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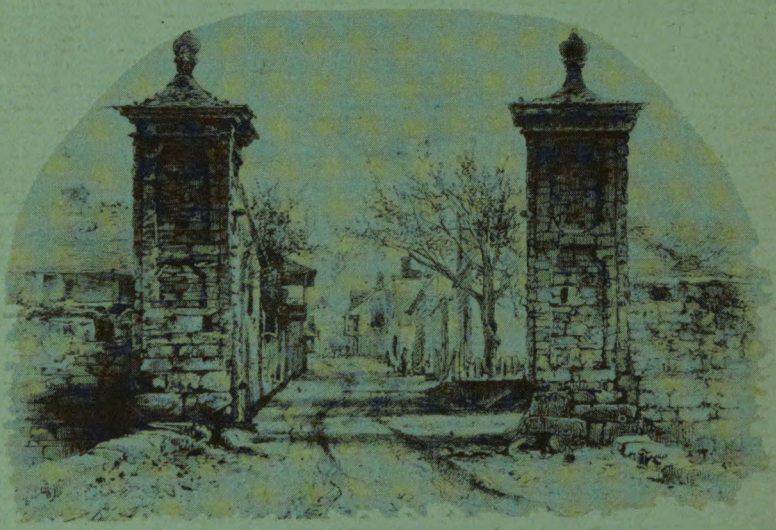
THE HISTORY OF Castillo de San Marcos & Fort Matanzas

FROM CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES AND LETTERS



City Gates, St. Augustine, Fla.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Source Book Series • Number Three

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THE HISTORY OF Castillo de San Marcos & Fort Matanzas

FROM CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES AND LETTERS

Edited by ALBERT C. MANUCY
HISTORICAL TECHNICIAN
CASTILLO DE SAN MARCOS AND FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENTS
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.

Reprint 1945

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Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, founder of St. Augustine in 1565, who drove the French from Florida and made it a Spanish stronghold.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book contains extracts from the vast field of historical records wherein are written the parts played by Fort Matanzas and Castillo de San Marcos in the growth of America. The extracts were chosen because, short as they are, they give an accurate picture of the general history of the two areas.

The materials reproduced here are significant not only as recordings of important events in the history of these two sites, but also as expressions of contemporary thought, uncolored by the interpretations of the historian. That is important. Of Spanish civilization in America, our English forbears and their descendants knew little and cared less; on the other hand, the Spaniards saw the enemy colonizers of North America only as interlopers and piratical adventurers.

That Spain did not press further her legitimate claims to the northern continent was due in large part to her concentration of effort in the Central and South American areas, where fabulous riches were to be had for the taking—riches which gave Spain power and upset the balance among European nations. A natural consequence was that the heavily laden galleons became fair prey for the corsairs of the less fortunate states, those nations perforce excluded from the treasures of the Americas. But capable Spanish admirals could cope with the sea wolves reasonably well, and Spain's greatest fear was that a powerful belligerent would establish a strong base at some wayside harbor and, in organized attack, cut the all-important lifeline that bound the colonies to the mother country. To forestall such an attempt, Spain chose the natural but difficult expedient of occupying all territory bordering on the trade route. This was the move which determined Florida's place in the scheme of empire. Then, out of the ensuing dogged fight for the American advantage, was resolved the epic theme of Castillo de San Marcos and Fort Matanzas National Monuments.

In the fall of 1565, at Matanzas Inlet on the coast of Florida, the Spanish destroyed the French Huguenots. This event gave Spain potential control of the entire continent of North America; more immediately, it opened the way to actual domination of the southeast for some two centuries to come.

In Florida, after the French were thwarted, the fight evolved simply into British pressure to break down Spanish barriers and gain control of the

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Bahama Channel—vital outlet for Caribbean commerce; and by thus pushing Spanish boundaries southward, England would also achieve protection of her own colonial enterprises along the Atlantic seaboard. After the English settlement of Charleston, the die was cast. Frantically the Spanish builders worked at the stone forts in Florida, and while these served their purpose well, Spain's destiny transformed them into gravestones of empire.

The translations of the earlier Spanish documents are rather literal, even to the extent of retaining archaisms, grammatical errors, and ambiguous constructions. It was felt that in no other way could the reader taste the true flavor of the epistles written not by a Cervantes, but by rough men of action, often on the very site of conflict. Neither has any attempt been made to polish the language of the later extracts, since to do so would destroy their historical character.

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1. *The Massacre at Matanzas*

Following the discoveries of the adventurous Ponce de León in 1513, Spanish navigators came to realize that the shortest and best return route from Spain's rich American possessions was along the Gulf Stream, through the narrow Bahama Channel, past the shores of Florida. Thus it was that this peninsula, at the very wayside of the treasure fleet passage, became of great strategic importance, and when in 1564 the French Huguenots successfully established Fort Caroline in Florida on the St. Johns River, King Philip lost no time in sending Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to remove this threat to Spanish commerce.

On the same day (August 28, 1565) that Menéndez made his landfall, Jean Ribaut arrived at the French colony with reenforcements. A few days later, Menéndez established a base which he named SAN AGUSTÍN *(St. Augustine). Ribaut, with superior forces, sailed to the attack, but his fleet was blown down the coast and wrecked. Meanwhile, under cover of the same storm, Menéndez executed the master stroke of surprising Fort Caroline and annihilating most of its garrison. Next he learned that the French castaways were tramping up the coast to return to their fort, and he quickly marched with 40 men to the south end of Anastasia Island. About 150 Frenchmen were gathered on the shore opposite this coastal island, halted there by the swift waters of an inlet which was later given the name* MATANZAS, *Spanish word for "slaughters". Mendéndez did not reveal the small size of his force, and when the French were convinced that Fort Caroline had fallen, they decided to surrender. On September 29, 1565, they were put to the knife on the site which is now included as part of Fort Matanzas National Monument.*

A few days later, under almost duplicate circumstances, Menéndez met a second band of the shipwrecked Frenchmen led by Jean Ribaut, whom the Spanish called "Ribao." What happened is related below in detail by eyewitness Gonzalo Solís de Merás, brother-in-law and biographer of Menéndez. The narrative begins with the Adelantado (Leader) Menéndez back in St. Augustine, after the destruction of the first band of Frenchmen at Matanzas. The day is October 10, 1565:

One day after the Adelantado arrived in Sant Agustín, the same Indians came as before, and they said that many more Christians were at that part of the river where the others had been. The Adelantado realized that this must be Juan Ribao, land and sea commander of the Lutherans, who was named viceroy of this land by the king of France, and presently he departed with 150 soldiers in good order, and at midnight bivouacked where he had the first time. At dawn he stationed himself next to the river, with his men scattered, and as the day brightened, he descried at two harquebus shots

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away, on the other bank of the river, many people and a raft made to take the people across to the place where the Adelantado was. Presently, the French, when they saw the Adelantado and his men, sounded alarm and unfurled a royal standard and two field banners, fifers and drummers playing smartly; and they offered battle to the Adelantado, who had commanded his men to sit down and breakfast, and not to make any show of hostilities. He himself walked by the shore with his admiral and two other captains, taking no notice of the French commotion and show of battle, so that the French must have become confused, because they halted in battle array and the fifers and drummers stopped playing, and with the sound of a bugle, they raised a white flag of peace.

The Adelantado at once called to an excellent bugler he had with him and drew from his pocket a handkerchief, which he waved in a manner signifying peace.

A Frenchman got on the raft and shouted loudly for us to come across to them.

By order of the Adelantado he was told that since they had the raft and had called first, if they wanted anything they should come to the Spaniards. The man on the raft replied that it was a poor raft for the crossing because the current was strong, and asked that an Indian canoe, which was at hand, be sent to him.

The Adelantado replied that the Frenchman could swim across for it under safe conduct. Soon a French sailor came, but the Adelantado did not let him speak; he ordered him to take the canoe and go tell his captain that since the French had called first, if their captain wanted anything, he should send a [suitable messenger] to say so. Next the sailor came with a gentleman, who said he was sergeant major to Juan Ribao, viceroy and captain general of this territory for the king of France, and that Juan Ribao had sent him to say that he had been wrecked with his armada in a storm at sea, and that about 350 French were there, that it was important for them to go to a fort [Caroline] he had about 20 leagues away, that he wanted the Adelantado to lend him small boats for crossing this and another river distant about 4 leagues, and he also wanted to know if they were Spaniards and who was their captain.

The Adelantado replied that Spaniards they were, and their captain was the same man with whom he spoke, named Pe[d]ro Menéndez. He told him to tell his general that the fort he said he had 20 leagues away had been taken and its Frenchmen destroyed, as were other men from the lost armada, because they had been badly commanded; and they walked to where the dead were, and he showed them to him; and [told him to tell his general that now] he had no reason to cross the river to his fort.

The sergeant, with great composure, making no show of grief over what the Adelantado told him, asked the Adelantado whether he would do him

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the favor of sending one of his gentlemen to tell these things to his general [Jean Ribao], so that a safe conduct might be discussed, because his general [Jean Ribao] was weary [from his long march]; and the gentleman asked whether the Adelantado would go across to see him, in a boat there at hand, and the Adelantado replied to him:

"Brother, go with God's blessing and give the reply given you, and if your general wants to come talk with me, I give him my word that he can come and return safely, with about 5 or 6 companions from the men of his council, so that he may take the advice which suits him best." So the gentleman left with this assurance.

Within half an hour he returned to accept the assurance the Adelantado had given and to ask for the boat, which, [however], the Adelantado did not want to give, sending him back to say that the French might seize it; that Juan Ribao could cross in the canoe, which was safe, because the river was narrow; and so the gentleman returned with this message, and presently came Juan Ribao whom the Adelantado received very well, with 8 other gentlemen of authority and very fine address. The Adelantado received them all very well, offered them drink and a collation from a certain barrel of preserves, and he said he would give them food if they wanted it.

Juan Ribao responded with much humility, being grateful for the hospitality shown him, and said they wished to breakfast with the wine and preserves in order to cheer their spirits, which were saddened by the news of the death of their comrades, but for the present they wanted no other food; and thus they did.

Juan Ribao said that his companions lying dead there (and he saw those who were near) might have been deceived [about the capture of Fort Caroline], but he did not want to be: then the Adelantado commanded the soldiers there to come forward with the trophies each one had from the fort, and so many were the things Juan Ribao saw, that he was certain the news was true; he could not [previously] believe it, though he already had the news from a French barber, one of those [from the first group] whom the Adelantado had commanded to be destroyed, who had been left for dead among the others, for at the first thrust they gave him, he fell, pretending to be slain; and when Juan Ribao arrived, the barber swam across to him, and since the barber was sure the Adelantado had deceived them by saying the fort was won when it was not, so Juan Ribao had heretofore believed likewise.

In order that they might satisfy themselves, the Adelantado told Juan Ribao to speak apart with two Frenchmen there, and thus he did; and presently he again approached the Adelantado and told him he was sure everything he had told him was true, but [said Juan Ribao] what was happening to him could also happen to the Adelantado; that since their kings were brothers [in law] and such great friends, the Adelantado ought to supply him as a friend, giving him ships and stores so that he could sail away to France.

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The Adelantado replied as he had to the first French on whom he had worked justice, and talk as he would, Juan Ribao could obtain no concessions from the Adelantado. Then Juan Ribao told him that he wanted to report to his men, because there were many nobles among them, and he would return or send a reply about what he resolved to do. Within 3 hours Juan Ribao returned in the canoe, and said there were different opinions among his men, inasmuch as some wanted to throw themselves on his mercy, and others did not.

The Adelantado replied that it mattered nothing to him whether all, or part, or none of them surrendered; they should do whatever might be best for them, since they were free to do so.

Juan Ribao told the Adelantado that half of them wanted to ask for his clemency and would pay a ransom of more than a hundred thousand ducats; and the other half would be able to pay more, for among them were rich persons of much income, who were soliciting royal payment of their expenses in this territory.

The Adelantado replied: "I am very sorry if I should lose such rich spoils and ransom, since I have full need of this help to aid in the conquest and population of this territory; it is my duty to plant the Holy Gospel in it, in the name of my King."

Here, for what good it might do [as a possible means of saving himself and the others] Juan Ribao tried to exercise cunning. It seemed to him that the Adelantado, greedy for the money they would give him, would slay neither him nor those who yielded to his mercy; it appeared to Juan Ribao that by agreement [to avoid bloodshed], it would be worth more than 200,000 ducats to the Adelantado, and he told the Adelantado he would return to his people with the answer; and because it was late, he asked him as a favor to stay there until the next day, when he would return with the decision that might be agreed upon.

The Adelantado said yes, he would grant time, and since it was already sunset, Juan Ribao went back to his men; and in the morning he returned in the canoe and surrendered to the Adelantado two royal standards, one of the king of France and another of the admiral, two field banners, a sword, dagger and very good gilded helmet, a buckler, a pistolet, and a seal which the admiral of France had given him for sealing decrees and titles. He told the Adelantado that about 150 of the 350 men there would like to throw themselves on his mercy; but that the others had withdrawn that night, and asked that the boat be sent for those who wanted to surrender, and for their arms.

The Adelantado immediately directed Captain Diego Flórez de Valdés, admiral of his armada, to bring them across ten at a time, as he had the others [of the first group], and taking Juan Ribao behind the sand dunes among the shrubbery, where [he had taken] the others, the Adelantado made

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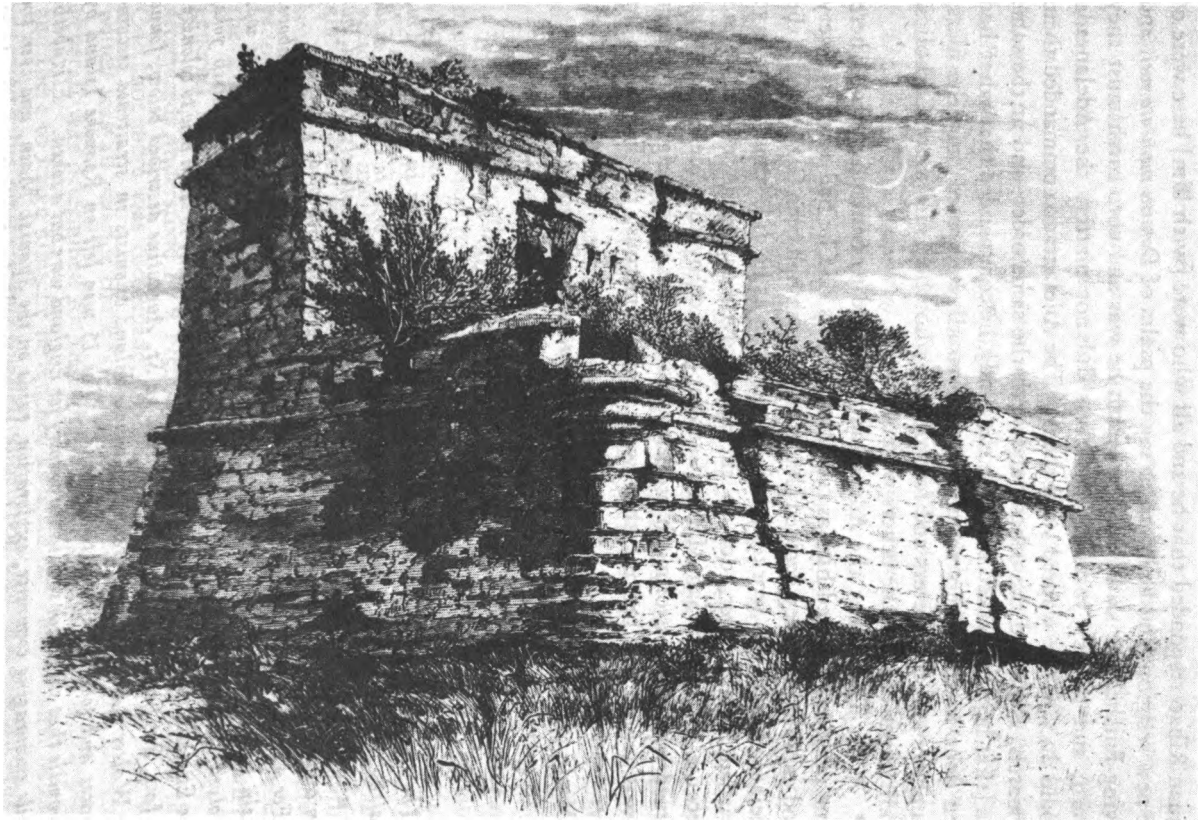

Fort Matanzas in 1872. From Harry Fenn, PICTURESQUE AMERICA, *1872.*

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them bind Ribao's hands behind him [and thus it was also done] to the others with him, as it had to the ones before, telling them they must march 4 leagues by land, and at night, so that he could not permit them to go unbound; and when all were tied, he asked them if they were Catholics or Lutherans, and if there were any who wanted to confess.

Juan Ribao responded that he and all who were [with him] here were of the new religion, and he began to say the psalm of *Domine memento mei;* and having finished, he said that from earth he was and unto earth must they return; and twenty years more or less did not matter, the Adelantado should do what he wanted with them. The Adelantado commanded them to march, as he had the others, and with the same order, and at the same line [that he had marked before in the sand], he commanded that what had been done to the others should be done to all; he spared only the fifers, drummers and trumpeters and four others who they said were Catholics, in all 16 persons; all the others were slain.

* * * That night the Adelantado returned to Santo Agustín, where some persons criticised him as cruel, and others said he had acted as a very good captain, and they decided that if the French had been Catholic and the Adelantado had not worked justice upon them as he did, some might have perished from hunger, due to the few provisions the Adelantado had (because the fort of San Mateo [Caroline], taken by the Adelantado, had burned with the loss of much property and supplies within eight days after it was won), and because they were more numerous, the French might have destroyed us * * *

Merás' Account of the Second Massacre at Matanzas, October 12, 1565.

2. *Enter the English*

The riches of the Americas made Spain the foremost power in Europe. This wealth, so tantalizingly long in transporting from New World to Old, also made her a target for freebooters. Spain's navigation secrets were jealously guarded, but men contrived to learn them in the dangerous and profitable school of piracy.

For a time, after the destruction of the French, so vividly described in part above, Spain had no formidable contestant for the "continent" of Florida. France was involved in civil wars. The Hollanders were struggling under a Spanish yoke. The English, their star in the ascendant, were just beginning to learn how to colonize. In fact, Sir Francis Drake, after the raid on St. Augustine described below, found Sir Walter Raleigh's first group of Roanoke Island colonists in straitened circumstances and took them back to England. The 15 men left on Roanoke Island by Grenville that same year to hold the country for England were but a token. Elizabeth, while encouraging commerce, exploration, raids on the Spanish Main, and even the colonizing projects of Raleigh, was husbanding her strength for the coming battle with Spain near at home.

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Much of the piratical activity in the western hemisphere was highly organized, a clear reflection of European disturbances. For example, the depredations of Drake in 1585–1586 were intended by Elizabeth to be acts of reprisal for injuries received at the hands of the Spaniards, but were also expected to divert King Philip's attention from war in the Netherlands. The expedition may be thought of as an extreme form of diplomatic pressure exerted by the English at a time when they were drifting toward armed conflict with Spain. Drake commanded a fleet of about 25 ships and 2,300 men. His most important actions were against Santo Domingo and Cartagena; from both of those towns he wrung fat ransoms. He was returning to England when his lookout sighted the coastal watchtower of the St. Augustine settlement. About 150 soldiers constituted the bulk of the town's population. In the action that followed, both the weakness of the struggling colony and the formidable character of the English opponent came into clear relief. It was a foreshadowing of the Anglo-Spanish contest for naval power and colonial empire which was to come and which was to be signalized by the defeat of the "Invincible Armada" two years later.

Thomas Cates, a member of Drake's expedition, relates the story of the sack of St. Augustine as follows:

After three days spent in watering our Ships, wee departed now the second time from this Cape of S. Anthony [Cuba] the thirteenth of May [1586], and proceeding about the Cape of Florida, wee neuer touched any where; but coasting alongst Florida, and keeping the shore still in sight, the 28 of May early in the morning wee descried on the shore a place built like a Beacon, which was in deede a scaffold vpon foure long masses raised on ende, for men to discouer to the seaward, being in the latitude of thirtie degrees, or very neere therevnto. Our Pinnesses manned, and comming to the shore, wee marched vp alongst the riuer side, to see what place the enemie held there: for none amongst vs had any knowledge thereof at all.

Here the Generall [Drake] tooke occasion to march with the companies himselfe in person, the Lieutenant generall [Christopher Carleill] hauing the Vantguard; and going a mile vp or somewhat more by the riuer side, we might discerne on the other side of the riuer ouer against vs, a Fort which newly had bene built by the Spaniards: and some mile or thereabout aboue the Fort was a little Towne or Village without walles, built of woodden houses, as the Plot [Plan] doeth plainely shew. Wee forthwith prepared to haue ordinance for the batterie; and one peece was a little before the Euening planted, and the first shot being made by the Lieutenant generall himselfe at their Ensigne, strake through the Ensigne, as wee afterwards vnderstood by a French man, which came vnto vs from them. One shot more was then made, which strake the foote of the Fort wall, which was all massiue timber of great trees like Mastes. The Lieutenant generall was determined to passe the riuer this night with 4. companies, and there to lodge himselfe intrenched as neare the Fort, as that he might play with his muskets and smallest shot vpon any that should appeare,

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and so afterwards to bring and plant the batterie with him: but the help of Mariners for that sudden to make trenches could not be had, which was the cause that this determination was remitted vntill the next night.

In the night the Lieutenant generall tooke a little rowing Skiffe, and halfe a dozen well armed, as Captaine Morgan, and Captaine Sampson, with some others besides the rowers, & went to view what guard the enemie kept, as also to take knowledge of the ground. And albeit he went as couertly as might be, yet the enemie taking ye Alarme, grew feareful that the whole force was approaching to the assault, and therefore with all speede abandoned the place after the shooting of some of their peeces. They thus gone, and hee being returned vnto vs againe, but nothing knowing of their flight from their Fort, forthwith came a French man being a Phipher (who had bene prisoner with them) in a little boate, playing on his Phiph the tune of the Prince of Orenge his song; and being called vnto by the guard, he tolde them before he put foote out of the boate, what he was himselfe, and how the Spaniards were gone from the Fort, offering either to remaine in hands there, or els to returne to the place with them that would goe.

Vpon this intelligence, the Generall, the Lieutenent generall, with some of the Captaines in one Skiffe, and the Vice-admirall with some others in his Skiffe, and two or three Pinnesses furnished of souldiers with them, put presently ouer towards the Fort, giuing order for the rest of the Pinnesses to follow. And in our Approch, some of the enemie bolder then the rest, hauing stayed behinde their company, shot off two peeces of ordinance at vs: but on shore wee went, and entred the place without finding any man there.

When the day appeared, we found it built all of timber, the walles being none other but whole Mastes or bodies of trees set vpright and close together in maner of a pale, without any ditch as yet made, but wholy intended with some more time; for they had not as yet finished al their worke, hauing begunne the same some three or foure moneths before: so as, to say the trueth, they had no reason to keepe it, being subiect both to fire, and easie assault.

The platforme whereon the ordinance lay, was whole bodies of long pine trees, whereof there is great plentie, layd a crosse one on another, and some little earth amongst. There were in it thirteene or fourteene great peeces of Brasse ordinance, and a chest vnbroken vp, hauing in it the value of some two thousand pounds sterling by estimation of the kings treasure, to pay the souldiers of that place, who were a hundred and fiftie men.

The Fort thus wonne, which they called S. Iohn's Fort, and the day opened, wee assayed to goe to the towne, but could not by reason of some riuers and broken ground which was betweene the two places: and therefore being enforced to imbarke againe into our Pinnesses, wee went thither vpon the great maine river, which is called as also the Towne, by the name of S. Augustin.

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Sir Francis Drake, from the Trinity House [London] portrait of the preeminent Elizabethan seadog who commanded the expedition of 1585–86 against the Spanish West Indies.

At our approching to land, there were some that began to shew themselues, and to bestow some few shot vpon vs, but presently withdrew themselues. And in their running thus away, the Sergeant Maior [Capt. Anthony Powel] finding one of their horses ready sadled and brideled, tooke the same to follow the chase; and so ouergoing all his company, was (by one layd behind a bush) shotte through the head: and falling downe there-

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with, was by the same and two or three more, stabbed in three or foure places of his body with swords and daggers, before any could come neere to his rescue. His death was much lamented, being in very deede an honest wise Gentleman, and a souldier of good experience, and of as great courage as any man might be.

In this place called S. Augustin, we vnderstood the king did keepe, as is before said, one hundred and fiftie souldiers, and at another place some dozen leagues beyond to the Northwards, called S. Helena, he did likewise keepe an hundred and fiftie more, seruing there for no other purpose, then to keepe all other nations from inhabiting any part of all that coast; the gouernment whereof was committed to one Pedro Melendez Marquesse, nephew to that Melendez the Admiral, who had ouerthrowen Master Iohn Hawkins in the bay of Mexico some seuenteen or eighteene yeeres agoe. This Gouernour had charge of both places, but was at this time in this place, and one of the first that left the same.

Cates' Account of Drake's Raid on St. Augustine, 1586.

3. Governor Canço Meets a Crisis

St. Augustine was never a self-supporting settlement. Subsidies from New Spain (Mexico) kept the colony alive. The subsidies were expensive, and at the beginning of the 1600's Spanish officials seriously considered abandoning St. Augustine. Gonçalo Méndez de Canço, one of most foresighted of the Florida Governors, was asked for an opinion. He adroitly turned a defense of the colony into a logical plea for further development, and his ably presented argument, liberally fortified with statistics, did much to save the situation. The following extracts from Canço's lengthy opinion illustrates what Florida meant to Spain in early colonial days, both as a coast guard station saving hundreds of Spanish lives and as headquarters for a mission system, which also worked as a giant buffer to become one of Florida's most important defenses against encroachment by other Europeans.

SEÑOR:

* * * My opinion is, if it please your majesty, that you should not order the abandonment of this presidio until in the meantime an entry into the interior land can be made, and it can be known and understood with certainty whether there are mines of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls. This entry can be made easily and at little cost in this way (your majesty being pleased to consider the said entry favorably), by ordering a number of about sixty or seventy soldiers to be provided besides those who already serve here * * *

In abandoning this presidio entirely, two difficulties are manifest to me, in my opinion very serious, which your majesty ought to consider. These

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are: if this fort should be abandoned, it would be obligatory to withdraw the Christian Indians who are protected by it, as well as the religious who teach them, because the said religious might continue to work among them. Their lives would meet with much danger and the said Indians would return to their idolatries as they used to. And the other: since the year of [one thousand] five hundred eighty-nine, many Spaniards (who were ship-

Christopher Carleill, stepson of Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Lieutenant General of the Drake expedition of 1585–86. From the engraving first published in Holland's HEROOLOGIA ANGLIA.

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wrecked on the coast of the provinces) escaped and were delivered from death, because this presidio was nearby. And those who escaped came in the following manner:

The said year [1589] on this coast four battered and dismasted ships under command of the general Martín Perez de Olesabal, more than four hundred fifty persons. One of their ships entered this port and from here it departed for Spain.

The said year [1589] the crew of the frigate in the service of this presidio discovered and rescued another forty persons of another ship from the said flota that was lost on Cape Canaveral.

The year of ninety-two [1592] another ship in distress, which was sailing from Havana to Santo Domingo, put into this port battered and damaged. Here it was repaired in every way that was necessary and continued its voyage. * * * [Additional similar rescues are listed.]

So then, there are in all five hundred seventy-eight persons who had fled here at times. Consistent with these two considerations, then, your majesty will at once determine and command what might better serve and befit your service and the service of God, our Lord. * * *

GONÇALO MÉNDEZ DE CANÇO.

Letter of Governor Canço to the Crown, September 22, 1602.

4. The Pirates of 1668

The increasing importance of St. Augustine as a guardian of Spanish commerce was a natural result of the growing maritime strength of Spain's rivals. Withal, however, the colony remained little more than a military outpost, dependent for existence upon money and supplies from New Spain (Mexico).

The reluctance of the Viceroys of New Spain to furnish this subsidy accounted for much of the weakness and poverty of early St. Augustine. It took another successful pirate raid to awaken Spanish officials to the realization that St. Augustine was near being lost to the Empire of Spain.

More than any single event, the 1668 raid decided Spain upon construction of an impregnable fort of stone, for it spectacularly showed the vulnerability of Florida defenses. And it was made clear to the Spanish that the incident had far more significance than the chance visit of an unnamed corsair. The English adventurers carefully surveyed the harbor, promising a return in force to seize the place for a base of operations against the "Vessels of the Indies trade."

The raid had its beginning in an argument between Governor Francisco de la Guerra and a French surgeon in the presidio of St. Augustine. When the pirates captured the outbound ship carrying the disgruntled doctor to Havana, he took his revenge upon the Governor by revealing to the pirates the most likely chinks in the Spanish armor. The outcome is graphically related in Guerra's letter to the Viceroy of New Spain.

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Most Excellent Señor:

On the twenty-ninth of May, just past twelve or one o'clock at night, an English pirate invaded this place with no trouble. He arrived off the bar of this port the day before, in a small vessel that we have been expecting from the Viceroyalty [of New Spain] with a supply of flour sent by the sergeant major Salvador de Zigarroa, who dwells on that coast to collect the subsidies for this presidio. They had seized the vessel off the coast of Havana.

A launch went out with the bar pilot to recognize it, as is the custom. And the pirates having hidden, the Spaniards were tricked, because the pirates forced the captain and seamen of said vessel (whom they held as prisoners) to show themselves, so the pirates captured the launch and accidentally they fired two shots, which was the signal I had arranged in case it was the said supply of flour.

And so, being secure for the present and on account of the condition of the bar, the pirates waited to make the invasion until the hour reported. Then they landed in launches and piraguas, which they brought for the purpose. Not being seen, they caught everybody asleep in their houses and when the people came jubilantly outside, some of both sexes were killed and others were wounded, and the families with greatest difficulty withdrew to the woods, but many were captured.

I, with the ordinary guard, followed by the pirates, went to the fort where other persons also came, all in the face of great peril, and many were wounded in the pursuit. There we were attacked with much force. We repulsed the enemy with the loss of some of his men, besides the wounded which were many.

And having realized that they could not prevail nor succeed in taking the said fort, they embarked the same day after dark, after a sally that some infantry made against them. They had sacked the houses and churches, a disaster it was not possible to prevent, for [meanwhile] a warship that they had left behind, arrived and entered the bar and joined with the said captured supply vessel. Both sailed from the port without damage from the said fort guns, on account of the distance. On the beach they left the prisoners of the said vessel and the others whom they seized in the presidio. * * *

San Agustín, July seventh of one thousand six hundred sixty-eight.

I kiss the hands of your excellency. Your servant,

Don Francisco de la Guerra y de la Vega.

Letter of Governor Guerra to the Viceroy of New Spain, July 7, 1668.

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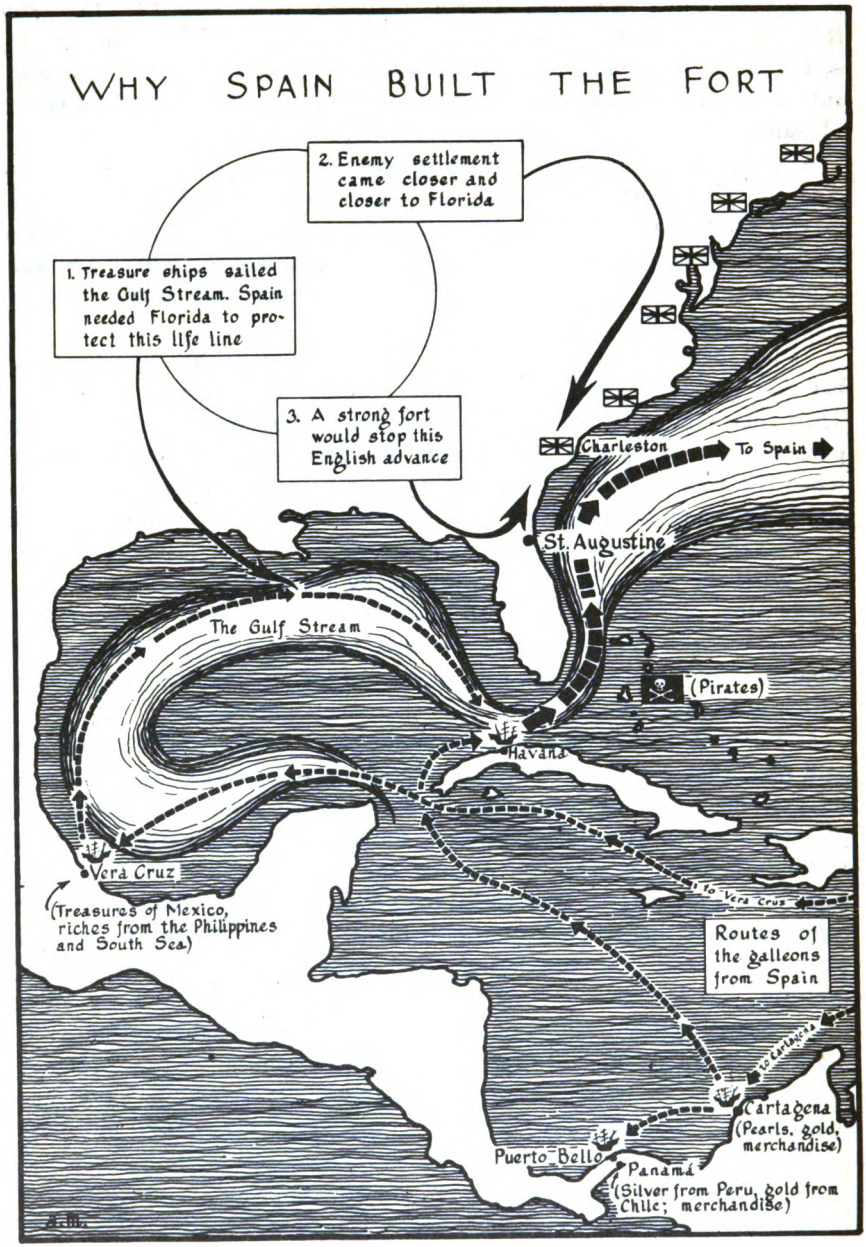

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5. *The Castle Is Begun*

On the Sunday afternoon in 1672 when the officials and townspeople of St. Augustine gathered in the shadow of the clumsy old wooden fort—the last in the succession of wooden forts since Menéndez' time—a new era was in sight. Here was to be built a citadel whence all Florida could be protected—a mighty fort to check the English advance. For many months the limekilns had been roaring, converting oyster shells into lime, and the quarry workers chopped incessantly in the coquina pits, cutting out the shell rock for the new stone fort. Notary Juan Moreno (John Brown) attests to the ground breaking in the following document:

I, Juan Moreno y Segobia, notary public for the government of this city and presidio of San Agustín of Florida, do certify and [give] true testimony whereto may agree the gentlemen who might see these presents:

That today, Sunday, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the year of one thousand six hundred and seventy-two; being next to the fort of this presidio where the site of the new fort is marked, which by order of his majesty is to be built of stone, the señor sergeant major don Manuel de Sendoya, governor and captain general of these provinces for his majesty, in his royal name, accompanied by the judges, royal officials, sergeant major don Nicolás Ponce de León and captain Antonio de Argüelles of this presidio, who are officers of his majesty, and many other persons and retired military officers of the presidio; [the said governor] with a spade in his hands and the other persons and royal officials present, began this said day to dig the foundation trenches to commence the building of said castle.

That the work continued on this said day and at most of it, I, the notary, was present; and so that it may be on record, by command of the señor governor and captain general I give these presents in the city of San Agustín of Florida, on the said day; witnesses being Antonio de Argüelles, captain of infantry for his majesty, the captain Lorensso Joseph de León and don Enrrique de Rribera, citizens and retired officers in the presidio.

It is written on ordinary paper inasmuch as the official stamped paper has not arrived in this presidio. Of which I do attest.

Witness my signum [rubric] in testimony of truth.

JN MORENO Y SEGOVIA
Scribe of the government

Affidavit Recording the Groundbreaking Ceremony for Castillo de San Marcos, October 2, 1672.

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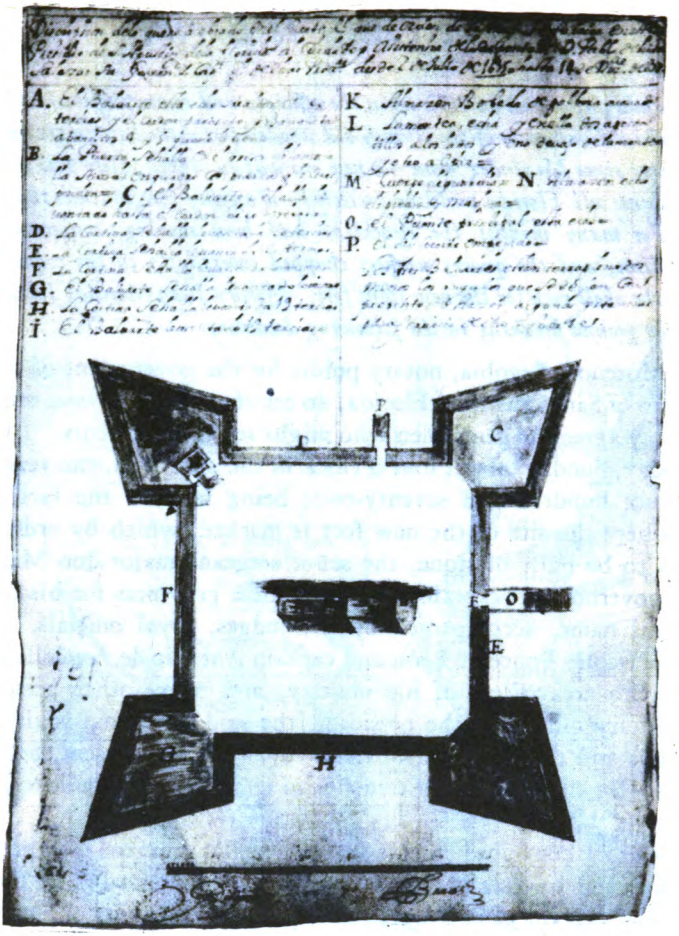

(Castillo de San Marcos In 1677)

The key to this old plan reads as follows: "Description of what has been constructed in the R[oya]l fort that by order of His Maj[est]y is being built in this Presidio of S. Augustine of Florida under the Care and Supervision of the Sergeant m[ajo]r D[on] Pablo de hita Salazar his Governr. and Capn. g[enera]l of said Prov[inc]es from 2 of July of *1675*—to 14 of Decer. of 677. A. The Bastion is made its height of 20 thirds [of a vara] and it does not have the cordon, parapet, and Banquette between 4 and 5.—B. The Doorway is in the main part of the wall, taken out on each side, with doors that correspond.—C. The Bastion is raised 20 thirds to the cordon—D. The Curtain is raised 20 thirds.—E. The Curtain is raised 20 thirds. F. The Curtain is raised the same.—G. The Bastion is raised the same.—H. The Curtain is raised 19 thirds. I. The Bastion raised 19 thirds.—K. Powder Magazine Arch finished.—L. The ramp, made and in it two small rooms on the sides and one below the ramp and another at the foot.—M. Guard room.—N. Magazine made of stone and wood.—O. The principal Bridge is made.—P. The one for Succors begun.—The Three Bastions are terrepleined, less the angles that are left with intention of making some changes for Service of said fort."

Scale of 70 Varas [vara = approx. 33.3 inches].

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6. *The Pirates Strike Again*

It took 15 years to build the main part of the castillo, and the years of construction were anxious years. To the north the English threat grew more serious by the day, while on the coasts both north and south, lawless freebooters were an ever present menace as was clearly pointed out by their bold seizure of Matanzas watchtower and the march on the unfinished castillo.

The Spanish archives contain more dramatic accounts of the 1683 pirate invasion than that here quoted, but none shows more emphatically the democratic privilege enjoyed by Spanish citizens of criticizing their leaders. Such criticism was more than a privilege: it was an obligation imposed upon his subjects by the Crown. In the case presented here against Gov. Juan Cabrera, much of the fault-finding derives from friction between the Governor and the religious. The document is unsigned, but appears to be the work of a faction which included the Franciscan friars and had as its nominal head Pablo de Hita Salazar, aged veteran of the Flanders wars, who was replaced in the governorship of Florida by Cabrera in 1680. The faction requested the appointment of a more "pious" Governor. But apparently the Crown was satisfied with Cabrera's ability, which was considerable, for he was not relieved until 1687.

Account of what happened when the French and English pirates [invaded] the Provinces of Florida this year of one thousand six hundred and eighty-three.

[The pirates landed and] * * * marched some days along the beach from shore to shore with two piraguas to the bar of Matanças, which they reached before daybreak on the twenty-ninth of March. Without being seen, and exercising the stealth and caution the matter called for, they came at full tide, approaching by land to the bank opposite the watchtower. Then they crossed over the bar and from the rear by land they surprised and seized five men who were in the watchtower, unaware of the danger from that sector (which ought to be reinforced).

And * * * it chanced that a corporal went from the new watchtower to give an order of the governor to the corporal of Matanças. He recognized the men, who had to cross the strange river past him, as enemies. Thereupon he withdrew with full caution and found a man on horseback whom he told to give the alarm, a message by which this presidio was delivered from invasion and robbery.

At the fort [in St. Augustine] all the families gathered on the thirtieth of March with great confusion. There was no shelter in the fort, since the quarters, ovens, wells, and mills are yet to be built. Stores of biscuit and salted meat and a herd of cattle for the moat [were lacking]. All deficiencies and the conveniences necessary in the place of arms in such cases were being provided. The flat roof [of the fort], where space is designated for the defenders, may be used for them to assemble if attack should occur with the usual means and devices.

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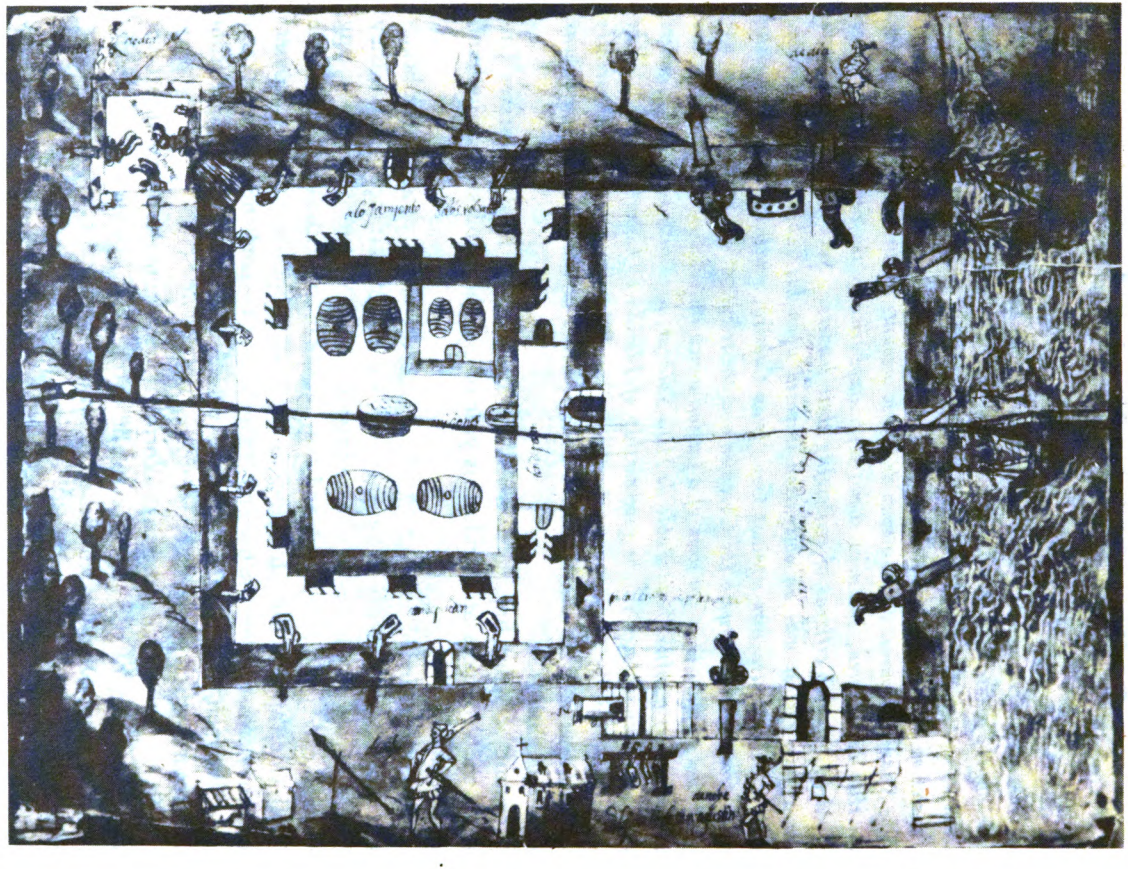

A sixteenth century wooden fort at St. Augustine. This plan, entitled EL FUERTE [*fort*] DE SAN AGUSTIN, *ca. 1593, combines the features of both elevation and floor plan. At the main entrance there are an alarm bell and racks for the pikes and harquebuses. Heavy cannon are mounted on a platform facing the water, and the magazine for the barrels of* MUNICIONES *occupies most of the other space in the fort. Nine wooden forts of this general type preceded Castillo de San Marcos.*

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On the thirtieth of March the enemy marched along the island of the Quarry, which runs five leagues from Matanças to this river, which is in front of this fort and presidio. The enemy sent his two piraguas with a small crew by the Matanzas river with one of the prisoners named Pedro de Texeda, who, being a loyal vassal and filled with zeal for his country, led them into the creek of San Julian, where they found themselves in difficulties.

This day the governor had news that about forty enemies were seen on the said island. Thereupon he determined to send captain Antonio de Argüelles with thirty men. * * * This party went with the idea that the enemy numbered only forty, but they discovered and saw and found them to be more than two hundred and thirty. And having fired volleys as the occasion demanded, the captain determined to retreat and he did it as a soldier of valor and experience. He conferred with his men, who responded to their duties, withdrawing, fighting and wounding the enemies as was shown by the spilled blood and spoils they brought in the next day in order to substantiate their account [of the skirmish].

And the enemy fled and on this occasion the governor should have ordered a night attack on the enemy, with two troops—one by land and the other with three or four piraguas by river, so that he might have succeeded in capturing the enemy piraguas. Finding themselves attacked by land with a second force, it should have terrorized them so much that, with the piraguas gone and being themselves surrounded, they would have had to surrender. The governor would have gained so fortunate a success that these and other [pirates] will find themselves taught by painful experience not to undertake these enterprises and pillagings.

But all was done contrariwise * * * The enemy had opportunity to save his piraguas. * * *

And one place was guarded by the sergeant major and twenty-five men with whom he had to defend the ford between the island and the city. According to the advice given by the officer Pedro de Texeda (who remained steadfast in his zeal, escaping in the skirmish), the place that the sergeant major occupied was the point where the enemy intended to cross. And Pedro de Texeda gave an account of the force and design of the enemy and the place where the piraguas were, and the attack referred to should have been led by him.

But the governor ordered a retreat, leaving the city abandoned, except for some sentries who could give the alarm if the enemy tried to cross to the city. Since the withdrawal [to the fort] was so short and secure, if it were attempted with [the proper] force of men, the governor should have taken precautions to defend the city so that the enemy might not burn it and the shrines, because their construction is all of wood, and the enemy might carry away the bells of the said shrines. * * *

Having escaped, the enemy used one of the strategems which, as soldiers,

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they knew, embarking at Matanças and sailing in the vessels to the mouth of this bar [of St. Augustine]. That caused concern, along with the fear that the enemy intended to attack this presidio by land and sea. From his maneuver it was not known until the next day that he left and did not appear again, thus gaining protection by the ruse whereby they in this presidio were confounded. As it came to pass, at nightfall he was on this bar and at dawn on the bar of San Juan, first island of the Province of Guale [Georgia]. * * *

Until today, Wednesday, the twenty-eighth of April, the governor and many families have remained in the castillo, except for those who returned to their homes the day after the enemy left the island of the Quarry. These numbered six, the most important of whom were the religious of St. Francis, and the beneficiary curate and vicar, who came from his church bringing the depository vessels, which with all zeal, time and care he secured in the chapel of the castillo, together with all the goods and meads of his church and the hospital, they having been jeopardized and exposed, because the enemy would carry away the goods of said churches as his first plunder. The rest stay until today and come and go to their homes and at night to the castillo, where the governor has stayed and is staying. The castillo remains open until eleven and twelve at night (a procedure subject to great objection since it is against all reason, military style and orders of your majesty). The families referred to are recognized [by the guard] without suspicion, which is not good military practice. And as a soldier should, the governor ought to have built some walls in the entrances, streets and places capable of defense. * * *

At the castillo, where the governor was, he attended to work on the parapet with innumerable curses and horrible oaths which, with great scurrility and evil example, with numberless infamous outrages, frightened without exception every person—even the priest and ecclesiastical judges. And because the words were so perfidious, scandalous and vile, not having courage to pronounce them, we leave them out. Had not the licentiate don Joseph de la Mota, chaplain of this force, curate and vicar, ecclesiastical judge and commissary of the crusade, used his great prudence and understanding which served him that night, a great turmoil might have ensued, and it would have been difficult to pacify the offended ones, who included everybody. * * *

Account of the Pirate Attack on Matanzas and St. Augustine, 1683.

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7. *Baptism of Fire*

While the castle was building, Charles Town was flourishing. The Carolinians soon felt strong enough to attack, for Spain's colony was a definite threat to their security and a stumbling block in the way of British control of the Bahama Channel.

Queen Anne's War was the excuse for Gov. James Moore's expedition against St. Augustine in 1702, but the way had been prepared by the rival of the Spanish missionary—the English trader or the Indian agent, who won the Indians away from their Spanish friends and furnished them with the firearms and the incentives for pushing Florida boundaries southward. Michael Cole's curious letter covers the major points of Moore's campaign, revealing with remarkable insight the weaknesses of both sides; namely, Moore's lack of equipment and Spanish reliance upon the fort alone for defense.

MR. BLATHWATE *Carrolina Decem^r ye 22^d 1702*

HONN. SR. Arriving heare ye 4 October Last found ye Governor Coll. Moore with foureteen Sayle of Vessells ready to Saile for St. Agussteen, with five hundred men & three hundred Indians, thay Sayled from hence about ye 16 October & made up theare fleet at Portroyall in this Collone & arrived at St. Agussteen about ye 24, & had been Masters of ye Town & Castell had not ye Scilliness [Silliness] of an undiscreet Master, of one of ye Small Vessells Lossing Company, whent a Shore with his boat, & was taken Prisoner, & gave them two days time to provide but however thay possessed them Selves of ye Town with Little or know Resistance, & made themselves Masters of theare Churches & Abbe, (w^q [which] are Large Enouf to Entertaine Seven or Eaight Hundred men) & forced them into ye Castell, w^q is a Regular fortification with foure Bastons, ye Besegers has raised a Batterry of 4 Guns, but being Slenderly Provided with Amonisstion, thay Cannot doe what they would, thay have Sent a Vessell to Jamica [Jamaica], for bomes & Carcasses, w^q If thay Get dont dout to be Masters of ye Castell in a few days after, thay are in want of most nesscesarys in ye fort, wilest our Peopall Is Plentyfully Supplied, with Cattell brought to theare Camp every day, by teen Wight men & fourty of our Nabouring Indians, who does nothing Elce, ye Country Is Plentifully Stored with them, we are heare mighty Dissioras [Desirous] of ye good Success of that Interprise, for ye happiness of this Collone Depends upon It, w^q is now very thrifing, & will make at Leest 400 Tuns of Rice this yeare, though ye Season has been very ordinary for It. If ye Garrison bee taken ye Country dissines [designs] to present ye Queen with It, w^q If her Majesti excepts will Inlarge our Trade with ye Indian^s about 20 Nations & add to ye Trade of our Wollen Manifactory Seven or Eaight thousand pounds S^trg [Sterling] P [Per] Anum. I shall Indevor to bring you ye Drauft of Portroyall Harbour, I am Promised It by a Good hand, well acquanted theare, when please God to Send me Safe for I shall wate upon you, & give you an acc^t

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[of] A great abuse in these parts, w^q Is much to ye prejudice to ye Trade of ye Nation & will Introduce a great Evill in time will prove twelfe or foureteen hundred pounds prejudice to ye Publick P Anum &c

Postscrip Febu^r ye 9. 1703 Via Bristoll

Sence ye above ye forcees from St. Agussteen is Returned heather without any Success, after Eaight Weeks laying Seeg to ye fort, ye forcees being ondisciplen men growed wary, & was for raysing ye seeg (ye Amonisstion from Jamica not Coming) ye Gover. Coll. Moore Used all ye Persvaission he could, for to Continue It, but Sone after this Comosion, theare appeared of that barr, two Spanish men of Warr of about 30 or 40 Guns each, with a Briginteen & a Sloop, with releaf from ye Havanah, & came to anker at ye foot of ye barr So that ye Besegers could not bring out theare Vessells w^q ware Eaight in Number ye bigest about 70 Tuns ye rest from 50 Tuns down wards, thay Continued ye Seeg three days after theare arrival ye Eneme darst not attack them, but a Last finding noe hopes of bringing of theare Vessells thay Sett them one fier, as allso ye Town of St Agussteen with theare Churches & Abbe, & Reduced It to Ashes & So Came of Sixty miles March by Land ye rest by watter in theare Preaugos [Piraguas], ye Charge of this expedistion will amount to 7000£ they have Raysed foure to pay this yeare ye other three ye next Is all at present from him who wishes you a Long & happy life & Is

Your Honners Most humbell Ser^t to Com.

MICHL COLE

Letter of Michael Cole to Hon. William Blathwate, December 22, 1702.

8. The Siege of 1740—A Climax

Anglo-Spanish relations in the Southeast rapidly approached a climax after the establishment of the Georgia colony in 1733. Gen. James Oglethorpe, founder of the colony, pushed the northern boundary of Florida to the St. Johns River, only 35 miles from St. Augustine. To stem the rising tide of British aggression, Don Manuel de Montiano was sent to Florida as Governor, and Don Antonio de Arredondo, royal engineer and frontier diplomat, surveyed the Florida defenses with an eye to their improvement. These capable men saw clearly the gathering war clouds and with foresight and energy strengthened the fortifications: the old rooms at the castle were replaced by shellproof arches, a stone tower (Fort Matanzas) was built at Matanzas Inlet, and other important work was done.

The War of Jenkins' Ear (1739) precipitated Oglethorpe's invasion of Florida. When the first English warship appeared off the bar, Montiano hastily sent word to Havana. It was the long-expected siege of St. Augustine. Then the British blockade tightened to include Matanzas.

Montiano had received reinforcements that brought his garrison up to 750 men against Oglethorpe's force of about 900 soldiers, sailors, and Indians. But when the

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Gen. James E. Oglethorpe, founder of the colony of Georgia, was the leader of the British forces during the climax of the Anglo-Spanish struggle for possession of the southeast. He was twice repulsed before the walls of Castillo de San Marcos.

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*British shells began to burst over the town, the inhabitants, almost 2,000 of them, fled to the shelter of the fort. "It is impossible," wrote Montiano to the Governor of Cuba, "to express the confusion of this place * * * though nothing gives me anxiety but the want of provisions, and if Your Excellency * * * cannot send relief, we must all indubitably perish."* ["*Letters of Montiano,*" *p. 56.*]

The bloodiest action of the siege took place at dawn, June 26, 1740, when a sortie from the castle surprised the Highlanders who had occupied Fort Mosa, an outpost about 2 miles north of the castillo. Meanwhile, English guns were ineffective against the massive walls of San Marcos. Matanzas—the back door to the city—was the deciding factor. Had the British taken the Matanzas fortification, all avenues of succor would have been cut off; but when Havana provisions arrived within reach of the beleaguered castle, Oglethorpe decided to raise the siege, for his troops were discouraged and the storm season was approaching. In this buoyant letter, Governor Montiano reports the end of the siege—the postponement of British dominion in Florida.

* * * [On the night of July 7, 1740,] Louis Gomez arrived at this place, with intelligence that he left within the bar of Mosquitoes [Ponce de León Inlet], three sloop, one small sloop, and two schooners, with provisions sent by Your Excellency, in charge of Juan de Oxeda, and addressed to the Captain Don Manuel de Villasante. The pleasure with which I received this news is indescribable; but the joy subsisted but a short time in my heart; for I was also informed, that when Pedro Chepuz, and the French sloop in which he came as pilot, arrived off this bar, he was seen and chased by an English ship, and packet, which did no harm, but got notice of our provisions, and of their whereabouts. At the same time came a deserter from the enemy's camp, who said that on some night, during spring tides, it was the intention of General Oglethorpe, to make an attack on this place by sea and land. On this I suspended the execution of the plan I had fixed on for bringing the provisions, little by little, and applied myself entirely to the purpose of resisting whatever attempts his pride and arrogance might undertake; but the days of opportunity, passed, without his executing his idea, and I turned my eyes upon our relief vessels, which were manifestly in danger. Using only the launches and the boat, we carried on the work of unloading and transporting to this place; for although I also sent with them a pirogue of considerable capacity for the same purpose, it so happened that on making that bar, four boats and launches, one frigate and a despatch boat crossed their path, separating them and attacking the small ones. But our people defended themselves stoutly, from four of the afternoon until nightfall, suffering only the loss of our pirogue, which splintered itself against the launches; the crew having shifted over, they continued their journey, and returned happily loaded with flour, and continued their task until it was no longer necessary, for on the 20th, the enemy having raised his camp, and taken to hasty and shameful flight, I promptly ordered our

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bilanders after making the most careful inspection to see if the pass was open and the coast clear, to resume their voyage and come in by Matanzas, if they had at least a moral certainty of safety. This they accordingly did on the 25th; and to-day the sloop from Campeche and the two schooners have completely discharged their cargo. And I have consequently directed Palomarez, Captain of one of them, to prepare to take this news to Your Excellency.

I assure Your Excellency, that I cannot arrive at a comprehension of the conduct, or rules of this General; for I am informed by at least twelve deserters from him present here, that his camp was composed of 370 men of his regiment, 600 militia of Carolina, 130 Indians, and 200 sailors armed, and encamped on the Island of Santa Anastacia, and as many more sailors for the management of the sloops, schooners, and launches. My wonder is inexpressible that this gentleman should make his retreat with such precipitation, as to leave abandoned, four 6-pounders on the battery on the point of San Mateo [north shore of St. Augustine Inlet], one schooner, two kegs of gunpowder, several muskets and escopettes, and to set fire to a quantity of provisions, such as boxes of bacon, cheese, lard, dried beef, rice and beans, to a schooner, and to an excellent mortar carriage; besides many things that have profited the Indians, and galley slaves who have had the fortune to pick up several barrels of lard and flour, and some pork. Notwithstanding all this, I can assure Your Excellency that all the deserters, and two squaws of ours, prisoners of theirs that escaped, agree in saying that Don Diego [James] Oglethorpe is going to reorganize his forces, and make a great effort to stir up the Indians. And although I appraise this rumor as something to placate and leave in doubt his people, moderating the fire that may be burning among them, and especially the Carolinians and Scotchmen as having been the hardest hit, yet I believe there would be no harm in taking precautions, and in Your Excellency sending me such reenforcements as may be suitable, and the munitions and stores as set forth in memorandum herewith. I shall send a post at once to the Uchises [Uchee Indians], to draw them, in view of all this news, from their allegiance to the English, and I shall offer to treat them handsomely if it will please them to come see me.

The formal siege has continued 38 days, counting from the 13th of June, to the 20th of July, and the fire of the batteries and bombardment 27 days, from the 24th of June, to the said 20th of July. The batteries were three; one in the pool [*pozo*] on the Island of Santa Anastacia, of four 18-pounders and one 9-pounder; another on the point of the hammock on said island, of two 18-pounders, and the other on the coast of the interior part of the point San Mateo, of seven 6-pounders, five of iron, and two of brass. The mortars, and small mortars were thirty-four, two mortars throwing shell of half a quintal, and two others of about a quintal [100 lbs.]. The thirty

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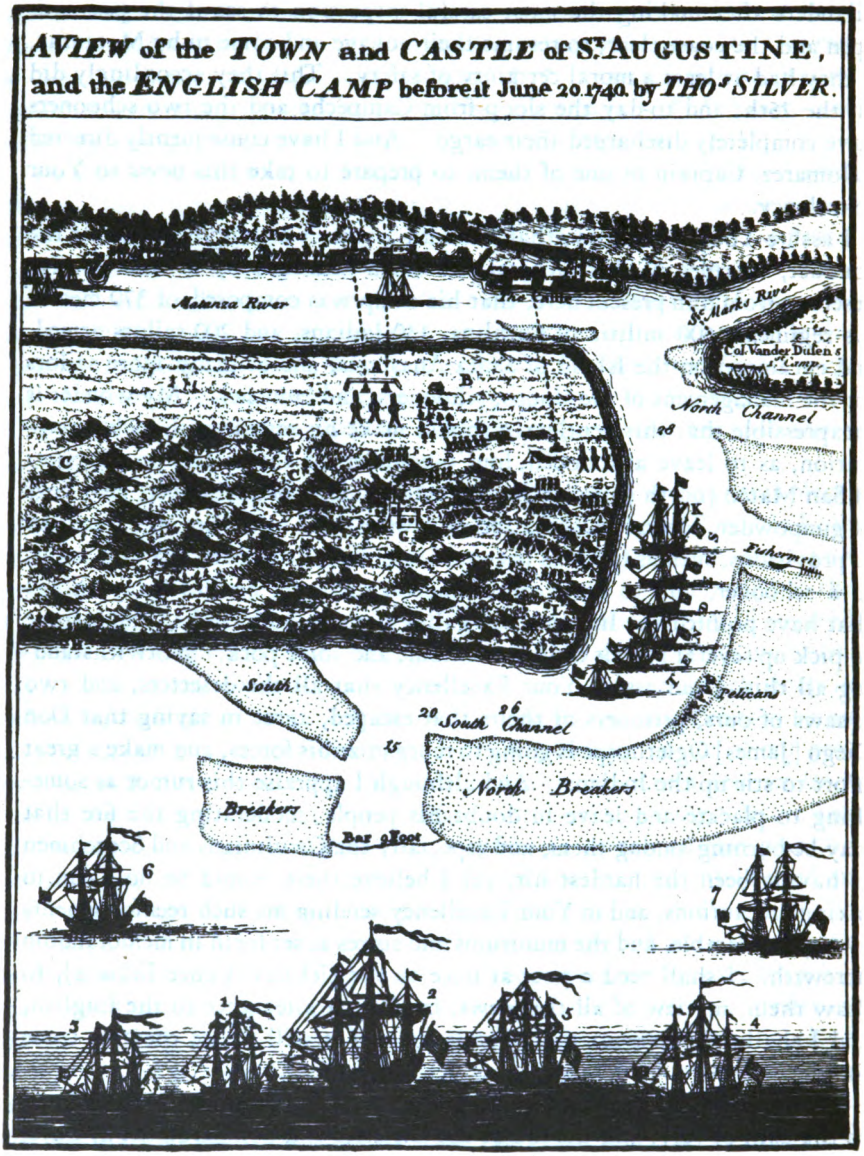

small mortars, which the deserters call cow horns [cohorns], were, some small hand grenades, and others for those of ten or twelve pounds.

The loss we have suffered is reduced to two men killed, and wounded. Those (wounded) by gun fire who died were [* * *] artilleryman and the convict, son of Ordonez, whom with the other one named Contreras I received in the first launch-loads from Mosquito. Of the other two wounded

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by shellfire, to wit, a soldier and a negro, the negro is perfectly well, and the other has a good chance of pulling through, though with one leg fewer.

The constancy, valor and glory of the officers here are beyond all praise; the patriotism, courage and steadiness of the troops, militia, free negroes, and convicts, have been great. These last I may say to Your Excellency, have borne themselves like veteran soldiers. I especially commend their humble devotion, for without ceasing work by day, they have persevered by night with the care and vigilance of old soldiers.

Even among the slaves a particular steadiness has been noticed, and a desire not to await the enemy within the place but to go out to meet him. In short, I have been thoroughly satisfied with all during the siege, and especially with the circumstance that during the entire siege no one has deserted. And lastly, Your Excellency may believe that the galliots have been of great service to me: for if the siege had caught me without them, the English would have given me much work to do, as the launches could have been used for nothing but the guard of this port, to say nothing of the necessity of taking other indispensable measures, at great cost. And so I renew my thanks to Your Excellency for having sent them to my relief, even against the common opinion of the entire torrent of members of the Junta held by you to decide whether or no they should be sent.

On the return of the boats under the charge of Don Juan de Ojeda I shall write at length to Your Excellency: to-day I can do no more than send this great news by the ship-master Palomares.

Saint Augustine, in Florida, July 28, 1740.

Letter of Governor Montiano to the Governor of Cuba, July 28, 1740.

9. *A Letter to George Washington*

Florida finally went to Great Britain in 1763. The British had captured Havana, Cuba, and for the return of Havana, Spain was obliged to relinquish Florida

St. Augustine became a regimental headquarters for British armed forces, and the courtyard of the erstwhile Spanish castle resounded to the tread of red-coated troops. But though the English repaired and strengthened the fort, it served as little more than a prison for men who were considered too dangerous for the common gaols downtown.

During the American Revolution, the Florida provinces remained loyal to King George III and were active against the rebellious southern colonies. As the war progressed toward the Yorktown climax, the British captured Charleston, S. C., and a number of political and military prisoners were sent from Charleston to St. Augustine (1780). Here most of them accepted new paroles, which allowed them freedom of the town, but Gen. Christopher Gadsden, Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, maintained that the parole he had previously given in Charleston had

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been violated by the English when he was brought to St. Augustine, and as a matter of principle, he refused to give a second parole. The result was imprisonment in the castle, an experience that Gadsden describes in the following letter to General Washington. There was a general exchange of prisoners in 1781, and the Charleston gentlemen, Gadsden among them, were shipped to Philadelphia, whence they returned to their homes.

Philadelphia 10 August 1781.

Dr Sir

The Bearer Mr John Loveday informſ me that he hath had the Honour to be Reccomended to an Office in your Excellency's Family by some of your Friends here. I cannot in justice deny him my Testimony of his Character—

He has been Meſsenger of the Privy Council of our State four or five Years during which Time he always behaved with the greatest diligence, Attention, & Secrecy & is, your Excellency may be aſsured a strictly honest Man. He was taken by the Enemy a few Days before Chas. Town capitulated, trusted with some important Meſsages from Mr Rutledge, was immediately closely confin'd, & when We were shipt off to Augustine sent with us—He is a sober, prudent discrete man, very firm & steady to the Cause — — —

Sixty One of us with our Servants arriv'd in two small Veſsels from Augustine, part about ten or twelve & the Remainder about five or six Days since, thanks to Heaven all in good Health & Spirits—We were in Augustine from the 15th Septr to the 17th last month, forty two Weeks of which I was confin'd in the Castle, & none of my Friends permitted to see me, because I wou'd not give another Parole, I told them I had kept the first as a Gentleman, defy'd (& do still defy) them to prove the Contrary & was determined never to take a second wch wou'd imply a Breach of the first Their Treatment of me when taken up the 27th of August last, was much more severe & pointed than against any of my Friends, which appears to me more owing to the Station I was In, than as Mr Gadsden, (tho I believe no Favourite as such,) & my not being mention'd in the Capitulation gave them an Opportunity to affect treating me with Rigour & Contempt. I thought it a Duty I owed to the General Cause to Refuse to the last giving a Second Parole, that I might be as a Standing protest against such outrageous Tyranical Conduct—

When in the Castle the Officers were order'd frequently not to converse with me, however, many of them often did, & all of them behaved with Decency, I never had the least Insult offer'd me there, Once indeed there was an Order against my lighting a Candle In Consequence of which I went without for two or three Nights, but the Pitifulneſs of this they were soon asham'd of themselves. Mr Ferguson & I are waiting for our Families expected in a few Days as soon as we see them a little fix'd, we shall set off for our State as will most of the Carolina Gentlemen here, We hope to be

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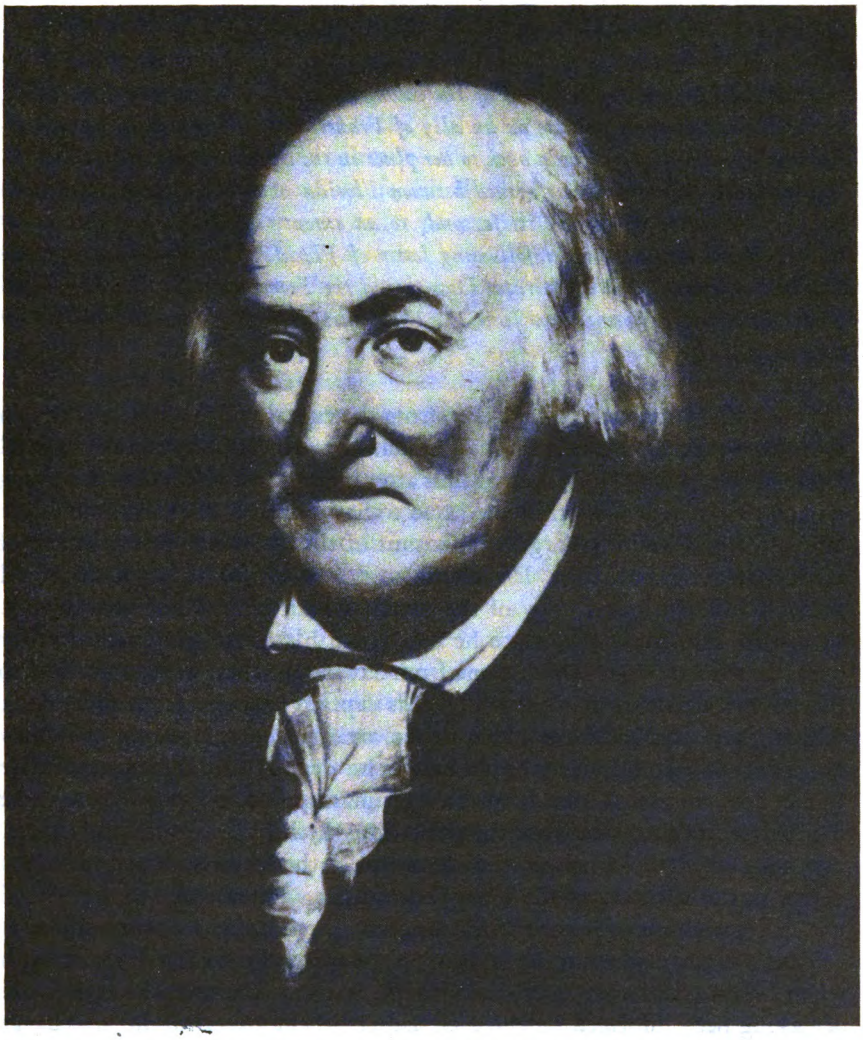

Indomitable Brig. Gen. Christopher Gadsden was a leader of the American Revolution in South Carolina. As a matter of principle, he endured an imprisonment of 42 weeks at the Castillo. From a photograph of the likeness in the Independence Hall Collection, Philadelphia, Pa.

gone by the middle of next month at farthest—I beg your Excell^{ys} & the Publick pardon for taking up so much of your precious Time & am with the greatest Esteeme

Y^{r} Excellency's

Most Obed^{t} hble Svt

CHRIS GADSDEN

Letter of Christopher Gadsden to Gen. George Washington, August 10, 1781.

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10. Days of Unrest

Spain had been no open friend of the colonies during the American Revolution, but at the end of that conflict, as an ally of France she participated in peace negotiations which brought Florida back to her place in the Spanish Empire (1783).

The border difficulties that ensued between Florida and the southern States were but a continuation of the old strife, and, to an extent, the unrest and intrigue of the period are reflected in the following letter of Florida's Acting Governor to the Governor of Cuba. The conspirator Duarte and the French captain were seized and placed in strict confinement on June 17, 1795, just 24 hours before the day set for their coup.

YOUR EX:

This declaration which was taken from the captain of the privateer which was shipwrecked on this coast & of which I have informed you in an official letter of last May 8, No. 4, stated that after having armed Port Po, & having a patent from that Governor, he came to Savannah, & that in the publick offices of the state of Georgia an account of this privateer was taken & of its legitimate expedition. He offered to present documents which would accredit this truth & a copy of the patent which he had not been able to save from the shipwreck, since he had asked his consul in Charleston for one. In the first boat which came from Savannah, there came inscribed to the governor, the documents which this captain expected from that place, which I had translated and added to the arrangements, & seeing that they agree point for point with what he said in his declaration, it seemed suitable to me, now convinced that he was a legitimate privateer, to give him some distinction, taking him from the prison in which he was with the others, assigning to him as a prison, the courtyard of the fortress, & as bedroom a corner of the Barracks of the troop; but with a written order to the official not to permit him to leave the fortress, nor to go up on its ramparts.

Thus he remained from the 26th of last May until the 17th of this month when I reduced him to strict confinement, without communication because of having been informed by three grenadiers of the battalion in my charge (they are those who mount guard in this fortress) that Santiago Duarte, also a grenadier sentenced by you to serve in this body for eight years, had solicited them to rise & seize the fortress in which plan he was in agreement with this French captain & had meditated on the matter in order to be able to direct it successfully.

The plan of the accursed man which plan was contracted & agreed upon with the French captain, as the three grenadiers who denounced it said, was to win six or eight grenadiers & have all the conspirators go on guard in one day, although it meant changing with others; & at midnight for five of them to cover the sentinels & he who was at the arms to pass them through the grating which the prisoners' dungeon has for light & air. This

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being done they were to throw themselves on the officer, to take the keys from him and kill him, to open the dungeon & on the prisoners coming out armed, to knife the grenadiers who did not embrace their party. Possessed in this manner of the fortress, they would take a [field] forge up to the ramparts, fire [*i. e.*, heat] [cannon] balls, [to] blow up the powder magazine & burn the barracks. The Frenchman also expected some followers which he has in the town & forming a united body they planned to establish themselves firmly in the fortress in order to seize the province, if the outcome corresponds with their desires, & if not, since being master of the castle, they were also of the two boats which at that season were in the port, they would have them approach the fortress, embark in them, & go to Charleston with the necessary provisions, & all the money which they supposed was in the King's coffers, kept in that fortress, in which opinion they were mistaken and were disappointed because the treasurer has the small amount which remains in a private chest in his home, for daily expenses.

Trial has been started against Duarte, that he may be judged in a Council of War & his statement has been taken in which he denies all that is said in the denunciation. The trial is continued actively but it is a long and prolix case & since a copy of it should remain here, perhaps it will not be able to go now.

The many Frenchmen who are in the battalion in my charge & in the companies of light infantry, together with my reasons for distrust of many new settlers, who are strongly addicted to the republican government & the rumors of invasion which increase each day, keep me full of worry, & increase my vigilance. There are already two privateers in Santa María [St. Mary's River] & another has been in sight of this bar for four days, forcing its boats to break with it. From all this information you can deduce what your long experience & wide knowledge dictates. I only manifest to you that the state of this province is critical & if the funds which are sent do not come in one of the king's boats or one which is well armed, it will be a miracle if they are not taken by the enemy.

I have proposed to you in my former official letters that these prisoners be exchanged for the fusileers which came from Philadelphia. This I desire now with greater reason, because it is not well for them to be here & if the attack which they meditated is, in your opinion, an obstacle to the exchange, I implore you to arrange for their transfer to that town in a boat which will carry them safely.

May God preserve you for many years.

Saint Augustine, Florida
June 27, 1795

Your Ex.
BARTME MORALES [Seal].

To: His Excellency Don Luis de las Casas

Letter of Governor Morales to the Governor of Cuba, June 27, 1795.

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11. *Manifest Destiny*

Through the Treaty of 1819, Spain ceded Florida to the United States in amicable settlement of disputes and misunderstandings that had been rife for many years. The removal of Spanish dominion clarified Florida boundary matters and put the United States in a position to solve the remainder of the Florida problems. More important, consolidation in the East meant freedom to meet the challenge of the West.

The treaty was ratified in 1821 and on July 10 of that year, East Florida was formally transferred to the United States with a picturesque ceremony at the old castle. The memorandum of procedure, as worked out by the U. S. Commissioner and the Spanish Governor, is given below:

St. Augustine, July 6, 1821.

The Spanish troops (excepting the detachment left in the fort) to be embarked on Monday, the 9th instant, ready to cross the bar on the following day.

There will be a salute fired by the fort on Tuesday morning, on hoisting the Spanish flag. During the disembarcation of the American troops, the flag of the United States will be hoisted along with the Spanish flag, when the fort will again fire a salute. The American officer who delivers the flag to remain in the fort until its delivery. When the American troops are formed near the fort the Spanish flag will be withdrawn under a salute; the guards will then be relieved, and the troops of Spain will march out, and, on passing the former, they will mutually salute; when the American troops will be marched into and occupy the fortress.

ROBERT BUTLER, *United States Commissioner.*

Approved:

JOSÉ COPPINGER

Memorandum on the Manner of Occupying Castle San Marcos, St. Augustine, 1821.

12. *Escape of the Seminoles*

Florida was now on the verge of new development as part of the United States. But expansion by white men meant only sacrifice for the Seminole Indian, who fiercely resented the preemption of his hunting grounds. There were a multitude of issues, economic and racial, which seemed impossible of solution except by war.

The second Seminole War, bloodiest of the Indian wars, began in 1835. Two years later, after other attempts to end the conflict had failed, a number of Seminoles were captured a few miles south of St. Augustine under a flag of truce. Osceola, famous Seminole leader, Prince Coacoochee (Wildcat), and medicine man Talmus Hadjo were among the prisoners brought to Fort Marion, as the Americans had renamed the castle. In one of the southwest rooms of the fort, Coacoochee and Talmus

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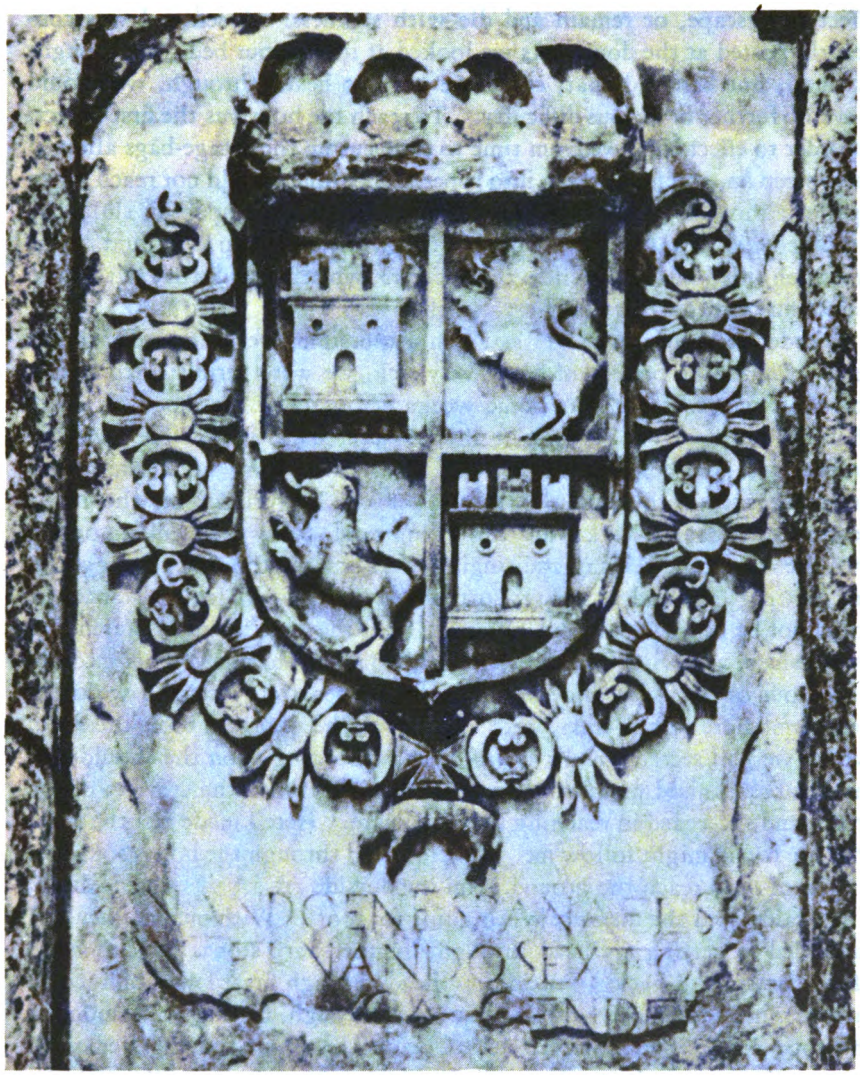

Arms of Spain over the sally port at Castillo de San Marcos.

were imprisoned together. The story of their efforts to escape is told by Coacoochee in the following selection.

The war did not end until Coacoochee was recaptured near Tampa Bay in 1842, and taken with a large number of his nation to the lands west of the Mississippi.

* * * we had been growing sickly from day to day, and we resolved to make our escape, or die in the attempt. We were in a small room, eighteen or twenty feet square. All the light admitted, was through a hole (embrasure) about eighteen feet from the floor. Through this we must

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effect our escape, or remain and die with sickness. A sentinel was constantly posted at the door. As we looked at it from our bed, we thought it small, but believed that, could we get out heads through, we should have no further or serious difficulty. To reach the hole was the first object. In order to effect this, we from time to time cut up the forage-bags allowed us to sleep on, and made them into ropes. The hole I could not reach when upon the shoulder of my companion; but while standing upon his shoulder, I worked a knife into a crevice of the stonework, as far up as I could reach, and upon this I raised myself to the aperture, when I found, that with some reduction of person, I could get through.

In order to reduce ourselves as much as possible, we took medicine five days. Under the pretext of being very sick, we were permitted to obtain the roots we required. For some weeks we watched the moon, in order that the night of our attempt it should be as dark as possible. At the proper time we commenced the medicine, calculating upon the entire disappearance of the moon. The keeper of this prison, on the night determined upon to make the effort, annoyed us by frequently coming into the room, and talking and singing. At first we thought of tying him and putting his head in a bag; so that, should he call for assistance, he could not be heard. We first, however, tried the experiment of pretending to be asleep, and when he returned to pay no regard to him. This accomplished our object. He came in, and went immediately out; and we could hear him snore in the immediate vicinity of the door. I took the rope, which we had secreted under our bed, and mounting upon the shoulder of my comrade, raised myself upon the knife worked into the crevices of the stone, and succeeded in reaching the embrasure. Here I made fast the rope, that my friend might follow me. I then passed through the hole a sufficient length of it to reach the ground upon the outside * * * in the ditch. I had calculated the distance when going for roots. With much difficulty I succeeded in getting my head through; for the sharp stones took the skin off my breast and back. Putting my head through first, I was obliged to go down head-foremost, until my feet were through, fearing every moment the rope would break. At last, safely on the ground, I awaited with anxiety the arrival of my comrade. I had passed another rope through the hole, which, in the event of discovery, Talmus Hadjo was to pull, as a signal to me upon the outside, that he was discovered, and could not come. As soon as I struck the ground, I took hold of the signal, for intelligence from my friend. The night was very dark. Two men passed near me, talking earnestly, and I could see them distinctly. Soon I heard the struggle of my companion far above me. He had succeeded in getting his head through, but his body would come no farther. In the lowest tone of voice, I urged him to throw out his breath, and then try; soon after, he came tumbling down the whole distance. For a few moments I thought

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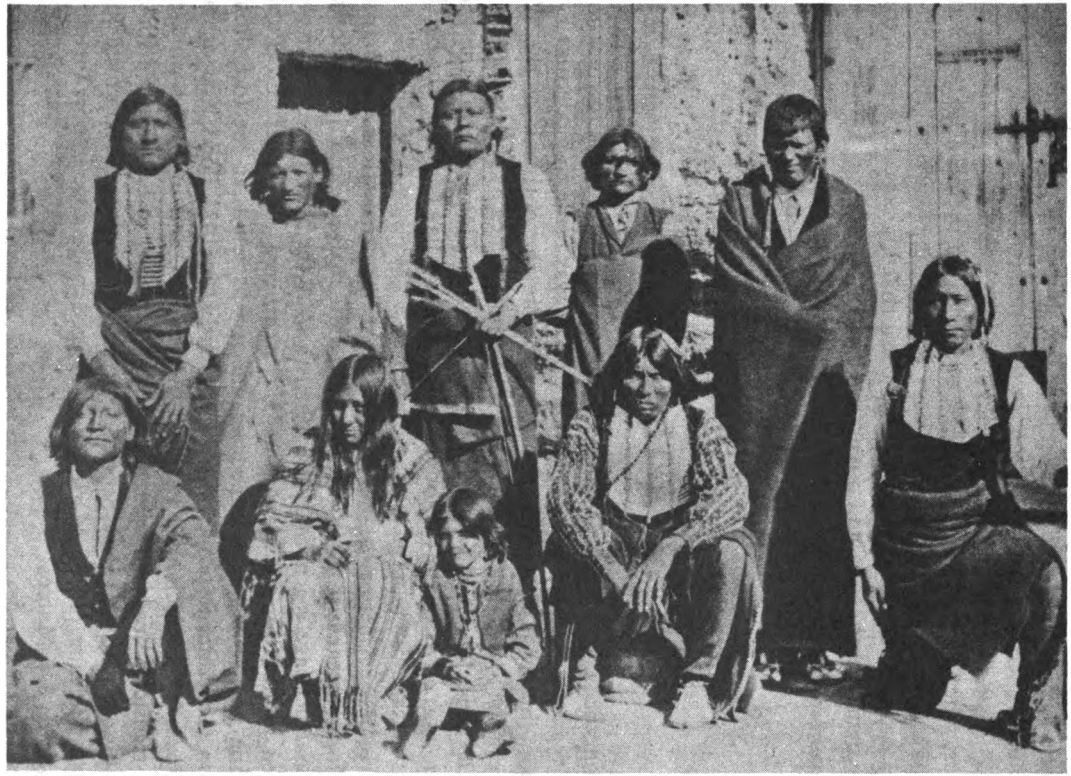

Indian prisoners in the courtyard at Fort Marion about 1875. From an undated stereograph in the library of the St. Augustine Historical Society.

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him dead. I dragged him to some water close by, which restored him; but his leg was so lame, he was unable to walk. I took him upon my shoulder to a *scrub* near the town. Daylight was just breaking; it was evident we must move rapidly. I caught a mule in the adjoining field, and making a bridle out of my sash, mounted my companion and started for the St. John's river. The mule we used one day, but fearing the whites would track us, we felt more secure on foot in the hammock, though moving very slow. Thus we continued our journey five days, subsisting upon roots and berries, when I joined my band, then assembled on the head waters of the Tomoka river, near the Atlantic coast. I gave my warriors the history of my capture and escape, and assured them that my capture was no trick of my own, and that I would not deceive them.

Coacoochee's Account of the Escape from Fort Marion, November 1837.

Epilogue

A Heritage

From the beginning of the United States occupation, the old fortifications were regarded as obsolete. True, some effort was made to modernize Fort Marion, but Matanzas was forgotten. Before the outbreak of the War between the States, Fort Marion had been strengthened by the emplacement of new guns, but there was little major action in Florida during the war, and none at all at the fort, though the Confederate flag flew over the battlements for some 14 months.

Early in the American regime, however, the Spanish castle was recognized as being of great historical interest, and public realization of its value as a national heritage reached a peak when in 1921 the War Department considered relinquishing ownership of the weathered old structure. Public reaction was strong and immediate, for it was felt that the fort should remain Government property. Consequently, in 1924 Forts Marion and Matanzas were proclaimed national monuments, and in 1933 both areas were transferred to the Department of the Interior, to be protected for all time by the National Park Service. By an act of Congress approved June 5, 1942, the name of Fort Marion was changed to the time-honored name of Castillo de San Marcos.

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[1] Sixteen-page illustrated booklets relating to these areas are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., at 10 cents per copy.

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