands, and the adelantado was to confirm the encomiendas it established. As a way station on the route to Spain from New Spain, Florida expected to profit from trade and shipping and it was hoped that employment would be provided by shipbuilding. In pursuance of the design, Pedro Menéndez brought in more than 500 settlers and loads of livestock from Cuba and Santo Domingo. Two sizable ships and several smaller craft were built in Florida, but in the final analysis the design failed.¹²

One perceptive Florida historian suggests that the Indian-Spanish relationship is the key to understanding why the Menéndez design failed.¹³ It is also important to place that relationship, as one essential part, within a chain of conquest. Thus, evangelization depended upon military support, and farmers waited upon pacification. In Florida, it was impossible for settlers to penetrate to the more fertile inland areas because of lack of security from Indian attack. Living on the rim of the vast domain called Florida, the Spanish could not apply the persistent pressure

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12. Witnesses for the adelantado presented proof of the number of settlers brought to Florida in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 1,024-A. Details of the frigate construction in Florida in 1571-1572 are found in AGI *Contaduría* 548. One of the most complete expressions of Menéndez's dream for Florida settlement and commerce is to be found in his letter to Philip II dated at St. Augustine on October 15, 1565, from AGI *Santo Domingo* 231, SC.
 13. Charles W. Arnade, "The Failure of Spanish Florida," *The Americas*, XVI (January 1960), 271-81.

needed to impress their culture upon that of the Indians. The corn-fields and sugar-cane plantings could not be defended. Live-stock, imported at great cost, had to be used for food, and thus the settlers consumed their agricultural capital.

The failure of the Jesuit mission, which was staffed with able and zealous men, further reflected the underlying failure of Menéndez's Indian policy. In 1573, a frustrated adelantado admitted that the Indians in South Florida, and notably those in the Indian River area, had made his task impossible. He asked royal permission to enslave them and to rid Florida of them.¹⁴

The Florida Indian problem was neither unique nor hopeless. Spaniards had faced and conquered similar situations in Yucatan, on the "Chichimeca" frontiers of New Spain, in Chile, and elsewhere in the New World. At places in Florida where the Spanish were most numerous, notably near St. Augustine, in Guale, and near Santa Elena, it seemed at times that success was near. Indians were paying tribute, and the peace was being kept for relatively long periods of time. But, even with Crown aid, Menéndez could not keep up the effort. The foothold in Florida had been gained, but the grand design failed of realization.

As with all enterprises, a balance-sheet can be drawn of the enterprise of Florida. The Crown expended some 385,000 ducats on Florida during the Menéndez years.¹⁵ In addition there was also the intangible value to the royal patrimony of the ship and slave licenses, trade privileges, and exemptions which had been granted Menéndez. The adelantado's heirs claimed that he had spent 977,379 ducats on his Florida enterprise. Other data reveals that this total contains both exaggeration and error. Menéndez's first Florida expedition of 1565 cost him and his supporters some 50,000 ducats. His Havana supply operation called for an expenditure of more than 10,000 ducats per year, exclusive of costs incurred in Spain for ships, men, and supplies. The royal auditors ruled that Menéndez had spent 130,000 ducats more than his contract had required. On the credit side of the ledger, the

14. See "Daños de los Indios de la Florida," 1573, AGI *Patronato* 259, No. 3, *ramo* 20, SC.

15. Paul E. Hoffman, "A Study of Florida Defense Costs, 1565-1585: A Quantification of Florida History," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LI (April 1973), 401-22.

adelantado had realized some benefit from booty and prizes in Florida, from the ransom of prisoners, and from the sale of asiento ship licenses.¹⁶ Twelve ships, ranging in size from the 900-ton *San Pelayo* to tiny shallops, had been lost. More tragic was the death of many friends and relatives from drowning, arrow-wounds, disease, or starvation in the attempted conquest of Florida.

Philip II was never able successfully to determine the stewardship of his Florida adelantado. Royal treasury officials and lesser supply functionaries were faithful members of Menéndez's retinue. Royal monies and supplies sent to Florida were often sold or converted to private use, and there was open fraud in the issuance of soldiers' rations. The audit of 1569 resulted in criticism of some of the guilty for the misuse of royal supplies, but Pedro Menéndez was not censured. The King authorized an investigatory journey by Dr. Alonso Cáceres of Santo Domingo to Florida in 1574, but this visit never took place.¹⁷

After Menéndez's death in 1574, the enterprise of Florida was willed to Hernando de Miranda, his son-in-law, who had married Catalina Menéndez. After receiving the titles of adelantado, governor, and captain-general, Miranda arrived in Florida to direct the enterprise, but he lacked the dynamism of Pedro Menéndez and his royal support. After disastrous Indian troubles at Guale and in the vicinity of Santa Elena, Miranda fled to Havana. The 1576 visit convinced the Crown that the adelantamiento of Florida should be suspended. Since Miranda retained the title, the new official was simply a Crown appointee and not adelantado. Although Pedro Menéndez Marquez was related to the conqueror of Florida, the adelantamiento of Florida had ended.¹⁸

16. For a detailed listing of Menéndez's estimated Florida expenditures, see Lyon, "The Adelantamiento of Florida," 137-54.

17. The 1569 audit performed by Andres de Equino is documented in AGI *Patronato* 257, No. 3, ramo 8, SC: AGI *Contaduría* 941; and AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 153-B, reel 2, microfilm, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History. A substantial body of materials about the projected Cáceres visit is in AGI *Santo Domingo* 124 (partly contained also in the Stetson Collection).

18. See the accumulation of materials about the succession of Hernando de Miranda in AGI *Justicia* 817. The *visita* of 1576 by Baltasar del Castillo y Ahedo is documented in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 153-B, reels 1 and 2, microfilm, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History. The appointment

Pedro Menéndez's case of 1567 continued for years. An initial financial settlement of his tangled finances was reached with his heirs in 1583.¹⁹ After the death of Hernando de Miranda and the failure of Catalina to produce an heir from her second marriage, the Menéndez estate passed to the son of the conqueror's nephew and descended down that branch of the family. After debate over the value of the services of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the lawsuit was settled finally in 1633. The Council of the Indies ruled that, in spite of frauds and failures, Pedro Menéndez had more than fulfilled his contract. It granted his heirs the title of adelantado of Florida in perpetuity. An encomienda in New Spain worth 40,000 ducats was granted to the estate, together with a fishery in Florida. No other claims were allowed. As it turned out the family waited until 1646 to collect the benefice in New Spain.²⁰

In 1671, more than 100 years after the events at Matanzas and Fort Caroline, the Council of the Indies ruled that the title of adelantado of Florida was equal in rank to the same title in Castile.²¹ The title of Adelantado of Florida continues today as an honorific held by a Spanish nobleman.

From 1565 to 1577, Florida was not just a political and military incident in a long international struggle, nor was it merely a Crown colony commanded by a subordinate of the Spanish Hapsburg King. It was an adelantamiento. The enterprise of Florida was a joint-venture in conquest. The Crown and its adelantado united in an undertaking of dramatic scope and of high priority. The dreams of landed estate, Christianized Indians, and prosperous, pacified royal domains were dashed after immense expenditure. Although both parties to the contract spent heavily, the contribution of Pedro Menéndez was the greater, measured in money, ships, or lives.

From 1565 to 1577, Florida was as typically Castilian as Lima

of Pedro Menéndez Marqués as civil governor solely was affirmed by the King in a *cedula* dated March 22, 1577, and found in AGE *Santo Domingo* 2528, SC.

19. This accounting is found in AGI *Contaduría* 454 and 548.

20. Settlement of the Menéndez suit over Florida was authorized by the Council of the Indies on February 7, 1633 and is found in AGI *Escribanía de Cámara* 956.

21. See the consulta of the Council of the Indies of that date contained in AGI *Santo Domingo* 231, SC.

or Valladolid. It had religious brotherhoods and cabildos, local judges, notaries, attorneys, and physicians. It was peopled by noble families, slaves, seamen, soldiers, priests, and friars. At St. Augustine and in Santa Elena, there were farmers and their wives and children, single men and women, prostitutes and some of their children, interpreters, and half-breeds. Each city had a forge, a cobbler's shop, taverns, tailors, a public stocks, and gallows. One of Florida's strongest ties to Spain was the means of its founding by adelantado, directly in the long tradition of conquest by contract.

The enterprise of Florida was written on the sand, finally to be erased by the tides of history. For twelve vital years, however, Florida was a borderland only by virtue of geography. In its institutions and in its daily life, as well as in the means of its founding, Florida was in the mainstream of Spanish expansion. This intimate bond with sixteenth-century Spain ties us, in Florida history, directly to our Iberian past.