

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Digital USFSP

Early Visions Bucket

Early Visions of Florida

1563

Commendation of Thomas Stutely

Robert Seall

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/early_visions_bucket

Recommended Citation

Seall, Robert, "Commendation of Thomas Stutely" (1563). *Early Visions Bucket*. 23.
https://digital.usfsp.edu/early_visions_bucket/23

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Early Visions of Florida at Digital USFSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Early Visions Bucket by an authorized administrator of Digital USFSP.

Early Visions of Florida

Poetry • Stories • Chronicles from an American Borderland

Robert Seall, Commendation of Thomas Stutely



— Broadside “Commendation” (Huntington Library)

Registered and printed around July of 1563, this English broadside ballad is the only work attributed to the author, Robert Seall, and it focuses on Thomas Stukeley. A man steeped in controversy since birth, Stukeley (Stucley, Stukely, Stutely—scholars have collected up to 24 spellings) was rumored to be a bastard child of Henry VIII and led a long life of piracy. The ballad was a public relations move to improve Stukeley's image after a long life of alleged piracy and his revealing plans of an Anglo-Huguenot venture to la Florida to a Spanish ambassador in London. The Catholic Spanish despised the French Protestant Huguenots (or Calvinists) and fought often to the death over land and religion.

In 1562 the English watched as Jean Ribault went to Florida. England set up a joint venture between Stukeley and Ribault; however, Stukeley did not reach Florida, due to his ill-advised confession. Stukeley nonetheless set out to start a colonization effort and gain riches, this ballad being propaganda to support him in the endeavor. Rather than setting up a colony, Stukeley turned to privateering.

Instead of being a bold founder like Aeneas, the fabled founder of Rome referred to in this ballad, Stukeley took the more infamous route and became a privateer. Though a little known character, his literary does not end here, and his name (spelled many ways) surfaces frequently in the literature of his time.

Michael Sadler, University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Further Reading

Firth, C. H. (ed.). *An American Garland, being a Collection of Ballads Relating to America*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1915.

Johnson, Richard. [Life and death of famous Thomas Stukely; The life and death of the famous Thomas Stukely, an English gallant in the time of Queen Elizabeth](#)

Peele, George. [The Battle of Alcazar](#) [1578].

Seall, Robert. [A co\[m\]mendation of the adue\[n\]terus viage of the wurthy Captain. M. Thomas Stutely Esquyer and others, towards the land called Terra florida \(1563\).](#)

Tazón, Juan E. *The Life and Times of Thomas Stukeley (c. 1525-1578)*. London: Ashgate, 2003.

If Fortunes force procure,

The valiant noble hart:

In travail, pain and daungers great,

In warres to have his part.

If losse of goods insue,

Through valiant enterprise:

Or for slaknes, or the foresight,

Of diligent advise.

Yet of his wurthy praise,

I can not speak tomiche [too much]:

Who ventreth bothe his goods and life,

His Contrey to enriche.

The worldly wise doo muse,

And also doo invay:

At noble harts when that their welths,

Doo fall unto decay.

As now of late I knew,

And saw the evidence:

Of one whose part it was to shew,

The like experience.

A noble hart in deed,

And wurthy great renowne:

Whose fortune was not to remain,

In Cittie nor in Towne.

A yung Eneas^[1] bolde,

With hart and courage stout:

Whose enterprise was only pight [organized],

Straunge things to bring about.

And though that all men seemd,

His dooings to deride:

Yet this his fact he would not leve,

Nor throwe it so a side.

But stil he dooth procure,

With boldned hart and minde:

That thing whiche erst he had assayd,

By travail now to finde.

Into a land unknowne,

To win hym wurthy fame:

As exequies^[2] and memory,

Of his moste noble name.

Whiche if it fall to his lot,

With fortunes helping hand:

He may wel make a lawhing stock,

Of them whiche him withstand.

Sume terme it Stolidia [Obtuse],

And Sordida it name:

And to be plain, they doo it mock,

As at a foolishe game.

If reasons sence be cause,

Of this forespoken talke:

Or fayned folly be the ground

Why mennes tungs thus doo walke.

Then might it seem to me,

The Frenches labour lost:

Their careful pain and travail eke,

That they therein have cost.

The cronicles also,

Whiche only seem as trew:

And writ by them that of that place,

Before did take the view.

The Spaniards eke doo shew,

And verify the same:

To be described as a thing

Deserving such a name.

The Portingales [Portuguese] doo say,

The crownacles [chronicles] be just:

And all that travailld have that coste:

The same confes it must.

If that in times before,

Through talkes men have refraind:

Whiche for the love of travail sore,

Their harts have long been paind.

Columbus as I reed,

The space of many yeeres:

Was counted as unwise also,

As in writers appeeres.

His earnest sute denied,

Yet in the finall ende:

His wurds & deeds did seem at length,

On reason to depend.

The like assay in hand,

He did at last procure:

Whose life and lucky viages,

Good fortune did assure.

At thend in savety home,

At length he did retourn:

And quenched all their mocking harts

Whiche erst did seem to burn.

For fire of force must needs,

Declare his burning heat:

Though for a time in smothering smoke

It seemes itself to beat.

So talk of tungs may not,

By smothering through be tame:

But bursting out at length wil turn

Into a firye flame.

And then, the mallice gon,

The fire falleth down:

And quenched quite, as by this man,

Which was of great renowne.

Now Stuetly hoice thy sail,

Thy wissed land to finde:

And never doo regard vain talke,

For wurds they are but winde.

And in reproof of all,

I wil not once refrain:

With prayer for to wish that thou,

Maist safely come again.

And that sum frute at length,

By travail thou maist finde:

With riches for to satisfy,

Thy manly modest minde.

[1] Aeneas, the fabled founder of Rome.

[2] funereal rites.

[3] Sordid, morally distasteful; note the feminized construction.