

THE PORTAL TO TEXAS HISTORY

Embark on a Voyage of Discovery

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Sixteenth century engraving illustrating the special dogs, called mastiffs, used by the Spaniards to tear apart uncooperative Indians. Moscoso is said to have used the mastiffs on a Nondacao guide who misled the expedition.

variations indicate that the Indians spoke dialects of Caddo. This would explain why the Caddo guides with Moscoso could not understand the language of the Indians across the River Daycao. They spoke a different language. All of these facts strongly support the Guadalupe River as being the River Daycao.

This was as far west as the expedition traveled. Upon learning about the "poverty and misery" of the Indians ahead, they decided to return to the Mississippi River and reach New Spain by boat. The expedition, still numbering 300 soldiers and countless Indian guides and slaves, needed

a guaranteed food supply to continue traveling. This was not to be found among the Coahuiltecan Indians of southern Texas. From archaeological evidence and early historical accounts we know that these people were hunters and gatherers who lived off the land and grew little corn.

The return of the expedition was apparently uneventful; the narratives provide only brief mention of the trip. At the Mississippi River they melted down much of their iron, felled many large trees, and used these materials to construct several boats.

After months of construction through the winter of 1542-43, they sailed down the Mississippi River and into the Gulf of Mexico. A few weeks later the members of the expedition reached their destination—New Spain and civilization as they knew it.

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