

PEDRO MENENDEZ DE AVILES

FLORIDA'S FIRST GOVERNOR, 1565



By
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Pedro Menendez de Aviles was born in the town of Aviles. He was one of twenty children. Aviles was a seaport town near the Asturian Mountains in sight of the ocean. Young Menendez could gaze at the ocean and must have known at a very early age that the ocean would become almost a part of him. Menendez' eyes first saw light on February 15th in the year 1519. He was to become one of the most important persons that the 1500s would produce.

As soon as he was old enough to bear arms his military career began. He saw his first duty under arms to join his comrades in making war on private ships that dared to attack Spanish shipping.

The historians, Meras and Barrientos, give striking incidents of Menendez' daring and ability as he assailed the outlaw Corsairs of the Spanish and French coasts. There is no doubt that young Menendez was born to adventure. He had all the characteristics cherished by the Spanish Crown. He was brilliant, quick, capable and ruthless. The perfect fighting man for his time, the perfect conquistador.

Menendez made many voyages to America already with the title of Captain General of the fleet of the Indies in the year 1554. The title and appointment were made by the King himself. Unfortunately, as we will see, this appointment infuriated the powerful Casa de la Contratacion of Seville, a huge and powerful organization which was the governing board of American trade and would cause Menendez much grief for years to come.

Now the Head of the Fleet, he could really show his talents, intelligence and rare qualities. His resourcefulness was outstanding, and he was never found wanting in his decisions to overcome great peril. His brilliance brought to Spain much treasure that otherwise could have been lost. His list of achievements grew large, and until the close of the year 1559, Menendez was active in Spain, England, France and Flanders both on land and on the sea.

With all of Menendez' accomplishments and feats, the simmering hatred and jealousy on the part of the Casa caused them to seek to destroy Menendez in any manner it could. And so it was that during Menendez' voyage to the Indies 1561-1563, the Casa brought false charges against Menendez, and he, along with his brother Bartolome, were seized by the Casa and thrown into jail where Menendez remained for twenty months, and his brother for twenty-five months. Finally, the King forced the Casa to have them set free. Menendez and his brother still had to pay a small fine. In the year 1565, the year of Menendez' greatest accomplishments, King Philip began a great feud with the King of France in connection with the ownership and settling of Florida. This is unconfirmed. The Spanish King, furious with France quickly put together an armada and chose Menendez to command it.

Menendez was glad to accept this offer with the understanding that he could hunt also for his own beloved son, Don Juan, who was shipwrecked while returning from New Spain. Don Juan had been in charge of a convoy. On June 29, 1565, Menendez and part of his fleet tried to sail from Cadiz, but a storm delayed them for several days until the voyage could begin. They raised their sails and headed for La Florida arriving in the year 1565.

Altogether his armada numbered over thirty ships all bound for La Florida. There were all sorts of people, numbering some twenty-six hundred, aboard the ships. There were millers, tanners, silversmiths, locksmiths, administrators, priests, farmers and artisans. Many families were brought along. Most of the people were military men, for the first task was to join battle with the French. The crossing was stormy, and the fleet scattered, but they made an attempt to a rendezvous of a sort at Puerto Rico. The French Captain Ribault's fleet was now nearing the Florida coast. After leaving Puerto Rico on August 15, 1565 with five ships and six hundred people, Menendez wanted to get ahead of the French Captain Ribault and his French ships. By taking shortcuts, Jean Ribault came to the Florida coast first. His ships sailed up the St. Johns River and were welcomed at Fort Caroline.

The next day Menendez came ashore somewhere south of St. Augustine and then continued north along the coast until he found a good harbor with a good beach. This place he named "San Agustin". Menendez now took his ships northward to engage the French ships reaching them on September 4th when he saw four large French ships in the mouth of the St. Johns River. Menendez had found the French fleet he had come to conquer. As Menendez approached the French ships warning shots whistled through his ship's rigging, but Menendez did not return a volley. Skillfully, Menendez put his flagship "San Polayo" between the bows of two French ships in the darkness. After an address with the Captain of the French ship Trinity (the sailing ship Trinity is credited with being the first sailing ship to enter the St. Johns River) when the French asked Menendez who he was and what did he want. Menendez wasted no time informing the French ship that he was a general of his Spanish armada of the King of Spain and had come to hang all the heretics he could find.

The friendly meeting had come to an abrupt end. The French, not prepared to fight, cut the anchor ropes and raised the sails and fled. The four French ships quickly sailed out of sight. Darkness saved them. With the French ships gone, Menendez gave the order to turn back and sailed as far into the bar across the St. Johns River. Here they could see five French craft anchored in the River. A French cannon fired, and Menendez quickly made sail for the safety of the harbor of St. Augustine. Once at St. Augustine, the boats began landing people, and the local Indians greeted them in friendship. They were in the Indian village of Seloy. Marching at once under cover of night, Menendez led his soldiers to Fort Caroline arriving there before daylight. In just a day they completely destroyed Fort Caroline. It was at its weakest, and was totally unprepared for the attack. Somewhere between one hundred and two hundred French Huguenots, most in their nightclothes, were set upon and their throats were cut. Fewer than 50 escaped. Almost immediately Menendez gathered thirty-five of his troops, and with only four hours rest,

they headed back toward St. Augustine to find the missing French fleet. A hurricane had wrecked many of the ships and drove some on to the beach. The Indians of Seloy promptly scalped about fifty of the crew. Menendez' men then killed them a few at a time until they were all dead, and then he killed Jean Rebault, the famous French Captain last. He then obliterated the name Fort Caroline and renamed it Fort Mateo.

King Philip's orders were "You will explore and colonize La Florida. If there be settlers or corsairs of any other nations not subject to us, drive them out immediately". This he did in August of 1565 as already discussed. Menendez then sailed for Havana. What a great victory it had been for Menendez. In a matter of just a few days he destroyed the Fort he was sent to destroy, killed most of the Frenchmen in the Fort, and with blind luck was able to kill the crews of two French ships that had been blown ashore while Menendez suffered a loss of only a few Spanish soldiers.

After the famous meeting of Menendez and Carlos in February of 1566 (to be covered in detail), Menendez sailed back to St. Augustine arriving there on March 20, 1566. The winter had been cold and hard for the little settlement. The people were hungry and discouraged. Many had died, and a hundred men had mutinied and fled to the Caribbean. When Menendez tried to muster a crew to explore the northern coast another hundred deserted. San Mateo was also in serious condition, as mutiny and desertions were rampant. There were now some newcomers as replacements. Late in March Menendez had stabilized Fort Mateo.

On April 1 the new expedition got under way surveying the upper east coast and its Indian people. They arrived at the new Spanish settlement of Santa Elena (Hilton Head, South Carolina). Menendez explored the river and waters until he sailed back to Fort Mateo where he received news that the hostile Saturiba, the Cacique of the salt water Timucua was on the warpath and had burned the Fort at St. Augustine. Menendez with three ships immediately sailed to St. Augustine. The Fort had been burned down. They all set to work to build a proper Fort across the bay where it could be defended. Menendez sailed to Cuba for supplies.

Now we come to the incredible and historic meeting between Menendez and King Carlos of the Calusa in February of 1566. The Captain General of the Austurian and Biscayan armada reached Havana in January of 1566. Esteban de las Alas had become separated from Pedro Menendez who was Admiral of the fleet. So on the same day, February 10th, his seven ships joined Menendez other ships to make up a flotilla of ships with five hundred soldiers and sailors, and the sails went up to make the voyage to La Florida's west coast. Menendez, having gone ahead, found a good channel between the Tortugas and the Florida Keys - a most important find for Spanish ships. Menendez' focus to was find and retrieve some two hundred Spanish people who had been shipwrecked on the Florida coast some of whom had been in captivity for twenty years in the land of Carlos (the lower west coast of Florida). The survivors had learned to live with the Indians, even to going naked, learning their language and customs and inter-marriage. (Few of the survivors had survived, most were used as human sacrifices). Menendez began to search for the harbor where the survivors were known to be among the Calusa. Menendez

(the Adelantado) chose a shallow draft brigantine that would hold thirty soldiers. Diego de Maya, Admiral of the armada, was ordered to follow him in another brigantine. Together they sailed as close as they could to the land.

On the fourth day of their search a lone canoe approached the brigantine with an Indian looking man who spoke Spanish in it. His name was Fontaneda. His full name was Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda. He was the sole survivor of a Spanish ship that had been shipwrecked in the Keys when he was aboard and only 13 years of age. He had been a Calusa slave for seventeen years until he was rescued by Menendez. He stayed with Menendez for several years as an interpreter. During his seventeen years as a captive he had learned four Indian languages. (Fontaneda will take his place in history, and a chapter will be devoted to his writings). Fontaneda presented Menendez with a letter the captives had written asking him to save them. Fontaneda was to guide him and interpret for him. Fontaneda was sent to the Cacique (Chief) Carlos to tell him that the Spanish came in peace and had brought many gifts to Carlos and his wives, and that he was also delivering a special message from the Catholic, and most powerful, King of Spain who wished to be his friend. King Carlos, surveying the small Spanish group, quickly called up three hundred archers. Menendez immediately countered by bringing the two brigantines close in shore. Artillery was placed in sight on the landward side of the two ships. Menendez then had a carpet taken ashore and placed on the sand. King Carlos and a number of his Chiefs joined him on the carpet. A very wise Carlos sat next to Menendez. Carlos and his Chiefs paid great respect to Menendez. Carlos knelt before Menendez, the palms of his hands turned upward so Menendez might place his hands down-turned on Carlos' hands. This act was the supreme tribute paid by the natives to their leader. King Carlos and his Chiefs were all naked carrying only their bows and arrows. Their private parts were bound in deerskins. The Adelantado (Menendez) then dressed the Cacique (Carlos) in a shirt, jacket, and a pair of silk breeches and placed a taffeta hat on his head. Other smaller gifts were given to Carlos' family. At the time of this meeting King Carlos II was about twenty-five years old, and his young, beautiful wife was about twenty. Carlos was now properly dressed for a Spaniard, not for a Calusa, and looked like a fine gentleman. The other Calusa Chiefs were given clothing along with biscuits and honey, and wine was presented to all of them.

In turn Carlos gave Menendez a bar of silver and a number of small pieces of gold. After the gift exchange, Carlos asked for more food and wine. Menendez then invited Carlos and about twenty of the Indians to board his brigantine to eat the delicious food. After their meal they could take the extra food home to their wives.

It was at this point that Menendez petitioned Carlos to hand over to him whatever captive Christians he held in his power. Menendez spoke plainly telling Carlos that if he did not do so, Carlos would be killed. If Carlos complied he would award numerous gifts and be accepted as an ally and friend. Menendez then told Carlos that the invincible Spanish would support him against all other Caciques who were his enemies. (Later Carlos asked Menendez to help him subdue the Tocobaga to the north of the Calusa territory. Because the Calusa and Tocobaga were not at war, Menendez would not help Carlos against

them). This created large problem in the near future between Carlos, Menendez and Carlos' sister who had been given to Menendez as his wife.

Carlos, greatly impressed, said he would be happy to give up the Christian captives and would go and fetch them. A wary Menendez told Carlos he could not leave but must send someone else to fetch the captives. In a very short time the Indians brought back five women and three men. The captives were quickly given clothing. They had various reactions to their rescue because some had families they would have to leave behind. After more gifts were given to Carlos, he promised that within two months he would hand over two more men and one more woman which made a total of nine.

After the meeting King Carlos asked Menendez to visit him in his village the next morning so that his wives could see him. One of the Christians warned Menendez not to go to the village, as it would not be safe. The Calusa wanted to kill him. Instead Menendez told the Indians to leave, and he would proceed to the village with a few of his own men. After Menendez' five ships assembled, the natives were friendly to Esteban de Las Alas who had gone to the village with one hundred soldiers. The Indians, in awe of such power, gave him a good reception. Esteban and the Indians even began to trade. For just a few trinkets, Esteban took out two thousand ducats in gold and silver.

Menendez again asked to meet Carlos and told him "all was well". Carlos replied to Menendez he wished to adopt him as his elder brother and then offered Menendez his older sister to be his wife. He told Menendez he could take her to a Christian land (Cuba), and when she returned Carlos would go, and then all his subjects could become Christians because it now seemed better to be a Christian than to be an Indian. Carlos invited Menendez to visit his village, and Menendez agreed to visit the next day.

When the sun came up the next day the Adelantado set out with two hundred men carrying harquebuses (large muskets), a flag flying, a pair of fifes and drums, three trumpets, a harp, a psaltery and a dancing dwarf. It was only a short walk to the house of the Cacique. It was very large and could easily hold two thousand men. Menendez stationed his two hundred men outside. Inside the King had a fine chamber. He sat there in great dignity with an Indian woman seated at his side, both on an elevated platform. Fifty Indian Chiefs were seated below him and fifty women below them. When the Adelantado entered the Cacique gave him his own seat, and the gathering drew aside so the Adelantado could greet the Cacique who showed his highest respect. Outside the building more than five hundred children gathered at the windows to sing. All the Indians sang and danced. The Indian girls outside formed in groups of a hundred and sang alternately - fifty at a time.

When the festivities came to an end, the Adelantado again gave out gifts and from the translation (which had to be done by a translator) he began to read to the natives in their own language, speaking with great flattery and endearment. He addressed Carlos' wives and his sister. When the Adelantado noticed that Carlos' beautiful young wife was not present he asked for her to be summoned. (Carlos then introduced his sister whom he had given to the Adelantado as his wife. She was about thirty-five, not particularly

beautiful and of a serious nature). When Carlos' beautiful wife joined the group, Menendez took her hand and seated her between the other Indian women. Carlos was not pleased with Menendez' attention to his wife, and soon sent her away.

When the food came several varieties of fish were served, some boiled and some roasted. Shell-fish came with the other fish. Menendez had his people bring a hundred weight of biscuits, a jug of wine, another of honey and sugar to be divided among the Indians. As the food was carried in the trumpeters outside played their instruments. Menendez then had a chorus of six gentlemen with fine voices sing. They were accompanied by a complement of good musicians. The dinner was a great success for the Indians and the Spanish.

Later that afternoon as the ships prepared to sail, Carlos brought his sister to the ships accompanied by three hundred Indians and two newly arrived Caciques. Carlos sent his sister off with six Indian men (probably nobles) and women who were among the wisest and most intelligent in the land. Menendez promised to bring her back in four to five months, and then all the Indians could turn Christian if his sister and her party affirmed that to be Christian was worthwhile. Menendez' "wife" was baptized and given the name Dona Antonia. She was soon transported to Cuba. Dona Antonia was Menendez' wife in name only. In Cuba she was treated regally and taught the Christian religion (which she probably never really accepted).

The Spanish presence among the Calusa was not only short-lived but violent, because Carlos' pledges of friendship were anything but sincere. Carlos plotted to kill Menendez on at least three occasions. He continually harassed the Spanish outposts set up at Fort San Anton de Carlos that was in the Calusa capital late in 1566 under the command of Captain Francisco de Reinoso. The Calusa attacked a boat party during the establishment of the settlement killing three Spaniards and bouncing a spear off Menendez' breastplate. The Spanish became like men besieged in their own blockhouse. They could not leave it without armed guards. A translated Spanish document tells a tale of virtually uninterrupted Indian hostility toward the Spanish soldiers, not only by the Calusa but by other Indians of Florida. This was the prelude to the ultimate showdown between the Spanish and King Carlos and the destruction of Carlos and his court.

In the early part of 1566, Menendez dispatched Francisco de Reinoso, a trusted Captain, to visit the Cacique (Carlos) with a small contingent of thirty soldiers. Upon reaching Carlos, he was greeted warmly and was told that no harm would come to them. Carlos built a house for Reinoso and even erected a cross. The Indians came to it with great devotion. Shortly after, Reinoso took Dona Antonia with him, and he and his soldiers and Antonia sailed to Cuba. Captain Reinoso wrote of Carlos' treachery. His letter stated that Carlos I and Carlos II had found many Spanish prisoners and had slain more than two hundred Christians for sacrifices. (Refer to Wm. McGoun's book "The Prehistoric Peoples of South Florida" for more detailed information).

A special note: Dr. John Worth of the Randell Research Center did a month-long research at the Archives in Seville, Spain searching for Spanish records where he came upon a

most interesting document where Captain Francisco de Reynoso was demanding payment for his promised salary during the three years stationed at Fort Anton at the Calusa capital on Mound Key. In addition to the 1566 order dispatching Reynoso with more than fifty soldiers to construct the fort (signed by Pedro Menendez de Aviles) the papers include signed testimony by witness Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda, the famous shipwreck survivor and ex-Calusa captive who had served alongside Reynoso throughout the fort's three year existence.

New information from Spain caused Menendez to sail to Carlos with six bergantines and one hundred fifty men. With Menendez was Father Rogel. King Carlos decided he would take advantage of the Spanish weapons and asked Menendez to go with him to make war against the Tocobaga, his hated enemy to the north of the Calusa (Tampa area). Menendez refused to help him against the Tocobaga. It was not beneficial to Menendez to get caught in an Indian war – one tribe against another tribe. King Carlos' request to make war on the Tocobaga was denied. Carlos was smart and devious. So in March 1567, Menendez arranged for a peace between the Calusa and the Tocobaga. Carlos was willing to agree to the truce because he received back twelve of his people and Antonia's sister who had been held in prison by the Tocobaga. But Carlos' hatred for the Spanish intensified. Carlos ordered a Calusa party to capture Father Rogel so he could be used as a human sacrifice. However this attempt failed.

To help contain King Carlos, Menendez sent his trusted Captain Reinoso to keep track of him. By the spring of 1567, Captain Reinoso had more than enough of Carlos' treacheries. The crafty Reinoso sent Father Rogel to Cuba for a quick trip to get him out of the way. Captain Reinoso then moved to kill King Carlos. Reinoso had Carlos and some of his closest advisors murdered.

After Carlos' death, Menendez made Felipe, who had been war captain under Carlos, the Cacique to replace Carlos. Felipe was bitter toward Carlos' father, as he had reneged on his promise of the throne to him years before. Also, Carlos' father forced Felipe to divorce his wife so she could marry Carlos.

Felipe's position as king in Carlos' place was short-lived. Carlos' death caused great unrest with some of the lesser chiefs, and the Tocobaga reclaimed some land and towns which they said were theirs. Felipe, in desperation, had the heads of fifteen lesser chiefs brought to him. In front of Father Roger, he and his close supporters danced around four of the chief's heads. This horrible display was more than Father Rogel could stand. In the face of such open hostility, Menendez retaliated by killing Felipe and 15 or 16 of his supporters. In just three years, both Carlos and Felipe had been killed.

The Calusa leadership then passed to Don Pedro. That did not help either. Don Pedro had even been to Havana, but still would not accept Christianity, and became worse than he had been before the Spanish sought his friendship. In the face of more hostility, the Spanish soon abandoned their presence among the Calusa only three years after it had begun. This signaled the beginning of the end of the absolute rulers of the Calusa nation, but the Calusa way of life continued through 1688 and afterward. Another factor not

mentioned previously was the effect of the Spanish making available European products and iron tools to some of the Calusa people. This might very well contributed to the diminishing of the chiefdom's absolute authority.

The continuing story of the Calusa will be found in my book "Florida's Great King - King Carlos Of The Calusa". In about two hundred years the Calusa no longer existed.

When October 20, 1566 rolled around King Philip was desperate to move Menendez and his ships against the "Corsairs" pirates in the Antilles. An armada was put together consisting of eight vessels and put to sea for the destruction of the Corsairs. Leaving from St. Augustine, the boats headed into the Caribbean. In the King's mind, Spanish America was closed to ships from other countries. Menendez took with him almost one thousand men whom he could leave at settlements from Cuba to Puerto Rico.

On March 1, 1567 Menendez made a trip from Cuba returning back to Carlos where he tried to get the Cacique of the Tocobaga and Carlos to settle their problems (before they went to war). He achieved very little success. Antonia and Carlos were furious with Menendez, because he would not make war against the Tocobaga. It's possible, but not certain, Carlos would have liked to kill Menendez after their meeting - and so would Antonia.

The relationship between Carlos and Menendez deteriorated severely after Menendez refused to attack the Tocobaga for Carlos. Menendez was then forced to add some additional troops to Captain Reinoso's little settlement located very close to King Carlos' throne room. Soon after, Menendez loaded his ship with maize from the campsite. His ship sailed to the land of the Tequesta on the southeast coast, and Menendez became friendly with the Tequesta Cacique. Menendez trusted the Tequesta to build a Tequesta station where he would leave thirty men. A block house was started immediately. Menendez then set sail directly to San Mateo the day being the last day of April in the year 1567 where Menendez tried unsuccessfully again to make friends with the Cacique Saturiba with no success. Menendez had run out of time in his beloved La Florida.

The trip to Spain could wait no longer, for it was said that the King would soon be gone to Flanders again. They left Santa Elena May 18, 1567 in a few fragata, a remarkable galley-type vessel that was sturdy enough for deep water and very fast. Menendez counted on this speed and the sweeps she carried along with the sail to show her heels to the corsairs they were likely to find beyond the Azores.

The ship's log showed an amazing average of seventy-two leagues per day, and in seventeen days they sighted the Azores. Going on, they touched Spain at Vivero and continued to Aviles. The news of their coming had preceded them, and the people of Aviles were waiting as the tiny fragata came up the estuary with pennants and banners flying. The gunners fired the cannon, and the gentlemen loaded the arquebuses and touched them off. The trumpets sounded again and again. There were shouts of joy and cries of welcome. Many dropped to their knees and raised their hands to heaven, praising God for his care of this son of Aviles and his company.

But as the craft came closer and those on shore began to see the strange, ragged soldiers and the dark-skinned naked Indians, they stared and became quiet.

Menendez stepped onto the landing and his comrades followed. The crowd parted. As was his custom, he led the way directly to the church where he knelt to give thanks for a safe voyage. When he came out, the people escorted him to his house, where Ana Maria and their daughters were waiting, along with his sisters and their children. It was a happy homecoming in July of 1567, and an occasion that came so rarely. For during eighteen years in the King's service, Menendez had been home only four times. Nor was this stay a long one, and Menendez' service must have made his family seem almost strangers. Some of his gentlemen also visited their families before making the long trip with him over the mountains a few days later to Madrid.

They arrived at the Court on July 20th. Mendenez delighted Philip by presenting the six Indians in their native dress (which consisted essentially of tattooing, a bow, and a quiver of arrows). The audience turned out well, despite defamations that had been circulated by Osorio and others, including the Florida deserters. If the King was ever made doubtful of his man by the glib statements of deserters intent upon saving their own hides, a few minutes with Menendez drove the doubts from the royal mind.

Philip listened with interest as Menendez related his adventures and spoke of affairs in this newest of the royal domains. He told of the march to Fort Caroline, the death of Ribault and the others. He described the land, and the discovery of two dozen harbors along three hundred leagues of coast, their entrances all sounded and marked. He expounded upon the Indians and their ways, and how there were treaties of friendship with all except Saturiba. Seven settlements had been made: St. Augustine, San Mateo, Santa Elena, Ays, Tequesta, Carlos, and Tocobaga. Of these the first three were in harbors chosen as suitable refuge for vessels of the treasure fleet. The others were well situated to aid castaways along the dangerous coast as well as to establish the Faith among the natives.

He touched on the brave loyalty of the soldiers and colonists, the hardships and dangers of the wilderness, and the desperate need for supplies. Nor did he neglect matters in the Caribbean, specifically the deeds of the corsairs and the obligation to punish them. Philip ordered help sent to the colonies at once, and directed Menendez to prepare a memorandum on Florida and Caribbean matters for guidance of the Council of the Indies (a thing which he did a few days later). To meet this exigency, Philip did a characteristic thing, he created a new title – Captain General of the West. And this he conferred upon Menendez. With the title went the charge to secure the Indies against all enemies. To do the job, the Captain General was allotted 200,000 ducats, 2,000 soldiers, and twelve galleons.

In January of 1568, Philip elevated him in the Order of Santiago by conferring the Commandery of the Holy Cross of Zarza. This honor meant a yearly income of some eight hundred crowns. Other rewards were to come, not the least of which was victory over Osorio, his enemy in Havana. Osorio was dismissed from office. Menendez himself was named Governor of Cuba in his place.

The immediate concern, however, was getting a fleet ready to take Philip to Flanders. Menendez spent February on the biscayan coast at this task. The Philip changed his mind about going to Flanders, leaving Menendez free to bend his energies toward the work cut out for him in America.

In June, the news reached Spain that San Mateo was destroyed. A French force led by Dominique de Gourgues had gone to Florida secretly. Saturiba welcomed de Gourgues gladly, and his warriors joined the French to overwhelm the garrison. The Spanish who survived the assault were hanged.

The jobs Philip had given Menendez to do kept him overlong in Spain. It was late summer before he reached Havana. There he found most of the Jesuits who had been assigned to Florida, and from their leader, Father Juan Bautista de Segura, he had a discouraging report. They had gone, as planned, to St. Augustine, arriving on June 29, 1568. The people were in rags, hungry and utterly forlorn. San Mateo had just been lost. Help expected from Spain had not come. The Jesuits gave out the little supply of food and clothing they had brought, and concluded that the hunger-ridden colony was not yet able to support missionaries.

Father Rogel, from Charlotte Harbor, was also in Havana. Carlos was dead, he told Menendez. The soldiers had done it. Kill or be killed, that's what it had come to. Carlos had become ever more dangerous since Menendez had forced him into the peace with Tocobaga. So at last they destroyed him. But the colony was still in mortal danger, and Father Rogel had come to Havana to beg alms for the mission and find aid for the colonists.

At Tequesta, a little progress had been made. Brother Francisco Villareal had learned the language and made of number of conversions. Then for some petty reason the soldiers killed the Cacique's uncle. The reprisal was swift and terrible. Those who survived it fled north to their countrymen at the blockhouse of Ays. Here the drain upon the meager food supply was too much. The news of Tocobaga was equally bad. The Indians had slain all the garrison.

Thus Menendez found that of the seven settlements, four were destroyed: San Mateo, Ays, Tequesta and Tocobaga. The others were in danger. But his new responsibilities in Cuba and the Caribbean kept him from the work that so badly needed to be done in Florida.

Before he could leave Spain, it was the new year of 1570. The corsair "Peg Leg" and others were audacious, and Menendez was at sea a good part of the time, convoying the

treasure fleets between the Canaries and Spain. Ashore, the affairs of Cuba and Florida kept him occupied, even at a distance.

The reports from Florida were now continually bad. The Charlotte Harbor settlement at last was abandoned after another break with the Indians. The garrison moved to St. Augustine. Tequesta lasted only one year and was not resettled. The Jesuit school at Havana, which was staffed with the missionaries intended for Florida, did not flourish, so Father Segura had taken them to join the others at Guale and Santa Elena. At St. Augustine, the situation did not improve. The place was still troubled with desertions and mutiny.

After December 1570, Menendez was again in Spain. Philip licensed him to recruit a hundred more farmers for Florida, and for the next several months he was busy putting together another sizeable expedition. As usual, the Casa officials gave him trouble, weather delayed the sailing, a ship was lost. But at last the little armada sailed from San Lucar on May 17th. It numbered seven galleons, two hundred and fifty soldiers and sailors, and four hundred other souls.

They reached Havana July 3, 1571. The treasure fleet was still in the harbor, and Menendez at once found himself involved in readying the armed vessels that would escort the fleet back to Spain. There were many other responsibilities, of course. Some of his people were sick, and had to be put ashore for treatment. There were also the usual desertions among those whose appetite for adventure had been dulled by the hardship of the ocean crossing, or whose true objective had been the warm promise of the Caribbean rather than the hostile wilderness of Florida.

There was also a disturbing report on the failure of the Jesuit mission on the Chesapeake. Menendez gave another the task of leading the convoy to Spain, and set out for Florida at once. After a brief stop at Santa Elena to land supplies and replacements, he hurried on to the Chesapeake. There was little hope of finding any of the missionaries alive

It was well into December of 1571 that Menendez went to search for the missionaries and then return to St. Augustine. His visit was short but just long enough to load people and their cargoes. On December 20th he sailed for Havana with a little fleet of three small vessels. Somehow Menendez general good luck deserted him. A sudden storm swept upon them, and they were blown ashore some thirty leagues south of St. Augustine in the land of the often hostile Ais Indians. When the Ais attacked them they took cover behind the boat and began to fire their arquebuses keeping the Ais at a safe distance. The successfully beat off many attacks from the Ais warriors and miraculously reached St. Augustine without any human loss.

As it turned out it was a blessing that Menendez and his crew reinforced the men at St. Augustine, because the British attacked the fort seven days later. When Menendez was asked to get a ship he sailed on Good Friday to Havana enabling him to return to Spain in the summer of 1572 (or May, 1574) with a treasure fleet.

In the year 1574, having yet another honor conferred upon him, he fell violently ill with a raging fever, and on September 17, 1574, the great man died. The Spanish Governor, Pedro Menendez de Aviles, whose titles included Captain General of the Ocean Sea, Governor of all of Florida northward to Newfoundland, Adelantado (Supreme in Command) was quite a man. The execution of the French settlers in Fort Caroline and the blatant cruelty to the French crews whose ships had blown ashore near St. Augustine darkened his name and dulled his claim to fame. In his defense he did not murder or slaughter the Florida Indians as his forerunners Narvaez and Desoto had. In fact, quite the contrary, it is evident that Menendez did all he could to keep the Indians under his jurisdiction to be at peace with one another and to accept the Christian religion which was, of course, for the most part an almost impossible task, because the deep religious conviction of the Calusa were too deep in the settled regions. Menendez took Carlos to Tocobaga to try and have the Calusa and Tocobaga not war upon each other. He tried for years to make peace with the Ais Indians. He tried to have the Tequesta on the east coast make peace with the Calusa. He traveled to southern Georgia to try to get the Guale make peace with their neighbors. He did not execute King Carlos, but his subordinates did. He established seven settlements in Florida. (See map).

The longest standing settlement in America is St. Augustine – the oldest in all the United States of America – established in 1565. Menendez also made six other settlements: San Mateo, Santa Elena, Ays, Tequesta, Carlos and Tocobaga. All the settlements other than St. Augustine were destined to fail. Florida's Indians did not like the foreign invaders on their territory. For over fifty years, the Spanish found the southern part of Florida just too inhospitable to penetrate with the Calusa on the west coast and the Ais on the east coast among others. There were many incidents during Menendez' rule when he could have set his troops on the troublesome Indians, but he refrained from the destruction of the native Indians. He waged war as needed, but did stay his hand more than many. All in all Menendez showed himself to be a patient Adelantado, the ruler as Governor of La Florida.

Menendez' destruction and cruelty at the French Fort Caroline and to the French sailors who had been blown ashore near the fort was questionable and diminished somewhat his great successes in La Florida as discussed briefly at the beginning of this story. Indeed, Menendez will stand with other great men who shaped our early history.

A special note:

This book regarding the life of Pedro Menendez de Aviles has been critiqued by Dr. John Worth, anthropologist, who is in charge of the Randell Research Center at Pineland,

Florida. Dr. Worth makes many trips to Spain and Cuba. He is currently the most knowledgeable person I know regarding Menendez and the Spanish period in Florida.

He has written, "The Calusa were once the most powerful people in all of South Florida. For many centuries they built huge shell mounds, engineered canals, and sustained tens of thousands of people from the fish and shellfish found in the rich estuaries west and south of Fort Myers. All that is left of their culture today is a dwindling number of shell mound sites dotting the estuarine landscape between Charlotte Harbor and the Ten Thousand Islands region of the Everglades.

The Randell Research Center (RRC) is a permanent facility dedicated to learning and teaching the archaeology, history, and ecology of Southwest Florida. Situated in the scenic community of Pineland on the western shore of historic Pine Island, the RRC encompasses more than 50 acres at the heart of the Pineland archaeological site, a massive shell mound site extending across more than 200 acres from the mangrove coastline.

On the Calusa Heritage Trail, visitors to the RRC can tour this internationally significant site and learn about Calusa culture and their environment. In addition, volunteers and students are able to participate in the ongoing research programs of the RRC, and members can follow this progress as they support the RRC.

We invite you to explore our website and learn more about the Randell Research Center."
<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/index.htm>



THE NEW WORLD OF MENÉNDEZ
(Shaded area indicates territory controlled by Spain)

Ribault's First Expedition

Ribault leaves Le Havre	18 February 1562
Ribault reaches the Florida coast	30 April
He find the entrance of the River of May (the St. Johns)	1 May
Discovery of the Seine, Somme, Loire Charente, Garonne, Gironde, Belle, Grande Rivers	first two weeks of May
Building of Charlesfort	15-20 May
Ribault explores the countryside	20-25 May
Ribault sails for France	11 June
Ribault arrives in Dieppe	20 July
Famine at Charlesfort	July-August 1562
Ribault's book on Florida is published in England	May 1563

Laudonniere's Expedition

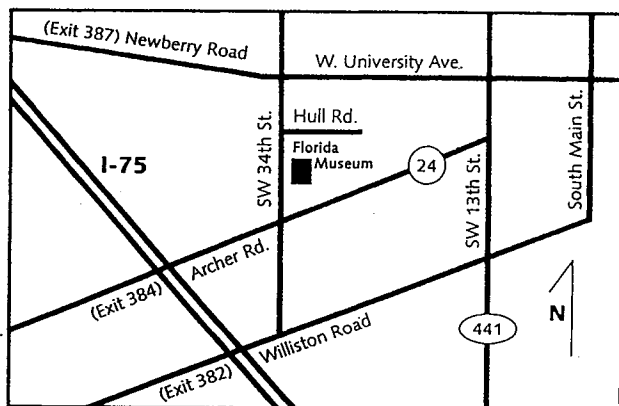
Laudonniere leaves Le Havre	22 April 1564
He arrives off the coast of Florida	22 June
He reaches the River of May	25 June
He meets Saturiba (Timucuan Chieftain)	25 June
At the River of Seine	27 June
At the River of Somme	28 June
The founding of La Caroline	30 June
Saturiba's visit to the fort	July
Ottigny with the Timucuan Indians	July
Vasseur and La Caille with Molloua	July
A storm devastates Saturiba's village	29 August
Captain Bourdet arrives from France	4 September
Vasseur and Arlac escort Saturiba's two prisoners back to Outina	10 September
Ottigny goes to Outina's aid	October
Departure of Captain Bourdet	10 November
Thirteen men desert the colony	13 November
Departure of the conspirators for New Spain	8 December
Good relations with Hiouacara, widow of Indian chief	January 1565
Return of the conspirators	25 March
Capture of Outina	April
Famine at La Caroline	May-June
Landing of John Hawkins' English fleet	3 August
Hawkins leaves Florida	7 August

Ribault's Second Expedition

Menendez' asiento with Phillip II to	
conquer Florida	22 March 1565
Ribault leaves Dieppe	22 May
He arrives at Le Havre	23 May
Ribault at the Isle of Wight	26 May-14 June
Menendez leaves Cadiz but has to	
turn back because of a tempest	29 June
A tempest rages in the Atlantic	20-21 July
Menendez lands at Puerto Rico for repairs	9 August
Ribault reaches the Florida coast	14 August
Menendez leaves Puerto Rico with	
five vessels	15 August
Menendez in sight of Florida	25 August
Ribault lands with reinforcements	28 August
Three French ships enter the river	29 August
Spanish sails sighted	4 September
Menendez discovers Ribault's ships	4 September
Menendez moves south and	
establishes San Agustin	8 September
Ribault's fleet sets out	10 September
Storm destroys the French ships	10-23 September
Menendez begins his march against	
La Caroline	17 September
The Spanish capture Fort de la Caroline	20 September
The Pearl and the Levriere leave for France	25 September
The first massacre	29 September
Menendez hears of Ribault's shipwreck	10 October
The second massacre; Ribault slain	12 October
Laudonniere arrives in England	15 November

De Gourgues' Expedition

De Gourgues leaves Bordeaux but has to return	2 August 1567
Fresh departure	22 August
De Gourgues lands in Florida	April 1568
He takes the two Spanish forts	24 April
Captures Fort San Mateo (de la Caroline)	27 April
Massacre of the Spaniards	27-28 April
De Gourgues leaves Florida	3 May
Arrives in France	6 June



Florida Museum of Natural History

University of Florida Cultural Plaza
SW 34th Street and Hull Road
PO Box 112710
Gainesville, FL 32611-2710

Hours:

Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday and holidays 1 - 5 p.m.
Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas

Admission to the museum is free,
but donations are accepted.

Fees may be charged for special events/exhibits.

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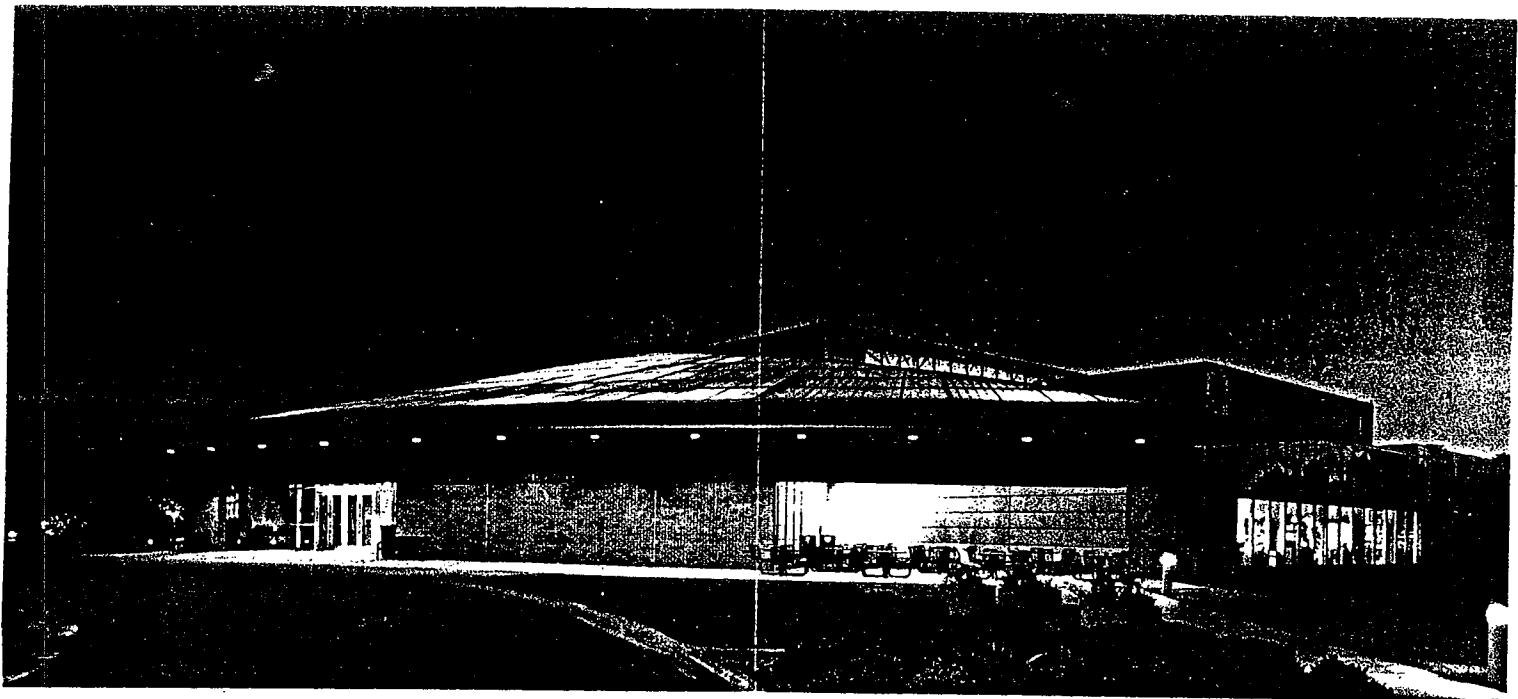
For after-hours rental information, dial Ext. 200



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Florida's Official
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Florida Museum of Natural History

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While exploring the natural history of Florida and the circum-Caribbean region, museum scientists make fantastic discoveries. From mammoths and miniature horses in northern Florida to pre-colonial settlements in Haiti, we share these adventures with you. So come and participate in the excitement of discovery that is the Florida Museum of Natural History!

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Recommended donations for visitors to the Pineland site are \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. These donations help the RRC maintain this important archaeological site.

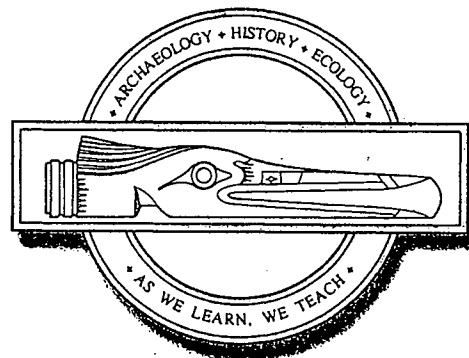
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