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Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW FOR SUNLAND TRIBUNE

George Gauld: Surveyor and Cartographer of the Gulf Coast. John D. Ware, revised and completed by Robert R. Rea, University Presses of Florida, 1982. Price not listed.

For many years John Ware, a man well known to many members of the Tampa Historical Society was interested in the life and career of George Gauld, who surveyed much of the Gulf Coast for England during the English occupation of Florida 1763-1783. Captain Ware saw service as a member of the Merchant Marine, was appointed a Tampa Bay pilot in 1952, and did considerable research and publication in the histories of Florida ports. After doing much research concerning Gauld in this country, Ware was ready to go to England and Scotland when the cancer which took his life was discovered. As his friends know, Ware worked until the last and Robert Rea, a professor at Auburn, completed the project.

George Gauld served as a coastal surveyor for the British Government from 1764 to 1781. During that time he surveyed and charted the Gulf Coast from Key Largo to Galveston Bay and in addition, Jamaica, Grand Cayman Island and Western Cuba. The first part of Florida to be surveyed by Gauld was Pensacola in the fall of 1764. According to Rea and Ware, Gauld did a good job in 18 months of work at Pensacola Bay.

In May, 1765 Admiral Sir William Barnaby ordered Captain Rowland Cotton, in command of the H.M.S. Alarm to proceed to Espiritu Santo on Tampa Bay with Gauld's surveying party of twenty-two men aboard to survey the bay. Starting on June 21, 1765 Gauld, using smaller boats to check the

depth of the water, checked the coastal islands lying at the entrance to Tampa Bay and the three entrance channels. Using the schooner Betsey and smaller boats, Gauld and his men moved in the bay proper noting that the site of present-day St. Petersburg would be a "good place for a settlement" and a small lake that may have been Mirror Lake. Black rocks were observed at Ballast Point and a fresh water pond near Gadsden Point. Rocky ground was noted near Hooker's Point and several islands reported to be lying at the mouth of present-day Hillsborough River. There was no mention of any of the rivers that flow into Tampa Bay. Earlier Spanish surveys probably did a better job. Greater detail was given to present-day Mullet Key when Gauld observed that a small fort should be built on the island. On August 14 another ship bound from Virginia for Pensacola stopped at Mullet Key for water and firewood. On August 30, 1765 the survey was completed and the Alarm returned to Pensacola. Another surveying party led by Gauld visited Tampa Bay in 1771. This time work was done along Anclote Island, Hillsborough Bay, the Hillsborough and Palm Rivers and the "West" river.

It was due to Gauld's 1765 survey that several places named by him still bear his designation. Egmont Key was named for John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont and Lord of the Admiralty, Hillsborough Bay for Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough and President of the Board of Trade, and Mullet Key for the fish found there. One of the authors believed that Tampa may have been named by Gauld but little proof was offered.

On the return to Pensacola, Gauld continued his surveying work along the Gulf Coast. When Pensacola was captured by the Spanish, he returned to England where he died in 1782. Captain John Ware and Dr. Robert Rea have made an excellent contribution to our knowledge of the history of Tampa and the Florida Gulf Coast.

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