

## Menéndez lands his people and founds St. Augustine (September 8, 1565)

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About eight leagues by sea, and six by land, I found a place that I had seen before, on the Feast Day of St. Augustine, and it is just short of 30 degrees and a half, and seven from there. Here I disembarked two hundred soldiers. And on the seventh [of September], three small vessels arrived with another three hundred, plus the husbands with their wives and children. And I also put ashore the greater part of the artillery and munitions that I brought, and the eighth [of September], being the Feast of Our Lady, having landed another one hundred people that I had to put ashore, along with sufficient cannon and gunpowder, the flagship and the admiral's galleon from the French fleet arrived, standing off half a league from us, offering battle, and coming round on us as we were anchored. They gave indications that they were coming to board us, but at three o'clock in the afternoon, they took in sail and departed for their harbor. And I went ashore and claimed possession in the name of Your Majesty, and I was sworn into office by the captains and officials, as governor, captain general, and *adelantado* of this land and coast, according to the provisions of Your Majesty.

There were many Indians present, including the principal men among them. They showed us friendship, and it seemed to us that they were enemies of the French, and they told us that by an inside route from this place, without putting to sea, we could reach the river where the French were, ahead of the fort by the upper river, seven or eight leagues; which is a fortunate thing, it being possible to move the artillery and the encampment and the cavalry, if we desire to land close by their fort. For unless the island impedes us, even though they have a fort, we would be able to go overland with the horses and cannons.

I am resolved to fortify my position as best as I can, until reinforcements come, and within three days, I intend to send to Havana by the quickest route, so that with God's help, I think they can get there inside eight or ten days, and I will send pilots, so that relief can come back with all speed to this port. Whatever comes will come, and I will use all my skill, with Our Lord's help, to gain the island of that place, and plant the cannons above their forces, because with the cavalry, I trust in God, to secure safety and be the victor of this campaign.

With the first two hundred soldiers I sent two commanders, Juan San Vicente, the brother of the captain of the San Vicente, and Andrés López Patiño, experienced campaigners, so that they could build a trench work around the best-suited spot; which place they fortified and gathered together the people who were ashore, to defend against enemies if they should come upon us. And they did this so well, that when I came ashore on the Feast Day of Our Lady, to take possession of the land in Your Majesty's name, it seemed like they had done a month's work. It could not have been done better, even if they had used shovels, and drills [¿] and other implements of iron (although we had no such tools, because the ship carrying them had not arrived).