

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST



Native American Conquest: The Midwest

By Donald E. Sheppard
Edited by James M. Cooper

Tampa Bay
February, 2001

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I shall be forever grateful to my uncle, William Goza of Gainesville, for introducing me to stories of Hernando de Soto and the "The Ride of the Thirty Lancers" 35 years ago; To Dr. Brent Weisman of Tampa for showing me, in the fields of Florida, the importance of archaeology, and for his insistence that I write my findings; To Mr. Lee Sultzman of Arizona for sharing his profound knowledge of Southern and Midwestern Native American cultural groups; To Dr. Douglas E. Jones of Huntsville for explaining Alabama's geography and resources while in those fields; To Dr. Lawrence A. Clayton of Tuscaloosa for his wonderful friendship and for sharing his knowledge of DeSoto's activity in Peru; To the late Dr. Frederick P. Bowser of Stanford, and Dr. Thomas J. Nechyba, of Duke, who both painstakingly criticized my work, corrected my grammar and encouraged me to proceed; To Doctors Jeffrey P. Brain of Harvard, Vernon J. Knight, Jr, and Ian W. Brown, both of the University of Alabama, for personally defining realistic considerations for me to keep in mind while tracking DeSoto; To Doctors Francis G. Crowley of Missouri, James J. Miller of Tallahassee, Lynda Norene Shaffer of Boston, and Jose Fernandez of Orlando who listened, read my manuscripts and provided me with practical constraint and realistic insight; To Mr. James M. Cooper, my friend in Tampa who cheerfully edited this document; To Mz. Cheryl Lucente, who drew the cover image; and to those wonderful pioneers who recorded, transported, transcribed, published, translated, annotated, and preserved the DeSoto Chronicles in our libraries; and to the fishermen, firemen, hunters, landowners and common people everywhere who showed me places I could never have otherwise seen or put into perspective with DeSoto's extraordinary journey across this wonderful Country.

D.E.S.

Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Acknowledgements	2
Table of Contents	3
The Midwest Conquest	4
Northward from Alabama	10
Tuscaloosa	11
The Tennessee River	16
Back into Tennessee	19
Lawrenceburg	20
Fortress Alabamu	27
Kentucky	35
The Great River	38
Indiana	42
Wabash and White Rivers	47
Terre Haute	50
Scouts to Chicago	55
News of a Northern Sea	62
Retreat	63
Southern Illinois	63
The Mississippi River	72
DeSoto's Lunar Activity	76
References	77
Map of DeSoto's Trail	81

Native American Conquest

By Donald E. Sheppard

The Midwest

At Mabila, Alabama

Led by speculation about which trails Hernando DeSoto followed through Alabama and points west, archaeologists have searched for traces of his army's presence there, but to no avail. No trace of DeSoto has ever been found in Alabama despite the fact that his army WAS there for at least six months nearly five centuries ago. No one doubts that DeSoto found Mabila, the source of the name Mobile, in southern Alabama. What historians did not know until recently was that from Mabila, DeSoto's army proceeded northward to Chicago, leaving clues as to its geographical location.

This book has described in detail DeSoto's trail to Mabila from his landing place at Port Charlotte, Florida. That trail led across Florida and into Alabama, across Georgia and the Carolinas, into parts of Tennessee and

Georgia, then back through Alabama to Mabila, a day's walk from Prairie Bluff on the Alabama River. This book contends that landmarks found along DeSoto's way and described in his people's journals still exist where they were found in the 1540's. Scientists have never challenged this observation, but because most cling to the ancient belief that DeSoto landed at Tampa Bay, their supposed DeSoto trails through Alabama and points west are well off-track.

In general, previous DeSoto trail seekers failed to comprehend that distance-measurement was critical to Spanish conquest. The actual distances between places, along straight lines - measured in Spanish "legal" leagues by pacers and plotted by cartographers - were essential for navigation and eventual land title. By today's standard, there are 2.634 "legal" miles per Spanish "legal" league (See "Background" in the Introduction Section of this Book). Most of America is titled in reference to a grid similar to the one DeSoto planned, with statute miles our units of "legal" measure. That land titling concept was inherited from the Romans and was applied to all New World colonies by both Spanish and English-speaking governments.

DeSoto's people knew that he could claim lands directly inland of only 200 leagues of coast for his colony,

and that they could claim lands only within his colony's boundaries. They kept track of desirable homesteads, usually Indian villages, in their personal journals and thereby described the army's movements for us. They recorded direction of march and league measure (5,000 paces per league) between landmarks; no other reference points existed to guide them back to those places once DeSoto selected his colony. Our rivers, mountains, plains, shorelines and pastures have not formed or moved since DeSoto was here, and roads between them follow the same Indian trails that DeSoto traveled. Modern maps allow us to follow DeSoto's people's directions between America's landmarks along those trails with reasonable accuracy, but only if we start precisely where their journals began in America: at DeSoto's landing place in Florida.

Pasturelands were critical to conquest. DeSoto's army had over 200 horses, each requiring adequate food every day. Horses were so important to DeSoto's mission - he used them to raid Indian villages for their food and captives to carry it - that pasturelands or Indian villages with stored food were always DeSoto's intermediate destinations. But Native Americans had no horses; their lifestyles simply were not accommodating to DeSoto's army of over 600 men and 200 horses. To make allowance for this, DeSoto marched his army in six divisions; each

camped separately on open fields or Indian clearings. His army was strewn across the landscape as it advanced, their campsites often at great interval. Horsemen provided intelligence for selecting desirable campsites for each division, then "posted" DeSoto's marching orders accordingly. Horses were kept fit and captains were kept aware of the proximity of other divisions in case of attack. Accurate distance measure was DeSoto's key to these ends and would serve as the foundation of land title once his planned colony was established. Scientists have NOT applied these important concepts, on a day-by-day basis, while attempting to track DeSoto's army.

DeSoto's ambition, to push his army rapidly overland, at six leagues the first day and five the second from his landing place in Florida, proved to be more than they could handle. His army averaged just over four-and-a-half leagues (about 12 miles) each day on the road most of the way from Florida; five days on the road and two at rest; 60 miles per week as a rule. Below Gadsden, Alabama, approaching Mabila, "they marched five or six leagues ((13 to 16 miles)) daily when going through a peopled region, and as much as we could through a depopulated area..." That pace was necessary given the approaching winter. The climate was much cooler then, and food was hard to find in that region.

Moon phases were also critical to DeSoto's marching schedule. He had only wood for fires and wood could not be easily carried to artificially light his army's way after sunset. They marched only during the day or under a full moon and not at all during stormy weather. Midnight raids on unsuspecting Indian villages, DeSoto's proven tactic in Peru and Central America, were out of the question except on or near Full Moon with open skies. Likewise, DeSoto's scouts were limited in the distance they could explore beyond reinforcement at night in hostile Indian territory unless the moon was full. The timing of the moon's phases during DeSoto's conquest was completely neglected by ALL DeSoto trail seekers until this book was published.

Alabama's Tuscalusa Indians were the boldest DeSoto encountered. Chief Tuscalusa knew that DeSoto was coming months before he arrived. DeSoto was headed for his ships - waiting at Mobile Bay with more soldiers, weapons, clothing and food - just three days down the Alabama River from Mabila, Tuscalusa's stronghold. Spaniards found barren fields in that area; the natives had cleared them (twenty years later, Tristan de Luna, another Spanish Conquistador, would experience the same hardship at the same place for the same reason). DeSoto chose to proceed through Tuscalusa's Province on the full moon, but Tuscalusa attacked him at Mabila - despite

overwhelming odds against him. The Spaniards lingered near Mabila to recover. They lost nearly everything to fires in that battle.

DeSoto's eventual flight, away from Mabila, also occurred on the full moon, this time to preclude news of his "defeat" from reaching his ships at Mobile Bay. DeSoto had heard about two deserters from a previous Spanish coastal expedition just days before arriving at Mabila. Any deserter from his army could spoil his plans to colonize North America among prospective settlers elsewhere with news of conquest hardships. DeSoto was careful, therefore, not to lose track of anyone. He prevented every member of his army - be they officer, wounded, fit, slave, woman or friendly native - from straying away from his now clustered army. He planned to keep them together until they were isolated beyond a natural barrier, deep in America's interior, for the Winter, then march them farther north in the Spring. The ships would be gone by then, back to Cuba. They would return the following winter, as DeSoto had instructed them to do in such an event, when he could give them news of successful conquest.

DeSoto's trail led north from Mabila, located just above Prairie Bluff, Alabama. The trail led through a large field where DeSoto's army recovered from wounds received

in battle at Mabila. The army had found villages in that field along their way to Mabila. Soldiers had been distracted by food (and possibly women) in them well into the battle. Later they found fields of food and comfort in them during the army's recovery. The intelligence of those well stocked villages, in large open pastures with accommodating women, near a deep river (the Alabama River) with a protected anchorage (Prairie Bluff) and not too far inland of a deep water, protected port on the Gulf of Mexico (Mobile Bay), would influence Tristan de Luna's decision to go there two decades later. South of Mabila, at Prairie Bluff, Indian canoes could drift down river to Mobile Bay to trade. No one in DeSoto's army would ever make contact with the ships in that bay, however; he and half of his army would perish in America's Interior. The testimony of survivors follows... ((The author's comments will appear inside double parentheses))

Northward from Mabila

"From the time Governor DeSoto entered Florida until leaving the battlegrounds of Mavilla, one hundred and two Christians had died, some of their illness and

others being killed by the Indians. He remained in Mavilla ((with 540 soldiers plus women and slaves, 200 horses and 300 pigs)) for twenty-eight days ((one moon cycle)) because of the wounded, during which time he was always in the open fields ((so no one could escape to the ships)). It was a very populous and fertile land. There were some large enclosed towns and a considerable population scattered about over the field, the houses being separated from one another one or two crossbow flights ((in today's Dallas and Perry Counties; that huge pasture is strewn with evidence of long-term Native occupation))." © 1993, Univ. of Alabama Press

"On Sunday, the fourteenth of November of 1540 ((on the Full Moon)), the governor left Mabila, and the following Wednesday he arrived at a very good river ((the Black Warrior River, having marched north to Greensboro and down Big Brush Creek to the river)).... and on Thursday they went across bad crossings and swamps ((Black Warrior River's east bank, a flood prone pasture)) and found a town with corn, which was called Talicpacana ((Moundville))."

Tuscaloosa

((During their two-day rest, having marched 60 miles from Mabila in five days,)) "the Christians ((scouts on horseback)) had discovered, on the other side of the

river, a town ((Northport, just upstream of Moundville near today's Tuscaloosa Airport)) that seemed good to them from a distance ((from the east bank of Black Warrior River)), and well situated, and on Sunday, the 21st of November, Vasco Gonzalez found a town, a half-league ((one-and-a-quarter miles)) from it which is called Mosulixa ((Tuscaloosa)), from which they had transferred all the corn to the other side of the river, and they had it in heaps, covered with mats, and the Indians were on the other side of the water ((with the corn)), making threats. ((The army moved up stream from Moundville, through the swamps.)) A raft of logs was made ((“in four days”)), which was finished on the twenty-ninth of the month ((a week after the army arrived at the large pastures on the river's bank just southwest of today's Tuscaloosa, directly opposite the Indians at today's airport)), and they made a large cart to carry the raft up to Mosulixa ((“transported one night a half league up river” from the pastures west of Tuscaloosa)), and having launched it in the water, sixty ((armored)) soldiers entered in it... ((DeSoto used this tactic to surprise the Natives who had watched the barge being constructed; the natives massed their forces on the west bank of the river directly opposite the army during that week, but DeSoto fooled them by launching the barge well up river during the darkness of New Moon on the 29th

of November, 1540)). The Indians shot innumerable arrows; but this great barge landed, the Indians fled and did not wound but three of four Christians, who took the land easily and found plenty of corn."

"The next day, Wednesday, all the army went to a town that is called Zabusta (Northport; directly opposite today's Tuscaloosa)). The Christians ((had)) mounted their horses and went upstream to assure the crossing where the governor, with all those who remained with him...crossed the river in the barge ((which had been brought to, and launched at, today's Tuscaloosa)) and with some canoes ((which had been abandoned on the river's west bank during the dawn raid on Northport)); and they went to take lodging in another town on the other end ((of Northport's enormous Western pasture - the Tuscaloosa Airport is built there today)), because up river ((up Sipsey River Valley, which lies a day's march northwest of Tuscaloosa's airport)) they found another good town ((the horsemen found it; we call it Fayette)) and took its lord, who was named Apafalaya, and brought him as guide and interpreter, and that bank was called the river of Apafalaya ((Sipsey River - DeSoto's army pillaged that valley, the richest in Western Alabama, for the next week while marching through it. Apafalaya may have helped the Natives of Tuscaloosa and Northport to oppose DeSoto's

crossing of Black Warrior River; he lived in Fayette, however, at the center of his valley kingdom))."

"From this river and province ((the Sipsey River Valley - fifty miles of it)) the Governor and his people left ((the north end of the valley)) in search of Chicasa on Thursday, the ninth of December, and they ((the horsemen)) arrived the following Tuesday ((six days up the trail - 70 miles through "an unpopulated region" on the nearly Full Moon)) at the River of Chicasa ((the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals - the Indian trails from Sipsey River went through Natural Bridge, at the north end of that river, and led to Muscle Shoals, as do the roads and railroads today)), having passed many bad crossings and swamps and rivers and cold weather ((north of Natural Bridge; that land is broken and unfertile))."

"And so that you know, reader, what life those Spaniards led, Rodrigo Ranjel, as an eyewitness, says that among many other needs of men that were experienced in this enterprise, he saw a nobleman named Don Antonio Osario, brother of the Lord Marquis of Astorga, with a doublet of blankets of that land, torn on the sides, his flesh exposed, without a hat, bare-headed, bare-footed, without hose or shoes, a shield at his back, a sword without a scabbard, the snows and cold very great; and being such a man, and of such illustrious lineage, made him suffer his

hardship and not lament, like many others, since there was no one who might aid him, being who he was, and having had in Spain two thousand ducats of income through the Church; and the day that this gentleman saw him thus, he believed that he had not eaten a mouthful and had to look for his supper with his fingernails. I could not help laughing when I heard him say that noblemen had left the Church and the aforementioned income in order to go to look for this life at the sound of the words of DeSoto. Because I knew Soto very well, and although he was a man of words, I did not believe that he would be able with such sweet talk or cunning to delude such persons. What did such a man wish, from an unfamiliar and unknown land? Nor did the Captain who led him know more of it than Juan Ponce de Leon and the licenciado Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon and Panfilo de Navarez, and others more skillful than Hernando DeSoto, had been lost in it. And those who follow such guides go from some necessity, since they find places where they could settle or rest, and little by little penetrate and understand and find out all about the land. But let us go on; small is the hardship of this nobleman compared to those who die, if they do not win salvation."

The Tennessee River

"They found that the river of Chicasa ((the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals)) was flowing out of its bed ((not over its banks)), and the Indians on the other side were up in arms, with many white banners. Orders were given to make a barge ((while the army caught up to the horsemen who built it)), and the Governor sent Baltasar de Gallegos ((soon to be DeSoto's most trusted Camp Master)) with thirty swimmers on horseback to go to look upriver ((under the still Full Moon)) for a place where they could cross and attack suddenly upon the Indians ((as they had done two weeks before at Tuscaloosa with no moon)); but he was detected, and so they abandoned the crossing ((upriver of the gathering army)), and they crossed very well in a barge on Thursday, the sixteenth of the month ((one week after the army left Sipsey River Valley - 70 miles in rain and snow; they probably marched every day)). And the Governor advanced with some on horseback ((through Florence and up Shoal Creek, under the nearly full moon, into Tennessee while the army crossed the river)), and they ((with DeSoto)) arrived very late at night at the town of the lord ((Lawrenceburg, 40 miles from the Tennessee River crossing place; DeSoto's mounted Thirty Lancers covered that same distance in Florida during a similar phase of the moon)), and all the people were gone.

The next day Baltasar de Gallegos arrived with the thirty ((horsemen)) who went with him ((well ahead of the army)). They were ((all)) there in Chicasa that Christmas ((once the entire army crossed the Tennessee River and trickled up the trail to Lawrenceburg during the week before Christmas))."

DeSoto's isolation of his army, above the Tennessee River, precluded any thought of their escape back to the waiting ships at Mobile Bay. The Tennessee River flows north from where DeSoto crossed it, into what he believed was the South Sea (the Pacific Ocean) on the north shore of this "Island of Florida". His calculated isolation of his army beyond what he perceived to be the center of this island would encourage them to march northward in the Spring, toward his intended route to China; not southward, back toward his ships.

The Tennessee River crossing at Muscle Shoals ("The first village of this province that our men reached..." coming from Mabila) was described by an historian of that century from testimonies of those who were with DeSoto: "The village was on the side of the river from which the Spaniards approached...and was situated on the edge of a large and deep river having very high banks ((as Muscle Shoals still is; the Tennessee River looks the same there today)).... However silently the Spaniards attempted to

launch the barges in the river ((at night)) and go aboard them, they could not avoid being heard by 500 Indians who were patrolling the opposite bank of the river...fearing that still more enemies would come, the Spaniards embarked as hastily as possible...One of the barges struck the landing squarely and the other fell downstream from it, and because of the high bluffs along the river, the men could not land. Thus they were forced to row hard ((against the river's current)) to get up to the landing... Governor DeSoto went across on the second trip...and the Indians saw that their enemies were numerous and that they could not resist them, and they retreated to some woods that were not far from the village ((today's Florence))..." The memory of those hostile Tennessee River people would linger in the minds of DeSoto's soldiers that winter; none of them would attempt to escape to the ships.

Historians have failed to track DeSoto to and across the Tennessee River; they suppose DeSoto crossed the Tombigbee River, wintered in Mississippi, then preceded west. The Tombigbee River may have been large at that time, almost a lake, but it could NOT have had the same flow which the Spaniards described given the close proximity of its headwaters. Besides, DeSoto's isolation of his army, well away from his ships at port in Mobile Bay, was critical to his primary mission of attracting settlers to

North America. Had DeSoto needed only food and shelter that winter, he would have halted his army on Black Warrior River or in Sipsey River Valley since food and housing were plentiful at both. Containing his army on either of those rivers, however, would have been nearly impossible because both flow into Mobile Bay, as does the Tombigbee River. Had DeSoto been seeking only food and shelter for winter he would never have passed Northport, much less Sipsey River Valley. He crossed the Tennessee River, instead, to isolate his army in America's Interior.

Back into Tennessee

Having followed the course of today's railroads (built over Indian trails) from Natural Bridge, Alabama, and across the Tennessee River at Florence, Hernando DeSoto's army followed that trail up Shoal Creek into Tennessee, through Loretta and to Lawrenceburg (40 miles from the river crossing at Florence). DeSoto had ridden the distance from the crossing in one day (under a nearly full moon, as his Lancers had done elsewhere). The horsemen rode that distance in two days. The army spent most of a week crossing the Tennessee River and proceeding 40 miles to Lawrenceburg, a place they called Chicasa. This is the place Davy Crockett would call "Home" three centuries later. The Tennessee River surrounds most of

Lawrenceburg's giant plain, isolating it from points south and, thereby, DeSoto's army from his ships at Mobile Bay (precluding any thought of the army's escape to them). DeSoto's army would winter at Lawrenceburg for four months, the ships would be back in Cuba by then.

Winter in Lawrenceburg

"After they were in Chicasa they suffered great hardships and cold, for it was already winter, and most of the men were lodged in the open field in the snow before having any place where they could build houses. This land was very well peopled, the population being spread out as was that of Mabila ((in today's Alabama)). It was fertile and abounding in corn, most of this being still in the fields. The amount necessary for passing the winter was gathered. Certain Indians were captured, among whom was one who was greatly esteemed by the ((local Chicasa)) chief. By means of an Indian the governor sent word to the chief that he desired to see him and wished his friendship. The chief came to offer himself to him, together with his lands and people. He said that he would cause two ((other provincial)) chiefs to come in peace. A few days afterward they came with him... one being named Alabamu ((of

Nashville)) and the other Nicalasa ((probably of Huntsville, Alabama)). They presented the governor with 150 rabbits and some clothing of their land, namely blankets and skins.

"Monday, the 3rd of January of 1541, the chief of Chicasa came in peace and gave guides and interpreters to the Christians in order to go to Calusa ((probably Huntsville)), which had renown ((good food, women and dogs, all of which the Spaniards highly valued))....Calusa is a province of more than ninety towns, not subject to anyone, of ferocious people, very bellicose and very feared, and the land is prosperous in those parts ((as it is today))."

"In Chicasa ((Lawrenceburg)) the Governor commanded that half of the people of his army should go to make war on Sacchuma ((well down Natchez Trace from Lawrenceburg's Plain, in northeast Mississippi; Sacchuma was not paying homage to the Spaniards, as others of that neighborhood were forced to do)), and on the return ((from Sacchuma)) the Chief Miculasa ((Mico means Chief in that Indian language - Mico Calusa was chief of the Calusa, most likely of Huntsville)) made peace ((probably in Florence, Alabama, through which the army passed on its return to Lawrenceburg)), and messengers ((with more food and animal skins)) came from Talapatuca ((Moundville, below Tuscaloosa, Alabama))." The natives of

that large area were forced to provide for DeSoto's army, or else captives taken from their villages - leaders, braves, women and children - would be fed to DeSoto's dogs; that tactic worked well in Nicaragua where DeSoto learned it from Balboa, his mentor. DeSoto's army had gone to Sacchuma and Florence to find captives, which would force those tribes to pay tribute for their eventual release. That foray lasted several weeks.

The army's camp at Lawrenceburg was described by a DeSoto historian of the sixteenth century: "It was situated on a level elevation extending from north to south between two streams having little water but much timber, consisting of walnuts, oaks, and live oaks, at the foot of which was the fruit of two or three years. The Indians let it go to waste because they had no cattle to eat it and they themselves did not use it, having other, better and more delicate fruits to eat... the army collected all the necessary provisions and brought from outlying small villages much wood and straw from which to make houses, because those of the principal village, though they numbered two hundred, were not enough. Our men were in these lodgings almost two months, enjoying some degree of quiet and rest..."

The State of Tennessee has preserved DeSoto's army's winter encampment in the form of Davy Crockett

State Park. That Park's boundaries are the two streams mentioned above, Crowson and Shoal Creeks. They flow from north to south on either side of a long elevated pasture with forests on either side. Trees line the broad creek beds which flow together at the Park's southern boundary. The high elevation between the creeks extends northward for several miles, then opens into a tremendous pasture, tens of thousands of acres stretching ten miles northward; Natives would exploit that weakness in DeSoto's encampment's otherwise natural perimeter. "One night...having realized that the north wind, which was blowing furiously, was favorable to them, at one o'clock the Indians came...in order to set fire to our encampment..."

"... (M)ore than three hundred Indians entered in the camp without the sentries detecting them, two by two and four by four, with some little jars in which they brought fire, in order not to be noticed or seen... ((they set fire to the north end of the camp; the wind fanned the fire southward))"

"...(A)nd the Indians not finding any resistance came and set fire to the camp and awaited the Christians outside behind the doors, who came out of the houses without having time to arm themselves; and as they rose, maddened by the noise and blinded by the smoke and flame of the fire, they did not know where they were going

nor did they succeed in getting their arms or in putting saddle on horse; neither did they see the Indians who were shooting at them. Many of the horses were burned in their stables, and those which could break their halters freed themselves. The confusion and rout were of such a nature that each one fled wherever it seemed safest ((they fled into the forests of the creeks on three sides of their camp, away from the attack)), without anyone resisting the Indians....The Indians thought that the horses, which were running about loose, were the horsemen gathering together to assault them...and fled away....The camp was consumed by fire."

"The Indians did us very great damage, and killed that night fifty-seven horses and more than three hundred hogs, and thirteen or fourteen men, and it was a great mystery of God why, without our resisting them or doing a thing, the Indians turned to flee and left us, because if they had pursued us, not a man of all of us would have escaped."

Davy Crockett's Place

"Next the Spaniards passed to a savanna one league ((2 1/2 miles)) from the camp in which they were, the place had huts and supplies, and they established camp on a slope and hill...(Davy Crockett's actual homestead sits on

that savanna, on that slope of Dry Land Creek, beside the hill which is the City of Lawrenceburg where Chicasa once lived - precisely the specified distance from the army's encampment on the top of the long hill which is Davy Crockett State Park)...and they made haste to set up a forge, and they made a billows from hides of bears; and they tempered their weapons and made new saddle frames and provided themselves with lances, since there were very good ash trees there.... ((There is an old water-grist-mill there today, made of stone and ash))."

"On Tuesday, the fifteenth of March, during the morning watch, the Indians attacked the Christians ((again)), determined to finish them, and they struck on three sides ((Dry Land Creek and a high ridge on its south side prevented attack from the south))."

"...Thanks to God it rained a little, so that because of the water they abandoned their plan...We were here about two months, making what we had need of in the way of saddles and lances and shields, and then we departed toward the northwest for another province that is called Alibamo ((DeSoto held some Alabamu Indians captive most of that Winter and knew they lived in the province north of Chicasa))."

"The land was flat and suitable for the Christians to profit thereby ((a square plain, twelve miles long and wide,

extends northward from Lawrenceburg and Davy Crockett State Park toward Natchez Trace - the road to Alabamu Province)). Some Indians were captured ((over the proceeding several months)), from whom the governor got information relative to the land beyond. On April 25th ((1541; the New Moon)), he left Chicasa and went to sleep at a small village called Alibamu ((the army marched four-and-a-half leagues, twelve miles, across Lawrenceburg's plain and camped at its northwest end)). It had very little corn and it was necessary after leaving there to commit themselves to an unpopulated region for seven days' journey ((84 miles at their normal marching rate of 12 miles per day)). Next day ((while the army gathered what food remained)), the governor sent three captains with horse and foot, each one taking a different direction, to search out provisions in order to cross the unpopulated region ((the land is broken and poor for that distance north to the Cumberland River)). Juan de Anasco, the accountant, went with fifteen horse and forty foot along the road where the governor was to go north, and found a strong stockade where the Indians were waiting (at the plain's northern opening to Natchez Trace).

Fortress Alabamu

The location of Fortress Alabamu, where the Indians chose to attack DeSoto's army, is worthy of note. Three accounts of that event follow; two are first-hand and one, the last, is based on interviews with survivors. The first account: "Here something happened to us that they say has never happened in the Indies, which was that in the middle of the road where we were to pass, without having food to defend nor women to guard there, but rather only to prove themselves against us, they made a very strong barricade of poles in the middle of the road, and about three hundred Indians placed themselves there, with determination to die before they relinquished it. As they saw us appear, some Indians came forth from the barricade to shoot arrows at us and threaten us that no man would remain alive. From this we considered that barricade differently, and with the people that defended it, we believed they had some food there or something that they were guarding, of which we had much need, because we were expecting to cross an uninhabited region of twelve days' duration, in all of which there was not one thing to eat, except what we carried there. About forty of us dismounted and placed ourselves on two sides, so that at the sound of a trumpet we would charge the barricade all at once. We did it thus and entered, although we suffered

some damage, for they killed seven or eight men and wounded twenty-five or twenty-six of us. We captured some Indians and others we killed, and we found out from them that they had done that only with the intent of proving themselves against us, and for no other purpose. We looked for food there, although with difficulty, in order to enter into our inhabited region."

The second account: "As soon as they saw the Christians approach, with loud cries and beating two drums, they came out in great fury to meet us. It seemed best to Juan de Anasco and those with him to keep away from them and to inform the governor. He withdrew over a level ground for the distance of a crossbow flight from the barricade and in sight of it. The men of foot, the crossbowmen and those having shields placed themselves before the horsemen so that the horses might not be wounded. The Indians came out by sevens and eights to shoot their arrows and then to retire. In sight of the Christians, they made a fire and seized an Indian - by the feet and head - and pretended they were going to throw him into the fire, first giving him many blows on the head, signifying what they would do to the Christians. Juan de Anasco sent three horse to inform the governor. The latter came immediately, and since he thought he should drive them thence, saying that if he did not do so they would

become embolden to attack him at a time when they could do him more hurt, he ordered the horsemen to dismount and having divided them into four companies gave the signal and they attacked the Indians. The latter resisted until the Christians reached the barricade; and as soon as they saw that they could not defend themselves they fled along a way where a stream flowed near the barricade, and from the other shore shot some arrows. And inasmuch as no crossing was found for the horses for the time being, they had time to get away. Three Indians were killed there, and many Christians were wounded, fifteen of who died on the march a few days later. It seemed to all that the governor was much to blame in not having had an examination made of the disposition of the land which lay on the other side of the stream and of ascertaining the crossing ((place)) before attacking them..."

The last account: "...having marched on the first day ((from Lawrenceburg)) four leagues ((about two miles)) through a level country dotted with many small villages having fifteen or twenty houses, they passed a quarter of a league ((just over half-a-mile)) beyond the inhabited region... When the Spaniards halted to make camp in that field they sent cavalry ((horsemen)) to scour the country on every side and see what was all around the camp. They returned with the information that nearby was a fort built

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

of wood, manned by very select warriors... They had bridges over the river made of wood, but so shaky and ruinous that they could hardly pass over them... ((description of the battle omitted))....((until))... they ((the Indians)) abandoned the fort within a short time, and those who were able to cross the river, now being safe ((from the Spaniards on the near bank)), formed themselves into a squadron. Our men remained on this side... DeSoto, who was desirous of punishing those Indians for their impudence and audacity, calling to the mounted men and crossing the river by a good ford that was above the fort, drove them forward across a plain for more than a league, spearing them all if they had not been overtaken by darkness..."

That place still exists: Traveling twelve miles northwest from Davy Crockett's Homestead at Lawrenceburg, we pass broad fields until reaching the end of the plain where DeSoto's army camped. There the land becomes hilly and broken except at Buffalo Creek, which flows northwest from the plain into Buffalo River. Indian trails followed that creek and river to Natchez Trace and today's Nashville, the home of the Alabamu Indians. DeSoto planned to raid their homes for food but had no guides to lead him there; the captives had died of starvation and exposure that winter. Approaching Buffalo

Creek from the plain, however, a broad pasture on Buffalo Creek's west shore invites anyone to proceed through it between steep hills on either side. As one precedes, however, Buffalo Creek enters a muddy ravine, the pasture narrows and the land inclines up a steep hill behind which Buffalo Creek bends west and cuts the hill's backside into steep cliffs. A broad pasture can be seen on the opposite bank from the cliffs, but, to get there, and all points northward, one must back-track to where DeSoto's army camped, turn east, cross Buffalo Creek at a sandy ford which is hidden by the creek's forest (where it is bridged today), then follow the creek's east bank several miles north to the creek's ravine and pasture beyond the cliffs, the way the Indians knew how to get to Nashville.

Fortress Alabamu barricade was located at the foot of the hill at the north end of Buffalo Creek's west bank, just out of view of the army's camp at the north end of Lawrenceburg's plain. The Spaniards were enticed up that side of Buffalo Creek, the wrong side. DeSoto's scouts would have discovered that had the Alabamu Indians not prevented their passage. After the army attacked, the Alabamu Indians escaped up the hill to the cliffs. They crossed the creek's ravine on an inclined bridge to the north shore pasture, then headed for home. The Spaniards had to go back to their camp to find the ford (where the

bridge is today) which would lead them to the creek's pasture north of the cliffs. The Indians were gone by the time the Spaniards arrived north of the cliffs at dark, with no moon. DeSoto resolved not to chase them to Nashville; he had more important things to do. He headed northwest, toward Quizqui (Casqui, the way Frenchmen would spell it), toward his objective: the Indians' Legendary Northern Sea. DeSoto's humiliation by the Alabamu Indians at the barricade must have been cause for local celebration. Buffalo Creek's West Side pasture, just south of the cliffs, is marked by a large earthen mound at the spot where DeSoto's army found the barricade. Perhaps that place became famous for deceiving DeSoto's Great Army.

The Rivers Flow Northward

DeSoto saw that the rivers flow northward from Lawrenceburg's plain and surmised that the north shore of this "Island of Florida" lay just ahead. Along the way, the rivers continued to flow northward until he reached the Ohio River, twelve marching days up the trail - 170 miles from Alabamu barricade. The army marched five leagues (14 miles) per day to the Cumberland River; they had little left to carry and their pigs were few in number. DeSoto did not worry about deserters any more; he knew his army would catch up or die in hostile Indian Country. "On

Saturday, the last day of April ((1541)), the army departed from the site of the barricade and traveled nine days ((seven on the road for most of them)) through an uninhabited region ((up today's Highway 48; the Indians of Hohenwald, Centerville and Dickson fled before them)) and a bad road through forests and swamps ((at Duck and Cumberland Rivers)) until Sunday the eight of May, when they arrived at the first town of Quizqui ((Clarksville)); and they took them unexpectedly ((under a nearly Full Moon)) and captured many people ((women and children)) and cloths ((probably animal hides, during a dawn raid))..." DeSoto had stayed too long in Chicasa; April showers probably kept him there, which would account for the army's complaint about bad roads and swamps beyond. The trail north from Alabamu Barricade led through narrow valleys and creek bed forests; horseback warfare's worst scenario.

DeSoto crossed the Cumberland River just east of today's Highway 48 Bridge below Clarksville; the only place on that river's run with no high bluffs on either side. That fording place, on the Indian trail, which DeSoto followed from Lawrenceburg, would become a ferry crossing before the Civil War. Union soldiers would cross there, too, but headed down the trail. DeSoto found a village at Clarksville: "He reached the town of Quizquiz

without being perceived. He seized all the people of the town ((women and children)) before they got out of their houses ((the men were in the fields at the time))... Inasmuch as his men were ill and weary for lack of corn, and the horses were also weak, DeSoto determined to ((try to get along when the Indian men returned on news of his invasion))... So he ordered the ((Chief's)) mother and all the others released, and sent them with words of kindness... many Indians came with their bows and arrows with intention of attacking the Christians. The governor ordered all the horsemen to be armed and mounted ((Indians had never seen such weapons of war))... When the Indians saw that we were on guard ((with overwhelming strength)) they stopped a crossbow flight from the spot where the governor was, near a stream ((they stopped near the Cumberland River's ravine just west of today's Clarksville, well back from the horsemen))... and said they came to see what people we were and that they had learned from their ancestors that a white race would inevitably subdue them... and after offering skins and blankets... together with the others who were waiting on the shore, returned ((to their canoes; DeSoto had performed dramatic shows of force elsewhere to intimidate the natives)). Inasmuch as there was little

corn in the town where the governor was, he moved to another..."

"One league from this town was found another ((New Providence)) with much corn, and then, after another league, another, likewise with much corn ((in the flats of today's Fort Campbell Army Airport at the Tennessee-Kentucky State Line))."

Kentucky

((Hernando DeSoto entered Kentucky on May 10th, 1541, under a Full Moon from Clarksville, Tennessee. There he had attained a truce with the natives that would last through Kentucky and the next three States with only one exception: at the Ohio River, Kentucky's northern border. The Spaniards described one Indian Tribe in Western Kentucky between the Cumberland and Ohio Rivers. It took most of the army only five days to hike the 80 miles from Fort Campbell, near the Cumberland River, to where forward Scouts first reported sighting the Ohio River near Henderson. They marched quickly, at six leagues (16 miles) per day, across Western Kentucky's pastures because there are no burdensome swamps or rivers to ford. Stops were made at villages along their way. Today's Hopkinsville, Madisonville and Sebree were probably raided for favorite morsels: corn, women and

dogs. From May 21st. until the next Full Moon on June 8th, they camped just above Henderson while building rafts to cross the Ohio River into Indiana. Four accounts of their Kentucky adventure are mentioned here; three written by eyewitnesses and one based on interviews with survivors.))

((DeSoto's people called Western Kentucky's Indian Tribe by slightly different names, ranging from Quizquiz (influenced by a place name of renown from DeSoto's Conquest of Peru) to Quizqui to Chisca, all sounding about the same in their language. The French would call them Casqui and the English Kashinampo. That tribe shared a unique language with the Casqui of Southern Indiana, the Alabamu of Central Tennessee and the Coste of Eastern Tennessee. They lived next to each other when DeSoto visited each of them. That entire Indian language group would be scattered well before being described by later Europeans.))

((Somewhere in Quizqui Province, probably at Madisonville, near its center,)) "The Indians moved out of their village and left the food they had in their houses for the Castilians. ((Some of the Spaniards)) remained in that village called Chisca for six days in order to care for the sick and wounded... The next day... ((they)) marched for four short daily journeys of three leagues ((8 miles)) each, since the indisposition's of the sick and wounded did not

permit longer ones." © 1993, Univ. of Alabama Press. ((They would have camped near Slaughters, Sebree and Canoe Creek's East Fork along their way to the outskirts of Henderson, where the army was by then: 32 miles from Madisonville.))

"There they saw the Great River. On Saturday, the twenty-first of May ((1541)), the ((reassembled)) Army moved on to a savanna between the river and a small town ((Henderson)), and they made camp ((near Audubon State Park)), and began to make four rafts in order to cross to the other side." Others said, "... they came to a passage where they could cross the Great River, not that they could ford it, but where there was an open passage for reaching it, for previously all along its banks there had been extremely large and very dense woodlands, and the banks on either side were very high and steep and one could not go up or down them." ((The riverbanks flatten north of Audubon State Park where there is a horseracing track on the grassy north bank near Green River "Island," as that bank is called today. The river's flats have shifted in five centuries; the "Island" on the north bank was part of Kentucky at Statehood but, in 1541, DeSoto found it about where it is today, slightly narrower and attached to the north bank.))

The Great River

"Many of the Conquistadors said that the river was larger than the Danube. On the other bank of the river up to seven thousand Indians gathered to defend the crossing with up to two-thousand canoes, all with shields which were made of canes joined together, so strong and so tightly sewn that a crossbow would scarcely pierce them." ((The Indians gathered on the west bank of the Ohio River, which was filled by spring run-off and April showers.))

"We immediately moved there ((very near Audubon State Park on the river's east bank)), houses were built, and the camp was established on a level place, a crossbow flight from the river. All of the corn of all the towns behind ((including Henderson, Sebree and Madisonville)) was collected there, and the men set to work immediately to cut timber and square the planks for rafts. Immediately the Indians came down river ((from Evansville, Indiana)), landed, and told the governor that they were vassals of a great lord called Aquixo, who was lord of many towns and people on the other side of the river ((he lived at Angel Mounds State Park and controlled the Evansville area, a large scattering of farms and villages at the time))."

"Here ((from Audubon State Park to Spottsville, east of the Park)) we found the first little walnuts ((pecans)) of the land, which are much better than those from Spain

((they are still the pride of Northern Kentucky - the pecan breeding stock of America - the best in the World)). This town was near the Great River. They told us that this and other towns there pay tribute to a lord of Pacaha, who was well known in all the land." He would be found in Terre Haute, Indiana. DeSoto was headed his way from the time he crossed the Cumberland River and first heard about Pacaha at Clarksville.

"During this time the Indians each day at the hour of three in the afternoon ((with the sun at their backs, thereby blinding the Spaniards)) placed themselves in two hundred and fifty canoes that they had there, very large and well shielded, and drew near the shore where we were with a great yell. They shot all the arrows that they could and returned to the other bank." ((The Natives assembled on the west bank of the Ohio River directly opposite today's Audubon State Park, where the Spaniards were building their rafts.))

"Arrows came raining and the air was filled with them, and with such a yell, so that it seemed a matter of great dread; but when they saw that the work on the rafts did not let up for them, they said that Pacaha, whose men they were, commanded them to remove themselves from there, and thus they left the crossing undefended. And on Saturday, the eight of June ((Full Moon)), all the army

crossed the Great River in four rafts, and they gave thanks to God, because in their opinion, nothing so difficult could ever be offered them again."

Another eyewitness says: "... they made four rafts, in three of which, one early morning three hours before it became light, DeSoto ordered a dozen horse to enter, four to each one - men whom he was most confident would succeed in gaining the land in spite of the Indians and assure the crossing or die in doing it - and with them some of foot - crossbowmen and rowers - to place them on the other side. In the other raft, he ordered Juan de Guzman to cross with men of foot... And because the current was strong, they went up stream along the shore for a quarter of a league ((almost three-quarters of a mile)) and in crossing they were carried down with the current of the river and went to land opposite the place where the camp was ((there is reason to believe that DeSoto launched the rafts east of camp to surprise the Natives; the Ohio River's big bend, which DeSoto's camp was inside of, afforded him perfect opportunity to do so; rafts had been carried some distance at night elsewhere for the same purpose)). At a distance of two stones' throw before reaching shore the men of horse went from the rafts on horseback to a sandy place of hard sand and clear ground ((on Green River "Island" at today's Ohio River Bridge)) where all the men

landed without any accident. As soon as those who crossed first were on the other side, the rafts returned immediately to where the governor was and in two hours after the sun was up all the men finished crossing. The crossing was nearly a half league ((about a mile)) wide, and if a man stood on the other side, one could not tell whether he were a man or something else..."

DeSoto's Great River Crossing

Previous historians have pointed out that DeSoto's Secretary, from whom was gained our knowledge of the timing of DeSoto's activity in America, erred in reporting the day or date of the Great River's crossing. He wrote, "On Saturday, the 8th of June, all the army crossed the great river," but the 8th of June was a Wednesday in 1541. Historians have deduced that June 18th, which WAS a Saturday, was the actual date of the crossing. NONE of them, however, checked the timing of the moon's phases during DeSoto's Conquest. June 8th, 1541, was precisely Full Moon, a circumstance that DeSoto had wisely exploited elsewhere for making dawn raids on unsuspecting Native American villagers. If DeSoto's Great River crossing was made on the 18th, the moon would have been small but rising three hours before dawn; allowing for navigation but lessening the chances of the army being

seen by the Indians (not much, given that DeSoto's army would have been crossing the river directly INTO the rising moon on June 18th). Either way, DeSoto definitely crossed the Ohio River in June of 1541; not the Mississippi River, as ALL previous historians have mistakenly surmised.

Indiana

An Officer with Hernando DeSoto's army wrote: "Having got across the Great River ((into today's Indiana just above the Ohio River bridge point near Evansville on June 8th, 1541, under the Full Moon)), the governor ((DeSoto)) marched a league and a half ((four miles, eastward)) and reached a large town of Aquixo ((at Angel Mounds State Park)), which was abandoned before his arrival.

Angel Mounds State Park, Indiana

The late Dr. Glenn A. Black, a noted Indiana archaeologist, published several books in which he speculated that Hernando DeSoto's people described the Angel Mounds Site perfectly as Aquixo, a village on the shore of the Great River (the Ohio River near Evansville).

Thanks to Mr. B. Michael McCormick, a well published and respected historian of Terre Haute, we find that "Dr. Glenn Black's study of Angel Mounds in Vanderburgh County, Indiana, was published in 1967 by the Indiana Historical Society in two-volumes in a slipcase entitled Angel Site: An Archaeological, Historical and Ethnological Study. Ethnohistory magazine called it "a landmark in New World archaeology." Archaeology magazine hailed it as "a monument to the consummate archaeological craftsmanship and warm personality of the author." The quality of the publication is representative of the esteem Black engendered. I think it is fair to say that Black's "Angel Site" set is among the most popular and one of the most lavish publications ever issued by the Indiana Historical Society."

Dr. Black noted (on page 549, Volume 2) that "...the analogy between the physical type of Angel ((Mound)) men and women and the... peoples of the Southeast ((United States)) is sufficiently marked to add considerable validity to the documentation we have presented herein ((the DeSoto accounts)) aiming toward a reconstruction ((of the then prevailing theory that DeSoto wandered only through the Southeast)) with aid of historical data ((including all of the DeSoto Chronicles and other historical data), of a preliterate historical site ((at Angel Mounds)). It would

appear on the basis of archaeological evidence that this site could well have been the "principal town" of almost any one of the "provinces" through which DeSoto passed. Dr. Black preceded that statement with fifty pages of comparisons of archaeological data found at Angel Mounds with items described by DeSoto's people, including the topography of Angel Mounds with Aquixo (Angel Mounds), Pacaha (Terre Haute), and Casqui (Vincennes), three large provincial centers which DeSoto's people described in Indiana.

The dated argument by 1930's scientists, that DeSoto's people described only Mississippian Mound Societies in the Southeast, was crushed by Dr. Black's careful examination of Angel Mounds - in all respects similar to Southeastern Mounds, the very ones used by 1930's scientists to "prove" that DeSoto's people spent four years exploring only the Southeastern portion of today's America. Indiana has been deprived of knowledge of its native culture by such assertions by powerful scientists ever since. Historians, for the most part, have surrendered to that power, but anyone reading the available source material today, with knowledge of 20th century technology and America's topography, would conclude that all, save Dr. Black, had missed the mark with DeSoto's trail.

Into Indiana

“Over a plain they saw thirty Indians coming whom the Chief had sent to learn what the Christians were intending to do, but as soon as the latter had sight of them ((and their horses)) they fled. Those of horse pursued them killing ten and capturing fifteen. And since the town whither the governor was marching was near the river, he sent a captain with the men he deemed sufficient to take the rafts up stream ((to the town)). And because by land they frequently turned away from the river in order to get around inlets which thrust out of the river, the Indians had opportunity to attack those in the rafts and put them in great danger. For because of the strong current of the river, we did not dare to go any distance from land and the Indians shot arrows at us from the bluff. As soon as the governor reached the town, he immediately sent some crossbowmen down stream ((probably in abandoned Indian canoes)) who were to come as rear guard ((for the men on the rafts)).”

“When the rafts reached the town the governor ordered them taken apart and the nails kept for other rafts when they might be needed. He slept there one night and the next day marched in search of a province called Pacaha, which, he was informed, lay near Chisca where the Indians said there was gold.” ((The army first heard

about Chisca in North Carolina the year before: it was reported to lay somewhere north of the Great Smoky Mountains where they were at the time; they had seen a great river, the Tennessee River, flowing north from those mountains and believed that Chisca was somewhere along the river they had just crossed.) "We marched through large towns in Aquixo ((today's Evansville)) which had been abandoned for fear of the Christians. From some captured Indians we learned that a great chief lived three days journey thence, called Casqui ((at Vincennes))."

"On Tuesday, the twenty-first of June ((after having spent some time plundering the Evansville area, they left from there))...We went up the river, because in order to go to that province of Pacaha we had to turn upriver..." ((they turned northwest, up the Wabash River, instead of following the Ohio River eastward, as they had done in getting from Henderson, Kentucky, to Angel Mounds State Park, Indiana, and passed through the province of Aquixo, which is very beautiful and nicely situated, all the way to Fort Branch)). The next day, Wednesday, they passed through the worst road of swamps and water that they had seen in all Florida, and in this day's journey "the people suffered much hardship" at the White River's flats near its junction with the Wabash River during Annual Spring flood; Indian trails led to that very fertile and populated

place. The army slogged over Patoka River, through Gordon Hills and headed for Orrville on the north bank of White River. There are no bridges there, even today, just one giant and shallow lake at Spring time. Telephone poles there have high water marks on them about waist high and houses are built on earthen mounds. To go around this flooded plain the Spaniards would have had to build bridges upstream on the White River (where the highway and railroad bridges are today). Forward scouts had told DeSoto when the plain was fordable; he had waited around Evansville for the waters to recede enough to cross that enormous flooded plain.

Wabash and White Rivers

"On that day they walked continually through water until sunset, which in places reached to the waist and in places to the knee. When they came to dry land they were very glad for it seemed to them that they would be walking about lost through the water all night ((it looks the same every Spring; there are no dams on either the Wabash or White Rivers to prevent that plain from flooding)). At noon they arrived at the first town of Casqui ((Gordon Hills, a large "island" on that plain)). They found the Indians off guard for they had not heard of them. Many Indians, both men and women, were seized, besides a quantity of

clothing, blankets and skins - both in the first town and in another which was within sight of it in an open field a half league (just over a mile) from it, whither the horsemen had galloped ((on Orriville's south bank; they also saw Mount Carmel, Illinois, across the Wabash River from there, as they would later report)). That land is higher ((fifty feet or more)), dryer and more level than the land of the river behind. In the open field were many walnut trees with soft nuts shaped like acorns ((pecans)); and in the houses were found many which the Indians had stored away... For two days the governor marched ((up the east bank of the Wabash River)) through the land of Casqui before arriving at the town where the chief was ((Vincennes)), and most of the way continually through land of open field, very well peopled with large towns, two or three of which were to be seen from one town." That is why the Indian trails from Evansville crossed the mouth of the White River; they headed straight toward those fields, trees, villages and Illinois from Aquixo.

At Vincennes

"Friday, the day of St. John ((June 24th, 1541, the morning of New Moon)), they went to the town of the lord of Casqui ((Vincennes)), and he gave food and cloths

((probably animal hides)) to this army, and on Saturday they entered in his town; and he had very good huts ((probably as good as the ones used by Lewis and Clark, who followed Indian trails to and from that place three centuries later)), and on the biggest hut, over the door, were many heads of very fierce bulls ((buffalo)).... There the Christians placed the cross on a mound."

"...We found that the chiefs there were accustomed to have, next to the houses where they lived, some very high mounds, made by hand, and that others have their houses on the mounds themselves. On the summit of that mound ((the largest, which is still there today)) we drove in the cross, and we went with much devotion, kneeling to kiss the foot of the cross. The Indians did as they saw us do, neither more nor less..."

"On Sunday, the twenty-sixth of June, we left from there for Pacaha, enemy of Casqui ("upriver"), and we spent the night at one town ((Oaktown)) and passed others. And the following day ((Monday)) we crossed a swamp ((Busseron Creek just west of Carlisle)), in which the Indians had a well-made bridge, broad and of ingenious construction ((spanning the trees which line that very deep creek precisely where the bridges, old and new, cross over))...a swamp that was very difficult to cross, having deep miry places at the entrance and exit and clear water

in the middle, but so deep that for the space of twenty paces it was necessary to swim... The men crossed over some poor wooden bridges that were there, and the horses swam across with much trouble because of the mud on either side of the swamp". DeSoto's army crossed Busseron Creek Valley and camped at Merom, then spent the next night at Prairie Creek..."and on Wednesday they arrived at the town of Pacaha, a town and lord of great renown and very esteemed in those parts." Their accounts of Terre Haute are some of the best we have. Most of them spent 40 good days there, others would slog 168 miles to Chicago and back.

Terre Haute

Chief Casqui and his people had escorted DeSoto from Vincennes to Terre Haute, improving the bridge at Busseron Creek along the way between cities on unfriendly terms. DeSoto sent word to Pacaha that he was coming with Chief Casqui and expected Pacaha to be there when they arrived. Pacaha fled, instead, "with all his people out the other side of town. The governor immediately entered and together with the men of horse charged ahead where the Indians were fleeing; and at another town situated a quarter of a league ((half a mile)) from that place captured many Indians. And as the horsemen captured them they

delivered them over to the Indians of Casqui, who, being their enemies, carefully and with great pleasure took them to the town where the Christians were; and the greatest sorrow they had was in not having permission to kill them."

"The chief of Casqui caught up with the Christians at the time that they entered the town, and they looted it ferociously. In Aquixo, Casqui and this Pacaha we saw the best towns that we had seen up to then, and better palisaded and fortified, and the people of more beauty, except for those of Cofitachequi."

"Many pelts of deer, cat, and bear were found in the town..." which were used to make clothing and shoes for the army. Heavy buffalo skins were likewise used to make armor for the horses.

"On Wednesday, June 19th ((1541)), the governor entered Pacaha ("...we saw the town on a plain, well palisaded and with a moat of water around it, dug by hand"). He lodged in the town where the chief lived, which was very large, enclosed, and furnished with towers ((like a frontier cavalry fort)); and in the towers and stockade many loopholes ((to shoot arrows through)). An abundance of old and new corn was found in the town and fields... large towns ((spaced)) at a league and half a league ((2.6 to 1.3 miles)) were found, all enclosed. Where the governor

lodged there was a large marsh which came near to the enclosure and entered through a ditch round about the town so that but little of the town remained to enclose. A channel had been made from the marsh to the large ((Wabash)) river through which fish entered..."

Another eyewitness says, "The town was very good and very esteemed in those parts... well palisaded with towers on the walls and with a ditch around most if it, filled with water which enters through an irrigation ditch that flows from the river."

Likewise, other survivors told an historian, "... from Mabila ((in today's Alabama)) to that point they had always marched toward the north... The village had 500 large and good houses and was on a site somewhat higher and more elevated than its surroundings ((the French named it "Terre Haute," meaning "high ground"). The Indians had made almost an island of it with a ditch... 50 paces wide, all made by hand. It was full of water from the river... which flowed 3 leagues ((7 miles)) above the village... The moat surrounded three sides of the village, the work not yet being complete. The fourth side was enclosed by a very strong wall made of thick logs set in the ground... This great moat and canal were filled with fish from the river..."

Terre Haute is drained by man-made canals; most old, some very old. The Spaniards described the one we call Thompson Ditch, which was given that name in 1886 when the State of Indiana straightened it. It drains the city's south side into Honey Creek and the Wabash River, seven miles from its head at a beautiful man-made pond. "That pond had many very good fish of different kinds..." Another eye-witness confirms that location "... Indians in canoes discovered where the Chief of Pacaha was - on an islet between two arms of the river ((the Wabash))... there were 5,000 souls on that islet..." ((but when detected)) "...fled in great haste to the other side of the river... swimming, where many people were drowned, principally women and children... we captured many Indians - men and women - and a quantity of clothing which the Indians had on wooden rafts... ((several of those rafts)) went floating downstream and the Indians of Casqui filled their canoes ((then headed downstream for home without DeSoto's consent))... On that account the governor was indignant at Casqui and immediately returned to Pacaha ((village)) two leagues ((five miles)) away..."

The island where Pacaha sought refuge in the Wabash River was drawn on the Illinois Township Survey of 1848, five miles west (on Hulman Road) of the man-made pond at the head of Thompson Ditch. Pacaha's

Village fronted that pond's northeast side between the ponds arms on the bluff near today's airport; well above the villages on the plain where Terre Haute is today. The northeast side of the village was walled but gated, allowing Pacaha's escape when the Spaniards came in from the river on Hulman Road.

"Governor DeSoto and his people, being some days in Pacaha, made some excursions into the interior..."

To The Forest

"...They told him that in some mountains ((Hoosier State Forest)) forty leagues ((105 miles)) away there was a great deal of very good salt ((at today's French Lick)), and to the repeated questions they asked them, they replied that there was also in that country much of the yellow metal ((gold)) they asked for. The Castilians rejoiced greatly at this news, and two soldiers offered to go with the Indians to confirm it... they were directed to note the nature of the country through which they passed ((so the army could go there later)) and bring a report as to whether it were fertile and well populated ((so the Spaniards could settle that land)). To barter for the purchase of salt and the gold, they took pearls and deerskins and some vegetables... They also took Indians to accompany them and two of the merchants ((from other

tribes who knew the trails)) to act as guides. Thus prepared, the Spaniards set out, and at the end of eleven days that they spent on their journey they returned ((from French Lick, exactly 105 miles from Terre Haute)) with six loads of rock-salt crystals, not made artificially, but found in this state. They also brought back a load of very fine and resplendent brass, and concerning the quality of the lands they had seen, they said that they were not good, for they were sterile and thinly populated ((the same as today)). Because they needed it so badly, the Spaniards consoled themselves with the salt for their disappointment and misunderstanding regarding the gold."

"Hence DeSoto sent thirty men of horse and fifty of foot to the province of Calusa to see whether they could bend back toward Chisca by that way where the Indians said there was a foundry for gold and copper." That was, at least, DeSoto's publicly stated reason for sending them.

Scouts to Chicago

The King's Agent with DeSoto reported, "We were in this town ((Terre Haute)) 27 or 28 days to see if we could find a road north in order to travel to the South Sea (the Pacific Ocean, the only way Spaniards could get to China's markets to spend their New World fortunes)... some expeditions were made to capture Indians who might

inform us ((of trails to a sea reported to lie in that direction)). One expedition in particular was made to the northwest because they told us that there were Indian villages through which we could go..." The Agent went with DeSoto's scouts (probably the Thirty Lancers with select foot-soldiers) into Illinois along the Indian trail which crossed the Wabash River just northwest of Terre Haute at the Old Fort Harrison Site. DeSoto usually dispatched his Lancers on a full moon (July 1st, 1541, in this case) because they needed moonlight for surprise raids on Indian villages for stored food. They could not carry enough for their horses. Indian merchants were sought to guide them to the next village along their way (through Illinois).

Illinois Trails

The King's Agent with a scouting party for Hernando DeSoto's ill-fated Conquest of 1541 reported that. "...we traveled eight days ((northwest from Terre Haute, Indiana)) through an uninhabited land ((Indians fled with news of the Spaniards' arrival))... through many great swampy lakes where we did not even find trees but rather some great plains where the grass was so tall and so strong that even with the horses we could not force our way through it ((guides could not be found to lead DeSoto's

scouts to better trails)). At the end of this time, we arrived at some Indian houses ((at Chicago, having followed the route of Illinois Highway 1 camping near Paris, Ridge Farm, Danville, Hoopston, Watseka, Kankakee and Beecher each of seven nights on the road toward the Great Northern Sea, their destination))... houses were covered with sewn reeds. When the Indians wish to carry them away they roll up the reeds of the covering and an Indian man carries it and the woman carries the framework of poles over which it is placed, and it is set up and taken down so easily that even if they moved every hour they could carry their houses with them."

The next day, having spent the night of July 8th, 1541, under a Full Moon on the lakeshore at Chicago... "we found out from these Indians ((when asked if there was an ocean or village beyond Chicago)) that there were ((only)) some little settlements of that sort across the land, and all they did was set up their house where there were many deer, or on a swamp where there were many fish, and when they had frightened away the game and could not catch fish as easily as at first, they moved from there with their homes and all that they owned and went away to another place where they could find fresh game. This province was called Caluci ((lands north of Kankakee River, the Provincial boundary)); they were people that

paid little attention to sowing ((planting)), because they maintained themselves on fish and meat. We returned to the town of Pacaha ((Terre Haute))... Having seen that there was no road to traverse to the other sea ((the Pacific Ocean))..."

Spanish Galleons cruised the World's Oceans on "roads," but no road to the World's Oceans could exist across Lake Michigan because it is landlocked. There are no Ocean tides or salt in it. The King's Agent had perceived that at once at Chicago. Spanish Conquest of North America, and Hernando DeSoto's career, ended then and there. Spain never returned for a second look; Portugal would continue to control European shipping to and from the Orient by sailing around Africa, their half of the New World according to the Pope's decree. France and England, oblivious to what the Spaniards learned at Lake Michigan, would continue the search for a northern passage for the rest of that century. DeSoto, likewise oblivious to the news for the next week, continued to amuse himself with his power over the natives while waiting back in Indiana .

Meanwhile, Back in Indiana

"((Since)) the chief of Casqui ((Vincennes)) had stolen away ((with the goods from Pacaha's Island Refuge

on the Wabash River))... without asking for permission... Governor DeSoto tried to make peace with Pacaha ((of Terre Haute)), and he came in to retrieve a brother of his whom the Christians had captured... and DeSoto struck an agreement with Pacaha that he should go make war on Casqui ((at Vincennes)), which was very gratifying to Pacaha. But Casqui had warning of that intent, and he came with fifty of his Indians in very fine array; and he brought a jester in front of himself for grandeur, who, saying and doing witty things, gave occasion for much laughter to those who saw him. The Governor displayed anger and harshness in order to please Pacaha... Pacaha asked the Governor for permission to give a slash to Casqui's face with a knife, which the Christians had given him, and the Governor said to Pacaha that he should not do such a thing... the Governor asked Casqui why he had gone without permission. Casqui replied, 'You gave me the cross to defend myself from my enemies, and with that same cross you wish to destroy me ((given that Pacaha's people now wore crosses high on their heads so the Spaniards could recognize them as allies)). My Lord, now that God heard us, by means of the cross ((which the Christians had placed on the Indian mound at Vincennes))... all those of my land knelt down to it to ask for rain from the God who you said suffered on it, and he

heard us and gave it to us in great abundance and saved our cornfields and seed beds; now that we have more faith in it and in your friendship, you wish to destroy those children and women who love you and your God so much...'

"Casqui gave DeSoto one of his daughters, saying that his greatest desire was to unite his blood with that of so great a lord as he was." The Governor replied... "Look Casqui, we did not come to destroy you, but rather to make you know and understand the cross and our God... But since you went away without my permission, I thought that you held little regard for the doctrine that we had given you; and for the contempt that you had for it, I wished to destroy you... Now that you come humbly, you may be certain that I wish you more good than you think; and if you are in need of something from me, tell me and you will see it... because you and your people are our brothers, and thus our God tells us."

"The Indians were as amazed at this as the Christians were at what Casqui had said," given that DeSoto seldom changed his mind and had little patience with Indians. ((It is likely that he wanted to keep the peace in that neighborhood with two very strong allies. If he was to establish a port on America's northern sea to trade Spain's New World fortunes with China, he would need both Casqui and Pacaha to aid in his defense, being so

deep inside this continent. He had done so in South America, with local allies, and had claimed a city of gold, but his Illinois scouts were about to return with news that sailing to China, across the northern sea anyway, was not going to happen.)

When the foot soldiers of the Illinois scouting party returned they told the army what they knew: "They went for seven days through an uninhabited region and returned after much hardship, eating green plums and corn stalks which they found in a poor town of six or seven houses ((probably at Paris, Illinois)). From there on, toward the north, the Indians said that the land was very poorly inhabited because it was very cold ((in Winter)), and that there were so many cattle ((buffalo)) that no field could be protected because of them ((that is why Buffalo Bill would become America's hero three centuries later: he slaughtered the buffalo which otherwise trampled the great plains: potential farm and grazing land for cattle)), and that the Indians sustained themselves on their flesh. The governor, seeing that in that direction the land was so poor in corn that they could not sustain themselves (and that Lake Michigan was NOT the Pacific Ocean), asked the Indians where the most populous district lay. They said that they had heard of a large province of very well provided land called Quiguate toward the south."

News of a Northern Sea

((The King's Agent, who had traveled eight days north with the Lancers, leaving the uninformed foot soldiers behind the day before sighting "America's Northern Sea" (Lake Michigan), told DeSoto the bad news. Had that Northern Sea been the Pacific Ocean, DeSoto knew he might have had a rebellion on his hands; most of his people wanted nothing more than to go home. They would have fled to that sea for escape if the mouthy foot soldiers had seen it and told them about it. DeSoto then ordered his army to retreat for the first time in his life. The army was never told why, only that food was not to be found in that direction. The foot soldiers were sent immediately back to Vincennes)) "...we turned south and returned to where we had placed the cross, and from there we headed southwest to another province which is called Quiguate..." ((to gather what they could for a long westward journey in search of "The South Sea." DeSoto and his riders would join them within a week just below Vincennes.))

"The governor rested in Pacaha for forty days. During that time the two chiefs gave him service of abundance of fish, blankets, and skins, and they tried to see which of them could perform the greater services. At

the time of his departure, the chief of Pacaha gave two of his sisters to him saying that if he would remember him he should take them as wives as a testimonial of love. The name of one was Macanoche and the other Mochila. They were very well disposed, tall of body and plump of figure. Machanoche was of good appearance and in her address and face appeared to be a lady; the other was robust." DeSoto would give them to several officers "...commanding that the women should deal from one land to the other with other tribes' commodities and business, and so they agreed to do it..." One of them would see Spain in her lifetime.

Retreat

"The chief of Casqui ordered the bridge ((over Busseron Creek)) repaired and the governor ((with the horsemen)) gave a turn ((a U-turn)) through his land and lodged in the open field near his town, whither the chief came with a quantity of fish and two Indian women whom he exchanged with two Christians for two shirts. He gave a guide and couriers. The governor went to sleep at one of his towns ((probably near Dicksburg Hill)) and the next day ((he joined the foot soldiers)) at another near a river ((at the junction of the White and Wabash Rivers)), where

chief Casqui ordered canoes brought for him in which to cross ((the Wabash River into Mount Carmel, Illinois))."

"...(A)longside the river of Casqui ((the Wabash River)), which is a branch that comes forth from the great river of Pacaha ((the Ohio River))... this branch is as large as the Guadalquivir ((River of Spain; it still is at that place)). There Casqui came and helped them cross the ((Wabash)) river by canoe on Tuesday the second of August. They spent the night on Wednesday at a burned town..." ((Mount Carmel, Illinois, directly opposite the White River's mouth on the Wabash River's flat west bank)). Chief Casqui had probably raided that town with Spanish weapons during his absence from Terre Haute several weeks earlier, which would account for his surprise "gifts" of clothing and skins to DeSoto before Chief Pacaha. It took two days for the army and its livestock to cross the wide, rain flooded, Wabash River at that point.

"The governor took his way toward Quiguate..." ((with the horsemen, well ahead of the army, while they were still crossing the river)).

Southern Illinois Conquest

Hernando DeSoto first entered Illinois on Tuesday, the second day of August, 1541, by crossing the Wabash River at Mount Carmel. Within days he would visit the

largest village he found in all of North America, we call it El Dorado; his people might have called it that, too. Edgar Allan Poe immortalized that mythical place in his poem of that name... "Gaily bedight, a Gallant Knight, in sunshine and in shadow. He journeyed long, singing a song, in search of El Dorado. But he grew old- this Knight so bold- and o'er his heart a shadow- fell as he found no piece of ground that looked like El Dorado. And as his strength failed him at length, he met a pilgrim shadow- "Shadow," said he, "where can it be, this land called El Dorado?" "Over the Mountains of the Moon, down the valley of the shadow... Ride, boldly ride," the shade replied, "if you seek for El Dorado."

DeSoto's Secretary says that "(t)hey spent the night on Wednesday at a burned town ((Mount Carmel)) and the following, Thursday, at another town next to the river ((Grayville on the Wabash River)), where there were many squash and much corn and beans. And the next day, Friday, they went to Quiguate..." ((Province)) by crossing the Little Wabash River at Carmi.

One of the advanced horsemen reported that "(o)n the fourth of August, he ((DeSoto)) reached the town ((El Dorado, well ahead of the army)) where the chief was living. On the way ((while camped at Carmi, the provincial boundary, with the advanced horsemen)), the latter sent

him blankets and skins, but not daring to remain in the town, went away. The town was the largest which had been seen in Florida. The governor and his men ((in the advanced party)) were lodged ((by the Indians)) in half of it; and a few days afterward ((when the army arrived, having camped at Omaha the night before)) seeing that the Indians were going about deceitfully ((on the Full Moon)), he ordered the other half ((today's Harrisburg, the largest half of the town)) burned, so that it might not afford them protection if they came to attack at night..." DeSoto typically chose to camp on open plains for the advantage they offered his mounted army. Trees on hillside campsites ((like Harrisburg)) obstructed his view and offered Indians opportunity to "fence" his horses by placing logs between trees to stop the horsemen from chasing them after midnight attacks, typically with fire on arrowheads directed toward the army and its livestock.

El Dorado, the Great

El Dorado lies near the center of a giant fertile plain, tens of thousands of acres, drained by three branches of the Saline River, which runs into the Ohio River (as does the Wabash River). DeSoto stayed for three weeks on the north bank of the Middle Fork of Saline River in "...the largest town they saw in the land, next to the

river of Casqui ((the Wabash)); and they found out afterwards ((in Arkansas the following year)) that the river was well peopled below ((along the Mississippi River, which all of those rivers flow into)), although they did not manage to find it out then, and for that reason they took the road to Coligua ((Kaskaskia, their next destination when they left)) passing through an uninhabited region... of wetlands. They would depart westward through Harrisburg, Marion, Carbondale and Murphysboro on their way to Kaskaskia on the Mississippi River.

"This (El Dorado/Harrisburg) was the largest town that we found in Florida; it was on a branch ((the Saline River)) of the great river (the Mississippi with all of its tributaries)."

"An Indian well attended by many Indians came saying that he was the chief. The governor delivered him to his guard that they might look after him. Many Indians went off and came bringing blankets and skins. Seeing poor opportunity for carrying out his evil thought, the pretended chief, going out of the house one day with the governor, started to run away so swiftly that there was no Christian who could overtake him; and plunged into the river ((Middle Fork of Saline River)) which was a crossbow shot's distance from the town. As soon as he had crossed to the other side, many Indians who were walking about

there ((where Harrisburg is today)), uttering loud cries, began to shoot arrows. The governor crossed over to them immediately with men of horse and of foot, but they did not dare await him. On going in pursuit of them, he arrived at a town which had been abandoned, and beyond it a swamp where the horses could not cross ((South Fork of Saline River just below Harrisburg)). On the other side ((at today's Mitchellsville)) were many women. Some men of foot crossed over and captured many of the women and a quantity of clothing. The governor returned to the camp ((less than 10 miles away)); and soon after on that night a spy of the Indians was captured by those who were on watch. The governor asked him whether he would take them to the place where the ((real)) chief was ((or be fed to the dogs)). He said yes, and the governor went immediately to look for the chief with 20 men of horse and 50 of foot. After a march of a day and a half ((20 miles over swamps and broken hills)) he found the chief in a dense wood ((near Millstone Ridge)), and a soldier, not knowing the chief, gave him a cutlass stroke on the head. The chief cried out not to kill him saying that he was the chief. He was taken captive and with him 140 of his people. The governor went back to Quigate ((El Dorado)) and told him that he should make his Indians come to serve the Christians; and after waiting for several days ((while the army gathered what it

could from that enormous plain)) hoping for them to come, but they were not coming ((as many Indian cultures, "Mississippian Cultures", had done elsewhere for their godlike chiefs)), he sent two Captains, each one on his side of the river ((the Saline River, southeast toward the Ohio River)), with horse and foot. They captured many Indians, both men and women ((from the large villages along the downstream banks)). Upon seeing the hurt they received, because of the rebellion, they came to see what the governor might order them. Thus they came and went frequently and brought gifts of clothing and fish. The chief and two of his wives were left unshackled in the governor's house, being guarded by the halberdiers of the governor's guard. The governor asked them in what direction the land was more densely populated. They said that on the lower part of the river toward the south were large settlements and chiefs who were lords of wide lands and of many people ("Mississippian Cultures" in Arkansas), and that there was a province called Coligoa ((today's Kaskaskia)) toward the northwest, situated near some mountain ridges. It seemed advisable to the governor and to all the rest to go first to Coligoa, saying that perhaps the mountains would make a difference in the land and that gold or silver might exist on the other side of them. Both Quagate ((El Dorado)) and Casqui and Pacaha

((Vincennes and Terre Haute, Indiana)) were flat and fertile lands, with excellent meadow lands along the rivers where the Indians made large fields."

Most Interior Indian tribes had heard about DeSoto, and his treachery, from their neighbors and traders long before he arrived in their towns. They also knew that his army was obsessed with finding gold. It did not take long for them to realize that even the slightest mention of gold in a nearby area would rid them of the army's menacing presence. The lure of easy riches drove DeSoto's army: both Indians and DeSoto knew that and used that ploy to move the army overland.

"Here ((at El Dorado)) we tarried eight or nine ((more)) days to look for interpreters and guides, still with the intention, if we were able, to traverse to the other sea ((the Pacific Ocean)), because the Indians told us that eleven days from there was a province where they killed cows ((buffalo in Missouri: Indians traveled at 25 miles per day or more - they probably hunted near Springfield, 275 miles due west of El Dorado)), and there we would learn of interpreters in order to cross ((this 'Island of Florida')) to the other sea."

Westward Ho

"The governor left the chief of Quigate in his town; and an Indian who guided him through large pathless forests conducted him for seven days through an uninhabited region ((the natives had fled)) where they lodged each night amid marshes and streamlets of very shallow water ((due west from Harrisburg, down Crab Orchard Creek to Marion and Carbondale, then down Big Muddy River from Murphysboro to the Mississippi River then up its east bank to Kaskaskia)). So plentiful were the fish that they killed them by striking them with clubs; and the Indians whom they took along in chains roiled the water with mud, and the fish, as if stupefied, would come to the surface and they caught as many as they wished..." in the massive swamps between Harrisburg and Carbondale. There are many levees (earthen dams) along that course today to protect the cities of that very low-lying area.

Another eyewitness says, "On Friday, the 26th of August, they departed from Quiquate ((El Dorado)) in search of Coligua ((Kaskaskia)), and they spent the night at a swamp; and from swamp to swamp they made their journey of four swamps and four days ((48 miles to Murphysboro, marching at twelve miles per day, their normal marching rate)), in which swamps were large

numbers of fish, because the great river floods all that area when it overflows its banks. And on Tuesday ((the fifth day on the trail, through a "...land of rugged mountains...")) they went to the river that they call Coligua ((we call it the Mississippi)), and on Wednesday likewise along the same river ((up its wide east bank)), and the following day, Thursday, which was the 4th of September, to Coligua ((Kaskaskia, 85 miles from El Dorado in 7 days)), and they found the town populated."

At the Mississippi River

"...(T)he Indians of Coligoa had not heard of Christians ((perhaps due to their extreme northern isolation)), and when we arrived they took flight up a river ((either the Kaskaskia or Mississippi River; Kaskaskia village was located at their junction)) which flowed near the town... some plunged into the river, but Christians who went along both banks captured them..."

"...(A)nd in it they took many people and clothes and a great deal of food and much salt ((salt was gathered from the Saline Creek on the Mississippi River's bank opposite Kaskaskia)). It is a pleasant town among some mountains, on a gorge of a river, and from there they went at midday to kill cows ((buffalo)), since there were many wild ones..." in the fertile flats of the gigantic Mississippi River gorge.

That setting is the same today, minus the buffalo, of course. DeSoto saw them, for the first and only time in his life, directly below today's St. Louis.

DeSoto's delight at finding another magnificent valley in America's interior must have been tempered by his perception of the big river running through it. That river had to drain a country much larger than DeSoto had previously conceived. His search for the South Sea ended the day he sighted the Mississippi River; his people would never mention that search again. The irony of DeSoto's discovering the Mississippi River, for which he is famous today, is that the discovery itself ended his dream of finding a northern passage to China. There was no hope for finding a nearby sea upstream of such a giant river, and DeSoto knew that. Spanish Conquest of America ended in Illinois. DeSoto would die of anguish within eight months of his now famous discovery.

"We inquired about a road in the direction we were headed and whether there was any village in that district, far or near. They were never able to tell us anything except that if we wished to travel where there might be a village, we had to turn west-southwest." ((The French would discover the same situation there in the next century. Kaskaskia would become their northern headquarters on the Mississippi River.))

"They said that five or six leagues beyond ((about 15 miles)), toward the north, were many cattle ((buffalo)), but because the land was cold ((during winter)), it was poorly populated; that the best land they knew of, as being more plentifully supplied with food and better inhabited, was a province toward the south ((west)) called Cayas..." supposedly in Southern Missouri. DeSoto would dramatically alter his planned course, for his fourth and final time in North America, at Kaskaskia. He had altered course at Marianna, Florida, due to an Indian boy's report that gold could be found toward the sun's rising; at Mabila, Alabama, due to massive battle losses; then again at Terre Haute, Indiana, when he learned that Lake Michigan was not the Pacific Ocean. This would be his last. From then on he would lead his army ever southward.

According to a Portuguese officer, "(t)hat town of Coligoa ((Kaskaskia)) was situated at the foot of a mountain in a field of a river the size of the Caya River which flows through Estremadura ((in Portugal; that giant river drains half of Spain)). It was a fertile land ((hosting gigantic farms and Indian mounds, but no gold, even today)) and so abundant in corn that the old was thrown out in order to store the new. There was also a great quantity of beans and pumpkins, the beans being larger and better than those of Spain; and the pumpkins

likewise... The chief of Coliquoa gave a guide to Cayas ((supposedly in today's Missouri)) and ((the chief)) remained in his town." DeSoto had used another famous place name, Quizquiz, to motivate his troops to cross America's Great River from Kentucky. This time he used the name Cayas for the place at the end of the rainbow. Spain's great river is called Cayas by Spaniards even today (as opposed to Caya by the Portuguese); it flows from Madrid, the wealthy center of Spain.

"On Tuesday, the sixth of September, they departed from Coligua and crossed the ((great)) river another time..." in search of Cayas... ((precisely on the Full Moon for the safety it afforded the divided army while crossing the Mississippi River in Kaskaskia Indian canoes, into Missouri for a longer time than daylight allowed)).

End of Part 4

These publications are available at www.FloridaHistory.com

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

DeSoto's Lunar Activity

Compiled for Internet Publication on www.FloridaHistory.com
from Lunar Circumstance Tables computed and provided by
Dr. Dennis Mammana, Resident Astronomer in 1994,
Natural Science Center, Balboa Park, San Diego, California.

MOON PHASE	DATE	EVENT DURING CONQUEST
		FIRST YEAR 1539
NEW	MAY 18,	DESOTO'S ARMY SAILS FROM HAVANA
FULL	JUNE 1,	DESOTO'S ARMY LANDS IN FLORIDA
NEW	JULY 15,	THE ARMY LEAVES PORT FOR INTERIOR
FULL	JULY 31,	THE ARMY ENTERS OCALE (DADE CITY)
NEW	AUG. 14,	DESOTO CONDUCTS HERNANDO MASSACRE
FULL	AUG. 29,	ARMY ADVANCES FROM OCALE TO SUWANNEE
NEW	SEP. 12,	SCOUTS EXPLORE VITACHUCO
FULL	SEP. 27,	DESOTO TAKES TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
NEW	OCT. 12,	ANASCO GETS LOST FINDING PANAMA CITY
FULL	OCT. 27,	30 LANCERS CROSS THE HILLSBOROUGH SWAMP
NEW	NOV. 10,	SHIPS LEAVE PORT CHARLOTTE ON SPRING TIDES
FULL	NOV. 25,	TROOPS FROM THERE CROSS GREAT SWAMP
FULL	DEC. 25,	SHIPS ARRIVE AT PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA
		ARMY WINTERS AT BOTH PANAMA CITY AND MARIANNA CAMPS
		SECOND YEAR 1540
FULL	MAR. 22,	ARMY TAKES TAO: DAWSON, GEORGIA
FULL	APR. 21,	ARMY CROSSES SAVANNAH RIVER
FULL	MAY 20,	ARMY ENTERS NORTH CAROLINA AT DAWN
FULL	JUNE 19,	DESOTO DEMANDS WOMEN FOR MEN AT CHIAHA
NEW	JULY 4,	DESOTO STRIKES HIAWASSI ISLAND, TENNESSEE
FULL	JULY 19,	ARMY ENTERS COOSA, FORT PAYNE, ALABAMA
FULL	AUG. 17,	SCOUTS LEAVE COOSA, ARMY WAITS
NEW	AUG. 31,	DESOTO STRIKES GADSDEN, ALABAMA
FULL	SEP. 16,	CAVALRY TAKES TALLASSEE, ALABAMA
NEW	SEP. 30,	ARMY AWAITS LIGHT TO VISIT TUSCALUSA, ALABAMA
FULL	OCT. 15,	DESOTO ENTERS CAHABA, TUSCALUSA'S BIRTHPLACE
FULL	NOV. 14,	LEAVE TUSCALUSA'S BATTLE GROUNDS AT MAUVILA
NEW	NOV. 28,	RAFTS MOVED TO BLACK WARRIOR RIVER
FULL	DEC. 13,	SCOUTS MOVE UP THE TENNESSEE RIVER
		STRIKE MADE INTO MISSISSIPPI DURING THIS WINTER
		THIRD YEAR 1541
NEW	APRIL 26,	DESOTO TAKES ALIBAMO AT NATCHEZ TRACE, TENN.
FULL	MAY 10,	DESOTO ENTERS WHILE SCOUTS EXPLORE KENTUCKY
FULL	JUNE 8,	DESOTO CROSSES THE OHIO RIVER AT EVANSVILLE
FULL	JULY 8,	SCOUTS SIGHT LAKE MICHIGAN AT CHICAGO
FULL	AUG. 6,	STRIKE ILLINOIS, LARGEST TOWN IN AMERICA
FULL	SEP. 6,	ARMY CROSSES MISSISSIPPI RIVER INTO MISSOURI
FULL	OCT. 5,	ARMY TAKES TULA, HARRISON, ARKANSAS
NEW	OCT. 19,	ARMY ENTERS THE OZARK MOUNTAINS
FULL	NOV. 3,	ARMY TAKES JACKSONPORT, ARKANSAS
		ARMY SPENDS THE WINTER EXPLORING MISSISSIPPI RIVER BANKS.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

FOURTH YEAR 1542

NEW	MAR. 16,	ARMY CROSSES WHITE RIVER IN SNOWS
FULL	MAR. 31,	ARMY TAKES NILCO PROVINCE NEAR MONTICELLO
NEW	APRIL 15,	ARMY MOVES QUIETLY TO LAKE VLLAGE
FULL	APRIL 29,	SCOUTS EXPLORE MISSISSIPPI RIVER
HALF	MAY 21,	DESOTO DIES, BURIED AFTER DARK
FULL	MAY 28,	DESOTO'S BODY DUG UP, PLACED IN THE RIVER
FULL	JUNE 27,	ARMY LEAVES SHREVEPORT, ENTERS TEXAS
FULL	JULY 26,	PLAN TO ATTACK (MISSION) TEJAS, TEXAS
FULL	AUG. 25,	ARMY TAKES (MISSION) TEJAS VILLAGE
FULL	SEP. 24,	SCOUTS EXPLORE WESTWARD FROM AUSTIN
FULL	OCT. 23,	ARMY RETURNS TO (MISSION) TEJAS VILLAGE
NEW	NOV. 7,	ARMY STRIKES MONROE, LOUISIANA
FULL	NOV. 22,	ARMY STRIKES PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS

ARMY SPENDS THE WINTER BUILDING BOATS FOR ESCAPE.

LAST YEAR 1543

NEW	JULY 2,	LEAVE ARKANSAS RIVER TO SLIP PAST GREENVILLE
FULL	JULY 16,	REACH GULF OF MEXICO, INDIANS ATTACK
NEW	JULY 31,	SABINE LAKE, TEXAS, CAREEN VESSELS, HIGH TIDES
FULL	AUG. 14,	AT MATAGORDA FOR 8 DAYS SPANNING FULL
NEW	AUG. 30,	HIGH SPRING TIDES BELOW KINGSVILLE, TEXAS
FULL	SEP. 10,	ARMY SPOTS SANDS OF MEXICO'S SHORELINE

References

Black, Glenn A.

1967 Angle Site, an Archaeological, Historical and Ethnological Study, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis

Blake, Alan

1988 Legua Legal of Legua Comun: A Discussion, DeSoto Working Paper #5, University of Alabama, W.S. Hoole Special Collection, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Bolton, Herbert Eugene

1920 The Colonization of North America, MacMillan Co, N.Y.

Bourne, Edward G.

1904 Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto, Volume I, in Trail Makers Series, A.S. Barnes & Co., N.Y.

Brain, Jeffrey P.

1985 Introduction: Update of the De Soto Studies Since the United States De Soto Commission Report in the **Reprint of the Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission**, 76th. Congress, 1st. Session, House Document, no. 71, Government Printing Office, Wash. DC

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

Bullen, Ripley

- 1951 The Terra Ceia Site, Manatee County, Florida, in Florida Anthropological Society Publications, No. 3, p. 37, Gainesville, FL.
1952 DeSoto's Ucita and the Terra Ceia Site, in Florida Historical Quarterly, Volume 30, no. 4, pp. 317- 323.

Chardon, Ronald

- 1980 The Elusive Spanish League: A Problem of Measurement in Sixteenth-Century New Spain, in Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 60, no. 2, Duke University Press.

Clayton, Lawrence A., Vernon James Knight, Jr., and Edward Moore (Editors)

- 1993 **The De Soto Chronicles, the Expedition of Hernando De Soto to North America in 1539-1543, Volumes I and II**, University of Alabama Press.

Davis, T. Frederick

- 1935 History of Juan Ponce de Leon's Voyages to Florida, Monographs on Subjects of Florida History, Jacksonville, FL.

Goza, William

- 1963 The Fort King Road, in The Florida Historical Quarterly, Volume XLIII, no. 1, pp. 52-70
1984 Florida and Spain in the New World: The Peruvian Connection. Paper presented at the Conference on the Remains of Pizarro at the Florida State Museum, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Hemming, John

- 1973 The Conquest of the Incas, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, N.Y.

Hodge, Frederick W.

- 1907 Spanish Explorers in the United States, in Original Narratives of Early American History, Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y.

Hoffman, Paul

- 1990 A New Andalucia and a Way to the Orient, Louisiana State University Press.

Katzeff, Paul

- 1981 Full Moons, Citadel Press, Secaucus, N.J.

King, Anthony

- 1990 Roman Gaul and Germans, University of California Press.

Laumer, Frank

- 1968 Massacre, University of Florida Press, Gainesville.
1995 Dade's Last Command, University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

Lawson, Edward

1946 The Discovery of Florida and its Discoverer Juan Ponce de Leon, Edward W. Lawson Press, St. Augustine, FL.

Lewis, Thomas M.N. and Madeline Kneberg

1939 Hiwassee Island, An Archaeological Account of Four Tennessee Indian Peoples, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, TN.

Lockhart, James

1972 The Men of Cajamarca, University of Texas Press.

Mahon, John K.

1967 History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, FL.

Mammana, Dennis L.

1994 **Lunar Circumstances** Search Report, unpublished, from the Reuben H. Fleet Space and Science Center, Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif.

Manchester, William

1992 A World Lit Only by Fire, The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance Portrait of an Age, Little, Brown and Company, N.Y.

Morison, Samuel Eliot

1974 The European Discovery of America, The Southern Voyages AD 1492-1616, Oxford University Press, N.Y.

Prescott, William H.

1847 **History of the Conquest of Peru**, The Modern Library (1936), N.Y.

Russell, Jeffrey B.

1977 The Devil, Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y.

Schell, Rolph F.

1966 DeSoto Didn't Land at Tampa, Island Press, Ft. Myers Beach, FL.

Schoolcraft, Henry R.

1857 General History of the North American Indians, Philadelphia, 6 Parts; Plate XLIV pp 50, Volume III and pp 58-68 Volume VI.

Shaffer, Lynda Norene

1992 **Native America Before 1492, the Mound Building Centers of the Eastern Woodlands**, M.E. Sharp Press, Armonk, N.Y.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST

Smith, Buckingham

1866 The Career of Hernando de Soto in the Conquest of Florida, from Theodore H. Lewis, Editor, Spanish Explorers in the United States, 1528 - 1543, Barnes & Noble, Inc, Reprint 1965.

Sprague, John T.

1964 The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War, a reprint of the 1848 publication, introduction by John K. Mahon, University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

Stone, George C.

1934 A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration and Use of Arms and Armor in All Countries and in All Times, Jack Brussel Publisher, N.Y.

Swanton, John R.

1939 **Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission**, 76th. Congress, 1st Session, House Document, no. 71, Government Printing Office, Washington. DC

1946 The Indians of the Southeastern United States, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington. DC

Thomas, Hugh

1993 Conquest; Montezuma, Cortes and the Fall of Old Mexico, Simon & Schuster, N.Y.

Wiecknieski, Jerome (Father Jerome)

1962 Juan Ponce de Leon, Abbey Press, Saint Leo, FL.

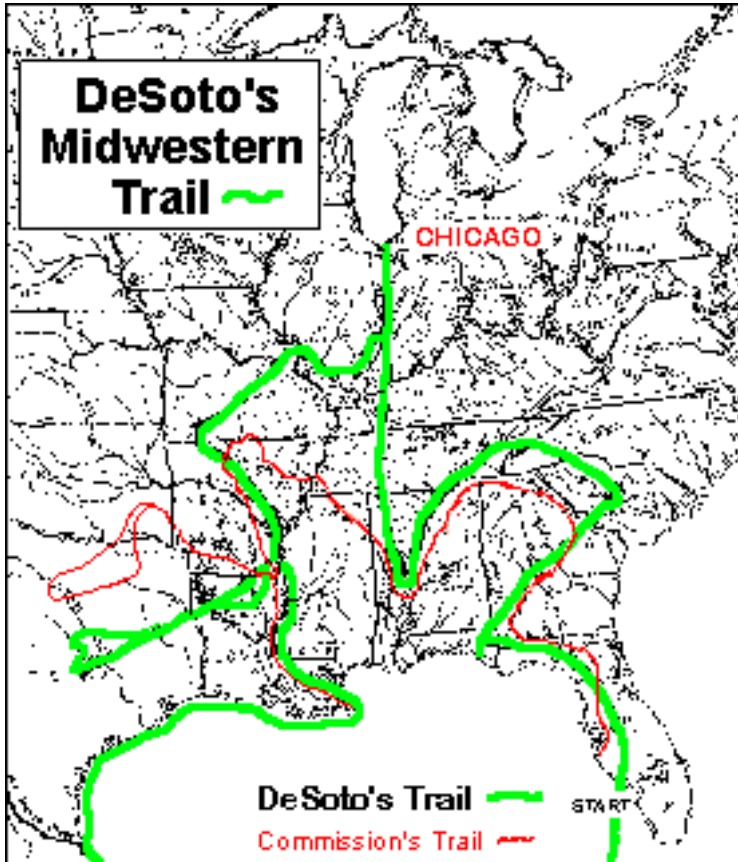
Wilkinson, Warren H.

1960 Opening the Case Against the U.S. DeSoto Commission's Report, Papers of the Alliance for the Preservation of Florida Antiquities, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

Williams, Lindsey W.

1986 Boldly Onward, Precision Publications Co., Charlotte Harbor, FL.

A draft of this article appeared in the Florida Anthropologist under different title



DeSoto's Midwestern Trail