1-1-1960

Manatee anchors claim as DeSoto landing site

Hampton Dunn

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub

Part of the American Studies Commons, and the Community-based Research Commons

Scholar Commons Citation
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub/2605

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
BRADENTON --- Uncle Sam has invested much in a DeSoto National Memorial here, and the ladies of the Colonial Dames of America have erected a sturdy marker to tie down Shaw’s Point on the shores of Tampa Bay as the spot where the dashing conquistador, Hernando DeSoto, set foot on U.S. soil back in 1539.

But other neighboring communities on the West Coast from time to time dispute this claim, St. Petersburg and Tampa being the most vociferous. The Federal Government chose this as the site for a national park on recommendation of the Smithsonian Institution who researched the question. DeSoto gave Tampa Bay the Spanish name of Espiritu Santo.

The story is that Don Hernando DeSoto, Knight of Santiago, "a gentleman by all four descents," kissed his bride, Dona Isabel, goodbye in Havana on May 18 and with 700 volunteers set sail for sunny Florida.

There’s controversy even over DeSoto’s conduct. Historian Karl Grismer wrote in his "Tampa" book: "It would be nice indeed if DeSoto could be described as a gallant, benevolent, kindly nobleman inspired by a desire to carry the story of the cross to the brown-skinned men of Florida, but to do so would be a direct contradiction of the facts. He certainly was brave and he may have been gallant ...but he certainly was neither benevolent nor kind..." DeSoto was fond of the sport of killing Indians.

He marched inland from here and from Ocala northward he was under constant attack from the Indians. He had many disappointments. Finally, he died, on May 21, 1542, and his body was buried in the Miss. River.
DE SOTO TRAIL

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA IN FLORIDA

NEAR HERE HERNANDO DE SOTO WITH HIS MEN LANDED MAY 30, 1539 AND BEGAN HIS MARCH WESTWARD TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. THIS MARKER COMMEMORATES THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ARRIVAL ON THE SHORES OF FLORIDA