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Changing Tides: Twilight and Dawn in the Spanish Sea, 1763-1803. By Robert S. Weddle. (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1995. xiii + 384 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.50 cloth.)

Changing Tides completes a trilogy in which Robert Weddle covers the history of Spanish maritime exploration and settlement along the Gulf Coast from the period of discovery to the twilight of Spain's empire in North America. The present work begins in 1763 as Spain, at the height of renewed achievement under Carlos III, takes over Louisiana at the end of the French and Indian War. The work is built upon meticulous research among a wide variety of primary documents, plus a thorough understanding of the intricacies of Spanish politics and defense measures following the elimination of French control along the Mississippi. In addition to his use of archival materials in London, Paris, Spain, Mexico, and the United States, Weddle also includes valuable published sources that provide an excellent backdrop for a lively and skillfully-written narrative.

The book is divided into four parts beginning with an analysis of Louisiana in transition from 1763 to 1769. Weddle explains how natural forces, specifically a hurricane, hindered Spanish operations on the Gulf Coast, further complicating Governor Antonio de Ulloa's already difficult situation. He then discusses the Texas area and introduces some fascinating English travelers/explorers including Lt. Philip Pittman and George Gauld.

Part 2 covers the bayous and the Gulf Coast from Texas to south of Veracruz from approximately 1771 to 1803. Most interesting is a discussion of a plan under Viceroy Antonio de Bucareli to explore an overland route following the Río de Coatzacoalcos linking the gulf with the Pacific at the Gulf of Tehuantepec. Although considerable geographic knowledge resulted, the project was abandoned because of cost and lack of agreement. Part 3 covers a number of subjects: the Gauld surveys, 1764-1777; the necessary charting of the Gulf Coast from the Florida peninsula to Texas' San Bernardo Bay from 1783 to 1786, a task entrusted to José Antonio de Evia then serving in Havana after the end of the American Revolution; and lastly, the quest for free trade from 1785 to 1798. The fourth and final part includes activities around Tampa Bay and the Florida peninsula from 1756 to 1793 and the repercussions of international problems in the Louisiana area between 1793 and 1801. The author presents some interesting scientific sidelights resulting from gains made in meteorology, hydrography, and cartography during the late eighteenth-century intellectual Enlightenment. Because of the invention of the chronometer some years before, important corrections were made to latitudes and longitudes charted in previous mapping operations. Also included is a little-known Spanish scientific examination of the erupting volcano of San Andrés de Tuxtla in 1793.

Weddle ends his study with the retrocession of Louisiana to France by the Treaty of San Ildefonso, confirmed in Madrid on 23 March 1801. This,

combined with the imminent loss of Florida and eventually Mexico, essentially ended Spanish control of the Gulf Coast regions and paved the way for further "changing tides." Although somewhat complicated by its topical organization, the book's wealth of detail makes it a welcome addition to the libraries of scholars and students of Texas history, the Spanish borderlands, and colonial Latin America. It is well illustrated with maps of the period and contemporary photographs.

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