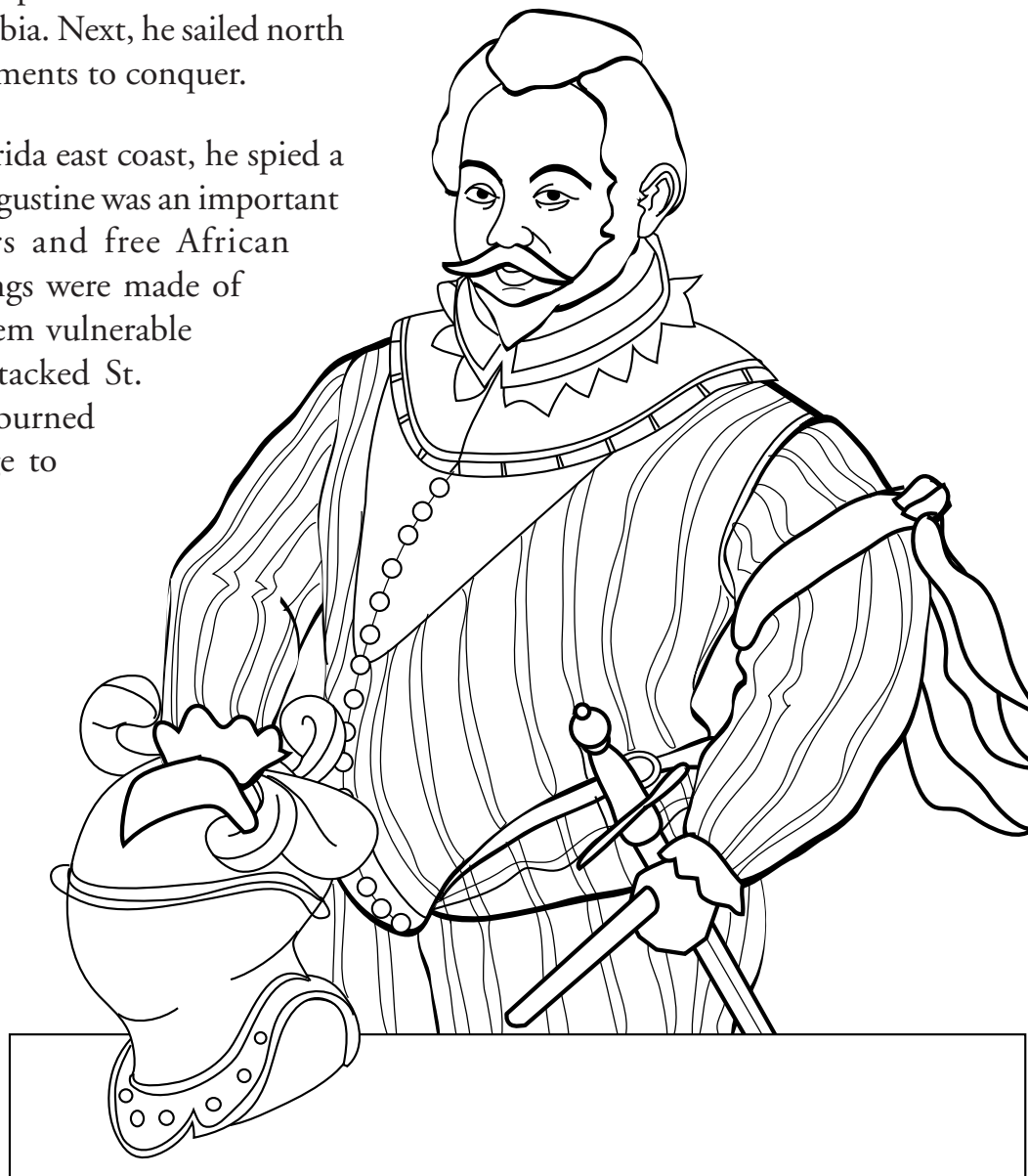


Sir Francis Drake

Sir Francis Drake was a soldier and an explorer from England who played a role in the history of Florida. In the late 1500s, England began to claim more land in America. Drake was sent from England in 1585 to attack Spanish settlements. He was selected for this mission because of his successful raid of Panama. He brought back a major cache of gold to England to present to Queen Elizabeth I. Because of Drake's excellent sailing abilities and soldier training, England was sure he would be successful in gaining more land for British control.

Drake sailed to America with 40 ships and more than 2,000 soldiers. He attacked the Spanish ports of the Dominican Republic and Cartagena, Columbia. Next, he sailed north in search of more Spanish settlements to conquer.

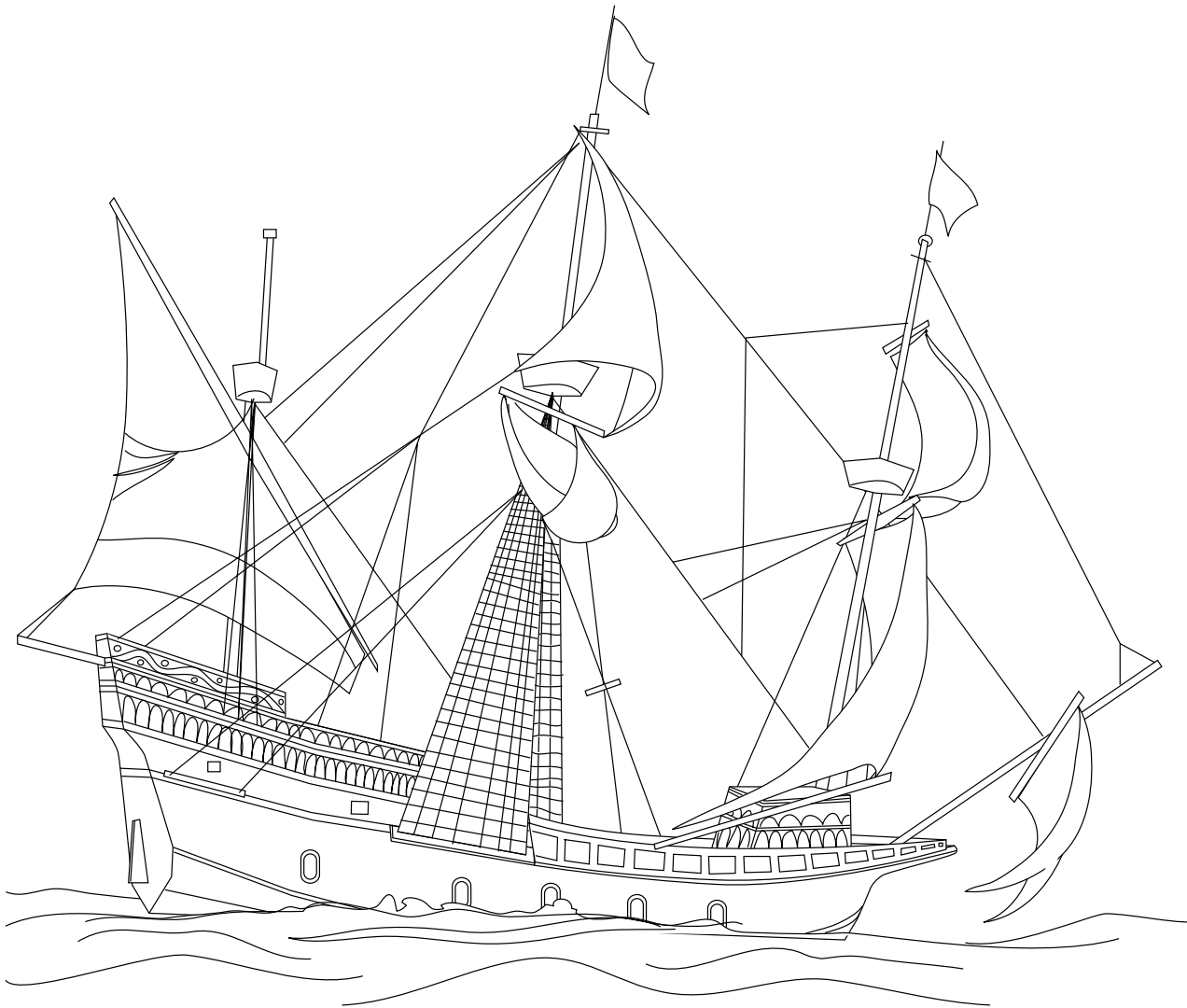
In 1586, as he sailed up the Florida east coast, he spied a St. Augustine watchtower. St. Augustine was an important landmark for Spanish settlers and free African Americans. Most of the buildings were made of wood and clay, which made them vulnerable to attacks and raids. Drake attacked St. Augustine. He and his soldiers burned crops and caused major damage to the fort and surrounding area.



**Sir Francis Drake
attacked and burned
St. Augustine.**

He did not burn a neighboring Timucuan village because he thought that the native Floridians might later help the British settle the fort. Many of the Spanish settlers fled to the woods and were able to escape from the soldiers. After Drake and his crew sailed away, the people of St. Augustine returned to the ruins and immediately began to rebuild the damaged parts of the fort. Fort Castillo de San Marcos still stands today as a symbol of perseverance.

Sir Frances Drake returned to England. He got married and lived on a large estate outside of London. In 1596, he was aboard one of his ships, the *Defiance*. A tropical disease that he probably picked up during his last trip to America struck him. He died and was buried at sea. It was said that he got out of his deathbed early the morning of his death and attempted to put on his suit of armor. He wanted to die as a soldier.



From 1577 to 1580 Drake sailed around the world in his ship, the *Golden Hinde*. Queen Elizabeth I knighted him to recognize his success.