

In 1508, all the country from the Cabo de la Vela to the Gulf of Uraba, where the Castillo del Oro begins, was called New Andalusia, a name since restricted to the province of Cumana.

A fortunate chance led me to see, during the course of my travels, the two extremities of the main land, the mountainous and verdant coast of Paria, which Columbus supposes to have been the cradle of the human race, and the low and humid coast extending from the mouth of the Sinu towards the Gulf of Darien. The comparison of these scenes, which have again relapsed into a savage state, confirms what I have elsewhere advanced relative to the strange and sometimes retrograde nature of civilization in America. On one side, the coast of Paria, the islands of Cubagua and Marguerrita; on the other, the Gulf of Uraba and Darien, received the first Spanish colonists. Gold and pearls, which were there found in abundance, because from time immemorial they had been accumulated in the hands of the natives, gave those countries a popular celebrity, from the beginning of the sixteenth century. At Seville, Toledo, Pisa, Genoa, and Antwerp, those countries were viewed like the realms of "Ormuz and of Ind." The pontiffs of Rome mentioned them in their bulls; and Bembo has celebrated them in those historical pages which add lustre to the glory of Venice.

At the close of the fifteenth, and the beginning of the sixteenth century, Europe saw, in those parts of the New World discovered by Columbus, Ojeda, Vespucci, and Rodrigo de Bastidas, only the advanced capes of the vast territories of India and eastern Asia. The immense wealth of those territories in gold, diamonds, pearls, and spices, had been vaunted in the narratives of Benjamin de Tudela, Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and Mandeville. Columbus, whose imagination was excited by these narrations, caused a deposition to be made before a notary, on the 12th of June, 1494, in which sixty of his companions, pilots, sailors, and passengers, certified upon oath, that the southern coast of Cuba was a part of the continent of India. The description of the treasures of Cathay and Cipango, of "the celestial town" of Quinsay and the province of Mango, which had fired the admiral's ambition in early life, pursued him like phantoms in his declining days. In his fourth and last