

NATIVE AMERICAN CONQUEST



Native American Conquest: The Southeast

By Donald E. Sheppard
Edited by James M. Cooper

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D.E.S.

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The Southeast

At Marianna, Florida

Before continuing west to Mobile Bay for more supplies, thence northward toward what they believed was the Pacific Ocean, a survivor of DeSoto's expedition reported that "...we had news of the interior...we were going in search of a land an Indian boy said was on another sea. The boy, Perico, said that he was from the land lying in the direction of the sunrise ((northeast)). Some time ago he had come here in order to visit; he said his land was called Yupaha, and that a woman ruled it. Her town was of wonderful size, and she collected tribute from many of her neighboring Chiefs, some of whom gave her gold in abundance. He told how the gold was taken from the mines, melted and refined, just as if he had seen it done, or else the devil thought him. All among us who knew anything of this said it was

impossible to give so good an account of it unless one had seen it; and all believed whatever he said was true when they saw the signs he made. On Wednesday, the 3rd of March, 1540 ((mid-March on our Gregorian Calendar, the end of winter in Florida)), the governor ((Hernando DeSoto)) left ((his camp at Marianna)) in search of Yupaha, the Indian boy's land."

"Our ships headed for Cuba and we marched north, in order to see what the Indian boy told us about."

To Alabama

DeSoto ordered all his men "to provide themselves with food for a long journey through uninhabited land. Those of horse carried the corn on their horses and those of foot on their backs, because most of the captured Indians had died from the hard life they suffered, being naked and in chains all winter. After a march of four days ((into Southeast Alabama)), we came to a deep river ((the Chattahoochee River, at today's Alabama/Georgia border)) where a large raft was made ("the river was so broad that our best thrower never managed to throw a stone across it") and, because of the strong current, a chain cable (made from bondage chains, "strongly joined with S hooks of iron") was fastened on each side of the river. The raft was crossed over alongside the chain

((four full days and part of another were spent rafting the army and its livestock across this river, which was flooded by the Spring thaw; today there is a railroad trestle and highway bridge spanning that river where DeSoto crossed it into Georgia))...the horses were pulled across with ropes and tackle, which had been dragged by the horses to that place ((from the ships at port in Panama City))."

Across Georgia

"On the other bank of the river we found a province, which is called Acapachiqui ((Southwest Georgia)), very abundant in food of that which the Indians ate. We saw some towns of the province, and others we could not visit because it was a land of very great swamps ((Kirkland, Sawhatchee, Sheffield Mills, Weaver Creeks and Porter Pond, all flooded by heavy rains)). Here we found a difference in the houses of the Indians; we found them as caves below the ground, while up to here they were covered with palms and straw."

"After crossing the river, in a day and a half we reached a town called Capachiqui ((Blakely, Ga.)). On Friday, March 11, they saw the Indians had hidden in the woods. Next day, five Christians went to look for mortars which the Indians use for crushing corn. They

went to some Indian houses near to the camp, which were surrounded by a forest. Within the forest many Indians were walking about who came to spy on us. Five of them separated from the others and attacked our men. One of our men came running to the camp. They found one of our men dead and three badly wounded. The Indians fled through a swamp ((Dry Creek)) with a very dense wood around it where the horses could not enter."

"...Thus we passed on to sleep at another town farther on ((Kolomoki Mound State Park)). But we came upon a bad swamp next to town ((just north of today's Blakely)) with a strong current, and before arriving ((at Kolomoki)) we crossed a large stretch of water ((Breastworks Branch)) that came to the saddle pads of the horses in such a manner that all the army was not able to finish crossing that day on account of it ((a dam is built there today beside a highway; but it still closes with heavy rains)). We left, on the sixteenth of March, and spent the night at White Spring ((at the head of Spring Creek, west of Edison)). This is a very beautiful spring, with a great abundance of good water and fish."

"We went onward and came upon two rivers ((Pachitla and Ichawaynochaway Creeks, just after heavy rains))..."

"...There we made two bridges of pine trees, and the great current broke them, and we made another bridge of timbers crossed in a certain way, which a gentleman described, at which we all laughed, but it was true what he said; and having made the bridges in that way, we crossed very well. And on Monday the army finished crossing those rivers and spent the night in a pine forest... and early on Tuesday they arrived at Toa ((Toa-sun today... Dawson, Ga.)). We found a fair-sized town there, larger than any we had found up to that time."

"Beyond that place a difference was seen in the houses, for those behind were covered with hay and those of Toa were covered with canes in the manner of tile... Throughout these cold lands each of the Indians has his house for the winter plastered inside and out. They shut the very small door at night and build a fire inside the house so that it gets as hot as an oven, and stays so all night long... Besides those houses they have others for summer with kitchens nearby where they build their fires and bake their bread. They have barbacoas in which they keep their corn, that is a house raised up on four posts and timbered like a loft and with a floor of cane...the houses of the lords are larger and have balconies in front, under which are cane seats

resembling chairs...Native blankets are made of the inner bark of trees and some from a plant like daffodils, the Indian women cover themselves with these, wrapping one from the waist down and another over the shoulder with the right arm uncovered. The Indian men wear only one over the shoulders in the same way and have their privies covered with a truss of deerskin resembling the breechcloths formerly worn in Spain. The skins are well tanned...and of this they make shoes...."

"Wednesday, the twenty-fourth of the month ((on the full moon)), the Governor left from there at midnight, secretly, with up to forty horsemen...and they traveled all that day until the night ((they rode through today's town of DeSoto, Ga.)), when he found a bad and deep crossing of water ((Lime Creek)), and although it was night, they crossed it, and they walked ((their horses)) this day twelve leagues ((thirty-two miles)); and the next day ((the Thursday before Easter)), in the morning, they arrived at the province of Chisi ((at the Flint River)) and crossed a branch of a large river, very broad, some of it on foot, and even a good part of it swimming ((they crossed the Flint River)) and attacked a town that was on an island in this river ((the "island" was the high ground inside the junction of the Flint River and Turkey Creek, the river's main branch, near

Drayton)), where they captured some people and found food. And because this place was dangerous, before the Indians came in canoes some went back the same way they had entered ((DeSoto sent riders back to advance the army)), but first they all had for lunch some hens of the land, which are called turkeys, and loins of venison that they found roasted on a barbacoa, which is like a grill...and the Indian boy Perico that they had brought from Apalache ((near Panama City, Florida)) as guide led them there. And they ((with DeSoto)) passed on to other towns ((riding up the east bank of the Flint River)), and at a bad crossing of a swamp ((Hogcrawl Creek)), some horses drowned, because they were put in to swim with the saddles, while their owners crossed over on a beam which traversed the current of the water. And crossing this Benito Fernandez, a Portuguese, fell from the wood beam and drowned.

"As soon as the governor had crossed the stream ((Hogcrawl Creek)), he found a village called Achese ((Montezuma, Ga.)), a short distance on. Although the Indians had never heard of Christians they plunged into a river ((the Flint River)). A few Indians were seized, men and women, and one of them understood the Indian boy who was guiding us to Yupaha. On that account, DeSoto was more certain of what the boy said, for we

had passed through lands having different languages, some of which the boy had not understood. The governor sent one of the Indians captured there to call the Chief who was on the other side of the river ((at today's Oglethorpe)).

"This day ((the Thursday before Easter)) we arrived at a town ((Montezuma)) where principal Indians came as messengers from Ichisi ((Macon, Georgia; he ruled the land between the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers)), and one of them asked the governor: "Who are you? What do you want? Where are you going?" And they brought presents of hides and blankets of the land, which were the first gifts as a signal of peace.

"The governor said...that he was the son of the sun and came from where it dwelt and that he was going through that land and seeking the greatest lord and the richest province in it. The Chiefs said that a great lord lived on ahead; that his domain was called Ocute ((beyond the Oconee River; these were Cherokee Indians))."

"On Monday, the twenty-ninth of March ((the army having advanced up the west bank of the Flint River through Americus and Oglethorpe then crossing the river into Montezuma during the days preceding

Easter Sunday)), they left from there for Ichisi ((Macon, Ga.)), and it rained so much, and a small river ((Beaver Creek)) swelled in such a manner, that if they had not made much haste to cross, all of the army would have been endangered.

"The chief ((of Montezuma)) gave DeSoto a guide and interpreter for that province. The governor ordered his Indians to be set free and departed from his town...marching through his land up a river with many villages ((up the Flint River to Whitewater Pond then over Beaver Creek)). He left a wooden cross, raised very high in the middle of the public place ((built on Easter Sunday)).

"We spent five or six days in passing through this province ((between the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers)), which is called Chisi, where we were well served by the Indians, from the little that they had."

"This day ((Monday, March 29)) the Indian men and women came forth ((to Marshallville, from Fort Valley)) to receive them ((DeSoto's riders in the vanguard)). The women came clothed in white and they made fine appearance, and they gave to the Christians tortillas of corn and some bundles of spring onions exactly like those of Castile, as fat as the tip of the thumb and more. And that was a food which helped

them much from then on; and they ate them with tortillas, roasted and stewed and raw, and it was a great aid to them because they are very good. The white clothing in which those Indian women came clothed is blanketed of both coarse and fine linen. They make the thread of them from the bark of the mulberry tree; not from the outside but rather of the middle; and they know how to process and spin and prepare it so well and weave it, that they make very pretty blankets. And they put one on from the waist down, and another tied by one side and the top placed upon the shoulder, like those of Bohemians or Egyptians who are in the habit of sometimes wandering through Spain. The thread is such that he who found himself there ((with DeSoto, in the vanguard)) certified to me that he saw the women spin it from the bark of the mulberry trees and make it good as the most precious thread from Portugal that the women in Spain procure in order to sew, and some more thin and even, and stronger. The mulberry trees are exactly like those of Spain, and as large and larger; but the leaf is softer and better for silk, and the mulberries better for eating and even larger than those from Spain, and the Spaniards also made good use of them many times, in order to sustain themselves. They ((DeSoto's riders)) arrived that day at a town of a chief ((Fort Valley; the

others probably camped near Marshallville their first night out of Montezuma)) subject to Ichisi, a pretty town and with plenty of food, and the chief gave them willingly of what he had, and they rested there on Tuesday ((while the rest of the army caught up to them)), and then on Wednesday, the last day of March, the Governor and his army departed, and they ((DeSoto's riders)) arrived at the Great River ((the Ocmulgee at Macon)) where they ((the Indians)) had many canoes in which they crossed very well and arrived at the town of the Lord, who was one-eyed ((at today's Ocmulgee National Monument)), and he gave them very good food and fifteen Indians to carry the burdens. And as he was the first who came in peace, they did not wish to be tiresome. They were there Thursday, the first of April ((while the army advanced from Fort Valley, through Byron, and crossed the Ocmulgee River at Macon)), and they placed a cross on the mound of his town and informed them through the interpreter of the sanctity of the cross, and they received it and appeared to adore it with much devotion."

((DeSoto's riders deduced that this "Great River," the Ocmulgee, was the Peace River, which flows into Charlotte Harbor, their port of entry in Florida. After all, on their way up the Gulf of Mexico Coast they had

encountered only two other large rivers: the Suwannee and the Apalachicola. When they departed Florida from Marianna, headed northeast, they crossed two big rivers, the Chattahoochee and the Flint Rivers, which, they figured, were, respectively, the Apalachicola and the Suwannee Rivers. The next great river they would encounter, according to that logic, would be the Peace River, which they up to then called the "Great River." The Gulf of Mexico, in their eyes, was the southern, east west, shoreline of this "Island of Florida:" all of North America.))

"Friday, the second day of the month of April, this army departed from there ((Ocmulgee National Monument at Macon)) and slept in the open, and the next day they ((the advance scouts)) arrived at a good river ((the Oconee)) and found deserted huts, and messengers arrived from Altamaha ((Milledgeville)) and led them to a town ((Georgia's first Capitol City)) where they found an abundance of food, and a messenger from Altamaha came with a present, and the following day ((after the army traveled from Macon)) they brought many canoes and the army crossed ((the Oconee River over the next several days)) very well.

"Here ((while scouting Milledgeville's east bank)) we found a river ((the Ogeechee River)) that did not flow

to the south like the others that we crossed. It flowed east, to the sea where the lawyer Ayllon had come ((the horsemen discovered this eastward flowing river, the first they came upon in North America, just below Sparta, a day's ride, twenty miles, from Milledgeville. It flows into the Atlantic Ocean, on the coast of which their kinsman, a wealthy judge named Ayllon, had been shipwrecked the decade before they left Spain)), and because of this we gave much more credit to what the Indian boy ((Perico)) told us, and we believed all of his lies. This province was well populated with Indians and they all served us ((freeing our scouts, who were otherwise engaged patrolling for Indian ambush, to explore beyond the range of immediate army reinforcement)). We questioned the Indians about the province we were searching for ((Eupaha, according to the Indian boy)), which was called by them Cofitachique, and they told us that it was not possible to go there; there was neither road nor anything to eat on the way, and we would all die of hunger.

"From there the governor sent a message summoning the chief Camumo ((possibly from Sparta, a chief who had avoided the Spaniards)), and they said that he ate and slept and walked continually armed, that he never took off his weapons, because he was on

the frontier of another chief called Cofitachequi, his enemy, and that he would not come without weapons, and the governor replied and said that he should come as he might wish. And he came and the governor gave him a large feather colored with silver, and the chief took it very happily and said "You are from heaven, and this your feather that you gave me, I can eat with it, I will go forth to war with it; I will sleep with my wife with it." This chief was subject to a great chief who is called Ocute ((at Sandersville)), and he asked the governor to whom he had to give tribute to in the future, if he should give it to the governor or to Ocute...and he ((DeSoto)) responded that he held Ocute as a brother, that he should give Ocute his tribute until the governor should command otherwise. From there the governor sent messengers to Ocute, and he came there, and the governor gave him a hat of yellow satin, and a shirt, and a feather, and he placed a cross there in Altamaha, and it was well received. The next day, the eighth of April ((the army having crossed the Oconee River into Ocute Province)), the Governor departed from there with his army, and he took Ocute with him, and they went to sleep at some huts, and on Friday they arrived at the town of Ocute ((Sandersville)). And the Governor got angry with him, and he ((Ocute)) trembled with fear; and

after that a great number of Indians came with supplies, and they gave the Christians as many Indian burden bearers as they wished, and a cross was placed, and they appeared to receive it with as much devotion and adored it on their knees, as they saw the Christians do."

((Garcilaso de la Vega, the only DeSoto chronicler who has not commented so far in this particular narrative, says at this point)) "At the end of ten days' journey ((from Montezuma to Milledgeville)) that our men traveled due north up the river ((the Ocmulgee River)), they passed out of the province of Altamaha ((by crossing the Oconee River at Milledgeville)), leaving the chief and his Indians very satisfied with the friendship that they had contracted with them. They entered another province; called Achalauque ("Cherokee" in today's language, lying beyond the Oconee River, which means "Big River" in the Cherokee language)), which was poor and lacking in food. There were very few young Indians in it, almost all of its inhabitants being old ((the young people would be found months later residing with Chief Coosa, or Cofa, as Garcilaso would call him, Lord of the Cherokee))....The Spaniards traveled through this province of Achalauque making long daily marches in order to leave it quickly both because it was poor in food and because we desired to reach Cofitachique as soon as

we could. There, because of the news they had of there being much gold and silver in that province, they thought to load themselves down with rich treasure and return to Spain. Whereupon they doubled their daily marches, and they could do it easily because the country was flat, without woods, mountains or rivers to impede their swift pace. They crossed the province of Achalaque ((between the Oconee and Ogeechee Rivers: Ogeechee means "Our Mother" in the Cherokee language)) in five days' marches and left its chief and natives very peaceably inclined and friendly toward the Christians. So that they would remember them, the governor gave them, among other presents, two swine, male and female, for breeding. He had done the same for the chief of Altapaha and the lords of the other provinces who had come out peacefully and made friends with the Spaniards. Though hitherto we have not mentioned that we brought these animals with us, it is true that DeSoto brought more than three hundred head, male and female, which multiplied greatly and were exceedingly useful in the great necessities that our Castilians suffered in this discovery. If ((by now)) the Indians have not destroyed them, it is probable that...there are many of them there today ((when this report was published in 1609)), for besides those the governor gave to the

friendly chiefs, many others were lost along the roads, though they were well and carefully guarded. While on the march one of the companies of cavalry ((horsemen)) was assigned to herd and guard them."

((Garcilaso goes on to say...)) "We have not mentioned hitherto a piece of artillery the governor brought along with his army...the governor, having seen that it served for nothing except a burden and annoyance, requiring men to care for it and pack mules to transport it, decided to leave it with the chief ((of)) Cofa to keep ((this chief was the one who the other chroniclers called Ocute, a chief subject to Cofa, Lord of the Cherokee, whom they would call "Coosa" when they reentered Cherokee Country months later)). So that he ((the chief)) might see ((the importance of)) what he ((DeSoto)) was leaving for him, the governor ordered the piece aimed from the house of the chief toward a large and very beautiful live-oak tree that was outside the village, and he knocked it down entirely with two shots, at which the chief and his Indians were amazed."

"The Chief ((Ocute)) sent him ((DeSoto)) two thousand Indians bearing gifts, namely rabbits, partridges, corn bread, two hens, and many dogs, which are esteemed among the Christians as if they were fat sheep because there was a great lack of meat and salt.

Of this there was so much need and lack in many places and on many occasions that if a man fell sick, there was nothing with which to make him well; and he would waste away of an illness which could have been easily cured in any other place, until nothing but his bones were left and he would die from pure weakness, some saying: 'If I had a bit of meat or some lumps of salt, I should not die.' The Indians do not lack for meat - for they kill many deer, hens, rabbits, and other game with their arrows. In this they have great skill, which the Christians do not have; and even if they had it, they had no time for it, for most of the time they were on the march, and they did not dare to turn aside from the paths ((which were Indian trails between Indian villages)). And because they lacked meat so badly, when the six hundred men with DeSoto arrived at any town and found twenty or thirty dogs, he who could get one and who killed it thought he was not a little agile. And if he who killed one did not send his captain a quarter, the latter, if he learned of it...gave him to understand it in the watches or in any other matter of worth that arose with which he could annoy him. On Monday, April 12, the governor left Ocute, the Chief having given him four hundred tamemes, that is, Indians for carrying."

"...And they gave us some of the foods they had and told us that if we wished to go make war on the lady of Cofitachiqui, they would give us all that we might want for our journey. They told us that there was no road by which to go, since they had no dealings with one another because they were at war; sometimes when they came to make war on one another, they passed through hidden and secret places where they would not be detected...Having seen our determination, they gave us eight hundred Indians to carry our food and cloths, and other Indians to guide us; we headed straight east and traveled for three days. The Indian ((boy named Perico)) who had deceived us told us that in three days he would get us there."

"And ((we)) arrived at Cofaqui ((Louisville)), and the principal Indians came with gifts...This Chief Cofaqui was an old man, full-bearded..."

"By the way that they were going, which proved to be the narrowest point of the province of Cofaqui ((between Louisville on the Ogeechee River and Waynseville near Briar Creek)), they left it in two daily journeys..."

"...And reached a province of an Indian lord called Patofa ((at Shell Bluff)), who, since he was at peace with the lord of Ocute and the other lords round him ((in

today's Georgia)), he had heard of the governor some days before and desired to see him. He came to visit...This land, from that of the first peaceful chief ((at today's Montezuma)) to the province of Patofa ((today's Shell Bluff)) - a distance of fifty leagues ((one-hundred and thirty-two miles, the actual distance between them)) - is a rich land, beautiful, fertile, well watered, and with fine fields along the rivers..."

"((At Patofa, the Indian boy named Perico)) said that four day's journey thence toward the rising sun was the province of which he spoke. The Indians of Patofa said that they knew of no settlement in that direction, but that toward the northwest they knew a province called Coza ((which others spelled "Coosa")), a well provisioned land and of very large villages ((Coosa, as we have said, Lord of the Cherokee, would be encountered months later)). The chief told the governor that if he wished to go thither ((toward the northwest)), he would furnish him service of a guide and Indians to carry ((the burdens)); and if ((DeSoto wanted to go)) in the direction indicated by the youth ((to the east)) he would also give him all those he needed..."

"On Thursday, the fifteenth of that month, Perico, the Indian boy who had been their guide since Apalache ((Panama City, Florida)), began to lose his bearings,

because now he did not know any more of the land, and he made himself out to be possessed...they had to take ((other Indian)) guides...in order to go to Cofitachequi, across an uninhabited region of nine or ten days' journey. Many times I am amazed by the gambling spirit, or tenacity or pertinacity, or perhaps I should say constancy, because it gives better impression of the way these deceived conquistadors went on from one difficulty to another, and from another to yet a worse one, and from one danger to others and others, here losing a comrade and there three and over there more, and going from bad to worse, without learning their lesson. Oh marvelous God, what blindness and rapture under such an uncertain greed and such vain preaching as that which Hernando DeSoto was able to tell those deluded soldiers that he led to a land where he had never been...because he knew nothing of the islands of the land to the North ((today's America)), knowing only the method of government of...Nicaragua, and of Peru, which was another manner of dealing with the Indians; and he thought that experience from there sufficed to know how to govern here on the coast of the North, and he deluded himself, as this history will relate...."

At the Savannah River

"On Friday, the sixteenth of the month, the Governor and his people spent the night at a creek ((there are several there)) on the way to Cofitachique, crossed an extremely large river, divided into branches, and broader than a long shot of a crossbow ((the Savannah River at Point Comfort, well below Augusta)), and it had many bad fords of many flat stones, and it came up to the stirrups, and in places up to the saddle pads. The current was very strong, and there was not a man on horseback who dared to take a foot soldier on the river. The foot soldiers passed across further upstream on the river, through very deep water...They made a string of thirty or forty men tied one to another, and thus they crossed, the ones holding themselves to the others; and although some were in much danger, thanks to God not one drowned, because they aided them with the horses, and gave them the butt of their lance or the tail of their horse, and thus all came forth and slept in the forest.

South Carolina

DeSoto crossed the Savannah River's branches at Point Comfort, the broadest flats on the Savannah River. Those flats would eventually be "channelized," by blasting its submerged rocks in order to ship cotton

downstream from Augusta, the world's cotton warehouse before the Civil War. This desolate land, from Point Comfort eastward, is owned by The Atomic Energy Commission today. Nuclear waste is stored there.

"This day we lost many pigs that we had brought tame from Cuba, which the current carried off."

"He ((DeSoto)) took corn ((from Patofa)) for four days and marched for six days along a path which gradually grew narrower until it was lost. He marched in the direction where the youth guided him and crossed two rivers ((the Savannah River at Point Comfort Bluff and South Fork Edisto River at Aiken State Park)) by fording, each of which was two crossbow-shots wide."

"We traveled through this uninhabited region...The Indian guides had already lost their bearings, and they did not know where to go or what road to give us."

"He came to another river ((North Fork Edisto River at Black Creek, on the full moon, in heavy rains)) with a more powerful current..." "...difficult to cross, which was divided in two branches ((Black Creek and North Edisto River)), with bad entrances and worse exits ((with a massive swamp at the approach, which the railroad and highway cross today on causeways; the terrain elevation doubles to more than 500 feet just

beyond there)). Now we carried nothing with us to eat, and with great labor we crossed the river, then arrived at some settlements of Indian fishermen or hunters ((shacks are still built there today, probably for the same reason.))..."

"...(T)he governor came out to a pine grove and threatened the youth and made as if he would throw him to the dogs because he had deceived him, saying that it was a march of four days, and for nine days he had marched ((over rivers and swamps))...and now the men were weak because of the great economy which had been practiced with regard to the corn. The youth said that he did not know where he was..."

"...(A)nd the Indians that brought us lost their bearings, since neither they nor the Spaniards knew the road ("...Because the road they had been following up to that time, which appeared to be a very wide public highway, came to an end, and many narrow paths that led through the woods in every direction were lost after they had followed them for a short distance, and they were without a path.))...and the governor proposed, as he had always done, that it was better to go forward, without his or their knowing in what they guessed correctly or in what they erred. And being perplexed in

this labyrinth, on Friday, the twenty-third of April, the governor sent men to look for roads and towns..."

"...((DeSoto)) began to give a pound of pork to each Spaniard...and we boiled it in water without salt or anything else. And from here the Governor sent ((some)) in two directions to look for a road; one he sent upriver, north and north-east ((up Black Creek)), and the other he sent down river, south and south-east ((down North Fork Edisto River)), and he gave each one a limit of ten days to go and come back, to see if they found something or saw a trace of a town."

((Perhaps thinking that he had been deceived by the Indian guides who had lead him into these ridges, which seemed like mountain foothills and barren country, and with heavy rains precluding his vision of any mountains ahead, DeSoto may have stopped there to wait for his scouts to determine if there were foods or mountains ahead.))

"And that day other Captains came from exploring, and they had not found anything...and ((DeSoto)) gave, as rations, one pound of pork to each man (("The governor had taken thirteen sows to Florida and was now driving three hundred pigs.")), and with it the herbs and roots that they ((the Indians))...supplied the best that they could...not without great conflict and

hardship. The horses went without any food, and they and their owners ((were)) dying of hunger, without a road, with continual rain, the rivers continually swelling and narrowing the land, and without hope of towns or knowledge of where they had to go to look, calling and asking God for mercy. And Our Lord remedied them in this manner: On Sunday, the twenty-fifth of April, ((Captain)) Juan de Anasco came with news that he had found a town and food..."

"The governor sent ((many of)) the Indians from Patofa back since he had nothing to give them to eat ((and, fearing that they might disrupt any favorable relations he might otherwise establish with so wealthy a nation as Cofitachequi, if he could find it, DeSoto sent many of Patofa's people back home))."

"He ((Captain Juan de Anasco)) who went south and southwest ((down the North Fork Edisto River)) came back in four days with news that he had come upon a little village (("twelve or thirteen leagues [thirty-three miles] away," today's Orangeburg, South Carolina's vegetable garden)) with some food, and he brought from there some Indians who spoke with the Indian ((boy named Perico)) who deceived us...And ((that Indian boy)) again affirmed the lies ((about the land))

that he had told us, and we believed him...We all then departed to go to the little village..."

"And the Governor determined to depart then, and having written some letters and placed them in some gourds, they buried them in a hidden place, and on a large tree left some letters that said where the Spaniards would find them ("Dig at the foot of this pine tree and you will find a letter,"). And thus they departed with ((Captain)) Juan de Anasco on a Monday, the twenty-sixth of April. This day the governor arrived with some on horseback at the town that is called Himahi ((Orangeburg)), and the army remained two leagues ((five miles)) back, the horses being tired. He found in this town...more than three thousand pounds of toasted corn. And the next day the army arrived ("There was no other way to town than marks left on the trees by ((Captain)) Juan de Anasco,"), and they gave out rations of corn...and there were infinite mulberries...and delicious and very fragrant strawberries. And apart from this they found there by the fields infinite roses...this town they named Succor ((Relief, in English)). The next day...((one)) who had gone to explore arrived and brought four or five Indians, and not one of them would make known the town of their lord nor disclose its location, although they burned one of them alive in front

of the others, ("Thereupon, another said that two days' journey thence was a province called Cofitachiqui,")...((another Spaniard)) came with news of roads and he left behind two lost companions and the Governor reprimanded him severely, and without letting him rest or eat, he made him return to look for them under penalty of his life should he not bring them."

"During this time the eight hundred Indians ((who carried baggage into this province from Patofa)) did all the harm and injury they could to their enemies, as secretly as possible. They scoured the country for four leagues ((ten miles)) in every direction, wherever they could do damage. They killed the Indians who they could find, men and women, and took off their scalps to carry away as evidence of their exploits. They sacked the village and temples wherever they could, but did not burn them, as they wished to do, so that the governor would not see or know about it. In short, they left nothing undone that they could think of to harm their enemies and avenge themselves. The cruelty would have continued if on the fifth day of this state of affairs the things that Patofa and his Indians had done and were doing had not come to the governors attention...((DeSoto)) decided to dismiss ((Chief)) Patofa

so that he might take his men and return at once to his own country. This he did..."

((DeSoto's scouts, at his command, may have led Chief Patofa's hostile Indians, the bearers of the army's supplies, to this place deliberately to keep them away from Cofitachequi. Those bearers would be replaced, before DeSoto proceeded, by Indians of "Succor," who were on friendly terms with Cofitachequi.))

"Friday, the last day of April, the Governor took some on horseback, the most rested...and went toward Cofitachequi and spent the night hard by a large and deep river ((the Santee River, "On the way there Indians were captured who declared that the chieftainess of that land had already heard of the Christians and was awaiting them in her towns,")), and he sent ((Captain)) Juan de Anasco with some on horseback to try to have some interpreters and canoes ready in order to cross the river (("...which hitherto had been on one side of them, cut across in front of them and the village," where the Congaree River joins the Santee River from the west)).. The next day the governor arrived at the crossing in front of the town ((of Columbia; he on the west bank of the Saluda River, just above that river's junction with the Congaree))."

Columbia, South Carolina

"((Cofitachique, or "Eupaha" according to the Indian boy, Perico)) was on the bank of a river that we believed was the river of Santa Elena ((the Congaree-Santee River, which had been discovered years earlier by the lawyer Ayllon, whose colony had failed and his people scattered. Some of them made it back to Spain with wild stories of gold in this land before DeSoto's people had departed Spain))...some Indians brought ((the Lady)) on a litter with much prestige. And she sent a message to us that she was delighted that we had come to her land, and that she would give us whatever she could, and she sent a string of pearls of five or six strands to the Governor. She gave us canoes in which we crossed that river ((the Saluda)) and divided with us half of the town..." ((The Broad River splits today's Columbia: the Spaniards got the west side; they called it "The Point," between the Saluda and Broad Rivers which join at Columbia to become the Congaree River, which the Spaniards had followed to Columbia.))

"She was young and of fine appearance, and she removed a string of pearls that she wore about her neck and put it on the Governor's neck, in order to ingratiate

herself and win his good will...And the Indians walked covered down to the feet with very excellent hides, very well tanned, and blankets of sable and mountain lions which smelled; and the people are very clean and very polite and naturally well developed. Monday the third of May, all the rest of the army arrived, and all could not cross ((the Saluda River just below Columbia's Zoo)) until the next day, Tuesday, and not without cost and loss of seven horses which drowned. These were among the fattest horses, which fought against the current, but the thin ones, which let themselves go ((survived))."

"As soon as he was lodged in the town ((Boozer Mall is built there today)), another gift of many hens was made to him. The land was very pleasing and fertile, and had excellent fields along the rivers ((the Saluda, Broad and Congaree Rivers)), the forests being clear and having many walnuts and mulberries. They said that the sea ((the Atlantic Ocean)) was two days' journey away (("According to the Indians, the sea was up to thirty leagues ((80 miles)) from there." It is actually 90 miles to Charleston, on the Atlantic Ocean, two days below Columbia)). Around the town within the compass of a league and a half ((four miles)) were large uninhabited towns, choked with vegetation, which looked as though no people had inhabited them for some

time ((the Lady probably resided in today's downtown Columbia, on the east bank of the Broad River)). The Indians said that two years ago there had been a plague in that land and they had moved to other towns ((the lawyer Ayllon, or other wayward Spaniard, probably introduced the foreign virus that caused this plague)). In the barbacoas ((storage bins)) of the towns there was considerable amount of clothing and blankets made of thread from the bark of trees and feather mantles ((white, gray, vermilion, and yellow)) made according to their custom, elegant and suitable for winter. There were also many deerskins, well tanned and colored, with designs drawn on them and made into pantaloons, hose and shoes. The chief, observing that the Christians esteemed pearls, told the Governor that he might order certain graves in that town to be examined, for he would find many, and that if he wished to send to the inhabited towns ((up the east bank of the Saluda River)), they could load all their horses. The graves of that town were examined and fourteen arrobas ((175 pounds)) of pearls were found, babies and birds being made of them."

"...(A)lthough they were not good because they were damaged through being below the ground and placed amidst the adipose tissue of the Indians. Here we found buried two Castilian axes for cutting wood, and a

rosary of beads of jet and some ((trinkets)) of the kind that they carry from Spain to barter with the Indians. All this we believed they had obtained from barter with those who went with the ((lawyer)) Ayllon."

"On the seventh of May...Gallegos ((one of DeSoto's Captains)) went with most of the people ((the foot soldiers)) of the army to Ilapi...((thence to Talimeco, today's Camden)) to eat seven barbacoas of corn that they ((the Indians)) said was there, which were a deposit of the Chieftainess...This Talimeco was a town of great importance, with its very authoritative oratory on a high mound; the house of the chief ((was)) very large and very tall and broad, all covered, high and low, with very excellent and beautiful mats, and placed with such fine skill that it appeared that all the mats were only one mat. Only rarely ((in that village)) was there a hut which might not be covered with matting. This town has very good savannas and a fine river ((the Wateree River)), and forests of walnuts and oak, pines, evergreen oaks and groves of sweetgum, and many cedars. In this river was...found a bit of gold; and such a rumor became public in the army among the Spaniards, and for this it was believed that this is a land of gold, and that good mines would be found there ((which eventually

happened in 1799, just upstream of Camden in Cabarrus County, setting off America's first gold-rush))."

"In the villages under the jurisdiction and overlordship of Cofachiqui through which our Spaniards passed they found many Indians native to other provinces who were held in slavery. As a safeguard against their running away, they ((Cofachiqui's people)) disabled them ((their neighbors)) in one foot, cutting the nerves above the instep where the foot joins the leg, or just above the heel. They held them in this perpetual and inhuman bondage in the interior of the country away from the frontiers, making use of them to cultivate the soil and in other servile employment's. These were the prisoners they captured in the ambushes that they set against one another at their fisheries and hunting grounds, and not in open war of one power against another with organized armies ((as was the European habit at that time))."

"The people were dark, well set up and proportioned, and more civilized than any who had been seen in all the land of Florida ((North America)); and all were shod and clothed. The youth ((Perico)) told the governor that he was now beginning to enter that land of which he had spoken to him. And since it was such a land and he understood the language of the Indians,

some credence was given him. He requested that he be Baptized, for he wished to become a Christian. He was made a Christian and was called Pedro. The governor ordered him to be loosed from the chain in which he had gone until then ("The Castilians did not offer the lady Baptism..."). That land, according to the statement of the Indian ((now named Pedro)), had been very populous and was reputed to be a good land. According to appearances, the youth ((Pedro)), whom the governor had taken as guide, had heard of it, and what he had learned from hearsay he asserted to have seen, and enlarged at will what he saw. In that town were found a dagger and some beads of Christians, whom the Indians said had been in the port ((of Charleston)), two days journey thence; and that it was now many years since Ayllon had arrived there in order to make a conquest of that land; that on arriving at the port he died; and there ensued a division, quarrels, and deaths among several of the principle persons who had accompanied him as to who should have the command; and without learning anything of the land they returned to Spain from that port. All the men ((with DeSoto)) were of the opinion that they should settle in that land as it was an excellent region; that if it were settled, all the ships from New Spain, and those from Peru, Santa Marta, and Tierra

Firme, on their way to Spain, would come to take advantage of the stop there, for their route passes by there; and as it is a good land and suitable for making profits."

"Since the governor's purpose was to seek another treasure like that of Peru, he had no wish to content himself with good land or with pearls, even though many of them were worth their weight in gold and, if the land were to be allotted in repartimiento, those pearls which the Indians would get afterward would be worth more; for those they have, inasmuch as they are bored by fire, lose their color thereby. The governor replied to those who urged him to settle that there was not food in that whole land for the support of his men for a single month; that it was necessary to hasten to the port of Ochus ((Mobile, Alabama)) where ((Captain)) Maldonado was to wait; that if another richer land were not found they could always return to that one whenever they wished; that meanwhile the Indians would plant their fields ((with seeds the Spaniards gave them)) and it would be better provided with corn. He asked the Indians whether they had heard of any great lord farther on. They said that twelve days' journey thence was a province called Chiaha which was subject to the lord of Coosa ((who was discussed in Georgia))."

((Editor's Note - Coosa, a very powerful chief, influenced many southern tribes at the time, including the Cherokee, Yuchi, Casqui and Creeks. The province of Chiaha would be found by DeSoto in the broadest expanse of mountains in Eastern America: the Great Smoky Mountains. After all, DeSoto needed to find gold to attract more settlers to his colony, and he knew that gold might be found in those mountains. He planned to attack the strongest villages and take their gold, just as he had done in Peru. A large section of the Smoky Mountains, just west of Nantahala Gorge and including its highest mountain, a village on it, and its western river, is still called Chiaha today. Chief Chiaha and his people were of the Yuchi Tribe. The name "Chiaha," in Yuchi, means "High Place." DeSoto would spend the next seven weeks getting his army up there.))

"Thereupon the governor determined to go in search of that land; and as he was a man hard and dry of word, and although he was glad to listen to and learn from the opinion of all, after he had voiced his own opinion he did not like to be contradicted and always did what seemed best to him. Accordingly, all conformed to his will, and although it seemed a mistake to leave that land for another land that might have been found round about where the men might maintain themselves until

the planting might be done there and the corn harvested, no one had anything to say to him after his determination was learned."

"...(B)ecause the Indians had already risen and that it was learned that the Lady was minded to go away if she could without giving guides or tamemes for carrying because of offenses committed against the Indians by the Christians—for among many men there is never lacking some person of little quality for who for very little advantage to himself places the others in danger of losing their lives—the governor ordered a guard to be placed over her and took her along with him, not giving her such good treatment as she deserved for the good will she had shown him and the welcome she had given him."

"We ((stayed)) in the town of this lady for about ten or eleven days, and then it was advisable for us to leave from there in search of food, because here there was none...((the horses and people had used it up very quickly))...We ((with DeSoto and the Lady)) turned again north and traveled ((up the west bank of the Broad River)).."

"Wednesday, the ((twelfth)) of May, the Governor ((with the horsemen)) left Cofitachequi ((the rest of the army had gone east, over the Broad River and to

Camden, with Captain Gallegos)), and in two days ((DeSoto having camped at Newberry)) he arrived at the province of Chalaque ((Cherokee in English, near today's Union)) but he could not find the town of the lord, nor was there an Indian who would disclose it ((it is possible that these Cherokee were recent arrivals, given that their village was difficult to locate following the conspicuous, well traveled roads)). And they ((with DeSoto)) slept in a pine forest, where many ((Cherokee)) Indian men and women began to come in peace with presents..."

"The Indians live on roots of herbs which they seek in the open field and on game killed with their arrows. The ((Cherokee)) people are very domestic, go quite naked and ((are)) very fatigued ((perhaps due to constant food gathering given their recent move to this land)). There was a lord who brought the governor two deerskins as a great act of service. In that land are many wild hens ((turkeys)). In one town they performed a service for him, presenting him seven hundred of them, and likewise in others they brought those they had and could get."

"...(T)he soldiers ((with Captain Gallegos, in the meantime)) were marching along at midday when suddenly a great tempest of strong contrary winds blew

up, with much lightning and thunder, and quantities of large hailstones that fell upon them, so that if there had not happened to be some large walnut trees near the road and some other dense trees under which they took shelter, they would have perished, for the largest of the hailstones were the size of a hen egg and the smallest were the size of a nut. The rodeleros held their shields over their heads, but even so when the stones struck an unprotected part of their bodies they hurt them badly. It was God's will that the storm last only a short time; if it had been longer the shelter they had taken would not have been enough to save their lives, and short as it had been they were so battered that they could not march that day or the next."

"...(O)n Monday, the seventeenth of that month, they ((with DeSoto)) departed from there ((near Union)) and spent the night in a forest; and on Tuesday they went to Guaquili ((Spartinburg)), and the Indians came forth in peace and gave them corn, although little, and many hens roasted on barbacao, and a few little dogs, which are good food. These are little dogs that do not bark ((opossum perhaps)), and they rear them in the houses in order to eat them. They also gave them tamemes, which are Indians who carry burdens. And on the following Wednesday they went to a canebrake

((Inman)), and on Thursday to a small savannah ((Landrum)) where a horse died; and some foot soldiers of ((Captain)) Gallegos arrived, making known to the Governor that he was approaching."

Across North Carolina

((Captain Gallegos, who had led most of the army's foot soldiers from Columbia, South Carolina, to Camden for food, had come up the east bank of the Broad River, recrossing that river just east of Spartanburg. DeSoto waited for Gallegos at Landrum in order to make a dawn raid on the first village of today's North Carolina))

"The next day, Friday ((the 21st of May, on the morning of the full moon)), they went to Xuala ((Tryon, North Carolina)) which is a town on plain between some rivers ((the Pacolet Rivers)); its chief was so well provisioned that he gave to the Christians however much they asked for: tamemes, corn, little dogs, petacas, and however much he had...In that Xuala it seemed to them that there was better disposition to look for gold mines than in all that they had passed through and seen in that northern part."

((The view of the Appalachian Mountains is spectacular from Tryon; the Cherokee place name Xuala,

spelled "Saluda" by English explorers, means "the bushy place." When viewed from the mountains above Tryon, the plains and foothills below appear to be bushy because they are covered with very bushy scrub oak, unlike the tall, colorful trees of the mountains.))

"...(T)he village and province of Xuala, which, although it was a separate province from that of Cofachiqui, belonged ((at least hereditarily)) to the same lady ((alliances may have been changing at that time, given the Cherokee intrusion, noted above, caused, perhaps, by the pestilence which had depopulated some of her land))...This village was situated in the foothills of a mountain range ((the Appalachians)) on the bank of a river ((North Pacolet)) that, though not very large, had a very strong current. The territory of Cofachiqui extended to that river ((which flows from the mountains and to Columbia, her home town; that river was, most likely, the western border of her province)). In the village of Xuala they served and entertained the governor and all his army most attentively, for as it was a part of the Lady's kingdom, and as she had sent orders to that effect, the Indians did everything in their power both to obey their lady and to please the Spaniards."

"They found little corn, and for that reason, although the men were tired and the horses very weak, the governor did not stop over two days."

"From the village of Cofachiqui ((Columbia, South Carolina))...to the first valley of the province of Xuala ((Tryon, North Carolina))...it was about fifty leagues ((130 miles)), more or less, all of it through a level and pleasant country with small rivers flowing through it at a distance of three or four leagues ((about ten miles)) from one another. They saw few mountains ((until they reached Tryon)), and these had much grass for cattle and were easy to traverse on foot or on horseback. The whole fifty leagues generally, both that which they found inhabited and cultivated and that which was uncultivated and fit for tillage, had good soil. The whole distance traveled from the province of Apalache ((Panama City, Florida)) to that of Xuala ((Tryon, North Carolina)) where we ((who followed Captain Gallegos)) found the governor and his army was, if I have not miscounted, fifty-seven daily journeys. The march was generally northeast, and many days toward the north. The large river that flowed through Cofachiqui ((the Congaree-Santee River)), according to the mariners among the Spaniards, was the one which they called Santa Elena on the coast; they did not know this for

certain, but according to the direction they had traveled, it seemed to them that it would be this one. This doubt and many others that our history leaves unsolved will be cleared up when God, our Lord, shall be pleased to have that land won for the increase of his holy Catholic faith. We take four and a half leagues ((twelve miles)) as an average of the fifty-seven daily journals those Spaniards marched from Apalache ((above Panama City, Florida)) to Xuala ((Tryon, North Carolina)), though some may have been longer and others shorter. According to this calculation, they have marched a little less than 260 leagues ((685 miles)) to Xuala, and from the Bay of Espiritu Santo ((Charlotte Harbor, Florida)) to Apalache we said that they traveled 150 leagues ((395 miles)). Thus in all they covered a little less than four hundred leagues ((1053 miles during their first full year in North America))."

"The governor set out from Xuala for Guaxule ((the Cherokee name for Asheville)), crossing over very rough and lofty mountains."

"In these mountains we found the source of the Great River ((Mississippi)), by which we ((eventually departed North America; the French Broad River, which they discovered in those mountains, is the head of the

"Great River," the Mississippi River, upon which the army would make its escape three years later))..."

"Tuesday, the twenty-fifth of May, they left from Xuala and crossed that day a very high mountain range ((the railroad uses that grade today, the least inclined into North Carolina from the south, but the steepest railroad grade east of the Mississippi River. The tracks run along Pacolet River, which flows swiftly through that pass))."

"They marched for another five days through a mountain range uninhabited ((the Indians had fled before the Spaniards arrived)) but very good country. It had many oaks and some mulberries, and plenty of pasturage for cattle. There were ravines and streams with little water, though they flowed rapidly, and very green and delightful valleys. At the place they crossed it this range was twenty leagues wide ((fifty-two miles, from Tryon to Asheville, as it is today)).

"...((Along the way)) they spent the night in a small forest ((today's Saluda, at the top of that pass)), and the next day, Wednesday in a savannah ((Hendersonville)) where they endured great cold, although it was already the twenty-sixth of May; and there they crossed, in water up to their shins, the river by which they afterward left in the ships that they made

((they crossed the French Broad river at King's Ford)). When that river comes forth to the sea, the navigation chart states and indicates that it is the river of Spiritu Sancto ((the Mississippi River, which the French Broad feeds)); which, according to charts of the cosmographer Alonso de Chaves, enters in a great bay ((the Gulf of Mexico))...from there ((King's Ford, north of Hendersonville)), where they crossed the river in water up to their shins, the Lady of Cofitachequi, whom they took with them in payment of the good treatment that they had received from her, turned back..."

"...((She)) stepped aside the road and went into a wood saying that she had to attend to her necessities...and hid herself in the woods, and although we sought her she could not be found ("in that province of Xalague..." Cherokee in English)). She took with her a box filled with unbored pearls, very valuable...and went to stop at Xualla ((Tryon)) with a slave who had escaped from camp...and it was certain that they held communication as husband and wife, and that both decided to go back to Cofitachique ((Columbia, South Carolina))."

"The next day they spent the night in an oak grove, and the following day, alongside a large creek ((the French Broad River at today's Asheville Airport)),

which they crossed many times ((as they marched down that valley between towering mountains)); and the next day messengers came in peace."

Asheville, North Carolina

"The army arrived in Guasili ((Asheville))...and because this was a good resting place the soldiers called it, while throwing dice ((thereafter)), the "House of Guasili," a good encounter ((or good luck))..."

"...(T)hey gave us a quantity of dogs and some corn, of which they had little.."

"The Indians there made him ((DeSoto)) service of three hundred dogs, for they observed that the Christians liked them and sought them to eat, but they are not eaten among the Indians. In Guaxulle and along the road there was very little corn..."

"Gauxule ((Asheville))...was situated among many small streams that flowed through various parts of the village ((located in the Hominy Creek flats)). Their sources were in these mountains where the Spaniards had passed through and in others beyond ((the creeks converge at Asheville))...All around it was a public walk along which six men could pass abreast ((Cherokee legend holds that its tribes and clans met in at today's Asheville to compete from time to time; the "walk,"

described by the Spaniards, was probably a Cherokee race track of some sort. "Jua Gaux-u-le," in Cherokee, means "The Place Where They Race"). The governor was in this village four days...from there he went in six daily journeys of five leagues each ((about thirteen miles each day))..."

"...(A)nd went with his army to an oak grove alongside a river ((they passed through New Found Gap, west of Asheville, and camped on the Pigeon River at today's Canton, a broad pasture at the time)), and the next day we passed through Canasoga ((in Cherokee that name means "Against the Slopes;" it is against the steep slopes of Bethel/Woodrow, five miles south of Canton, which was called Canasoga by English settlers as well. The army followed that route in order to cross the Pigeon River at its branches at Woodrow)) and spent the night in the open ((due west of Bethel - the Chief's residence - through Pigeon Gap to South Waynesville's broad, flat valley)). And on Wednesday we ((crossed the Blue Ridge, westward through Balsam Gap, followed Scott Creek and)) spent the night alongside a swamp ((three miles above today's Sylva, there is a Budweiser warehouse near that creek's swamp today)), and the next day we ate a very great number of mulberries ((as they passed through today's Dillsboro and

northwestward along the Tuckasegee River to Whittier and Thomas Valley, just below today's Cherokee Indian Reservation - The Great Smoky Mountain Expressway follows that same trail from Asheville today, within a few miles)). The next day we went alongside a creek ((actually, it was the same day along the Tuckasegee River, their longest day's march from Asheville))...and now it was large ((the Tuckasegee River enlarges with creeks and the Oconaluftee River))...the next day, Friday, we went to a pine forest and a creek ((west, past Governors Island and Bryson City through Sherrill Gap, then down the north bank of the Tuckasegee River to the broad pastures of Forney Creek, just east of the Little Tennessee River))...And the next day, Saturday, in the morning, we crossed a very broad river, across a branch of it ((they crossed the Little Tennessee River at its confluence with the Tuckasegee River))...and entered Chiaha, which is on an island of the same river..."

((That large island, located at the base of today's Chiaha Mountain at the union of its giant rivers, is covered by the Fontana Dam Reservoir today, but the entire region is still called Chiaha. Chiaha Village extended from Chiaha Island southward up the flats of Panther, Wolf, Stecoah, Sawyer and Tuskegee Creeks. The horses were pastured in Stecoah's large valley, in

the largest pasture hemmed by steep mountains in that area, twelve miles from their previous night's campsite. DeSoto's six day journey from Asheville included just over thirteen miles each of his first, second, third and fifth days, fifteen miles on the fourth and eleven on his last, given that he chose to camp within a mile of his horses in Stecoah Valley and NOT on Chiaha's fortified island.))

"All of these rivers joined together within a short distance ((of DeSoto's campsite - Chiaha Island is at the union of the Tuckasegee, Oconaluftee, Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers)) to form a large river of such volume that at Chiaha, which was thirty leagues ((79 miles)) from Guaxule ((Asheville, as it is today)), it was larger than the Guadalquivir at Savilla ((Spain)). This village, Chiaha, was situated on the ((east)) end of a large island ((formed by the Little Tennessee and Cheoa Rivers on the north and west, the Little Tennessee and Nantahala River on the south and east)) more than five leagues ((thirteen miles)) long, which the river formed ((measured from the Little Tennessee River's bend on itself, just west of today's Fontana Dam, eastward to the Nantahala River)). The Chief went out to receive the governor and welcomed him cordially with all the demonstrations of affection and pleasure that he could

show, and the Indians whom he had brought with him did the same with the Spaniards, being very pleased to see them. Taking them across the river ((the Little Tennessee River)) in many canoes and rafts they had ready for this purpose, they lodged them in their houses, as if they were their own brothers. All the other service and entertainment they accorded them were similar in measure, their desire being, as they expressed it, to take out their hearts and lay them before the Spaniards, so that they might see with their own eyes how much pleasure it gave them to know the Spaniards..."

"Chiaha ((("The Place of the Mink," in the Cherokee language, possibly meaning weasel, given Chiaha's reputation among Cherokee)) was isolated between two arms of a river and was settled near one of them ((the Little Tennessee River)) ...Very excellent fields lay along them...((Chief Chiaha was not Cherokee, but he, and his people, were from the west; they extracted homage from the Cherokee, which may be why Chief Chiaha welcomed DeSoto...and, likewise, why the Cherokee do not even mention the name Chiaha today...In the Yuchi language, Chiaha means "The High Place;" they were probably from the Tennessee River Valley)). There the Governor rested for thirty days...((while his army searched the surrounding

mountains for gold. One mineshaft, blasted precisely to sixteenth century standards, still exists in Sawyer Creek Valley; the Spaniards may well have dug it). “

"Saturday, the fifth of June, was the day that they entered in Chiaha; and since from Xuala ((Tryon, North Carolina)) all their travel had been through a mountain range ((the highest in Eastern-North America)) and the horses were tired and thin, and the Christians likewise fatigued, it was advisable to halt and rest there; and they ((the Indians)) gave them an abundance of good corn, of which there is much...and considerable oil of walnuts and acorns which they knew how to extract very well, and it was very good and helped them very much for their sustenance, although some are wont to say that the oil of walnuts causes flatulence; notwithstanding, it is very delicious...."

"...(T)he Chief came to visit the Governor and made him a present of a handsome string of pearls. If they had not been pierced with fire they would have been a fine gift because the string was two fathoms ((about twelve feet)) long and the pearls as large as hazel nuts, almost perfectly matched. The Governor received them...and in return gave him pieces of velvet and cloth of various colors and other things from Spain, which the Indians valued highly. The Governor asked him if those

pearls were found in his country, and the chief replied that they were, and that in the Temple and burial place of their fathers and grandfathers...there were great quantities of pearls; and if he wanted them, he could have...as many as he desired...The Governor told him that he appreciated the good will and although he desired the pearls he would not injure the burial place of his ancestors, however much he might want them. The string that he had given the Governor he had received only because it was a present from him, and he wished to know only how they ((the Indians)) took the pearls from the shells..."The chief told him that on the next day at eight o'clock in the morning his lordship would see how it was done, for that afternoon and night the Indians would fish for them. The Chief immediately directed that forty canoes be sent out with orders that they fish for the shells, with all diligence, and come back in the morning. When morning came, the chief ordered much wood to be brought and heaped up on a level space on the riverbank. It was set on fire and a large bed of coals made, and as soon as the canoes arrived he ordered that the coals be spread out and the shells that the Indians brought ((in the canoes)) to be thrown upon the bed of coals. The pearls opened from the heat of the fire and they were enabled to hunt for the pearls inside

them. From almost the first shells that they opened the Indians took out ten or twelve pearls as large as medium-sized chick-peas and brought them to the chief and the governor, who were watching together to see how they took them out. They saw that they were very good and perfect except that the heat and smoke of the fire had already damaged their fine natural color.

"Having seen them take out the pearls, the governor went to his lodgings to eat and soon after he had eaten a soldier entered...Showing a pearl that he carried in his hand, he said: 'Sir, as I was eating some of the oysters that the Indians brought today, a few which I took to my quarters and had cooked, I found this between my teeth, which almost broke them. As it seemed to me to be a fine one, I brought it to your lordship so that you might send it to your wife Dona Isabel...' The adelantado ((governor)) replied, saying: "I thank you for your good will and accept the present and the favor you do Dona Isabel so that she may thank you and repay you whenever the opportunity arises. But it will be better if you keep the pearl and take it to Havana, so that you can get in exchange for it a couple of horses and two mares and anything else you may need. Because of the good will you have shown toward us, I

shall pay, out of my own pocket, the fifth ((of the value of the pearl)) that belongs to his Majesty.

"The Spaniards who were with the governor examined the pearl, and those among them who regarded themselves as lapidaries of sorts estimated that in Spain it would be worth 400 ducats, because it was the size of a large hazelnut with its husk entire, perfectly rounded and of a clear and lustrous color. Since it had not been opened with fire, as had the others, its color and beauty had not been injured. We give an account of these particulars, though unimportant, because they show the wealth of that country. On one of the days that the Spaniards were in this village of Chiaha a misfortune occurred that grieved all of them very much. This was that a gentleman...while walking across a plain near the river with a lance in his hand, saw a dog pass near him and threw the lance at it with the intention of killing it for food, because due to the general scarcity of meat throughout that country, the Castilians ate all the dogs they were able to get. The throw missed the dog, and the lance went skimming across the plain beyond until it fell over the bluff above the river, and it happened to strike in the temple a soldier who was fishing there with a cane pole, coming out on the other side of his head, from which he

immediately fell dead. ((The gentleman)), ignorant of having made this cruel throw, went to look for his lance and found it stuck through the temples of Juan Mateos, for this was the soldier's name...Among all the Spaniards who went on this discovery he alone had gray hair, wherefore everyone called him father and respected him as if he were the father of each of them. Thus there was general grief at the misfortune and miserable death that had overtaken him when he had gone out to enjoy himself. Death is near and is equally certain for us in all times and places."

"The chief told us...that thirty leagues away ((79 miles over the Great Smoky Mountains)) there were mines of yellow metal ((near today's Knoxville; a place called "Chisca" by Chiaha))...and that he would furnish guides who would take our people there and back. They ((the scouts)) left there at once, deciding to go on foot rather than on horseback...so as to accomplish more in less time." ((There are no roads over those mountains, even today, from Chiaha northward; the Rocky Mountains are much too steep, even for horses... and the Indians had learned by that time that by telling the Spaniards that gold could be found just over the horizon, they could quickly be rid of the Spaniards.))

"The Indians were with ((us)) fifteen days in peace; they played and swam with us, and in all they served us very well. They went away Saturday, the nineteenth of the month ((precisely on the Full Moon)) because of a certain thing that the Governor asked them for; and in short, it was women. The next day in the morning..."

"...((We)) cut down and destroyed their large maize fields...and sent word to them that they should return...that our Governor did not wish any Indian women since it cost so dearly for them to give them to us."

"In the land of ((Chief)) Chiaha these Spaniards first found the towns palisaded ((enclosed with high fence; the people of Chiaha were not Cherokee but lived in the Cherokee Mountains and collected tribute from them; nor did they speak the language of the Cherokee but one resembling their neighbors to the west)). ((Chief)) Chiaha gave us five hundred tamemes, and DeSoto's Captains consented to leave off the collars and chains.

On Monday, the twenty-eighth of June, the Governor and his people left from Chiaha ((in Western North Carolina))...we passed through five or six towns ((on the way down the south bank of the Little

Tennessee River)), and we went to sleep at a pine forest, in front of a town ("which, we said, was five leagues [thirteen miles from Chiaha])...where the river came together again," at the Little Tennessee River's bend on itself just below today's Fontana Dam; pioneer Tallassee, an Indian village once located on the river's big bend, has since moved downstream. That village, named "Tallassee," may well have been the source of the name "TENNESSEE," in English, given that English fur traders ventured into today's Tennessee along the same trail that DeSoto used). "... (B)ut we had much hardship there in crossing the river that flowed very strong, and, so that the foot soldiers might not be endangered, we put the horses in the river in single file, tail with head, and we held them still...and the horses received the impact of the current, and below them...the foot soldiers crossed, holding on to the tail, stirrup and mane of one ((horse)) after another; and in this manner all the army crossed well."

Into Tennessee

"The next day, Tuesday, we ((entered Tennessee and)) passed through a town ("Tallassee," inside the Little Tennessee River's big bend just below today's Fontana Dam)), and there we took corn and went on to

sleep in the open ((west of today's Tallassee, well downstream of the river's big bend and outside of the mountains))...Wednesday we crossed a river ((the Little Tennessee, westbound)), and then a town ((today's Toqua)) and a river ((the Tellico)) and we spent the night in the open ((near today's Madisonville)). And on Thursday the chief of Coste came forth to receive us in peace, and he led us to sleep in a town of his ((Athens))."

"...((The scouts)) returning from discovering the mines ((near Knoxville, just up the Tennessee Valley from Athens)), spending ten days on their journey...said that the mines were ((not of gold but)) of very fine brass and that gold and silver would be found if the veins and deposits were sought ((copper and aluminum are mined there today))..."

"Those ((scouts)) said that the Indians had taken them through a land with such lofty mountains ((The Great Smoky Mountains)) that it would have been impossible for the camp to march through it ((from Chiaha))."

"On Friday...the Governor ((in the vanguard)) arrived at Coste, which is a town on an island of the river ((Hiwassee Island, at the Tennessee-Hiwassee River confluence)) which flows great and strong and is difficult to enter...and the Governor ((crossed the

Hiwassee River onto the island and)) entered the town carelessly and unarmed with a few unarmed men, and when the soldiers...began to climb on the grain storage bins...the Indians began to beat them...The Governor commanded that our men all should suffer it and be tolerant, because of the evident danger in which they were all in ((given that the army had yet to arrive)), and that no one should put a hand on his ((hidden)) weapons; and the Governor began to quarrel with the soldiers, and...he also thrashed some of them, and he flattered the chief and told him he did not wish that our people should anger them, and that he wished...to take lodging at the savanna of the island. And the chief and his people went with him...and ((when the army arrived)) the Spaniards put the Indians in chains with their collars, and the Governor threatened the Indians and said that he would burn all of them, because they had laid hands on the Spaniards."

"There in Coste was found, in the trunk of a tree, honey from bees, as good or better than can be found in Spain. In that river we found, in some clams they gathered to eat, some pearls, and they were the first pearls we ever saw from fresh water, although there are pearls in many parts of that land. On Monday we crossed a river ((the Hiwassee River again, to leave the

island)) and slept in the open ((across the Tennessee River from Shady Grove)). On Tuesday we crossed another ((the Tennessee River, into Shady Grove, in order to avoid the steep ridges on the river's south bank, then spent the night near Hixon on North Chattanooga Creek)), and on Wednesday another river ((the Tennessee River, from Moccasin Bend, North Chattanooga, to Brown's Ferry landing on the west shore of the river)), and we ((the entire army)) slept in Tasqui ((Tiftona))...On Thursday we ((the horsemen in the vanguard)) went to another small town ((Sulpher Springs, Georgia)) and passed other small towns ((in rapid order; the riders had no rivers to cross beyond Tiftona))..."

Into Alabama

"...(A)nd on Friday the Governor ((with his riders)) entered Coosa, one of the best and most abundant provinces we found" ((located in a large valley on the south side of Sand Mountain; DeSoto had passed through Valley Head where the army camped before catching-up the next day. "Coosa" means "The Place of the Birch" in Cherokee; this place was not the main village of Coosa, however, but instead one established to

accommodate the Spaniards along their way between the mountains and Mobile Bay)).

"Its chief ((Coosa, "Lord" of the Georgia "Cherokee," given that he collected tribute from them, spoke a Muskogean dialect, unlike the Cherokee Iroquoian language)) came forth to receive us ((the vanguard)) on a litter with great festivity and many people, because he has many subject towns" ((including those in Georgia where few young people were found. Chief Coosa's main village was probably today's Etowah, just above Atlanta, where young people surrounded the powerful chief. DeSoto had instructed Coosa to bring enough food to that place to accommodate the army in this otherwise small village located on the trail from the Carolina Mountains to Mobile Bay, where his ships would meet him)).

"DeSoto reached Cosa on Friday, July 16th. The chief came out to welcome him two crossbow flights ((half-a-mile)) from the town in a carrying chair borne on the shoulders of his principal men, seated on a cushion, and covered with a robe of marten skins of the form and size of a woman's shawl. He wore a crown of feathers on his head; and around about him were many Indians playing and singing. "As soon as he came to the governor, he saluted him and addressed the following

words to him; 'Excellent and powerful Lord, superior to all those of the earth...I come to welcome you, ((but)) long ago I have welcomed you in my heart, namely, from the day on which I heard of your Lordship ((probably from his people in Georgia)). With so great a desire, joy, and happiness to serve you, what I show is nothing compared to what I feel, nor could it have any comparison. You may consider it as true that to receive dominion over the world would not gladden me so much as does the sight of you; nor should I consider it as great happiness. Do not expect me to offer you what is yours, namely, my person, lands, and vassals. I wish only to occupy myself in commanding my people to welcome you with all diligence and due reverence from this place to the town ((in Big Will's Valley)) with music and singing, where your Lordship will be lodged and served by me and by them; and you will do with all I possess as though it were your own...' "

"The governor thanked him, and both talking together very joyfully, they went on to the town ((where the chief temporarily resided in Big Will's Valley)). He ordered his Indians ((his servants)) to move out of their dwellings, in which the governor and his men were lodged ((the army would arrive later and be quartered in today's Fort Payne)). In the storage bins and fields there

was a great quantity of maize and beans. The land was very populous and had many large towns and planted fields which reached from one town to the other ((up and down Big Will's Valley)). It was a charming and fertile land, and grapes along the river ((Big Will's Creek)) on vines climbing up into the trees. Beyond the streams were the low stocks of large, sweet grapes, but because they were not cultivated or well taken care of they had large seeds."

"The governor was accustomed to place a guard over the chief so that the chief might not go away, and took the chief along with him until leaving the chief's land; for by taking the chief ((by surprise attack with swift horses)), the people ((of the chief's village)) would await in their towns ((for the army to arrive)) and the chief would give a guide and Indians as carriers ((for all of the food and clothing found in their village to be used by the Spaniards as they passed)). Before departing from their lands, ((DeSoto)) would give the chiefs leave to return to their homes as soon as he reached another dominion where others were ((forced to be)) given to him" ((in the same manner)). "Those ((Indians)) of Coosa, seeing their lord detained, thought ill of it and revolted and went away to hide themselves in the woods - both those of their lord's town and those of other chiefs towns,

who were his vassals. The governor sent four captains ((out to find them, as the army arrived)), each in a different direction... They seized many Indians, men and women, who were put in chains ((by the foot soldiers)). Upon seeing the harm they received, and how little they gained in absenting themselves ((from the fast moving horsemen)), they came, saying that they wished to serve in whatever might be commanded them. Some of the principal men among those imprisoned were set free on petition of the chief. Of the rest, each man ((in the army)) took away as slaves those he had in chains, without allowing them to go to their lands. ((Curious on-lookers from surrounding areas, were, no doubt, attracted by the spectacle of the Spaniards. They were captured by the army as it advanced.)) Nor did many of them return ((to their homes)) except some whose good fortune and assiduous industry aided them, who managed to file off their chains at night; or some, who were able, while on the march, to wander away from the road upon observing any lack of care in their guard. They went off with their chains, their loads ((of food and supplies)) and the clothes they were carrying ((for the Spaniards))."

"...(A)nd in truth, as eyewitnesses testified ((at Spanish Inquests years later)), it was a thing of much

pity to see ((those Indians)); but God forgets no evil thing done nor does it remain without punishment, as this history will relate."

"One day while the Spaniards were in this village of Cosa, its lord, who had eaten at the governor's table, having talked with him about many things pertaining to the conquest and settlement of the country and having replied to the entire satisfaction of the governor...said, 'Sir...if you are seeking good lands on which to settle, see fit to remain in mine and make an establishment in them. I believe that this is one of the best provinces that your lordship has seen among all of those that are in this kingdom, and moreover I assure your lordship that you have chanced to pass through and see the poorest and least desirable part of it. If your lordship should desire to examine it more closely, I will take you through other, better parts ((Rome, Georgia, Chief Coosa's home)) that will satisfy you entirely, and you can take whatever part of them that seems best to you for settling and establishing your house and court. If you do not wish to grant me this favor at present, at least do not refuse to remain in this village during the coming winter, which is near, where we will serve you, as your lordship will see by our actions...' The governor thanked him for his good will and told him that he was wholly unable to make an

inland settlement until knowing what ports there were on the seacoasts to receive the ships and the people that would come to them from Spain or elsewhere with cattle and plants and the other things necessary for making settlements. At the proper time he would accept his offer and would always maintain friendship with him, and meanwhile he might rest assured that he would not delay in returning there and settling the country, and then he could do the things he asked for his gratification and satisfaction. This lord ((Coosa)) was twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, of very elegant bearing, as are most of those in that country, and of good understanding. He spoke with discretion and gave good replies to all the questions that were asked him; he appeared to have been brought up in a most enlightened and polished court."

"...(T)he governor saw fit to continue his journey toward the sea, which he was seeking. Since leaving the province of Xuala ((Tryon, N.C.)) we had marched toward the coast ((the Gulf of Mexico)), making an arc through the country in order to come out at the port of Achusi ((Mobile Bay)) as we had agreed with Captain Maldonado to do. The later had remained to explore the coast and was to return ((from Cuba)) at the beginning of the coming winter to the port of Achusi with

reinforcements of men and arms and cattle and provisions...The governor's chief purpose was to go to this port to begin making his settlement..."

"The Governor rested in Coosa ((Fort Payne)) for twenty-five days, then set out on Friday, August 20th ((1540)), to look for a province, by name, Tuscaloosa."

"We ((the army)) departed from here toward the west and southwest ((into and down Big Will's Valley)) and went through towns of the Chief..."

"...((We)) passed through a large town ((north of Collinsville; there is a very old pioneer cemetery there today))...and went to sleep half-league ((three-quarters of a mile)) beyond it near a stream ((Big Will's Creek, where it bends back to the main road through that wide part of the valley)). Next day he reached a town called Y-tau-a ((Duck Springs, in E-ta-wah County; English explorers spelled it "At-tal-la." As we do today))...we stayed there for six days because a river was swollen ((beavers still cause this problem in this narrow canyon by damming Big Will's Creek between its steep walls just below Duck Springs))...As soon as the river allowed crossing, we set out, and went to sleep at a town called Ullibahali ((Gadsden))...near which flowed a small river ((the Coosa River))...enclosed like that in other towns seen there afterward, of thick logs, set solidly close

together in the ground, and many long poles as thick as an arm placed crosswise ((this structure may have partially served as a levee against the river's periodic floods)). The height of the enclosure was that of a good lance ((ten feet or more)), and it was plastered within and without and had loopholes ((for the Indians to shoot arrows through)). On the other side of the river was a town where the chief was ((Ohatchee))...we ((then)) went to sleep at a town subject to him ((Lincoln))...and the next day we reached another called Toasi ((Talladega))...we marched ordinarily five or six leagues ((13 to 16 miles)) daily when going through a peopled region, and as much as we could through a depopulated region...we marched for five ((more)) days...and reached Tallise ((spelled "Tallasse" today, at the same place))...The town was large and was located near a deep river ((the Tallapoosa River; the town extended southward to the peninsula formed by the river's westward bend))."

"...(T)he governor took leave of the good Chief Coosa and his people, who were very sad because we were leaving their country ((actually, Chief Coosa was released into hostile Indian territory where he would be slain, according to Spanish reports made there two decades later)). We went by way of a road that they

((advance scouts)) told the Governor was the most suitable... The scouts had been dispatched to explore two trails to ((Chief)) Tuscaloosa, reported to lie only thirteen leagues ((35 miles)) from there...((one trail passed through today's Montgomery, the other well above it; the first crossed the Tallapoosa and Alabama Rivers; the other, only the Coosa River; DeSoto chose the later.))

"...(A)nd spent the night...alongside the river ((still on the north bank of the Tallapoosa River)), and the next day went to Caxa ((at today's Fort Toulouse State Memorial, just opposite today's Wetumpke, by crossing the Coosa River)), a wretched town on the bank of the river on a direct line ((“raya” in Spanish)) between Talisi and Tuscalusa."

"...And ((we)) crossed the River of Talise ((the Coosa River)) in rafts and canoes ((into today's Wetumpke)), it being so full of water that they could not ford it."

"The next day they spent the night alongside the river ((the Alabama River now, near Coosada)), and a town called Humati was on the other side of the water ((we call it Montgomery today)). And the next day they went to a new town ((Prattville))...and the next day we camped in the open ((in the large field of Forester)) one

league ((two-and-two-thirds miles)) before the town of Tuscalusa...the Governor entered the town, which was called Atahachi ((Autaugaville today))."

"...((Chief Tuscaloosa)) was an Indian so large that, to the opinion of all, he was a giant. He awaited us in peace in his town..." ("on a high small high hill, an eminence from which much of the country could be seen in every direction..."; Potato Hill, a giant natural earthen mound at the west end of that valley; a location selected by Tuscaloosa to dramatize his nobility before the Spaniards: its still there today)). "We made much festivity for him when we arrived and jousted and had many horse races, although he appeared to think little of this. Afterward we asked him to give us Indians to carry the burdens, and he responded that he was not accustomed to serving anyone, rather that all served him before...he said that he could not give us anything there, that we should go to another town of his, which was called Mauvilla, and that there he would give us what we wanted from him."

Selma, Alabama

"After a march of two days ((down the Alabama River and through today's Selma)) we reached a town called Piachi ((just above Cahaba, the site of Alabama's

first Capitol, downstream of Birmingham; that river is low today, probably for that reason)). Near it flowed a large river. The Governor asked the Indians for canoes ((to cross the Cahaba River)). They said that they did not have any ((they had probably sent their women and children downstream in their canoes)), but they would make rafts ((for us))..."

"In that town of Piachi it was found out that they had killed Don Teodoro, and a black man, who came forth from the boats of Panfilo de Narvaez ((who had been in Mobile Bay a dozen years before this army arrived; the two deserters had fled from the stranded Narvaez Expedition))."

"From the port ((Charlotte Harbor)) to Apalache ((located just above today's Panama City, both in Florida))...the governor had marched east to west; from Apalache to Cofitachequi ((Columbia, S.C.))...from southwest to northeast; from Cofitachequi to Xualla ((Tryon, N.C.))...from south to north; and from Xualla to Tuscaloosa ((Autaugaville, AL))...he marched...from east to west to the province of Coosa ((Ft. Payne, AL)) and...to Tuscaloosa from north to south. After crossing the River of Piachi ((the Cahaba River))...Chief Tuscaloosa sent an Indian from that place to Mauvilla...to advise them to have provisions prepared and Indians for carrying...we

marched for three days ((down the north bank of the Alabama River))...."

At Mabila

"On Monday, the eighteenth of October, the Day of Saint Luke, the Governor arrived at Mabila ((or Mavila, Mavilla, Mauvila or Mauvilla depending upon which Chronicler wrote it and when he wrote it)), having passed that day through some towns ((a day's walk northeast of Prairie Bluff; those fields are covered with traces of ancient civilizations; DeSoto advanced to Mabila during Harvest Moon, probably for the security afforded by moonlit nights.))...But these ((bountiful)) towns detained the soldiers, pillaging and scattering themselves, for the land seemed populous; thus only forty on horseback arrived in ((the)) advance guard with the Governor, and since they were a little detained, in order for the Governor not to show weakness, he entered in the town with Chief Tuscalusa...The Indians then did a kind of ball ((for the Governor)), with dancing ((girls)) and singing."

"We arrived at Mavila at nine o'clock in the morning. It was a small and very palisaded town and was situated on a plain ((just above the baptismal pond at today's Boiling Spring Cemetery, northeast of

Catherine))...Some important Indians came forth to us upon seeing us and asked the Governor, through the interpreter, if he wished to spend the night there or to enter the town...It seemed better to the governor to enter the town, and we ((the advance guard with DeSoto)) were commanded to enter...Having entered within, we were walking with the Indians, chatting, as if we had them in peace, because only three hundred or so appeared there...they began to do their dances and songs...fifteen or twenty women in front of us...Chief Tuscalusa arose and entered one of those houses...The guard entered to bring him out, and he ((the guard)) saw so many people within...that he told the Governor that those houses were full of Indians, all with bows and arrows....The governor called to another Indian who was passing by there, who likewise refused to come. A Nobleman...seized him by the arm in order to bring him, and then the Indian gave a pull that set himself free...The Nobleman put hand to his sword and gave him a slash that cut off an arm. Upon wounding this Indian, all began to shoot arrows at us...we suffered so much damage that we were forced to leave, fleeing from the town...When the Indians saw us outside, they closed the gates of the town and began to beat there drums and to raise banners with a great yell, and to open our

trunks and bundles and display from the top of the wall all that we had brought..."

"At this time, all the horse and foot ((soldiers)) who came marching ((immediately)) behind ((DeSoto)), happened to reach Mavilla. They were of different opinions there as to whether they should attack the Indians in order to enter into the town or whether this should be avoided, as the entrance was doubtful. But, at last, it was decided to attack them."

"The few riders...((who had fled from)) the village with their horses ((and))...a few others who had arrived from the ((army's)) march...went to resist the...Indians ((who)) were pursuing the ((soldiers of DeSoto's guard)). They, however much they tried, could not prevent the Indians from driving ((DeSoto and his escorts)) across the plain...until the Indians saw the horses charging them. Then the Indians held up a little and gave our men a chance to rally and form two divisions ((at DeSoto's direction)), one of foot soldiers and one of horsemen. These fell upon the Indians with such courage...that they did not stop until they had shut ((the Indians))...in the village. But when ((we)) attempted to enter, such a shower of arrows and stones rained upon ((us)) from the wall and its loopholes that ((we)) withdrew...Seeing ((us)) retire, the Indians came out

again with the same impetuosity as the first time, some through the gate and others jumping down from the wall. They engaged our men rashly, even grasping the horsemen's lances, and the Spaniards were forced, in spite of themselves, to ((retreat)) more than two hundred paces from the wall. The Spaniards withdrew without turning their backs, fighting with all discipline and good order, because in this lay their salvation. They were few and lacked those ((soldiers who had not yet arrived at the village))...those being in the rear guard, which had not yet come up."

"Our men at once charged the enemy and drove them back toward the village, but they made a strong attack from the wall, from which the Spaniards came to understand that it was better to fight them on the plain, at a distance from the village, than near it ((given that horses could be used to advantage only in the open)). Thus from that time on, when ((our people retreated)) they purposely yielded more ground than the Indians forced them to lose, in order to draw the Indians away from the village so that by their retreat the horsemen would have more ground and room where they could charge them with lances. First one and then the other ((of the battling forces)), attacking and withdrawing in this manner, as if in a tournament with reed spears -

though it was a very cruel and bloody battle - and again standing their ground, Indians and Spaniards fought for three hours, savagely killing and wounding each other. In these attacks and retreats that were thus made, there rode behind among the Spaniards a Dominican friar named Fray Juan de Gallegos, the brother of Captain Gallegos. He was not attempting to fight, but he wished to give his horse to his brother, and with this desire he shouted to him to come out and mount the horse. The captain, who had never ceased to be among the first, as he had happened to be at the beginning of the battle, made no effort to reply to his brother because he was unable to do so, nor would his reputation and honor permit him to leave the post that he occupied. In these advances and retreats the good friar made...with the horse during an assault by the Indians, one of them caught sight of him, and though he was some distance away ((the Indian)) discharged an arrow at the moment when the friar happened to turn his horse to flee from them. ((The arrow)) struck him in the back and wounded him, though slightly, because he wore his two cowls and all the other robes that those of his order usually wear, which are many, and over all this he had a large felt hat that was fastened around his neck with a cord and hung down over his shoulders. The arrow wound...was not

mortal because of all these defenses. The friar took warning from it and went off some distance, fearing that they might shoot him again."

"The Indians fought with so great a spirit that they drove us outside again and again. It took them so long to get back that many of the Christians, tired out and suffering great thirst, went to get a drink at a pond ((Boiling Spring)) located near the stockade, but it was tinged with the blood of the dead..."

"There were many wounds and deaths in this obstinate battle, but the one that caused the Spaniards the greatest regret and grief...because of the misfortune through which it happened and because of the person upon whom it fell...was that of Don Carlos Enriquez, a gentleman...He was married to a niece of the governor and, because of his great virtue and affability, he was esteemed and beloved by all...From the beginning of the battle this gentleman had fought like a very valiant soldier during all the attacks and retreats, and his horse having been wounded in the last retreat by an arrow that had gone into one side of his breast above the breast-leather, in order to draw it out he changed his lance from his right hand to his left, and grasping the arrow, pulled at it. With his body extended forward along the horse's neck, he made an effort ((to remove the

arrow)), ((but by)) turning his head slightly over his left shoulder so that his throat, which was unprotected, without armor ((for all the rest of his body was well armored))...((the arrow)) wounded him in such a manner that the poor gentleman at once fell down from his horse with his ((own)) throat cut, though he did not die until the next day."

"With such events incident to battles, Indians and Castilians fought with many deaths on both sides, although the mortality was greater among the Indians because they had no defensive arms ((shields, crossbows, lances or horses)). After fighting for more than three hours on the plain, the ((Indians)) realized that they were getting the worst...and they all decided to withdraw toward the village, close the gates, and station themselves on the walls. This they did, calling to one another to assemble from every direction. On seeing the Indians closed up ((inside the fortress)), the governor ordered that all the mounted soldiers, because they were better armed than the foot soldiers, dismount and attack the village, taking shields to defend themselves and axes to break in the gates, as most of them carried axes with them...Instantly a squadron...was formed, which attacked the gate, broke it down with axes, and entered through it with no little damage to themselves. "((In the

meantime, the Indians who were)) closed up in the village...ran to the house that had been designated for the governor's service and chamber, which they had not attacked hitherto because it seemed to them that they had it safely ((in their grasp)). Thus they now went very boldly to enjoy the spoils that were in it. But they found the house well defended, because inside were three crossbowmen and five halberdiers of the governor's guard who were accustomed to accompany his equipage and servants, and one of the first Indians whom they captured in that country, who was now a friend and a faithful servant, and as such carried his bow and arrows to be ready when it should be necessary to fight against those of his own nation in the favor and service of the foreigner. There also happened to be in the house two priests, a cleric and a friar and two of the governor's slaves. All these people stationed themselves to defend the house, the priests with their prayers and ((the guards)) with arms, and they fought so courageously that the enemy could not gain the door. The Indians then decided to go in through the roof and accordingly opened it in three or four places, but the crossbowmen and the Indian archer worked so effectively that those who dared enter through the holes in the roof were shot down dead or badly wounded, as they appeared

((through the holes in the roof)). These few Spaniards were conducting this spirited defense when the general and his captains and soldiers came up to the door of the house, fighting, and drove the enemy away from it. Thereupon those in the house were released and went out to the field, giving thanks to God for having saved them from such danger."

"The other Spaniards ((on the outside of the fortress)) who could not go in through the gate, because it was ((too)) narrow, so as not to wait in the fields and lose time in fighting, made vigorous strokes at the wall with their axes and knocked off the mixture of mud and straw that ((had been plastered on the wall))...uncovering the transverse logs...((then)), assisting one another, they climbed up ((the now exposed transverse logs)), got over the wall, and entered the village...The Indians, on seeing the Castilians inside the village that they had considered impregnable...fought with the spirit of desperate men, in the streets as well as from the roofs, from which they did much damage to the Christians. The latter, in order to defend themselves from those who were fighting from the flat roofs or terraces, and to insure that they would not attack them from behind, and also in order that the Indians might not come back ((outside)) to gain the houses...decided to

set fire to the ((fortress)). They did so and, as the houses were made of straw, in a moment a great deal of flame and smoke arose, which added itself to ((the confusion of)) the blood...and the massacre that was taking place in such a small village."

"The governor, who had fought throughout the four hours on foot at the head of his men, went out of the village and mounted a horse. So as to increase the fears of the enemy and the spirit and courage of his men, he went back into the village, accompanied by another who was also mounted, and both riders, calling the names of Our Lady and "Santiago" ("St. James," the traditional battle cry of the Spanish)) and shouting loudly to their men to make way, broke through the enemy squadron from one side to the other as it was fighting in the principal street and in the plaza. Then they turned back upon them, spearing them on either side...

"During these attacks and withdrawals, at a time when the governor was standing in his stirrups to throw a lance at an Indian, another who was behind him shot an arrow above the hind bow of the saddle, which struck in the small unprotected space the general ((had)) exposed between the saddlebow and the breastplate, and though he wore a coat of mail, the arrow broke through it and penetrated some six inches into ((his)) left hip.

The good general ((DeSoto)) alike in order not to let it be known that he was wounded so that his men would not become alarmed because of this hurt, and because in the press of the fighting he had no opportunity to pull out the arrow, fought with it through all the rest of the battle, which was almost five hours, without being able to sit in the saddle, which was no small proof of the valor of this captain and of his skill in horsemanship..."

"The fire that they had set to the houses increased momentarily and did the Indians much damage, for as they were numerous and could not fight in the streets and plaza, because they could not all get into them, they fought from the terraces and flat roofs. The fire trapped and burned them there or forced them, in fleeing from it, to fling themselves down from the terraces. It did no less damage in the houses where it came in through the door, for...they were large rooms with only one door, and when the fire blocked it, those who were inside could not get out and were burned and suffocated by the fire and smoke. Many women who were closed up in the houses perished in this way."

"The fire was equally harmful in the streets, because sometimes the wind blew the flame and smoke over the Indians, blinding them and helping the Spaniards to drive them back without their being able to

resist. Again it would turn in favor of the Indians against the Christians and enable them to regain the part of the street that they had lost. Thus the fire went favoring now one side and now the other, and increasing the mortality of the battle."

"The fighting was sustained on both sides with the cruelty and fury that has been seen until four o'clock in the afternoon, the battle having been continuous for seven hours. At this hour the Indians, seeing how many of their men they had killed by fire and the sword and that for lack of fighters their strength was decreasing while that of the Castilians was increasing, summoned the women and ordered them to take up some of the many arms that were lying in the streets and set about taking vengeance for the death of their people; and if they could not avenge them, they should at least see to it that all of them should die before becoming slaves of the Spaniards."

"When they gave this command...many of them had already been fighting bravely for some time along with their husbands, but with this new order not one remained who did not go to the battle, taking up arms that they found lying on the ground, of which there was an abundance. Many of the swords, halberds, and lances that the Spaniards had lost came into their hands...They

also took up bows and arrows and shot them with no less skill and ferocity than their husbands. They stationed themselves in front of the latter to fight, and resolutely exposed themselves to death with much more nerve than the men. They thrust themselves among the enemy's weapons with great fury and recklessness, showing well that the desperation and courage of women in what they have determined to do is greater and more heedless than that of men. The Spaniards, however, seeing that the Indian women were doing this more with the desire of dying than conquering, and also out of regard for the fact that they were women, abstained from wounding and killing them. While this long and stubborn battle lasted, the trumpets, fifes, and drums did not cease to sound the alarm very insistently, so that the Spaniards who had lagged behind in the rear guard would hurry to the assistance of their men. The maestro de camp and those who were coming with him ((had)) marched scattered about the country hunting and enjoying themselves, ignorant of what was going on in Mauvila. But when they ((were close enough and)) heard the noise of the military musical instruments and the shouts and outcries that sounded inside and outside the village, and saw the clouds of smoke that rose up in front of them, suspecting what it might be, they passed the word back

to the last ones and all of them marched at top speed, arriving during the last part of the battle. "The battle that took place in the country was no less bloody; it was for this purpose that the fields had been cleared ((by the Indians, before the Spaniards had arrived at Mauvilla)) of timber and cleaned even to uprooting the grass and herbs. Having enclosed themselves in the village to make a defense, the Indians realized that because of their numbers they would hinder one another in fighting, and that because the space was limited they could not profit by their lightness and agility. Thus many of them agreed to go out to the fields, letting themselves down from the walls, where they fought with all good spirit and courage and eagerness for victory. But they soon recognized that their plan was ill-advised, because if their lightness gave them an advantage over the Spanish foot soldiers, those on horseback were their superiors and speared them in the field entirely at their pleasure, without there being able to defend themselves, for these Indians do not use pikes, although they have them, which are the defense against horsemen, because they had not permitted themselves to believe that we would come up within reach of the pikes, but expected to assault and kill us with arrows a good distance before we should reach them. This is the chief reason the Indians

use the bow and arrows more than any other weapons. Thus a great many of the died on the field were ill-advised in their ferocity and vain presumption. The Spaniards of the rear guard came up, horsemen and foot soldiers, and all attacked the Indians who were fighting in the field. After engaging in battle for a long period of time and receiving many deaths and wounds, though they arrived late, they received a very good share of them..."

"At this time, which was now nearly sunset, the shouts and cries of those who were fighting in the village still sounded. Many of those who were mounted entered to aid their men; others remained outside to be ready for whatever might be needed. Hitherto for lack of room none of the horsemen had fought inside the village except the general and one other. Now, therefore, many mounted men entered and scattered through the streets, for there was work for them to do...Breaking through the Indians who were fighting there, they killed them."

"Ten of twelve horsemen advanced along the principal street where the battle was fiercest and bloodiest, and where...Indian men and women were fighting most desperately...The horsemen charged upon them...so furiously that they knocked down many...of the Indians. The Spaniards were fighting hand to hand with

the enemy, all of whom they killed, for none wished to surrender or give up their arms, but to die...fighting like good soldiers...."

"...((When)) the battle ended, one of the Indians who had been dazed ((during the fighting))...attempted to save his life by fleeing...he ran to wall and jumped up on it with much agility, as to escape across the fields...but seeing the Christians that were there...and the massacre that had occurred and that he could not escape, he preferred death to giving himself up as a prisoner...and taking the cord from his bow, he fastened it to the branches of a tree ((which was part of the wall))...and the other ((end of the cord)) around his neck ((and)) let himself down from the wall so quickly that, although some Spaniards desired to rescue him...they could not get there in time. Thus the Indian was hanged by his own hand, causing amazement by his action...From this ((we)) surmised the recklessness and desperation with which all of the Indians ((of North America)) fight, for the one who was left alive killed himself."

"We fought that day until it was night...we killed them all, some with fire, others with the swords, others with the lance...(("All of the clothing carried by the Christians, the ornaments for saying mass, and the

pearls were all burned there," "...and the horses that they tied within...were killed,")...the Indians killed more than twenty of our men, and two hundred and fifty of us were injured by seven hundred and sixty arrow wounds...We stayed there ((in that province)) treating ourselves twenty-eight days ((until the next full moon, under which the army would depart))...We took the women and divided them among the most seriously wounded...we heard...that we were up to forty leagues ((105 miles)) from the sea ((down the Alabama River at Mobile Bay, where Captain Maldonado was waiting for DeSoto with supply ships)). Many wished for the Governor to go there ((to leave this country))...because the Indians gave us news of the small ships being there, but we did not dare...the Governor felt it advisable to look for a land where ((he could find a trade route to China and)) we might find provisions in order to be able to spend the winter...."

((DeSoto would release the captives who had been taken by Captain Maldonado at Mobile Bay the proceeding winter and brought by DeSoto, into the continent, to lead the army over land to Mobile Bay. He would direct his army northward to winter in Tennessee, well above the Tennessee River, to keep his men from escaping to the ships at port. DeSoto would continue

leading his army northward in the Spring, searching for the Indians' legendary sea. He would never return.))

Epilogue

Twenty years after DeSoto's visit, survivors of his expedition returned to Mauvila in an attempt to settle that land. A Conquistador named Tristan de Luna, who had been told of the bountiful Mauvila Province, its proximity to the sea and its safe anchorage at Prairie Bluff (for the protection that bluff offered against destructive northwest winter winds), brought settlers to the same place where DeSoto was "defeated." To entice those settlers, who were well aware of DeSoto's defeat at the legendary Mauvila, Luna renamed that place "Nanapacana." In *Spanish vernacular*, that name means "nothing but pecans," the delicious fruit and valuable wood which was the only "treasure" brought from North America to Spain by DeSoto's ill-fated Conquistadors.

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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	SEP. 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.

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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 VILLAGE
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

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DeSoto's Southeastern Trail -

Part 1 of 2



DeSoto's Southeastern Trail -

Part 2 of 2