

# **CHRONICLES OF FLORIDA**

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Chronicles of Florida by Athanase

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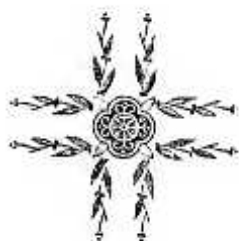
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**ATHANASE**

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## INTRODUCTION.



About the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, when we judge the following extracts of the chronicles open, Spain had already been drained of the larger part of her boldest and most enterprising sons, who, led by the insatiable thirst for gold, had exhausted their energies in the wilderness of the new world; and already had the national prosperity sunk helplessly in consequence of this diversion of enterprise from its legitimate, industrious and commercial pursuits. Spain, now with the empire and mines of a world, presented the marks of internal decay and of real poverty, her vigor was impaired, her character degraded; the once proud blazonry of Castile y Leon had faded.

Still the tide of emigration and adventure flowed onwards, though in a diminished current; and now that the El Dorados of Mexico and Peru had become monopolized to a considerable extent, later adventurers sought for newer fields, where as the

## INTRODUCTION.

first pioneers, they might hope to derive the greater advantages.

Having premised this by way of introduction we shall proceed to give a free, yet fair rendition of such portions of the chronicles as may prove of sufficient interest to the general reader. We deem it proper to state that we shall alter the orthography of proper names in the text wherever this can be done with propriety to meet the requirements of another language and the lapse of one hundred and fifty years: thus for Tanase, Vatoga, Coucke, Quanasse, etc., we shall substitute Tennessee, Wantoga, Cowee, Hiwassee, etc.

In conclusion, the regret may here be expressed that this work necessarily begins and ends abruptly, for want of ampler material, and that many difficulties existed in the correct rendition of the text given.



# Chronicles of Florida.

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## BOOK I.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE EXPEDITION TO CATENGEMA.

**I***N esta tiempo*, at this time, says the chronicler, a company was formed here (Pensacola) for the prosecution of mining operations among the high mountains which are situated about one hundred and fifty leagues towards the northeast. Having a perfect knowledge of all the material facts connected with the expedition that followed, I trust my friends will not blame me for digressing at this point of my narrative, though what I am about to relate will be of some length.

The person of most influence concerned in the business was Don Carlos de Lerida, a Catalan by birth, who in the indulgence of a wild career, had

risked the forfeiture of his patrimony under a mortgage, which he was now anxious to redeem. With this intent, accompanied by an only son, he had crossed the sea—and like other noblemen—in the hope of soon amassing wealth. His original destination under a commission from the court had been for Mexico, but his views underwent a sudden change when the vessel in which he sailed touched here by the way to disembark some troops, some of the first that were sent since the French cession. He had no sooner landed than he heard of the existence of immense mines in the interior. This information struck the right chord of his heart, and he forthwith applied himself with ardour to procure all means necessary to enable him to reach the desired region. His informant was one Oliviera Payez, a galley fugitive, an unprincipled braggart whose pompous speech and affected heroism covered the darkness and baseness of his purposes.

For a few years previous to this time, Oliviera had enjoyed the patronage and admiration of the

Senor Governor, whose own deficiency in all the qualities of true and generous bravery, incapacitated him from discriminating these from the mere froth of the bully. Oliviera then lodged at the palace, a constant attendant to echo his excellency's vain and silly boasts. Matters stood thus for awhile, till when under the influence of wine, in an unlucky moment, Oliviera ventured to insinuate some decided doubts respecting one of Don Diego's vaunted exploits. The offence was unpardonable and to be rid of one whose presence had become undesirable, the Governor despatched him on a secret mission among the Indians to the northward—adding slyly, "that it suited a person of indomitable valor to go there." He had been absent a considerable time after leaving Saint Augustine, when he suddenly reappeared at Pensacola. His object in unbosoming himself to Don Carlos was to secure in the enterprise one possessed of means and ability to set it afoot, also whose disconnection with the existing Governor was the more likely to yield the greater consideration to his informant