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Director

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Dr. A. McA. Miller
120 Dickman Drive, SW
Ruskin, FL 33570

Dear Dr. Miller,

Your letter of 13 March to Mary Ann Gentile finally passed through several hands and landed on my desk. I hope the enclosed paper will answer some of your questions about de Soto's camp site on Tampa Bay. I gave a talk on this in Bradenton last spring and wasn't too popular, although I did allow that de Soto probably first stepped ashore in the greater Bradenton area.

I will be giving another talk on de Soto at the Tampa Historical Society on May 20 (I don't know where, yet). Perhaps you will be able to attend.

Sincerely,

Jerald T. Milanich
Curator in Archaeology

Notes on the Route of De Soto in Florida from
Bahia Honda (Tampa Bay) to River of Cale (Withlacoochee):
Archaeological, Cartographic, and Ethnohistoric Evidence

Jerald T. Milanich
July, 1986

The Landing

First landing was west ~~or~~ south west of Bradenton — Camp was established well up the bay several days later

According to Luis de Biedma (1922:3, 4) the Hernando de Soto expedition landed in Bahia Honda, which Rodrigo Ranjel (1922:54) says is 8 leagues west (sic) of Bahia de Juan Ponce, thus differentiating the two bays. Ranjel (1922:53) notes that when the ships first reached the mouth of the harbor of Bahia Honda, there was difficulty in recognizing it. After landing De Soto renamed the harbor Port of Espiritu Santo (de Soto 1866:164; Elvas 1922:34; Garcilaso 1951:59; Ranjel 1922:63).

Both Bahia Honda and the Bahia de Juan Ponce were known to Spanish navigators prior to the de Soto expedition. Apparently de Soto was looking specifically for Bahia Honda and had it located and scouted by Juan de Anasco, one of his military aides prior to sailing from Cuba (Elvas 1922:20). The de Soto expedition had the benefit of Cabeza de Vaca's knowldge of the route of the ill-fated 1528 Panfilo de Narvaez expedition which had landed in Florida in 1528 (Elvas 1922:5-7). Additional evidence that de Soto had knowledge of the Florida Gulf coast prior to his voyage is the existence of Volume IV of Alonso de Chaves' Espejo de Navigantes, which was compiled no later than 1527 (Castenada et al. 1977). The Espejo gives descriptions and locations of both Bahia Honda and the Bahia de Juan Ponce. In it Bahia Honda is placed on the west coast of Florida at 29 degrees of latitude (actually the mouth is at 27 1/2 degrees). It is described as a large bay, 10 leagues long and 5

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leagues wide at the mouth. Portions of the interior of the bay are said to be very navigable (in terms of depth) and safe for all ships. From the mouth of the bay, running along the coast to the south, are two large islands, the islands of San Clemente, which are 4 leagues long. These are probably Anna Maria and Longboat keys. At the northern entrance of the bay are three small islands called San Gines (Castaneda et al. 1977:121-122). This description accurately fits Tampa Bay. The small keys at the north side of the mouth of the bay (above the main passage just south of modern Egmont Key?) could today be Mullet, St. Christopher, Hospital, Bonne Fortune, and St. Jean keys. Indeed, St. Jean could be a modern corruption of San Gines.

The Espejo describes Bahia de Juan Ponce as lying southeast of Bahia Honda at 27 1/4 degrees of latitude. Like Bahia Honda, the Bahia de Juan Ponce is described reasonably accurately and is said to be large and clear with safe harborage inside in the northern portion.

Both Rolf Schell (1966) and Warren Wilkinson (1954) have argued that de Soto anchored in San Carlos Bay, moving the ships of the expedition up into the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River where the horses were off-loaded and the camp established. Both authors trace the expedition's land route eastward along the Caloosahatchee to (Schell) or almost to (Wilkinson) Lake Okeechobee and then northward through the central highlands of the state. Their respective interpretations of a southerly landing and the subsequent route are incorrect. San Carlos Bay and the Caloosahatchee River mouth were not navigable for ships of any size prior to the end of the nineteenth century when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

undertook dredging and clearing operations. The initial Corps of Engineers survey of the Caloosahatchee River was undertaken in March and April, 1879 (Meigs 1880a). The engineer responsible for the survey noted that "no vessel exceeding 5 1/4 feet in draught can pass from the mouth of the river to Fort Myers at mean low-water. The range of the tides, however, between mean low-water and mean high-water being here 2.2 feet, vessels drawing from 6 to 7 feet are enabled by taking advantage of tides to reach Fort Myers" (Meigs 1880a:869). The engineer's report makes reference to oyster bars in the river's mouth.

A later, more extensive Corps report which is accompanied by a map of the river with soundings, also mentions the oyster bars: "For 17 miles from its mouth the river is broad and has a channel depth of from 6 to 20 feet, with the characteristics of an estuary. This portion of the river is obstructed by oyster-bars" (Black 1889:1337). That same report details the dredging that was done from 1882-1885 to open a channel 7 feet deep and 100 feet wide through the oyster bars. It is clear from these and other Corps reports that prior to the dredging and clearing operations beginning in the 1880s and continuing over subsequent years, the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River and the adjacent portion of San Carlos Bay were not navigable (San Carlos Bay is shown in the map accompanying the Black, 1889, report as having depths of 3.6-5.1 feet near the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River).

200 years open?

The San Carlos Bay/Caloosahatchee River landing and interior route also can be discounted because of their incorrect placements of aboriginal provinces and groups whose true locations are known from other sources. Both Schell and Wilkinson, because of the length of their

Florida routes, are forced to space locations of aboriginal peoples farther apart on the route than was truly the case. An excellent example is the Potano Indians whose aboriginal location is well documented by both French and non-de Soto-related Spanish documents as roughly modern Alachua County (e.g., Ningler et Confrontes 1927:163, 179-81; Lopez 1933:28-32; Ore 1936:112-114; Wenhold 1936; Seaberg 1955; Milanich 1978:75-81; Boyd, Smith, and Griffin 1952:7, 57-58; Swanton 1946:173-174; Chatelain 1941; Boniface 1971). The seventeenth century Spanish mission of San Francisco de Potano has also been located (northwest of Gainesville) and a portion of the associated village excavated (Symes and Stephens 1965). In order to fit their respective interpretations of the route to the Florida peninsula, Schell must place the town of Potano visited by de Soto at about northern Orange County (1954:end map), and Wilkinson must place it east of Lake Harris near Eustis, Florida (1954:64).

Just as the early Corps of Engineer surveys discount the San Carlos Bay/Caloosahatchee River locale as the landing site, so do they confirm that Tampa Bay was navigable: "Schooners and steamers are employed in the navigation of Tampa Bay, the former drawing from 5 to 7 feet, and the later from 7 to 12 feet of water. These vessels find no difficulty at the lowest stage of the tide in the navigation between the entrance to Tampa Bay at Egmont Key and buoy No. 9, which is located about 7,300 yards nearly due south of the pier at Tampa" (Meigs 1880b:871).

A detailed map of Tampa Bay made by the Corps of Engineers to accompany a report of June 30, 1897 (Benyaurd 1897), clearly shows this channel (Southwest Channel), which passes south of Egmont Key and

northeast; its minimum depth is 25.5 feet. This natural channel passes by the mouth of the Little Manatee River about 1.5 miles offshore. From the edge of the channel to the northern shore of the mouth of the Little Manatee River, a minimum depth of 9 feet of water exists. This is deeper than the shallower, non-channel portions of the bay elsewhere along the easterly shore of the bay (except for the mouth of the Manatee River, which has depths of 8-9 feet also extending out to the natural channel; the drainage system of the Manatee River, however, is much more braided than the Little Manatee and there is less of a clear way to shore). The same map shows a high point called Indian Hill about 2.5 miles south of the mouth of the Little Manatee River. This is probably the Cockroach Key site, 8Hi2, a 35-foot high prehistoric shell midden (Moore 1900:359-62; Walker 1880:418; Willey 1949:158-172; Florida State Museum collections catalogue #99367).

The small peninsula of land today known as Piney Point is not apparent on the map as the finger of land extending out into the bay, as it is today. Water depth approximately 0.5 miles offshore from the present location of Piney Point is still 9 feet, but it shallows rapidly as one moves toward shore. Other than at the mouths of the Manatee and Little Manatee Rivers, this is one of the few locales on the west side of the lower bay where deep water comes that close to land. Perhaps this was recognized subsequent to 1897 when the map was made and the finger of land was dredged up to make an earthen pier. De Soto probably offloaded his horses near Piney Point and then swam them across the Little Manatee River to his new camp at the north side of the river's mouth, as discussed below.

Two other nineteenth century sources, both guides for pilots, also support Tampa Bay as the landing site, indicating that Charlotte Harbor was not suitable for larger ships. It should be remembered that both of these accounts predate the dreding of the harbors done by the Corps of Engineers. In The American Coast Pilot (Blunt 1822) Tampa Bay is described as follows:

> The entrance of Tampa Bay is obstructed by various sand shoals, upon which are raised some islands. Between these shoals there are three channels to enter, called the West, South West, and South East; the two first have plenty of water on their bars; on the first (at low water) there are 23 feet, and in the second 18 feet. The channels are frank, and to take them there is not necessity of advice, as, at high water, the shoals shew (sic) themselves, and at low water are dry. (p. 279)

Charlotte Harbor is described as being less navigable, at least for ships drawing more than 8 feet of water:

> Carlos bay is a large entrance made in the coast in which are emptied various rivers, whose mouths are covered by many keys and shoals, which leave between them channels more or less wide: the northernmost is called Friar Gaspar, and has 6 feet water; the next, called Boca Grande, is the deepest, having 14 feet water. This bay is only good for vessels of 8 feet draught, by the little shelter which it affords in gales in winter; and although the holding ground is good, you are obliged to look for the bends of the bay to shelter you from the wind which blows. The tide rises 2 feet, and when the wind is off shore it runs with great velocity (Blunt 1822:280).

The second set of sailing instructions comes from The West Indian Pilot, vol. 1, printed in London in 1861 (Barnett 1861). Tampa Bay is again described as very navigable while Charlotte Harbor is not:

> The outer part of the estuary (Tampa Bay) is greatly obstructed by a middle-ground of hard sand, with depths from 8 to 12 feet, which stretches two-thirds of the way across from the western shore. Vessels of 18 feet draught, however, can pass round the east and north sides, and thence down a lane of deep water on the west side of it, to secure anchorage in 4 or 5 fathoms within only a short distance of Piney point (Barnett 1861:466),

And, "Charlotte harbor, on San Carlos bay, (is) an extensive bight, with only 8 to 12 feet water" (Barnett 1861:468). All of this evidence certainly supports Tampa Bay as Bahia Honda, de Soto's landing place.

There are also archaeological and ethnohistorical data which support Tampa Bay as the landing site and a location at the mouth of the Little Manatee River as the site of de Soto's camp. Archaeological investigations in the Tampa Bay region began more than a century ago and have continued unabated since (e.g., Stearns 1870, 1872; Walker 1880; Moore 1900, 1903; Fewkes 1924; Sterling 1930, 1931; Willey 1949; Griffin and Bullen 1950; Bullen 1951, 1952b; Luer and Almy 1981). As a result, more than 200 archaeological sites have been located and the prehistory of the bay is quite well understood. At the time of both the Narvaez and de Soto expeditions the Safety Harbor archaeological culture occupied the bay region (Willey 1949:475-488; Bullen 1952b, 1955, 1978; Milanich and Fairbanks 1980:204-210; Luer and Almy 1981). Safety Harbor temple mounds, burial mounds, and midden sites are well documented for Manatee,

Hillsborough, and Pinellas counties surrounding the bay; Safety Harbor sites also extend inland, north at least to the mouth of the Withlacoochee River, south to Charlotte Harbor, and inland to eastern Polk County. From the de Soto narratives, we learn that the names of the aboriginal groups living around the eastern and northeastern portions of Tampa Bay included the Ucita, Mocoso, and Capaloey (Pohoy) Indians. Names of the latter two groups also appear in later French or Spanish documents (Swanton 1946:151, 173; Ore 1936:6) and are associated with Tampa Bay. One such document describes a 1612 Spanish expedition to Tampa Bay by the governor of Florida, Juan Fernandez de Olivera. Twenty St. Augustine soldiers were dispatched to subdue Indians in South Florida who had attacked northern (missionized?) Florida Indians. Along with a pilot, the group traveled by boat down the Suwannee River to the Gulf of Mexico and then went by sea to a large bay located at 27 1/3 degrees of latitude north. The Bay of Pooy, which is certainly Tampa Bay, is described as deep enough for a fleet of ships to enter. Living in the bay are the Pooy (Pohoy) and the Tocopaca (Tocobaga) aborigines (Quinn 1976:137). The Pooy told the Spanish that de Soto had landed there. Pooy or Pohoy is a form of Capaloey, whose name appears in the de Soto narratives and who are said by Ranjel to be enemies of the Ucita.

Luis Geronimo de Ore (1936:6), writing in the early seventeenth century, also records that the de Soto expedition landed at a place the Indians called Pohoi. It is not certain, however, if his information is based on the same 1612 expedition or is he had additional evidence.

The Tocobaga Indians, encountered by Pedro Menendez de Aviles two decades after the de Soto expedition (Zubillaga 1946:272-277, 291-297,

303-304; Solis de Meras 1964:223-230, 242), were located on the north side of the bay, probably the west side of Old Tampa Bay. By that time, the Tocobaga were evidently the most politically important tribe around the bay. Today, researchers often use the generic term Tocobaga to refer to the various Tampa Bay aboriginal groups (Bullen 1978:50; Milanich and Fairbanks 1980:230).

Let us now turn to the evidence for de Soto's camp at the mouth of the Little Manatee River. Eight archaeological sites are recorded for that locality, from the river mouth extending inland to the town of Ruskin (8Hil, 23, 27, 29, 30, 93, 94, 536; a distance of about three miles). No systematic survey of this exact locality has been carried out and it is likely that these sites represent only the remnants of shell middens and mounds which once blanketed both banks of the river. Similar clusters of sites were present at the mouths of the Manatee and Alafia rivers and at Cockroach Key and Bishop's Harbor, all along the eastern edge of Tampa Bay.

If de Soto's expedition camped at or near the north bank of the Little Manatee River near its mouth, we would expect to find the archaeological remains of the aboriginal village of Ucita and Spanish artifacts of the de Soto period. The Gentleman of Elvas describes the village as follows (1922:23): "The town was of seven or eight houses, built of timber, and covered with palm-leaves. The Chief's house stood near the beach, upon a very high mount made by hand for defense; at the other end of the town was a temple, on the top of which perched a wooden fowl with gilded eyes.... The Governor (de Soto) lodged in the house of the Chief....The rest of the dwellings, with the temple, were thrown

down, and every mess of three to four soldiers made a cabin, wherein they lodged."

These two conditions for identifying Ucita's village (as well as the geographical criteria found in the narratives) are fulfilled by the complex of archaeological sites on the north side of the mouth of the Little Manatee River, consisting of a probably temple mound, 8Hi536; a large shell midden, 8Hi94) and the various mounds and middens of the Thomas mound complex (8Hi1 and 8Hi23), all of which are found along the north bank of the Little Manatee River from its mouth inland about 1.5 miles. Excavations were carried out at the Thomas site proper by C.B. Moore (1900:358-359) and under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration program and the Florida State Board of Conservation (Anonymous 1939; Simpson 1937; Willey 1949:31, 103-105, 113-135; Bullen 1952b:1-2, 7-20). The other sites remain unexcavated. Spanish artifacts have been excavated from the Thomas site burial mound and other European materials, not identified to origin, have been excavated directly across the Little Manatee River at the Sellner shell middens (8Hi30; Bullen 1952b:71-75).

From the Thomas Mound, Moore (1900:359) reports "a number of blue glass beads and two bits of lookingglass." The later WPA and Florida Board of Conservation excavations produced "about 200 more glass beads, a triangular piece of sheet copper, measuring three inches on each side, a tubular silver bead, a brass pendant or tablet, and a larger silver pendant" (Bullen 1952b:17). Additional European artifacts were excavated from the Sellner shell mounds which extend "about a half mile along the south bank of the mouth of the Little Manatee River, opposite the Thomas

mound" (Bullen 1952b:71). European specimens, reported by Bullen (1952b:72-73) included a "copper penny, a copper punch, modern iron and brass, lead weights, a long glass bead, and bones of a pig and of a horse or of a cow." Although Bullen considers the materials to be of recent origin, the long glass bead may be a Nueva Cadiz Plain bead, a type known to date from the de Soto era (Smith and Good 1982:27-28).

Other Spanish artifacts were excavated in the 1930s from the Parrish mounds in Manatee County, inland 10-15 miles along the Little Manatee River, and still more possible de Soto materials have come from other sites around Tampa Bay. Unfortunately there has been widespread destruction and disturbance of all of these sites and many have been destroyed. At the present time we need to carry out archaeological reconnaissance and excavations to assess the integrity of these and other sites. Preliminary work suggests the Thomas mound complex is destroyed, but a portion of the Sellner midden still exists.

In summary, the archaeological evidence from the mouth of the Little Manatee River supports the contention that the Indian village where de Soto placed his camp was on the north bank of the river near its mouth. Although John R. Swanton (1939, 1953) has argued for the Terra Ceia site as the location of Ucita, the location does not fit the narratives' descriptions nor have excavations at the site produced any sixteenth century Spanish artifacts (Bullen 1951, 1952a).

The River of Mocoso

At the end of the first day's march after breaking camp at Ucita, de Soto's expedition camped beside the River of Mocoso, the Alafia River.

Most likely, Chief Mocoso's town was somewhere along this river or one of its tributaries. Apparently de Soto did not pass through the town of Mocoso proper; the expedition probably bridged the river at Bell Shoals, about 7.5 miles up river (measuring in a straight line) from the bay.

There are two archaeological sites which may be the remains of Mocoso's town. One is on the north side of the Alafia River about 0.5 miles from the mouth. C.B. Moore (1900:356-358) described the Mill Point village/mound complex (8Hi16-20) and carried out limited excavations in several of the mounds. Shell middens are present along the bank of the river at the south side of the side. According to Moore's map, the middens are about 1000 feet long and he gives the maximum height as 8 feet. At the eastern end of the site is a large temple mound with a borrow pit to the north. The rectangular mound measures 148 by 62 feet and is 11 feet high with a ramp extending out toward the village plaza. On the opposite side of the plaza is a burial mound. Two other low sand mounds, perhaps the bases of other structures, lie to the north.

(alafia)

Well inland adjacent to a tributary of the Alafia River is another candidate for the village of Mocoso, the Picnic mound (8Hi3). The site, located about 14 air miles from the bay, is adjacent to Hurrah Creek and near the South Prong of the Alafia River, about 7 miles below where the river splits into a north and south prong. At the time of excavation by the WPA/Florida Board of Conservation archaeologists (Bullen 1952b:61-71) the upper portion of the burial mound had been badly disturbed by looters.

PICNIC

According to Bullen (1952b:63) the disturbed portion of the mound, most of the secondary cap, "Originally ...contained burials and many post-Columbian objects. Screening of this disturbed dirt produced fragmentary skeletal material, objects of European origin, including many glass beads of various types, and nearly 100 narrow triangular arrow points." And, "A large number of glass beads and post-Columbian metal objects were found, particularly in the upper or secondary mound, both during the W.P.A. excavation and previously.... An iron celtiform axe came from disturbed dirt.... Silver objects included a small claw- or fang-like object, a perforated disc, a decorated pendant, an undescribed pendant, ..." (Bullen 1952b:69). We do not know about the village site associated with this burial mound. The large quantity of Spanish artifacts associated with the mound makes it a leading candidate for Mocoso's town. According to Garcilaso (1951:227-228), the supplies left at the camp at Espiritu Santo with de Soto's force which had remained there were given to Mocoso when the camp was burned and the men traveled northward to rendezvous with the main body of the expedition preparing to winter at Apalachee.

Adjacent to the Bell Shoals crossing point on the south side of the Alafia River is a Safety Harbor site (8Hi79). A surface collection from this site contains aboriginal Safety Harbor pottery, three Spanish olive jar sherds, and one fragment of Spanish blue-on-blue pottery. The site may be the location of de Soto's field camp.

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Lake of the Rabbit and Lake of St. John

After crossing the Alafia River, the expedition passes through (or by) the Lake of the Rabbit, the Lake of St. John, the dry plain where Prado died of thirst, and then the plain of Guacoco where they first spotted maize growing. The sand hills where a person might die from a combination of heat and thirst are located in a thin, pie-shaped triangle that runs north-south with Zephyrhills and Lumberton at the base and Dade City at the apex. Between Tampa Bay and Dunellon are found mixed hardwoods and loamy soils, a sure sign in Florida for aboriginal agriculturalists; these conditions lie in a north-south band beginning about Dade City and going up through Brooksville to north of the Pasco-Citrus County line. The village of Luca probably lies in that band and the village of Urriparacoxi must have been to the southeast; probably Vicela and Tocaste are also nearby. In other words, after crossing the Alafia River, the River of Mocoso, the expedition might have gone in a northerly direction (probably moving along the trail that later was the military road from Fort Brook to Fort Foster to Fort Cooper); they may have traveled fewer miles per day during this, the early stages of the expedition. In general they averaged 12-14 miles per day.

On the other hand, after crossing the River of Mocoso they might have moved northeasterly toward the upper headwaters of the Withlacoochee (and its swamp), where Hurriparacoxi was hiding, before moving northeasterly past Zephyrhills into the dry plain. As a consequence the location of the Lake of the Rabbit and the Lake of St. John given here may actually be too far west, although the highways selected to mark the Trail (in the last section) would remain the same.

Accepting the intepretation of the northerly route as most likely, after the crossing of the Alafia River, the Lake of the Rabbit would be about Lake Thonotosassa; they could have picked up what became the military trail here. Southeast of the lake about one mile is the Jones Mound which contained burials and scraps of European metal and at least one glass bead (Bullen 1952b:57). The next day's camp would have been in the vicinity of Zephyrhills, and the Lake of St. John is probably west of Zephyrhills. There are several possibilities; the one I like is 3 miles west and is called Sixmile pond; it is certainly on an old trail. After leaving here they entered the sand hills, moving northward. That day they might have stopped when they hit the wet area round Dade City (Indian Lake is just west of town). This is about where the vegetation/soil change takes place and where we would expect them to encounter the first maize fields. One Indian mound in the region, 8He14 (which I think is on St. Clair Lake southeast of Brooksville) contained glass beads.

The next day they continued through gently rolling country, the plain of Guacoco, where they first sighted maize. At this point they are in the vicinity of Dade City. The exact route they took after leaving the Dade City locale is uncertain. One, the "eastern" route, is close to the Withlacoochee River through Luca (and near Urriparacoxi's town, which is probably near the rivers swamping headwaters) near modern Lacoochee. The least likely "western" route places them closer to the Brooksville. The Weeki Wachee burial mound near the coast west of Brooksville contained a very large amount of de Soto era Spanish artifacts, including Nueva Cadiz beads (Mitchem et al. 1985). With either option, the general route remains the same.

Luca, with either route, would be in eastern Hernando County, and Vicela was in either extreme northeast Hernando County or extreme southeast Citrus County. Tocaste, a village said to be on a lake, is probaby the Duval Island site, 8Ci7, on Lake Tsala-Apopka near Floral City; it is a Safety Harbor period site and a Spanish ax was found there. A number of Safety Harbor period village sites and burial mounds are found around Lake Tsala-Apopka and within the Withlacoochee Cove wetlands adjacent to the Withlacoochee River. One of the sites, the Ruth Smith mound, contained quantities of Spanish metal and glass beads, including Nueva Cadiz beads (some of this material has been described, Mitchem and Weisman 1984; Mitchem et al. 1985). The location of the Ruth Smith mound is within seven miles of the Stokes Ferry crossing on the Withlacoochee River, one possible route the de Soto expedition used to bridge the river and swamp of Cale.

Recent excavation of the Tatham Mound by the Withlacoochee River Archaeological Council and the Florida State Museum has produced additional evidence for a mid-sixteenth century Spanish presence in Citrus County. Those ongoing excavations, which will continue in the Fall, 1986 (funded by a private, anonymous donor), have revealed Spanish glass and metal beads and other Spanish objects along with bones of aborigines which were cut with metal knives or swords. One piece of metal has been tentatively identified as from the lower arm portion of brigandine armor; canvas-like cloth impressions are apparent on one side and it exhibits a rivet and a rivet hole. Mass burials in the mound suggest disease epidemics, which would be expected if the population had come in contact with the de Soto expedition.

It was on the west side of the Withlacoochee Cove region that the expedition encountered noticeably broader paths. Most likely this well traveled path later became the north-south route used by the U.S. military during the Second Seminole War and later by early settlers. Today highway U.S. 41 follows this same path.

Across the River and Swamp of Cale to the Town of Cale

The narratives of Ranjel and the gentleman of Elvas give us several clues to the location of the crossing of the "river or swamp of Cale" (Ranjel 1922:67), which is certainly the Withlacoochee River. An advance force, 56 mounted men and 50 on foot passed by a lake before arriving at the river, described as having a "powerful" and "strong and broad" current. The crossing itself involved both building a bridge and wading for a distance of three crossbow shots and it was made with a great deal of difficulty. Narratives describe the country immediately before the river as "low, very wet, pondy, and thickly covered with trees" and with palmetto (Elvas 1922:36-37; Ranjel 1922:67-68). Probably the crossing was at the northern end of Lake Tsala-Apopka; possibly it was across the Cove of the Withlacoochee itself. It is not impossible to cross the Cove and Lake Tsala Apopka west-to-east on foot. Today S.R. 44 follows an old trail due east from Inverness. The 1895 USGS quadrangle map shows another crossing several miles north. However, even in normal summer high water, either of these routes would have been very difficult and there seems to be no reason for de Soto to have taken the hard way. The easiest route was to continue moving northward (along the U.S. 41 route)

through Citrus County, skirting the western edge of the Cove and Lake Tsala Apopka. This point nears to be cleared up with additional research. Likewise, we need to carry out excavations at the Duval Island (Tocaste?) site.

There are two old trails which cross the Withlacoochee in this locale. One is the present U.S. 41 crossing at Dunnellon; the second is the S.R. 200 crossing at Stokes Ferry (also known as Camp Izard Ferry), the traditional crossing at the time of the Second Seminole War. I prefer the second as the de Soto crossing for two reasons: (1) the land before the crossing is indeed wet and pondy; the U.S. 41 crossing is approached by relatively higher and drier land; (2) the narratives tell us that once across the river and within the province of Cale, the expedition found "a great deal of maize" (Elvas 1922:37; Ranjel 1922:68, says Cale was "a good region for corn"). The S.R. 200 crossing leads directly into such a region; vegetation and soil maps show an area of hardwood forests and loamy soils extremely suitable for agriculture in southwestern Marion County and extending northward thorugh the western halves of Marion and Alachua counties to the Santa Fe River. This region was the heartland of the Cale and Potano Indians, both farming peoples. De Soto's expedition, still traveling almost due north since crossing the Alafia River, was to continue north through this rich agricultural region. Highway 41 skirts the western side of this region, especially in westernmost Marion and eastern Levy counties, and it is not the best choice for the exact route, although it is the only possiblity for the general route. The exact route may be along an old road that is shown parallel to it on the 1895 USGS quadrangle maps.

This latter north-south trail passes through the agricultural zone. It extends north from the Camp Izard crossing on the Withlacoochee River and parallels U.S. 41 (which is to the west) at an average distance of about 5 miles. In Marion County (from south to north) it passes through Heidtville, Cotton Plant, and Elmwood before passing across the northeast corner of Levy County (between Priest Prairie and Johnson Lake) and entering Alachua County on the west side of Levy Lake. S.R. 121 apparently follows this trail through the its route across the corner of Levy County to the western side of Paynes Prairie (from just south of Priest Prairie). Within Marion County, portions still exist, e.g. the five miles of dirt road runing north-south through Cotton Plant.

Once across the River of Cale the expedition passed through the aboriginal village of Uqueten which was subject to Cale. De Soto came upon an abundance of corn and sent some back by mules to those men who were behind him on his route. He arrived at Cale, which was abandoned, and set up camp. Elvas reports that de Soto had all of the nearby maize gathered and enough for three months was secured.

Cale is not said to be particularly large (Biedma 1922:5, says it is a small town) and there is no indication that it is the major town of the province of Cale. De Soto remained in the town for nearly two weeks to allow his men to rest (after the force was united) and to gather food. Cale must be within a half days march of the Withlacoochee River. Possibly it is in the vicinity of Ross Pond or Ross Prairie just to the east of the trail. During a 1965 survey of the proposed route of the Cross Florida Barge Canal, Ripley P. Bullen recorded the remnants of

three archaeological sites in that region, all near S.R. 200 where it was to intersect the barge canal. The first, 8-Mr-100, is described as a small village, ca. 100 by 700 feet, which had been destroyed by the excavation for the Gulf Atlantic Ship Canal many years previously (Bullen 1966:6-7; FSM archaeological site files). A second small village, 8-Mr-101 had previously been destroyed also. A third site was also recorded, but the survey team found only chert chips. The site had been destroyed by the construction of S.R. 200. All of these locations, plus others, need to be resurveyed by archaeologists. Locating Cale is a major goal of the archaeological research to be carried out in 1986-87.

While at Cale, de Soto sent a party to Acuera for additional provisions. The name Acuera appears in later French and Spanish records and probably was the Timucuan group located between the Oklawaha and St. Johns Rivers, a region whose ceramic assemblage is that of the St. Johns culture, quite different from the Ocale/ Potano assemblage (see Goggin 1953; Deagan 1978:11-112; and Pareja 1627:36-37, who refers to a Timucuan dialect of the Santa Lucia de Acuera).

While at Cale the expedition heard much more about the province of Apalachee which was of "great fame," was "populous", and was "abounding in maize" (Biedma 1922:5; Elvas 1922:39, and Ranjel 1922:69). Accordingly, de Soto left Cale on August 11, 1539, with a force of 50 calvary and 60 infantry (Elvas 1922:39; Ranjel says 100 on foot) hoping to reach Apalachee. Luis de Moscoso remained at Cale with the remainder of the men until they received word on "how the advance section got on" (Ranjel 1922:69).

Marking the General Route from the Landing to Cale

The De Soto Trail is presently marked from Inverness, Florida, northward to the Florida-Georgia border. Southward from Inverness to the landing site, the general trail remains to be marked; the reticence of the De Soto Committee to recommend the southern portion largely arose from its failure to agree on the landing site. Was it Tampa Bay or another location farther south (some members held out for the San Carlos Bay/mouth of the Caloosahatchee River locality as the landing site)? I think that the evidence that has now been assembled leaves no doubt that the landing was on Tampa Bay.

The exact location of the camp established by de Soto after landing may never be determined because of the widespread destruction of archaeological sites on the eastern side of Tampa Bay. The Thomas mound site complex, selected as the camp site in this report, has been destroyed. However, we still need to check other sites in the general region (including a major one on the north side of the mouth of the Manatee River) and we need to talk with local people who might have collected artifacts from the Thomas site at the time of its destruction.

Based on the best evidence available at this time, if I were marking the general route of the de Soto Trail from the landing site to Inverness I would place it on the following existing highways (see attached map which includes names of aboriginal villages and other locations):

For political and other reasons the route could begin at the existing de Soto National Monument just west of Bradenton. Indeed, de Soto's fleet sailed right by here and it was not far away that de Soto himself first stepped ashore while looking for the passage into Bahia

Honda (Tampa Bay). From the monument take S.R. 64 east into Bradenton to the U.S. 41 intersection; turn north on 41 and cross the Manatee River; across the river at Palmetto U.S. 301 begins, intersecting with 41. Turn on U.S. 301 north and continue across the Little Manatee River and the Alafia River; continue on 301 past Tampa, across the Hillsborough River, through Zephyrhills to Dade City. From Dade City there are several options. One, is to follow U.S. 98 from Dade City to Brooksville, then turn on U.S. 41 and follow it into Inverness. A second option is to take U.S. 98 north and then west out of Dade City. Then turn on S.R. 39 north through the Chinesgut National Wildlife Refuge to S.R. 48 which leads west to U.S. 41 at Floral City; U.S. 41 then leads to the existing Trail at Inverness (this is the best option and the one drawn on the enclosed map). Any of these routes (and several others) would serve to mark the general trail.

In the De Soto Trail brochures, etc., you might wish to point out other nearby state and federal attractions, like the Withlacoochee State Forest, Dade Battlefield, and some of the state parks (e.g., Madira Bickel and Gambel Mansion). From some of the correspondance I have received, it appears that people are interested in traveling the Trail at a leisurely pace, taking in other sights along the way.

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PETER BENNETT, Ph.D.
Director

904 / 392-1721

May 5, 1987

Dr. Arthur M. Miller
120 Dickman Drive SW
Ruskin, FL 33570

Dear Dr. Miller,

Thank you for your nice note. Here is another report on the southern portion of the route; much of it is also covered in the one paper you have.

Yes, I am still giving the talk on May 20th in Tampa. I still don't know where. However, my local contact is Glen Westfall of the Tampa Historical Society, 813-247-6641.

Thank you for the offer to go to the mouth of the Little Manatee River. I am afraid that I can't do it this trip. I already promised to go up to Safety Harbor to look at some collections that might be associated with Menendez. Perhaps we can do it another time.

Sincerely,

Jerald T. Milanich
Curator in Archaeology

p. 11 need to assess Thomas mound

THE FLORIDA STATE MUSEUM

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PETER BENNETT, Ph.D.
Director

904 / 392-1721

May 26, 1987

Dr. Arthur M. Miller
120 Dickman Drive, S.W.
Ruskin, FL 33570

Dear Dr. Miller,

Thank you very much for your memorandum on investigating the area around the Little Manatee River to try and locate evidence of the de Soto expedition camp. Your idea is excellent and it certainly would be more efficient for you and your students to do it, than for me. You also have much better local contacts, etc.

I have several thousand dollars in our de Soto budget that could be used for expense money or whatever for your project. I could also come down and give a presentation to the students and bring one of our people to give a workshop on identifying Spanish artifacts that are de Soto markers.

I would like to have access to your data and to be able to include it in our de Soto book and in reports that I have to send to the Florida Department of Natural Resources whose money we would be using. However, I would hope that you would publish your results (e.g. in The Florida Anthropologist and/or elsewhere) so others could cite them. And I would certainly cite you and your project as the source of our information.

I am not necessarily interested in the contents of the Thomas burial mound, which apparently was mainly of the Weeden Island period with some intrusive contact period items in the top. Artifacts from the village areas (including the Sellner midden on the opposite side of the river) may be much more important. A former graduate student here, Bruce Council, told me that his parents own land (their residence?) on the north side. I am sure they would be cooperative. And if you find any undisturbed village areas, it might be beneficial to carry out some archaeological tests.

What's next?

Sincerely,

Jerald T. Milanich
Curator in Archaeology

Bahia Honda (Tampa Bay) to River of Cale (Withlacoochee): Archaeological, Cartographic, and Ethnohistoric Evidence

Jerald T. Milanich
July, 1986

The Landing

According to Luis de Biedma (1922:3, 4) the Hernando de Soto expedition landed in Bahia Honda, which Rodrigo Ranjel (1922:54) says is 8 leagues west (sic) of Bahia de Juan Ponce, thus differentiating the two bays. Ranjel (1922:53) notes that when the ships first reached the mouth of the harbor of Bahia Honda, there was difficulty in recognizing it. After landing De Soto renamed the harbor Port of Espiritu Santo (de Soto 1866:164; Elvas 1922:34; Garcilaso 1951:59; Ranjel 1922:63).

Both Bahia Honda and the Bahia de Juan Ponce were known to Spanish navigators prior to the de Soto expedition. Apparently de Soto was looking specifically for Bahia Honda and had it located and scouted by Juan de Anasco, one of his military aides prior to sailing from Cuba (Elvas 1922:20). The de Soto expedition had the benefit of Cabeza de Vaca's knowldge of the route of the ill-fated 1528 Panfilo de Narvaez expedition which had landed in Florida in 1528 (Elvas 1922:5-7). Additional evidence that de Soto had knowledge of the Florida Gulf coast prior to his voyage is the existence of Volume IV of Alonso de Chaves' Espejo de Navigantes, which was compiled no later than 1527 (Castenada et al. 1977). The Espejo gives descriptions and locations of both Bahia Honda and the Bahia de Juan Ponce. In it Bahia Honda is placed on the west coast of Florida at 29 degrees of latitude (actually the mouth is at 27 1/2 degrees). It is described as a large bay, 10 leagues long and 5

Report submitted to the Division of Recreation and Parks, Florida Department of Natural Resources. On file, Florida State Museum, Gainesville.