

The French of Fort Caroline and The Timucua of Florida

Selected engravings by Theodore de Bry after watercolors by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, artist with the French expeditions to Florida under Jean Ribault (1562) and René Goulaine de Laudonnière (1564)

Published 1591

In Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae provincia Gallis acciderunt . . .* (A brief narration of those things which befell the French in the province of Florida in America . . .), published by Theodore de Bry with forty-two engravings by de Bry, many based on Le Moyne's watercolors of the 1564 expedition, in de Bry, *Grands Voyages*, V. II, *America*, Pt. II (Frankfort, 1591).

In this collection:

___The French at Fort Caroline___

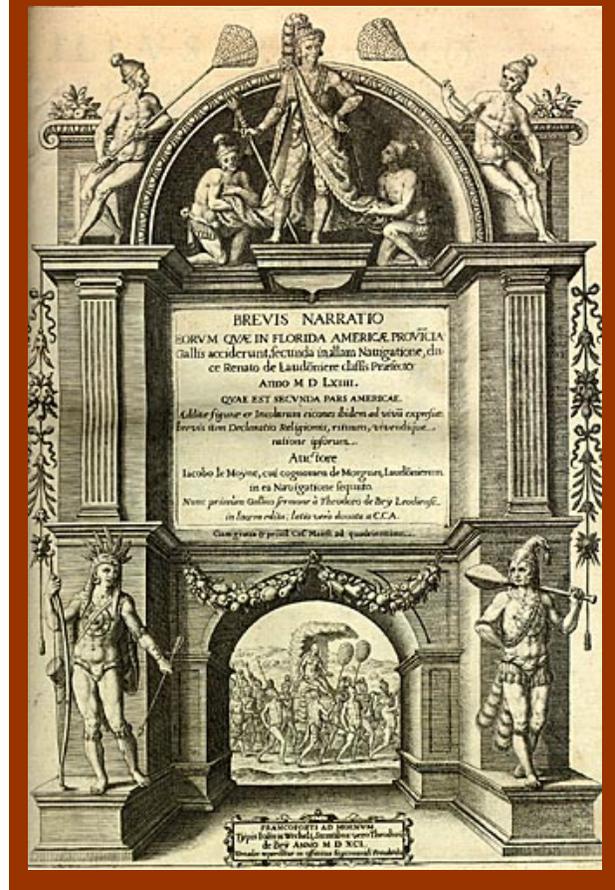
1. The Promontory of Florida Where the French Landed, Called by Them, Cape François
2. The French Voyage to the River of May
7. The Frenchmen Left in Charlesfort Suffer from a Shortage of Corn
9. The French Choose a Suitable Place for Building a Fort

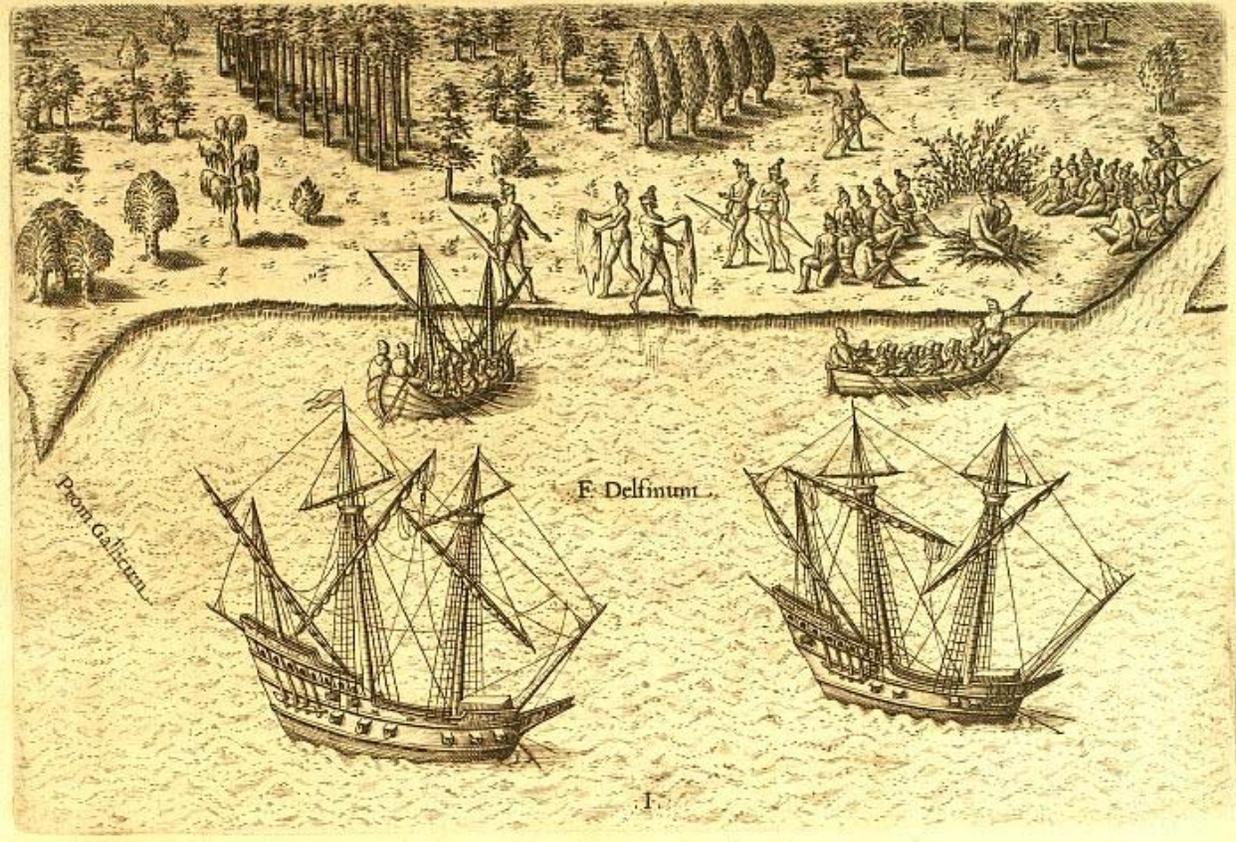
___The Timucuan Indians of Florida___

8. The Floridians Worship the Column Set Up by the Captain on the First Voyage
18. Requests Made of the Chief by Women Whose Husbands Have Been Killed in Battle or Carried Off by Disease
25. Their Hunting of Deer
28. Preparations for a Feast
35. Their Solemn Ritual in Consecrating a Deerskin to the Sun
41. The Way They Collect Gold in the Streams Flowing Down from the Apalatci Mountains



Le Moyne de Morgues, map, *Floridae Americae Provinciae*



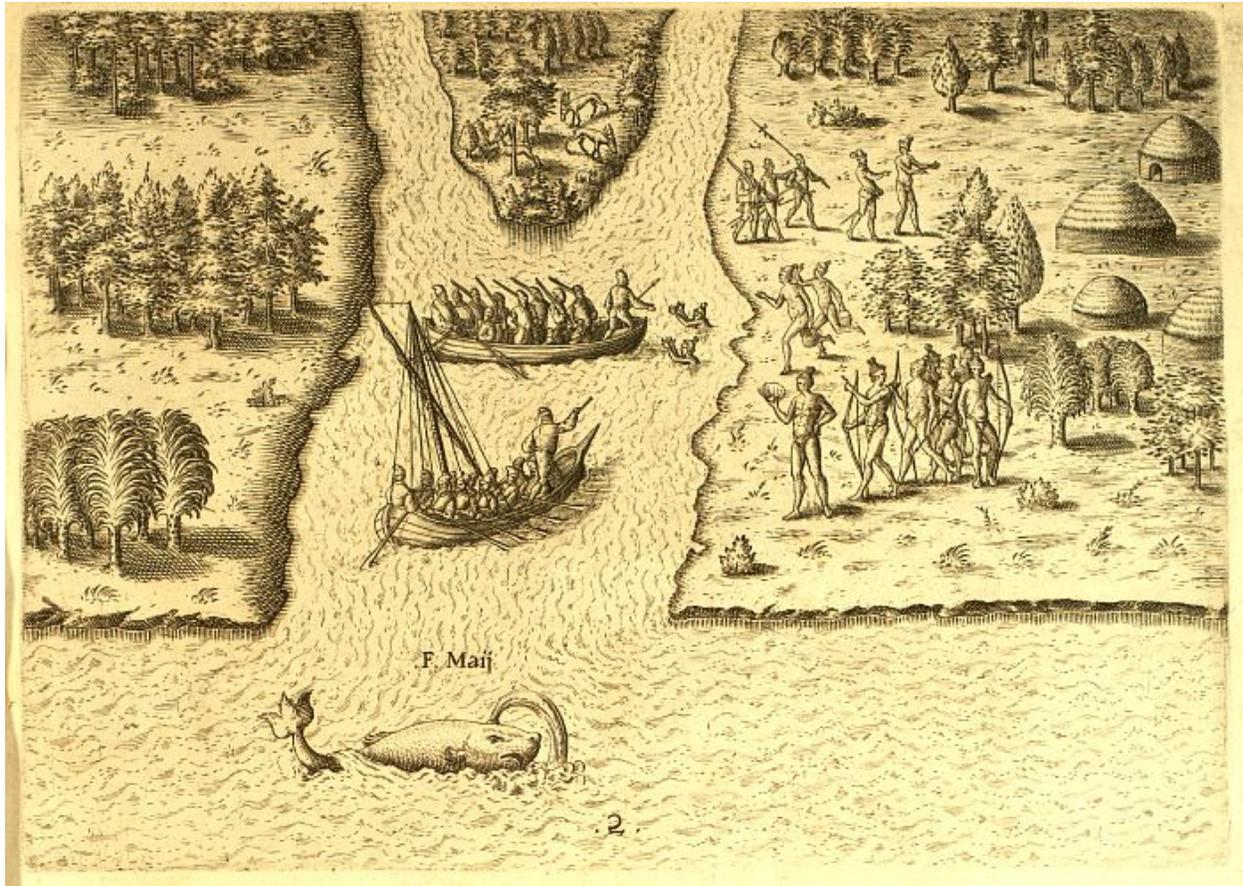


I. THE PROMONTORY OF FLORIDA WHERE THE FRENCH LANDED, CALLED BY THEM, CAPE FRANÇOIS

On the first voyage to the province of Florida the French landed at a promontory* which was of no great elevation (for the coast was low-lying) but densely wooded with extremely tall trees. In honor of France the captain of the fleet named it Cape François and its position in about 30° from the equator. Following the coast north from there they found a wide and pleasant river at whose mouth they dropped anchor so that next day they might explore more closely. On the second voyage Laudonnière called this the River of Dolphins because when putting in there he had seen a great many dolphins swimming in it. When they landed on the banks of the river they saw many Indians whose bearing had suggested that they would receive them in a most civil and friendly way, as was proved in practice. There the Indians gave a number of skins to the captain and also promised that they would show them their chief who had not stood up with them but was still reclining on strewn branches of laurel and palm. He presented the captain with a huge skin decorated all over with a kind of realistic representation of various wild animals._____



* Ribault's landfall at the cape of Anastasia Island (near St. Augustine, Florida) occurred April 29, 1562. This first French expedition to Florida, planned as a refuge for French Protestant Huguenots (and which Le Moyne did not accompany), is depicted in the first seven engravings in de Bry's publication, which de Bry probably based on the account by Laudonnière, who was second-in-command in 1562 and captain of the expedition in 1564.



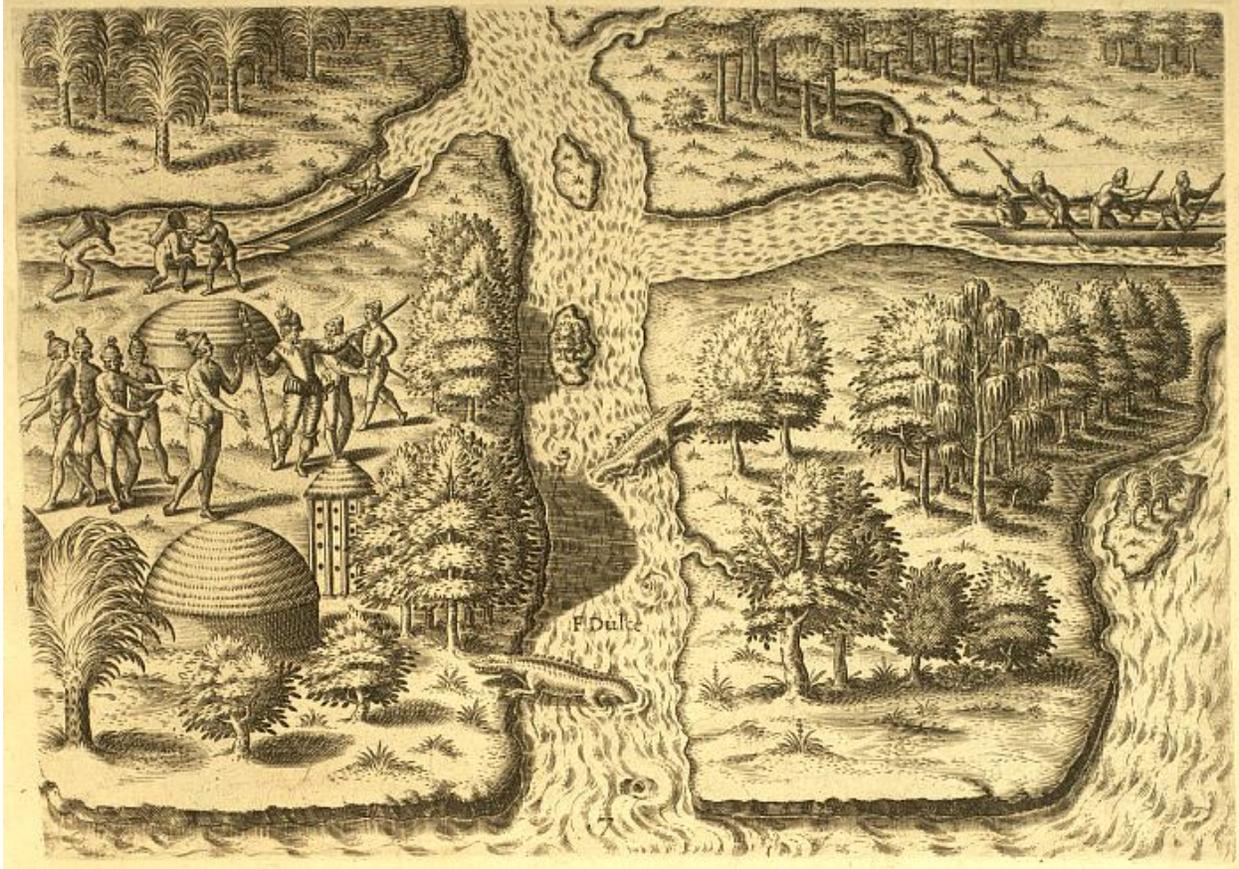
II. THE FRENCH VOYAGE TO THE RIVER OF MAY

Embarking again they set sail for another place and before they landed were greeted by another crowd of Indians who went into the river up to their shoulders and offered them little baskets* full of maize and white and red mulberries, while others offered their help in bringing them to land. When they landed they caught sight of their chief who was accompanied by two sons and a crowd of Indians armed with bows and quivers full of arrows. After exchanging greetings they went off into the woods hoping to discover some remarkable things there; but they saw nothing except trees bearing red and white mulberries, and the tops of the trees were teeming with silkworms. They named that river the River of May† since they had sighted it on the first of that month._____



* "The baskets carried by the running Indians are . . . shaped like European rather than native artefacts." [Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, p. 203]

† St. Johns River, near present-day Jacksonville, Florida.



VII. THE FRENCHMEN LEFT IN CHARLESFORT SUFFER FROM A SHORTAGE OF CORN

A short time after Captain Ribault's departure from Florida, those who had been left in Charlesfort* (the stronghold which he had built above a small stream, on an island which stands in the larger, north-facing, channel of Port Royal) began to suffer from a shortage of corn. They therefore canvassed various opinions about how to deal with this problem and decided that nothing would be more advantageous than to approach the Chief Ouadé and his brother Couëxis. Accordingly they sent off some of their men to them, and when they had travelled in an Indian canoe about ten miles through the inland region, they came upon a large and fine looking river of sweet water, in which they saw a great many crocodiles, much larger than those of the Nile, the river banks being covered with tall cypresses. After staying in the place a short while they went on farther and reached the chief Ouadé who received them most civilly. They explained to him why they had come and begged him not to abandon them in their great need. When he understood the position he sent messengers to his brother Couëxis to ask for maize and wheat. The latter immediately responded, for the messengers returned with provisions very early next day, and when, at the chief's order, the corn had been carried into the boat, the Frenchmen, much delighted with his generosity, wished to say goodbye. But he would not allow it and kept them back with him for the day, entertaining them jovially. The following morning he showed them his fields of millet and maize and told them not to let themselves be oppressed by shortage as long as that corn lasted. Then the chief dismissed them and they returned to their comrades by the same way that they had come._____

* Before returning to France, Captain Jean Ribault ordered the construction of a fort, Charlesfort, which was manned by thirty soldiers who abandoned the fort several months later and were rescued by an English ship.



VIII. THE FLORIDIANS WORSHIP THE COLUMN SET UP BY THE CAPTAIN ON THE FIRST VOYAGE

When the French had landed in the province of Florida, on the second voyage made under Laudonnière's leadership, he went down on shore himself, accompanied by twenty-five arquebusiers, and was received in greeting by the Indians (for these had come up in crowds to see them). Even the chief Athore came, who lives four or five miles from the seashore; and when they had exchanged gifts and all manner of courtesies he indicated that he wished to show them something special and asked them for this reason to go along with him. They agreed, but because they were aware that he was surrounded by a great number of his subjects, they set out with caution and vigilance in his company. In fact he led them to the island on which Ribault had placed on top of a certain mound a marker of rock carved with the arms of the King of France. Drawing close they noticed that the Indians were worshipping this stone as if it were an idol. For when the chief himself had saluted it and shown it the sort of reverence he was accustomed to receive from his subjects, he kissed it; his people copied him and encouraged us to do the same. In front of the stone were lying various offerings of fruits of the district and roots that were either good to eat or medicinally useful, dishes full of fragrant oils, and bows and arrows; it was also encircled from top to bottom with garlands of all kinds of flowers, and with branches of their most highly prized trees. After witnessing the rites of these poor savage people they returned to their comrades with the intent to search out the most suitable site for building a fort.

This chief Athore is an extremely handsome man, intelligent, reliable, strong, of exceptional height, exceeding our tallest men by a foot and a half, and endowed with a certain restrained dignity, so that in him a remarkable majesty shone forth. He married his mother and by her raised more children of both sexes whom he produced for us by slapping his thigh; and indeed, after she had been betrothed to him, his father Satouriwa did not touch her anymore. _____

*“The engraving (previous page) is the only one of the De Bry plates for which the original [Le Moyne] miniature survives [see below]. . . . [S]ome of the details of the body decoration, fruit and garlands, have been slightly modified and Athore’s features with his high cheekbones and aquiline nose somewhat Europeanized.” [Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, p. 205]

“The baskets here [referring to the de Bry engraving, p. 5, based on Le Moyne’s watercolor below] seem European and not Indian in both construction techniques and shape. The pack baskets are especially clearly a European type. Southeastern Indian pack baskets were not shaped like these, whereas there is good evidence for Flemish and French pack baskets with high backs, . . . The exotic fruits in the basket are very improbable — really impossible — for Florida. Some seem to be modelled on European root crops. . . . Many of Le Moyne’s colors are wrong as is especially evident in the European complexions and hair colors of the Indians, and the gold and bright colors of the tattoo patterns (rather than grey or blue). But two elements here are independently confirmed for Indians of this region. The two vessels with handles are closely paralleled archaeologically: by a wooden bowl, measuring 9 x 6 inches, from the site Su-5 on the Itchtucknee River (Florida State Museum . . .) . . . and by several pottery examples excavated by C. B. Moore.⁶ The pendants hanging from Athore’s belt, although they are not especially distinctive in shape, can be matched among the stone and shell pendants — especially those called “plumets” — common in late archaeological remains from this region.⁷ This plate and several others . . . strikingly imply a relation of equality and friendliness between the French and Indian leaders. Their postures and their relative size suggest a status equivalence that would be surprising in later periods.”

⁶ C. B. Moore, “Certain sand mounds of the St. John’s River, Florida,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, n.s., X (1894), pp. 68, 69, 80, pls. 5, 8, 17, 21.

⁷ J. M. Goggin, *Space and Time Perspective in Northern St. Johns Archeology, Florida* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, no. 47, 1952), pp. 121-2; and various illustrations in Moore, op. cit.

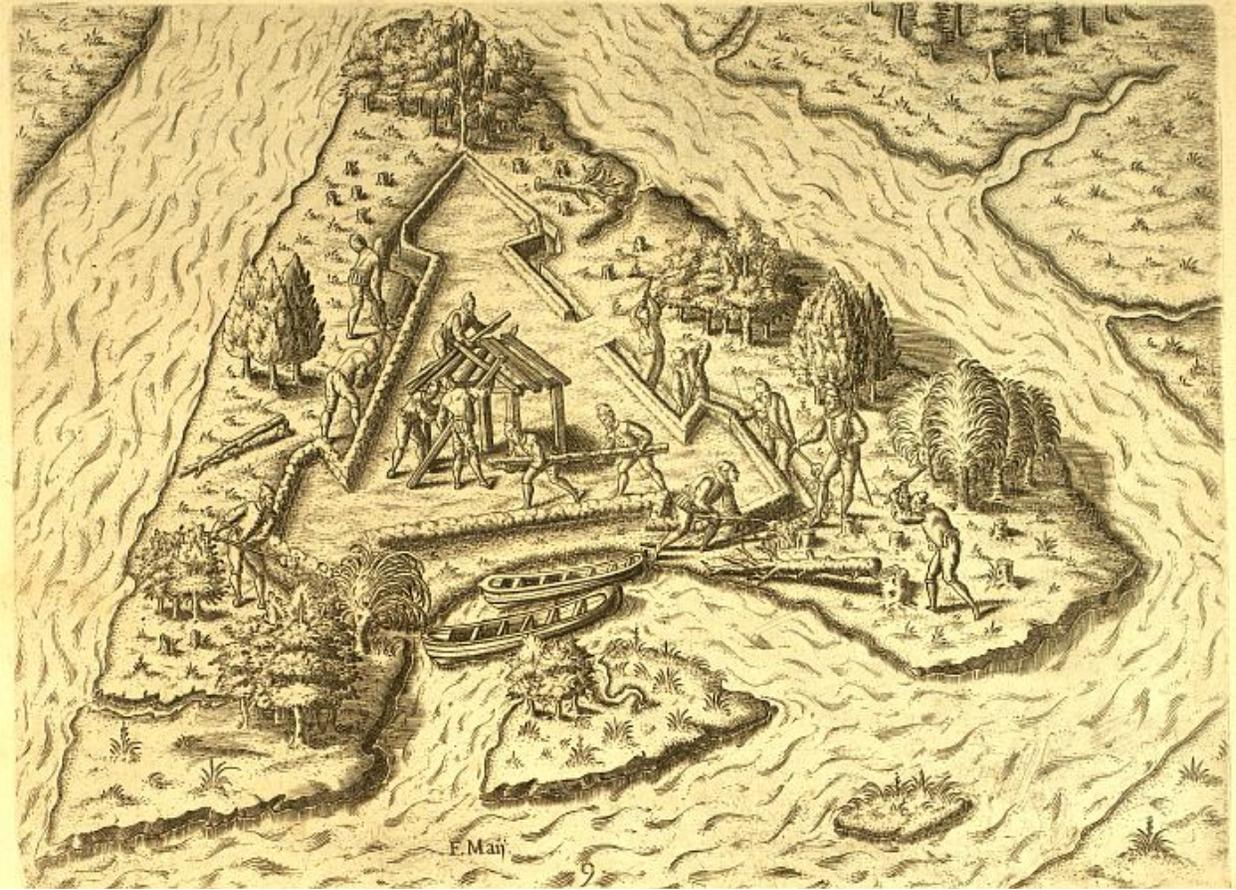
[Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I: pp. 163-164. [Commentary by W. C. Sturtevant]



Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, “Athore shows Laudonnière the Marker Column set up by Ribault”
[during the first French expedition in 1562]

Watercolors and bodycolors with touches of gold on vellum, and traces of black chalk outlines; mounted within a gold border; pictorial surface 180 x 260 mm; 7 x 10¼ in. New York Public Library. Permission pending.

[Text in Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, plate 6]



IX. THE FRENCH CHOOSE A SUITABLE PLACE FOR BUILDING A FORT*

When many of the rivers of that region had been explored the conclusion was finally reached that a base should be chosen on the River of May rather than on any other river; because they had already noticed that it, more than the rest, was rich in millet and corn besides gold and silver which were found there on the first voyage. So they steered their course towards that river, and when they had sailed up it to a certain



place near a hill, that was judged more suitable for building a fort than any other which they had seen hitherto. At first light next day, when they had offered prayers to God and given thanks for their safe arrival in that province, everybody became active. A level area was then measured out in the form of a triangle, and everyone began to put his back into the work, some digging the ground, some bundling together twigs that they had cut, some constructing a wall; for nobody had come without a spade, a saw, an axe, or some other tool both for cutting down trees and for building a fort. They worked so hard that soon the task was progressing well._____

*"The location of Fort Caroline has not been finally determined except that it was on the south bank of the St. Johns River, perhaps on St. Johns Bluff¹ [near present-day Jacksonville, Florida]. [Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, p. 205]

¹ Woodbury Lowery, *Spanish settlements II, Florida 1562-1574* (1905), pp. 405-7.



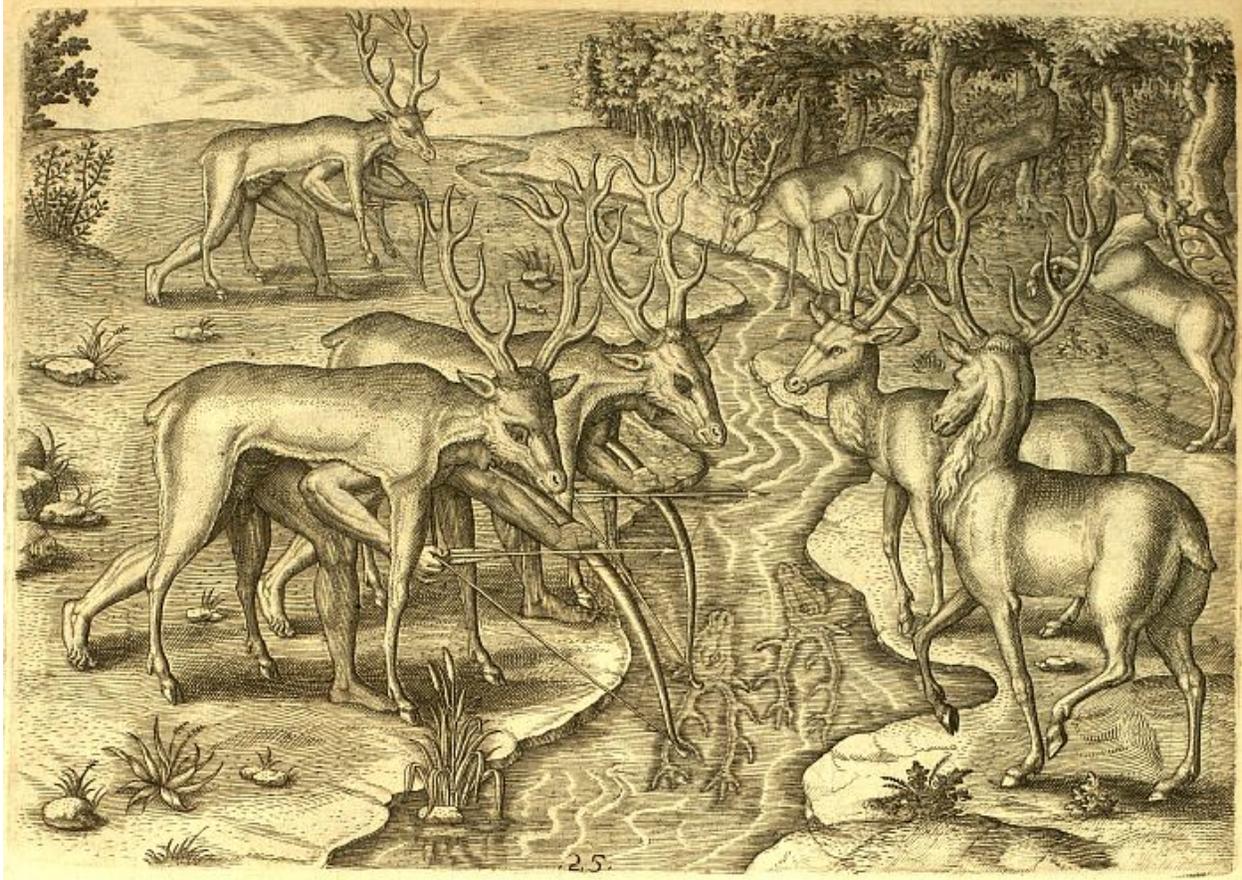
XVIII. REQUESTS MADE OF THE CHIEF BY WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE OR CARRIED OFF BY DISEASE*

The wives of those who have fallen in battle or died of disease are accustomed to gather on a day that they judge to be somewhat favorable for addressing the chief. Approaching him with much grief and wailing they squat on their heels and cover their faces with their hands, and with loud cries and pleadings seek vengeance of the chief for their dead husbands. They ask for assistance, so that they can maintain a livelihood as widows, and permission to marry again at the time prescribed by law. The chief has pity on them and grants their request. They return home weeping and wailing as a sign of the love they bore their husbands. When they have spent some days in mourning, and have taken to their husbands' graves their weapons and the cup they used to drink from, they weep afresh and carry out other womanly customs.

*"The text that accompanies and explains the engravings, and the general topics of the pictures themselves, coincide quite well with the independent documentary evidence on Timucuan culture and with comparative data on other Southeastern Indian cultures. It is mainly the concrete details that seem wrong or distorted. . . .

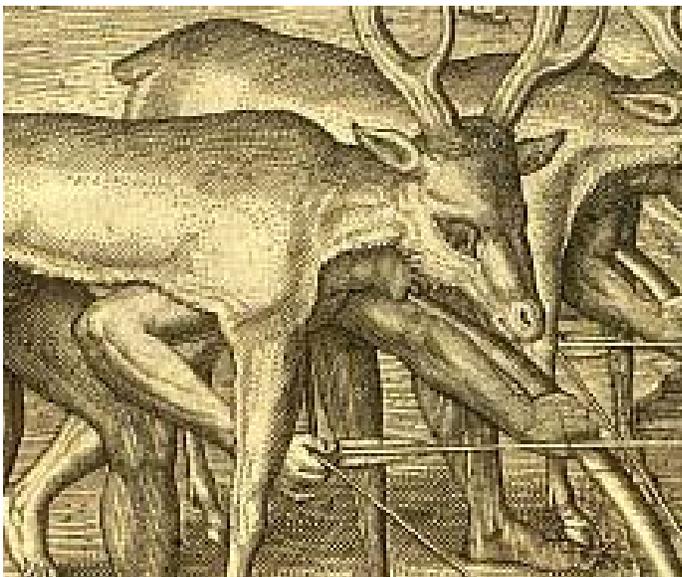
. . . Le Moyne supplied at least a few sketches based on his observations either directly or by means of his memory of local artifact forms. Good examples are the small bowls with handles, the bird leg ear ornament, the oval metal pendants, and the long-stemmed tobacco pipe, That is a surprisingly short list. . . .

. . . While one does not expect European artists of this period to depict non-European anatomy and facial features accurately, the skin and hair color chosen by Le Moyne in the surviving original miniature are surprising for one who must have remembered Indian coloring. The wavy hair of the engravings is also clearly wrong." [Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, pp. 70-71; commentary by W. C. Sturtevant]



XXV. THEIR HUNTING OF DEER

The Indians use a device for capturing deer which we had never seen before. They know how to fit the skins of the largest deer they have been able to catch to their own bodies in such a way that, with its head



adjusted to their head, they can look through the eye-holes as if through a mask. Thus arrayed they approach as near as possible to the unsuspecting deer (having previously noted the time at which the deer go to drink at the river) and, with bow and arrow in their hands, are able to shoot them easily since they are extremely common in that region. They protect their left arm with the bark of trees from being hurt by the bow-string (nature having taught them this). And indeed, when they have re-moved the skins from the deer, they know how to prepare them, not with a metal blade, but with shells, with marvelous precision; and I do not think anyone is to be found in the whole of Europe who can prepare them so skillfully.____



XXVIII. PREPARATIONS FOR A FEAST*

At the time of year when they are in the habit of holding a communal feast the cooks are specially selected for the task. First of all they place over thick logs a large, round, earthen vessel which they know how to make and fire so precisely that water can be boiled in it as well as in our cauldrons. They light a fire under it, one of them holding in his hand a small fan which is very effective for getting a fire going. The chief cook throws what is to be cooked into the pot, some pour water into a trench for scouring, another brings water in a vessel made like a bucket, and yet another crushes herbs for garnishing the food on some flat stone; and all the time the women busy themselves in selecting what is necessary for cooking. However, although they hold great feasts in their own way, yet they are temperate in their eating, as a result of which they live for a long time. For one of their chiefs assured me that he was three hundred years old, and that his father, whom he showed me, was fifty years older than he; and I can truly say, that when I saw him, I thought I was looking at no more than human bones covered with skin. They certainly put Christians to shame who reduce their span of life by holding immoderate feasts and drinking parties, and who deserve to be handed over for training to these base uncivilized people and brutish creatures in order to learn restraint.

*"Most of the vessels here seem to be European in shape. However, the scoop-shaped basket in front of the fire (and perhaps the one held over the pot) can be matched quite well by one of the basket shapes used in maize preparation by the modern Choctaws.¹

Bernadette Boucher (personal communication) has suggested that the man pouring water may be leaching acorns, perhaps pounded into a meal by the man in the left background. There is archaeological evidence from northern Florida for shallow stone mortars that might have served as the basis for the one drawn here.² The text [Le Moyne] to the plates offers no explanation for the circular objects piled in the foreground. They are shaped like the metal ornaments worn by men in other illustrations, but there seems no reason for these to be shown here. More likely the engraver has misinterpreted two piles of shellfish shown in the drawing he was copying. The illustration shows a variety of foods, among which one would expect to find shellfish."

¹ See D. I. Bushnell, Jr., "The Choctaws of Bayou Lacomb," Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin*, no. 48 (1909), pl. 9.

² P. Ripley and Adelaide K. Bullen, "Stone mortars in Florida," *Florida Anthropologist* (Gainesville, Fla., 1974), vol. xxvii, no. 4, pp. 169-70. [Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, pp. 211-212; commentary by W. C. Sturtevant]



XXXV. THEIR SOLEMN RITUAL IN CONSECRATING A DEERSKIN TO THE SUN

Every year, a little before their spring (at the end of February, in fact), the chief Outina's subjects take the skin, complete with antlers of the biggest stag they have been able to catch. They stuff it with all kinds of



the choicest plants that their land produces, sew it up again, and deck the horns, the throat, and the rest of the body with their more special fruits made up into wreaths or long garlands. Thus decorated, it is carried away to the music of pipes and singing into a very wide and beautiful plain, and there it is placed on a very tall tree trunk, with its head and chest turned towards the sunrise, prayers bring repeatedly uttered to the sun that he should cause to grow again in their kingdom good things similar to those offered to him.

The chief with his sorcerer is nearest to the tree and gives the lead in what is said, with the people who are farther away responding. When they have greeted the sun the chief and the rest of the people go away leaving the skin there until the following year. This sort of ceremony is repeated each year._____



**XLI. THE WAY THEY COLLECT GOLD IN THE STREAMS
FLOWING DOWN FROM THE APALATCI MOUNTAINS***



A long way from the place where our fort was built there are high mountains, called the *Apalatci* in the Indian language, where, as may be seen from the map, three large streams rise and wash down silt in which a lot of gold, silver, and copper is mixed. For this reason those who live in that area make channels in the river beds, so that the silt, which is borne along by the water, may sink into them because of its weight. Carefully removing it from there they take it to a certain place, and some time afterwards they again remove from the channels the silt which has fallen and collect it together. They put it in canoes and transport it down a great river, which we named the River of May and which flows into the sea. The Spaniards now know how to exploit the wealth which comes from this source._____

*"Apart from Le Moyne there is no evidence whatever that at this early period the Indians north of Mexico extracted gold from water by panning. The separate use of gold by the Indians in any form at this time, except from Spanish sources, remains unconfirmed and so far in Indian excavations there is a complete lack of gold objects which are not of Spanish origin. Yet the metal exists in the form of gold dust in inland waters from South Carolina to Virginia, particularly in the foothills of the Blue Ridge. But the method indicated by Le Moyne would have been quite unsuited to the collection of gold dust. It is more likely that copper was the metal in question (the Indians used the same word for the two), and the basket-screening indicated could have produced coarse metal particles and larger nuggets."

[Hulton, ed., *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*, 1977, v. I, pp. 215; commentary by David B. Quinn]