



Changing Tides: Twilight and Dawn in the Spanish Sea, 1763-1803 (Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas A&M University)

Robert S. Weddle

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In this crowning touch to his historical trilogy, Robert S. Weddle resumes the dramatic voyage of discovery and exploration in the Gulf of Mexico (the Spanish Sea) and along its coast. Combining thorough research with elegant narrative, *Changing Tides* treats the reader to political intrigue, tales of hurricanes and shipwrecks, and the rich historiography that marks the period between 1763 and 1803. The book opens with a series of territorial transfers that drove France from the North American continent and launched a flurry of exploration by Spain and England, each eager to survey its new territory and align its defenses. Spanish reconnaissance of the Texas barrier islands and lagoons in response to a rumored English threat and three voyages to survey and map the Gulf Coast west of the Mississippi River demonstrate international rivalry as a spur to exploration. The story concludes with Spain's retrocession of Louisiana to France and the immediate sale of the territory to the United States, a milestone toward the young nation's Manifest Destiny. Using sources previously underutilized by historians, Weddle raises new questions concerning events of the late eighteenth century and the politics that drove them, with emphasis on exploration and mapping in the Gulf. Scholars and students of Texas history, Spanish borderlands, and colonial America and Latin America will value this final installment in Weddle's meticulous, well-researched, and expertly written study.

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