Pedro Menéndez De Avilés Encyclopedia Article

Pedro Menéndez De Avilés

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Pedro Menéndez De Avilés

1519-1574

Spanish mariner who founded what has since become one of the oldest European settlements in North America. Menéndez's career as a seaman began at the age of 14 when he joined a ship's crew. He gained fame at the age of 30 when he engaged in a duel with the notorious French corsair Jean Alphonse, and struck him down. Five years later, Menéndez accepted the title of captain-general of the Fleet of the Indies and began leading voyages to America. On his first trip to America in 1565, he established a settlement at St. Augustine, Florida. That settlement is now considered the oldest white settlement in the nation.