

THE LAND IS SPANISH

by PABLO RICARDO QUINTANA

If you read my last article on Bernardo de Galvez, then you know my first reason for saying that the United States is as much Spanish as it is English; because the Spanish contributed greatly to the creation of the United States. My second reason for saying so is that the land is Spanish.

When Cristobal Colón discovered America, he did not just claim Central and South America for Spain, but all of the Americas. Pope Alexander VI, in his papal bull drew a line of demarcation, later revised by the Treaty of Tordesillas, between the lands of Spain and Portugal in the New World. No other country was given right over this land.

Spain immediately moved to establish its claim in fact, by sending explorers throughout the Americas to map, name and claim this new land. The result is that there was left no part which was not part of the Spanish territory, including Hawaii and Alaska. Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines were discovered and claimed by Fernando de Magallanes (Magellan). What was unfortunate for Spain was that this land was so vast and her people so few that it was all but impossible to settle, claim and defend all of it. There was just too much. Nevertheless, there were already inroads being made into doing just that. Esteban Gomez explored and mapped the East coast of today's U.S.A. and Juan Cabrillo would do the same for the West coast. In the South, Coronado and de Soto would explore the territory so well that they would come within 200 miles of each other. Missions, forts and trading posts would be established throughout both coasts. Here are some of the original names of these Spanish lands. What is now New England were the Tierras de Corterreal, the Middle Atlantic states were the Tierras de Esteban Gómez, Virginia was the Tierras de Ayllón, North Carolina was Chicoria, South Carolina was Santa Elena and below that was Florida .. The Hudson River was named Rio de San Antonio, the Mississippi was the Rio del Espiritu Santo and so on. The land was Spanish!

When the French, English, Dutch and Russian colonists arrived in their turns, by using Spanish maps, they were essentially squatters. The land was not theirs to take, but take it they did. The English so overwhelmed the poor Spanish fathers' missions in Santa Elena and Chicoria, when they came in search of Indian slaves, that the poor fathers had to abandon them. Those lands were left for the English without so much as a battle and that is how the United States began.

Later, the Russians would sell Alaska to the United States, the French Louisiana and so on, none of which was theirs to sell. The land was Spanish. But, there you are! That is what happens in the real world. So, when the bigots tell Hispanos to go back where they came from, just remember that, if anybody is going to leave, it will be the English first and the Spanish will be last to leave this land.

