

ADVENTURES IN FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY

Historical Perspectives
From The 1920s
and '30s

And Jerald T. Milanich
on the de Bry and le Moyne
images of Indigenous Peoples

2024



FHSAI 2024 Editor's Note



Dr. Benjamin D. Brotemarkle
Executive Director, Florida Historical Society

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Florida Historical Society Archaeological Institute (FHSAI), a department of the Florida Historical Society (FHS) focusing on the intersection of history and archaeology in our state.

While FHSAI was created in 2014, FHS was established in 1856, and our support of archaeology in the state goes back more than a century.

The first publication of FHSAI was the book *Searching Sand and Surf: The Origins of Archaeology in Florida* edited by Rachel K. Wentz. In her introduction to that book, eminent Florida archaeologist Kathleen Deagan recognized the long history of cooperation between Florida historians and archaeologists, as well as the important role that FHS and our academic journal, the *Florida Historical Quarterly* played in enhancing the work of archaeologists:

“Archaeological topics were of great interest to scholars of Florida history from the very first issue of the *Quarterly* in 1908 onward, and the *Quarterly* became the principal outlet for publication about Florida archaeological sites until the initiation of the *Florida Anthropological Society Journal* in 1948. The [Florida Historical] Society itself was also the principal active

advocate during this period for the protection and study of archaeological sites throughout the state.”

In 1905, FHS became the first statewide organization to preserve Native American artifacts, promote archaeological research, and publish findings dating to the early 1900s. Archaeology enthusiast Clarence B. Moore became a member of FHS in 1907, and donated his papers to our Library of Florida History. In the 1940s, FHS helped to create the Florida Anthropological Society (FAS), and the position of State Archaeologist. From 2010 to 2013, FHS hosted the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) East Central Region.

Since 2014, the Florida Historical Society Archaeological Institute (FHSAI) has continued more than a century of the FHS educating the public about Florida archaeology through research, publication, and educational outreach. FHSAI publishes this magazine, *Adventures in Florida Archaeology*, annually.

For the tenth anniversary of FHSAI, we thought it would be interesting to look back a century, to the 1920s and '30s, to see what Florida historians were writing about archaeological topics.

In his July 1924 article “Home Life of the Florida Indians,” Benjamin Harrison presents theories on the origins and evolution of Florida’s Indigenous People, and describes their daily lives, political systems, and traditions.

In the October 1924 article “Indian Races of Florida,” Benjamin Harrison continues his exploration of Native culture, describing the relationships between different tribal societies, and the impact of European culture on them.

In the short but informative article “Some Florida Names of Indian Origin” from April 1926, Frank Drew provides insight into the etymology of Florida place names.

In her October 1927 article “The Ruins of Fort San Luis near Tallahassee,” Venila Lovina Shores uses a variety of documents to reconstruct the location of Fort San Luis, known today as Mission San Luis.

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While Rhea M. Smith's 1933 article "Anthropology in Florida" contains many historical inaccuracies (the Spanish were *not* looking for the Fountain of Youth, and Florida's Indigenous People were *not* cannibals, for example), it is a fascinating look into early archaeology in the state.

Many of the beautiful illustrations that are used throughout this magazine replace black and white engravings credited to Theodore de Bry based on drawings by Jaques Le Moyne that accompanied the articles when they appeared in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. These images were originally "colorized" for French historian Charles de la Roncière's 1928 book *Floride Française*. These images were also included in the first English translation of that book, *French Florida*, edited by Ben DiBiase and published by FHS Press in 2014.

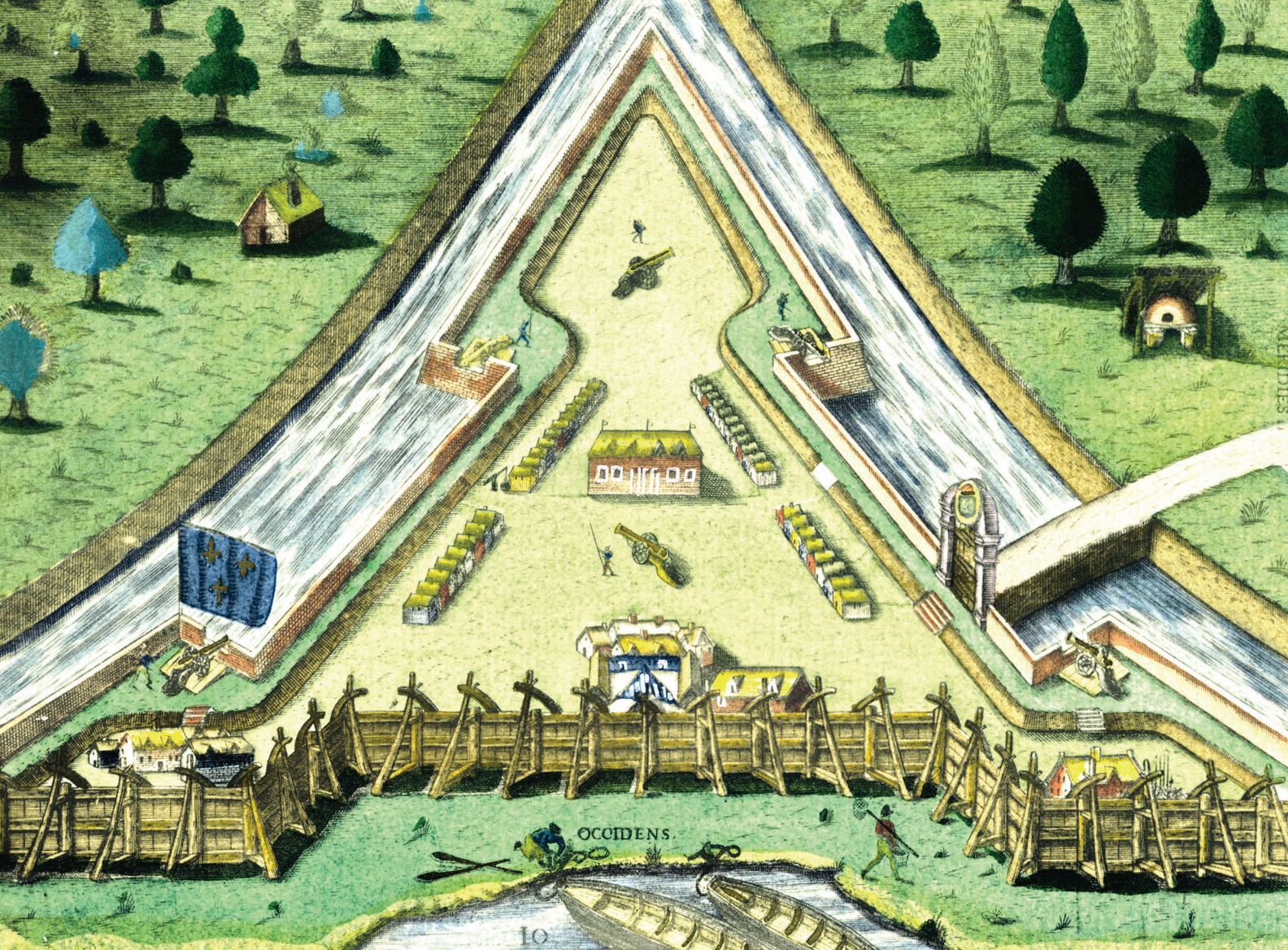
Since serious doubt has been cast upon the accuracy of these depictions of Florida's Indigenous People, it is only appropriate that we include in this magazine the article "The Devil in the Details: Theodore de Bry, Jaques le Moyne, and Sixteenth-Century Engravings of Timucua Indians" by renowned Florida archaeologist Jerald T. Milanich. This article appeared as a chapter in his 2017 book *Handfuls of History: Stories About Florida's Past*, published by FHS Press.

A century after the Florida Historical Society published most of these articles, the Florida Historical Archaeological Institute continues to bring historians and archaeologists together to tell the stories of our state's evolving history and culture.

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Unless otherwise noted, images in this edition are hand-colored reproductions of Dutch engraver Theodore de Bry's famous images of Indian life based on pictures by Jacques LeMoyne de Morgues. The colorized versions were first published in Charles de La Roncière's *Floride Française: Scènes de la Vie Indienne* (1928), and later in the first English translation, *French Florida* published by the Florida Historical Society Press (2014).



Home Life of the Florida Indians

Benjamin Harrison

July 1924

Source: *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jul., 1924), pp. 17-28

Every family of mankind refers fondly to a Golden Age, when peace and innocence reigned on earth. The lost paradise is no monopoly of the Christian, of the Greek or even of the Old World, since the Inca and the Aztec were equally confident in the truth of his traditions describing it. When Columbus compared the happy conditions he observed in the islands to which he came, with those of Europe, he declared the inhabitants were close to the angels in disposition as well as in geography, and he confidently looked for his Blessed Mountain in all his wanderings. When the French came into the mouth of the St. Johns,

and were hospitably entertained, Ribault says: "We entered and explored their country hereabouts, which is the fairest fruitfulest and pleasantest of all the world, abounding in honey, venison, wild game, forests, woods of all sorts and vines with grapes. And the sight of the fair meadows is a pleasure inexpressible." Moreover, the inhabitants seemed hospitable and kind beyond all experience, while in dignity and fair speech they were "both courtier-like and wise."

Yet the first act of these visitors was to build a fort for fear of these people, and they learned by experience that men might starve in a land

so overflowing with food that the inhabitants freely gave of their abundance! Those who seemed “like unto angels” came to be denounced as savages, and to be suspected of witchcraft—as idolaters and necromancers, they were to be exterminated unless they could be used as slaves! So we are prone to pass from one extreme to another; if the Floridians of that day were disposed to be hospitable and kind, they were yet men who took offense when robbed and knew how to repel injury by hostility.

Study and observation have taught us to reject the theories which marked off the eras in human history as Ages of Gold and Silver and Bronze, until coming to our own time, which we called that of Iron, because general happiness seemed to have fled with Astrea to the stars! Instead of these divisions we know that in every age are people of every condition; today we can study the manners of the people of the Ages of Stone, because we can now mingle with tribes in like circumstances; even in the New World, there were, or had been but lately, palaces of stone, though yet savages of the most brutal characteristics roamed the interior, while some gentler than their visitors could be found on the Southern coasts.

The great mistake made by the Europeans was the assumption that these savages were rising from barbarism, as their ancestors in England and Germany and France and Spain had lately risen, as they would have said, “By the grace of God.” But the truth was, as now held, that a process of declension was going on; such condition as followed the downfall of the Roman Empire in Europe from which these observers were struggling to rise. The difference was that the American had been isolated, while in Europe successive waves of migration had brought advancement and compelled progress.

Science agrees with inspiration that human life began in Central Asia and flowed outward to Europe. The first man of whom science finds the trace is the Pithecanthropus Erectus—barely human in shape and little more than animal in mind. But the first European is an improvement on the original, and is known as the Piltdown or Neanderthal; certainly he possessed the land for centuries from the Thames to the Danube. With him roamed animals of like shape to those we know—not the monstrous forms we are

digging from the rocks of our land. Against these he fought for life with flint-headed spears and clubs; the flints being first the forms he chose from accidental breakage, but finally rudely shaped by hand. Lands rose and sunk; climates varied and animals wandered north or south to escape the cold or to follow the invitation of renewed pasturage; man lived as best he might. Next, coming from the east, appeared a superior race before whose strength and cunning and superior weapons the Neanderthal vanished; the Cro-Magnon gave graceful forms and a fine surface to his stone implements; he began to fish, and so lived with less labor, and he drew forms and painted colors on the walls of the caves in which he dwelt, for the proof of his presence; he held Europe for 25,000 years. Then came the ancestor of the races known to us—the Etruscans of Italy and the Latins who conquered them, while the forests of France and Germany were still held by barbarians not so docile or kind as the Indians discovered in America.

Thus in Europe there was always movement; in America the immigration was confined to short distances. Before Britain was separated from the continent except by a river, and while Africa was joined to Europe by more than one natural bridge, variations of climate and arrangements of land and water may have opened the way in those remote times to a wave of immigration to America, but the date was at least too distant to admit of proof. The Nahua journeyed from Central America, and the Aztec set up a kingdom in Mexico; the Inca conquered to the north and south of Cuzco, but there was no exchanges of population from continent to continent. Cities were built in South America and Central America with which England and Germany and France of the same period had nothing to compare, but the builders were content to stay at home and had no dreams of assimilating and educating any beyond their immediate neighborhood.

Yet our own territory had but lately been the seat of a wide empire, and its disintegration did not long precede the arrival of the Spaniards at Tampa, and the Frenchmen at the mouth of the St. Johns. Of this empire the kindred families of the Muscogees were members, although the headship seems to have been vested in the Natchez on the Mississippi River. Of their wide domains the mounds are still the

monuments and the witnesses; the people of Florida and Georgia still used mounds and built them when DeSoto passed through their country. Practically, this race possessed the Southern States when the white man came; the Algonquins of New England and Virginia were being driven by the fiercer Iroquois, while the Cherokee mountaineers were stoutly holding their own.

Until evidence was found of the decadence of the Muscogees, Maskokis or Creeks, from a more complicated social and political condition, the facts observed by travelers and traders who lived among them were too marvelous to be credited. How could a people only beginning to rise above the rudest of savage conditions have adopted such relations with each other? We are the heirs of a gradual process of development reaching beyond the Christian era, yet these earliest inhabitants of our country enjoyed some advantages to which we are only beginning to aspire. In much their social and political organizations resembled ours, but the grades of rank were more carefully marked, the line of descent was regarded with greater

pride on the one part and deference on the other; the laws of marriage and the family, for instance, were at once more absolute and more free. Let us examine into some of these facts.

Usually we have the savage—scarcely to be distinguished from the brute, then the hunter, then the shepherd and next the agriculturist. When we know the Southern Indian maize was the staple food, and this grain had been developed from an inferior plant found only in Guatemala; would mere savages have watched this plant into usefulness and have preserved the seed for generations uncounted? Nomads do not accomplish such results; the Indian who plants remains to reap, and he who has fields to till holds to his native land. No expressions of patriotism can be found in Creek literature that the orators of the Creeks have left us in our comparatively short acquaintance with them before their extermination or degradation. While the Indian is responsible for the existence of maize as we know it, we must see that the maize is largely responsible also for the Indian at his best.



Indian Marriage Processions

When a Creek warrior wished to marry, he sent his mother or his sister to consult the relations of the girl he had chosen. If his proposals were favorably received, he sent presents to her female relations; when those were not returned the two were considered betrothed. Then he built a house and planted a crop; when the harvest was ready he brought meat from the hunt, and she came as his wife to take possession. Either party could demand a divorce, but the woman could not marry again till after the next green corn dance, which was never more than a year since it was an annual festival. The children were entirely under the guidance of the wife; in case of divorce, she took them to her family, and they always belonged to her gens. All the household goods were the property of the wife; she could send the husband out of the house at will. All the men and women of the town joined in clearing the field for planting; the chief divided this common field into lots for each family. After the harvest each family contributed of its crop to the share of the family of the chief, and this was guarded to entertain visitors and strangers, for the support of the fighting bands, and as a reserve against a period of scarcity. Of this the chief could give a share to the needs of the European settlers, but when this was exhausted, he refused to give more; the supplies from private stocks were soon exhausted, then force was used by Europeans to extort more.

Each town was a separate community, and each sent a delegation to the national council. Each town had public buildings set about a square so as to form a tetragon; the government was administered by a Micco and his Old Men, or cabinet; but they were bound to observe customs and precedents which were accepted as laws. Over the national government council presided one chief in time of peace; on a declaration of war he was automatically displaced for some war chief; might not this arrangement prove a valuable hint to us, in view of our experience with presidents who are warriors, but not statesmen, and politicians who are not warriors; only Washington of all our presidents has been first in war and first in peace. All differences between the towns, which were in much like our States, were submitted to a body composed of the Peace Chief and the Ancients, which might have

suggested our Supreme Court to Jefferson, had he known of the Indian institution, of which there is no proof; but the Muscogees preceded him in the only feature of our government that was original; since it is not the same as the old Greek Areopagus. But our constitution-makers are justly lauded throughout civilization, though they had knowledge of experiments of peoples of whom the Muscogees had never heard; many of them were scholars as well as statesmen, and all of them had the inheritance of centuries of regular government under the English law; what shall be said of the men who set up the Muscogee system?

In practice, the matrons of the Creek nation had the deciding voice in questions of peace and war; practically they could interpose a veto when a decision for war had been rendered. Have we gone so far as this? Do the suffragettes even demand so much?

We have heaps of volumes of law enacted for the preservation of fish and game; these needed no protection from the Indians, although the woods and waters furnished the tables of the inhabitants of the country.

There were no beggars among the Muscogees, because each man or woman had tasks which must be done, and for these food and clothing were paid unfailingly; while one family had a surplus there could be no hunger.

There were no prisons; for all offenses except murder punishment was prescribed, but if the offender chose to absent himself till after the occurrence of the annual festival, no mention of the offense was permitted. If a murderer took himself out of the country his absence was accepted as sufficient; if he returned he met the executioner. Thus the public was relieved of the most burdensome taxes of our systems; the Creeks had no policemen, no prisoners or prison-keepers; a judge was honored when the parties to a difference accepted him as arbiter and made no charge, but he was not compelled to serve nor the disputants expected to pay for his services.

If scandal arose because of the talk of a woman, the matrons investigated the case and punished the guilty party in case the charges were not proved. If a man made the charge the warriors investigated and punished.



Before he had been degraded by contact with the white man, the Indian was provident in proportion to his needs; it was more honorable to give freely than to amass property, as it is among the Arabs of the desert. He did not consider himself bound in honor to give his enemy a fair show; he proposed to kill when he went to war, and did not desire to be killed. In contrast to the habits of the Iroquois, the Muscogees were kind in peace and placable in war; a tribe that felt itself too weak to fight would be admitted into the Confederacy on equal terms, and it was by such accessions that the Muscogees increased in number, while their kindred, the Chickasaws and Choctaws, declined. Bartram, Duval, Pickett, Milfort, and all the other observers report that the Muscogees were tall and straight, athletic and handsome. Certainly they were devoted parents, as are the Seminoles today.

It is often said that the Indian was treacherous and cruel to his enemies; the charge may be

admitted if it is allowed that we treated them worse than they treated us.

The Muscogee was an agriculturist and not a simple hunter. We doubt if a like population of white people would be able to feed a wandering body of five hundred men, as the Muscogees fed the army of DeSoto. Time and time again we find such remarks as this in October and other harvest months: "Thenceforward the country was well inhabited, producing much corn, the day leading by many habitations like villages." "The Indians never lacked meat. With arrows they got abundance of deer, turkeys, conies (hares) and other animals, being very skillful in killing game, which the Christians were not." "The country was delightful and fertile, having good interval land upon the streams; the forest was open with abundance of walnut and mulberry trees." "There was abundance of lard in calabashes (great gourds) drawn like olive oil which the inhabitants said was the fat of bears. There was likewise much oil of walnuts which,

like the lard, was clear and of good taste, and also a honeycomb which the Christians had never seen before, nor saw afterwards, nor honey, nor bees, in all the country." Yet honey was soon found to be a staple article of trade.

Bartram testifies that in a residence of several months in an Indian town, he never heard a man speak angrily to a woman; he never heard of a man cruelly treating a child; he never heard of a family contention about children or property.

Others have testified that in a Muscogee Village theft was unknown; a trader's property was entirely safe if left exposed to public view, exactly as our show windows are used for advertisement. There was no hunger; there was no overwork. If it be true that the Indians were never afflicted with consumption and other diseases of kindred character, there is a disease of the feet caused by intrusion of a germ, due to lack of sanitation, but the germ was imported from Africa and was never heard of in aboriginal America. Smallpox is a filthy disease; America never heard of it till a negro in the train of Narvaez brought it to Mexico.

One other instance: The water at Hot Springs in Arkansas is a specific for certain diseases; the government of the United States obtained possession of the springs and admitted all to them, but those who cannot pay must take the refuse after the rich have had the benefit. All aboriginal America had the free use of such waters, in Arkansas and at Saratoga and in Virginia; doubtless in North Carolina also. Members of tribes at war with those about these springs could pass freely with their families and were allowed to remain as long as they desired, the friends of the diseased hunting freely while taking the treatment. There was no ownership of such provisions for health, just as there was only tribal ownership of lands; the man who could not support a family under such conditions must be worthless indeed. Age was honored—the public holding that a support was amply repaid in the advice given by the experienced.

Let it not be understood that all the tribes were living under these conditions; we speak only of the Muscogees, who were the Apalachees of Florida; not even their kindred,



the Choctaws and the Chickasaws, were so happy in all respects. But if there were inferior peoples among the aborigines of America, there were others deserving to rank with the Creeks—men of ability and virtue came from each of the principal stocks. Let us not lightly estimate warriors who went down before greater numbers and better weapons; the orators whose eloquence was not taught by other civilizations, nor the statesmen who could organize confederacies of independent populations and gain the ends without force, which in Europe must be imposed by the swords of knights and the armies of retainers on unwilling subjects. On the original inhabitants of continental Europe the Romans forced the lessons they derived from the Greeks, who had drawn upon the deeper springs of Egyptian thought; after the Romans came the Northern nations, and from the resulting mixtures the men who discovered America found the strength to overcome the Indians, who had no such advantages of diverse thought, manners and organizations. Remains the charge that the native races of America were cruel. Today who can accuse them of superiority in this particular without reckoning the advantages of Christianity for the Europeans now slaughtering each other?

Still, they are accused of worshipping the powers of nature only; if their conquerors were better taught, to what influence should credit be given? What were the Celtic and Teutonic Races before they were baptized into

a faith drawn from Asia? What sort of religion animated the minds of those who exterminated the populations of the New World?

Spaniard and Puritan accused the Indians of being enchanters, witches and warlocks, children of the devil, and predestined to eternal punishment; read the accusation and be convinced that the accused were better than their defamers. Were they thriftless? What need for flocks and herds, had the people for whom nature provided parks and game, that must be defended against a starving peasantry by the aristocracy of Europe Is it not better to sustain a community without beggars or prisoners than one in which the suffering outnumber the millionaires and the comfortable or prosperous? Is not the child without clothes, a better proof of paternal care than one condemned to slavery in a factory, before body or mind is mature? Is not the sufficient meat and bread of the savage better than the kickshaws of civilization, which leave the stomach craving? Is not the free forest better than the little parks of the city, plastered with notices to keep off the grass? Might not the mind and body be healthier with the teaching which made theft and falsehood unknown, than one that had collected the vices along with the wisdom of books? Perhaps we might do well to admit it were well if we had tried to learn something from the Indian instead of demanding that he learn from us or die.

***Adventures in Florida Archaeology* welcomes your articles and regional news that focus on aspects of archaeological study.**

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THE **FLORIDA**
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



Indian Races of Florida

Judge Benjamin Harrison

October 1924

Source: *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Oct., 1924), pp. 29-37

Ethnologists now accept the conclusion that the races who built the mounds were pressed to the southward by ruder invaders who came from the North and that the great battles of the conflict between the two were fought in Ohio where the remains of the fortifications erected for defense still remain. On this continent we have, on a smaller scale, a duplication of the struggle which ended in the overthrow of the Roman Empire. The great body of these invaders were diverted towards Mexico, where the Toltec empire was overthrown by the Aztecs, soon to be conquered in their turn by the Spaniards under Cortez. But there was no wide difference between the culture of the invaders and the Mound Builders; both were ignorant of the use of metals and both belonged to the Stone Age, although a people capable of such works as the defensive mounds must have been much more than rude hunters. The strategic points they selected are now the sites of our cities and showed ability of no mean order since they constituted successive lines of defense such as would now be adopted under like circumstances. It must have been the descendants of these mound builders that De Soto found in the Southern States since they still occupied such artificial positions and were still building them. Thus we are to understand that the works in the Southern States are of a later date than those of the Middle West and we can gain some knowledge of the old conditions by studying those which attracted the attention of the white men on their arrival. In Florida we have from Garcilaso de la Vega a description of the Indian method of founding a town; they first collected a quantity of earth with which they formed a platform large enough to hold ten or twelve houses—sometimes fifteen or more. In these dwelt the chief, his family and the principal men. At the foot of this a square

was marked out sufficient to accommodate the inhabitants and within this the houses were built. Around the whole a palisade was often erected and the trunks of trees bound together with vines.

Sometimes there were walls of earth and ditches; the palisades were too close to admit of the passage of a man's body but open for shooting arrows. Within were warehouses for the storage of provisions and the land outside was laid out in fields for the growing of crops. These towns were always bravely defended; despite their superiority of arms the Spaniards were roughly handled and little progress was made in the conquest of these peoples until our government undertook the task, although the Spaniards exterminated the Mexicans and Peruvians without much effort who were both more numerous and seemed to be more advanced in the arts and in the science of war.

The Spaniards often speak of Indian kings and nobles but they found nothing answering to these titles as used by us—usually the chief was taken from a certain family, but he was always chosen by election and the influence he exerted depended much more on his character than on his birth. The tribes were made up of clans but the communities thus formed were confederacies of independent communities. No government known to the Indians of our territory could enforce its decrees except by general consent; all land was in common and there was little personal property beyond the arms and clothing of a family that might not be called upon, on occasion, for the use of the whole community. The system of government was socialistic and communistic, regulated only by established customs and varying with the character of the chiefs in power at the moment. Each village was independent in very much the



sense that our States are independent, with a common subjection in some respects to the council in which every village was represented. The township system in Massachusetts bore a very close likeness to that of the tribes holding the country when the white man came and the likeness is continued in our constitution today for the government of the nation. Thus the American began under a socialistic conception which some of us would renew in many respects.

The Indians of our territory had no domestic animal except a dog which they had reclaimed and partly domesticated from the wolf of their forests, but on the Pacific coast they had tamed the turkey. For the summer they had booths of branches and leaves, caring little for the rain, but when the cold required it they built huts of wattled branches or other easily adapted materials which they strengthened with clay and grass mats; “daubed within and without with clay and the door is very little; they shut it by night and make fire within so that they are

in it as warm as in a stove and so it continueth all night so that they need not clothes. Besides these they have others for summer and their kitchens near them where they bake their bread. And they have barbacoas where they keep their Maiz, which is a house set up on four stakes, boarded about like a chamber and the floor of it is cane hurdles. * * * And about them they have many lofts wherein they lay up maiz and deer skins and mantles of the country which is like blankets; they make them of the inner bark of trees and of a nettle which, being beaten is like flax. The women cover themselves with these mantles. They put one on from the waist downward and another over the shoulder with the right arm out, like unto the Egyptians.” So says the Gentleman of Elvas who passed with De Soto through the country.

The possession of Florida in our time was disputed by the French, the Spaniards, and the English; even so when the white man came he found three distinct races struggling for it.

The Muscogees held Georgia and Alabama with their allies and kinsmen, the Apalachees holding western Florida and reaching down into what is now part of middle Florida; the Timuquanans who came from the East held Amelia Island which they called Guale, the Atlantic coast south to Cape Canaveral and the whole of Peninsular Florida down to Lake Okeechobee, where their boundaries met those of the Calus or Carlos Indians whose villages kept the south and Gulf coast from Tampa to the keys with their main settlements on the Caloosahatchee river which keeps their name. These Calusans were Caribs who were the pirates and buccaneers of the islands when Columbus came.

We have given the description of the original Muscogees by the Gentleman of Elvas; as a companion picture here is the sketch of the Timuquanans by Laudonniere, who saw them at the mouth of the St. Johns River. He says they had great skill in the manufacture and use of dyes which they obtained from vegetables. "The most of them have their bodies, arms and thighs painted with fair devices, the painting whereof can never be taken away because the same is pricked into the flesh * * * They exercise their young men to run well and they make a game among themselves which he winneth who has the longest breath. * * * They have their priests to whom they give great credit, because they are great magicians, great soothsayers and callers upon devils * * * They eat all their meat broiled upon coals and dressed in the smoke which they call boucaned. * * * The agility of their women is so great that they can swim over the great rivers, bearing their children upon one of their arms."

Fontanedo says that the Apalachees lived in communal houses, some of these accommodating 500 persons, but each Timuquanan family occupied its separate dwelling which was thatched with palmetto leaves with walls of skins or mats of grass. From the Apalachees came the pearls De Soto noted among the Indians and these were taken from the oysters at the mouth of their river and passed as ornaments throughout the neighboring peoples.

The village of the Florida Indians consisted of a central council house, sometimes on an artificial mound; in this the warriors and chiefs met to debate questions of public interest and

here sat, as often as need arose, a body over which the chief presided to give judgment—a court of last resort. But a village site was often changed for a variety of reasons; sometimes from a superstitious motive, for security from attack, failure of the food supply or exposure to flood, etc. But there was something of a limitation of territory for each community. Within the tribal boundaries land was common but intrusion on hunting grounds was often the cause of war.

The Indian had but one cereal and on this his agriculture was based, but he had indigenous vegetables in the pumpkin and a variety of beans. He used a great variety of fruits and roots and his women dried stores of both these so that the French settlement was often supplied with them to meet a time of scarcity. A stick or stone was the implement of husbandry—usually this was pointed with a shell or a bone.

Whether in the village or on the march, the clan was the unit of the community through which the government operated and kindred was based on descent through the mother; no man could marry in his own gens, but sought a wife in another clan to which his children would belong. It was always the clan that enforced justice on its members or demanded satisfaction for murder or other wrong. It was the clan that held the common property and it was the clan that provided for those who could not care for themselves. A clan assumed a distinguishing name, usually that of some animal to which it attributed its origin in some remote past and to which it paid a certain reverence.

The government of the village in time of peace resided in a civil chief who was elected, but was sometimes allowed to retain his office and even to leave it to his brother. He was assisted by the old men and to the council an appeal could always be made.

In time of war the headship resided in a war-chief, who was elected though the office usually was restricted to a family; however, the leader had no power except such as personal character won for him. "Nowhere in North America," says Major Powell, "have a people been discovered who had passed beyond this tribal society to a national society based upon property." Groups of villages are mentioned by early writers who call them confederacies but these were loosely held together by pressure



from without and acted together only to meet a common danger though a seeming alliance may have continued for a long period. Of such a nature was the confederacy of the Six Nations or Iroquois, that of the Muscogees and the one over which Powhatan presided in Virginia.

Lowery and many other students insist that the Indian had no idea of a supreme being except as Christian influences have so shaped his superstitions. "But the Indian feared the powers of nature in their visible aspects, in their constant influence on his life, in his success or failure in the war or in the chase, in the abundance of rain for his crops and his recovery from disease. Wherever he could trace an influence exercised over him by any object whatsoever he immediately endowed it with intelligent being and propitiated it by sacrifice or prayer." That may be; if so we are still compelled to admit that the Indian owed many virtues to nature. He was simply amazed to find that the Spaniard did not hesitate to break his pledged word; before the Indian had

experience of the white man's code a promise to him was enough. Even yet, the most amazing charge he can make against the white man is that of bad faith and the fact that "The big chief of the white men is a liar all the time" seems more wonderful to the Seminole than the white man's power.

The Indian is accused of worshipping his maize; is the authority sufficient? What are his dances and ceremonial observances but our celebration of the harvest home? "Dances, feasts and fasts were celebrated in its honor;" did our ancestors "worship" wheat because the last sheaf was brought in with dances and songs? The Puritans condemned the dances around the May-pole and it is true that this festival also was once idolatrous, but did the dance and the song necessarily imply worship? The Indian was accused of "animal worship," and here he may be more guilty, but this, with him, was much nearer akin to ancestor-worship in which he bears company with those of corresponding culture throughout the world. We are taught

that the Egyptians did not worship the bull, the dog and the cat, but divinities who manifested themselves under these forms; the Indian might be treated with equal consideration. The history of the Indian from the coming of the white man is easily understood after we recognize the racial differences in the population of Florida. When Ponce de Leon entered a bay on the Gulf Coast a multitude of canoes came out to attack him—these were the Caribs of Calusa, who made war in their war-canoes in all the islands. On the East Coast the Indians attacked the white man only after his landing; these were the Timuquanans. De Soto found that Jean Ortiz stole away from one Indian town near Tampa and was protected in the adjoining one; he fled from cruel captivity among the Caribs and was protected and kindly treated by the Timuquanans, who were of a gentler nature and always held themselves the enemies of the Caribs.

In his march De Soto broke the force of the people of Vitachuco and marched on. After this there was a vacancy in peninsular Florida which the Muscogees and Apalachees hastened to occupy. Within a few years Menendez found

these Apalachees in possession of the country between Jacksonville and Tallahassee and they made incursions into the valley of the St. Johns so that he was obliged to make war upon them. Somewhat to his surprise he found the Indians of his neighborhood willing to help him; the Timuquanans hated the Apalachees almost as bitterly as they hated the Spaniards and gladly saw their hereditary enemies forced as slaves to build the fort of San Marco. When our Seminole War began the Timuquanans appreciated the necessity and made common cause with the Creeks because Caocoochee was a statesman, but the Caloosans refused to join the league until Americans attacked them without cause and so made an enemy without need. The Caloosans withdrew to the islands when threatened with subjection by the Americans and given the option of removal. A remnant of the race is still found in Jamaica and Martinique.

The Timuquanans differed in language and character from the Creeks and even during a war of ten years their forces were not joined until the last battle on the shore of Okeechobee.



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Some Florida Names of Indian Origin

Frank Drew

April 1926

Source: *The Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Apr., 1926), pp. 181-182

There is intense interest in venturing beyond the horizon of recorded history into that of the prehistoric by way of tracing back to the time of the earliest Spanish explorations the aboriginal names of localities in Florida, and particularly such names of many of its bays, streams and lakes.

Sarasota is derived from **Sua** (the Sun), **ha** (water), and **Sata** (the Shadow)—literally denoting the fleecy, intense brightness of the cumuli (billowy clouds) which Indian fancy suggested as shadows cast by the sun itself: “Water of the White Sun Shadows.”

Miami is from **ma** (a form of negative so intense that it made the most emphatic affirmative) and **Yama** (meaning the Dark One of the mythical Twins: Yamo being the Dawn, and Yama the Dusk that “drives from the heavens the far-shooting arrows of light”—the sun’s last rays): **Miami** as figuratively, and by the most intense form, “Always (Everlastingly) Bright.”

Tampa is evidently of close kinship to Tlamapa (the name of an ancient town in Santa Cruz), and from **Tamu** (culture hero of the Guaranis and patron deity of the Caribs, “The Old Man of the Sky”—the sun), the form **tlama** denoting “something done with the hands,” exercise of the creative power, and subjectively **pa** (from **Allpa**, the earth), in instance the building of a hill or mound: polysynthetically¹ “The Place made by the very hands of the Great Sun God and the Mound of his Temple (Council) House.” The name was first applied to a locality on the Gulf coast south of the city of Tampa, being subsequently changed to the present site with undoubtedly an exact location by the mound that formerly stood on the old Fort Brooke reservation.

It is unfortunate that the city of Tampa could not have forestalled the obliteration of this mound by preserving it intact as a monument to the origin of its name.

The **Withlacoochee** river (of the south) before it was so called by the Seminoles, who came in later and succeeded the Indians located there at the time of the Spanish explorations, was the **Amasura**, that is, **Yama** (the Dusk) **ha** (water) **Sua** (the Sun), signifying “Water that has the darkness of dusk even in sunshine.”

The **Suwannee** river was destined to pass under many names before that of final determination, and as a fanciful derivation was one time supposed to be “San Juanee” (much Anglicized Spanish)—“Little St. John.”

The *Memoir* of Fontanedo (who was wrecked on the Florida coast, held for many years a prisoner by the Indians, and afterwards an interpreter for the expedition to Florida under Pedro Menendez, in 1565) gave the name of this river as **Olacatano** (or Olgatano); and without analyzing its polysynthetic structure, the meaning was “Blessed Stone Dwelling of the God of Rain and Fertility”; while its present form is from **Sua** (the Sun), **ha** (water) and **no** (beloved): “Water beloved of the Sun God.”

These names and many others of startling appropriateness are veritable picture-words that express an emotional tribute to nature by a people of far higher culture than the later (Seminole) Indians.

Notes

1. Duponceau gave the name polysynthesis to the Indian method of combining a number of ideas in the fewest words, even in one.



The Ruins of Fort San Luis near Tallahassee

Venila Lovina Shores

October 1927

Source: *The Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Oct., 1927), pp. 111-116

In western Florida there are many places of historic interest whose physical remains have been obliterated by the action of the elements, and the memory of man may have long since ceased to know them. Now and then the student searching historical material finds bits of information left by the pens of long ago concerning them. Here are some of these fragments relating to Fort San Luis.

From Spanish records historians¹ have learned that Fort San Luis, established about 1640, was not only a place for safety but also the mission center from which the Franciscan friars carried on their work of conversion. The territory included by the workers from this mission embraced at least northern and western Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. From the same sources it has been learned that within a radius of twenty miles there were several missions dependent upon San Luis, but the exact location of few is known today. That they were established at points of vantage for work among the Indians is certain, and we

hope that further study may mark their definite location.

At the present time there is nothing to show definitely the location of this old mission-fort, San Luis; however, the writer believes that in the spring of 1926 bricks forming two of the corners were found, thus partially identifying its location. The site is on the right side of a road now leading westward from Tallahassee at the top of the second hill. In his journal, Andrew Ellicott² refers to this place, when in 1798-1800 he was serving the United States government in running the boundary in compliance with the treaty of San Lorenzo with Spain (1794):

Some miles north of St. Marks, there is a tract of country though not extensive, which is tolerably good, and here the Spaniards had a small settlement or colony; it was conquered about sixty years ago, by an enterprising party from Charles Town, South Carolina; it is now totally abandoned and scarcely a



vestige of the settlement now remains, except the ruins of a fort, one or two pieces of old artillery, almost in a state of decomposition.

In the issue of the *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser* of November 27, 1824, the location of Fort San Luis is aptly described as:

. . . about twenty miles from the coast. It is the only high and perfectly commanding spot in this part of the country; a narrow winding ridge rises gradually for half a mile, ending in a very high bluff, surrounded by a deep swamp, on this bluff the fort was erected.

When the capital of territorial Florida was located much interest was shown in the natural beauties of the country which surrounded this new “city in the wilderness.” The ruins of Fort San Luis received their share of attention, not only in newspaper articles but also in the writings of travellers passing through the region. A letter³ from Judge H. M. Brackenridge, of Florida, to Colonel White the delegate from the Territory, tells of the destruction of San Luis, thus:

The appearance of a dense population, which seems to me to have covered the country has induced me to make some inquiry . . . While in Havana I could learn

nothing; but while in Charleston I met with an English work, Robert’s account of Florida 1763, which gives a piece of history apparently little known. The district of Apalache, it appears was inhabited by a race called Atimaco Indians with whom the Spaniards became intermingled. The Yamassee Indians who lived near St. Augustine backed by those of Apalache made frequent excursions into the new settlements of South Carolina threatening them with total destruction. In consequence of this Col. Moor, Governor of that State, made three inroads into their country, in the years 1702, 1704, and 1706 marching to the Flint River, then taking a direction south towards Tallahassee. In the last expedition, he entirely defeated the Spanish Governor, the don Juan Mexia, killing and taking prisoners above 800 of the Spanish and Indians—Don Mexia himself being one of the prisoners—Col. Moor transported 1400 of the Indians and fixed them in a settlement near the Savannah River. The settlements were entirely destroyed. This agrees tolerably well with the traditionary account of the old Indian, Chefixico, who says that his father told him the settlements formed by the intermarriage of the Spanish and Indians had been destroyed by a great



warrior after three different invasions. Chexico says that when a boy, the country was so open as to be scarce of game, and was not resorted to by the Indians until the forests grew up; that it was then full of orange and fig trees, and the roads and bridges still to be seen.

Another description of the destruction is given in the *Pensacola Gazette*⁴ as follows:

From Capt. Burch who has lately returned from surveying the ground for the national highway from Pensacola to St. Augustine, I have learned some very interesting particulars. ...traces of Spanish settlements are found. The first is a fort St. Louis, at least its ruins, situated about six miles east of Ocolockony and north by west 25 miles from St. Marks. This place has more of the appearance of having been a fortified town than a mere fortification. . . . Fort St. Louis was built on an elevated spot of ground around a hollow, from the bottom of which issue two springs that furnish an abundant supply of water, but which after running but a few yards, again sink into the ground. One of these on being opened by Capt. Burch, displayed a wooden box or trunk in which it had been enclosed; they were overshadowed by a beautiful live oak tree. . . . Capt. Burch

met with an old Indian near Tallahassee of the Creek Nation, who appeared to be of great age and who informed him that he had been in a war which destroyed these settlements. His age could not be precisely determined, but from circumstances it was thought that it could not be less than one hundred and thirty or forty. . . At the time of the war with the Spanish he was in the prime of life and recollects very particularly all its circumstances. . . The Indians made repeated attempts at St. Louis, and were as repeatedly repulsed, being unable to withstand the cannon. They then mustered their whole force and after laying waste the whole country, they made a final effort by investing the fortified places; and endeavoring to starve them out. They were encamped principally on the North side of the Fort; the Spanish prepared everything for evacuating it, and retired in the night to the fort on the Ocolockony. The first intimation to the Indians of the retreat was the explosion of the Fort: the cannon were so broken and injured as to be unfit for use, and is still to be seen. The country having thus fallen into their hands, together with the Yamassy tribe of Indians, with whom the Spanish had intermarried, and lived on a most friendly

footing; the males were all destroyed, and the women taken for wives or slaves.

But the country had been so entirely cleared, that there was no game, and the domestic animals having been destroyed during the war, the great body of Indians returned to their nation. The Indians who remained formed a new race, who were called Seminoles, which in the Hitchy language signifies run wild. The old Indian himself went to the Apalachicola—no Indian lived near St. Louis—until the forests grew up, when he returned about the time the Tallahassee and Mikasuky towns were built. He represents the Spanish population to have been very numerous, but could give no precise idea of their numbers. The Indians had no firearms being armed with bows and arrows and clubs. In order to protect themselves from the effect of the shot, they suspended thick boards about their necks and which did not always answer the purpose. The Indians have preserved a superstitious story which keeps them at an awful distance from San Luis. They say that the Spaniards, on quitting San Luis, buried their church ornaments, and with them some bottles of medicine (magic) which would prove fatal to them if they were touched. They cannot be prevailed upon to accompany the whites there even to show the place.

Of the appearance of the ruins at about the time Tallahassee was established as the territorial capital, we find several other reports. John Lee Williams, who was one of the commissioners appointed to select the site for the new capital, wrote to Richard Keith Call as follows:⁵

Among the curiosities of the country we discovered an old Spanish Fort on a commanding hill about half way from Oclockney to Tallahassee. The south line of it measured 71 paces, the north 55, the east and west ends about 46. It had bastions near the angles, and in the spring about fifty feet down the ravine, east of the works, we discovered the breach of a six-pound field piece, and near it another piece of the same dimensions,

from which the muzzle was broken. An ancient Indian of old Tallahassee, told us that the fort was taken by the Creeks, when he was a boy, near a hundred years ago, that the country tho thickly settled with the Spaniards was broke up, that the Yamassee Indians then called Bone, were friends of the Spaniards and also cut off. . . .

In *A View of West Florida*⁶ the same writer speaks more at length regarding this ruin and its appearance:

Extensive forts were erected, on many commanding eminences. Fort St. Lewis was situated two miles west of Tallahassee. Its form was an irregular parallelogram; the eastern and longest side was fifty-two paces. Within the moat, two brick edifices had been erected; one sixty by forty, the other thirty by twenty feet. There were bastions at each corner. The outward defenses are extensive. A covered way led to a spring, in a deep ravine, under the north-east wing of the fort. Here were discovered two broken cannon, one of them having only the muzzle broken off; this has been removed to Tallahassee, and again awakens the echoes of the distant hill on days of rejoicing. Many articles of old iron have been discovered about this old ruin. Before it, trees and grape vines grow, in the order in which they were planted: the rows are distinctly traced, although overrun with a more recent forest.

A few sentences found in the *Pensacola Gazette* of April 2, 1825, add another fragment to the picture on this hill top as seen in the early twenties:

These [the two brick edifices] are in total ruins, and nothing but the mound appears where the walls stood, composed wholly of broken bricks, which had been composed of a coarse sandy clay and burned in the modern fashion. Yet on the very walls of these buildings are oaks eighteen inches in diameter. On the same hill, and in fact within the outworks of this fort, are to be seen grape arbors in parallel lines, which still maintain their pristine regularity.

In early territorial days the attraction of Fort San Luis was not alone its traditions and its power to arouse in the imagination a vision of another era, but its natural beauties made it a delightful place, and many were the merry makings held there according to the traditions of our own Tallahassee. It was here that Prince Murat⁷ and Mrs. Catherine Dangerfield Gray first met. The fascination of the Priest's Spring⁸ must be felt as long as its peaceful beauty is undestroyed by the hand of man.

Notes

1. Jeannette Thurber Connor and Herbert E. Bolton.
2. *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, Philadelphia, 1803, p. 240.
3. Washington, D. C., Jan. 14, 1827; in the *Pensacola Gazette* and *West Florida Advertiser*, Mar. 23, 1827.
4. By an act of Feb. 28, 1824, Congress provided for the opening of a public road from Pensacola to St. Augustine. It is definitely stated in the act (United States Statutes at Large, Little Brown Co., IV. p. 6) that the road shall pass "the site of Fort St. Lewis." Capt. Burch was appointed to take charge of the survey. In the *Pensacola Gazette*, April 25, 1824, note is made of his having "lately received orders" for the work, and "it is calculated that this force [200 men] will enable him to reach Tallahassee . . . by the first of June next." *Pensacola Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1824, "Old Settlements in Florida," copied from the *National Intelligencer* (no date or author) implies that the work of Capt. Burch had been completed.
5. Brevard, Caroline, *History of Florida*, I. p. 263. Letter dated St. Marks, Nov. 1, 1823.
6. Williams, John Lee, *A View of West Florida*, etc. Philadelphia, 1827, p. 32. The *Pensacola Gazette*, April 24, 1824, contains similar statements.
7. Long, Ellen Call, *Florida Breezes* p. 156. "I met Kate the first time at a picnic. It was at old Fort St. Luis; her shoes were so much too large for her that one slipped off, I did seize it and drank to her health"; so says Prince Murat.
8. So Jeannette Thurber Connor very aptly called the spring on first seeing it in March, 1926.



Images in this article are from *Florida Frontiers* Television episode 32 "The Indigenous People of Florida."

Jonathan Dickinson's Journal

or

God's Protecting Providence

An Early American Castaway Narrative

God's Protecting Providence, better known as "Jonathan Dickinson's Journal," is a firsthand account of the 1696 wreck of the ship *Reformation* near Jupiter Inlet. The Indigenous peoples through whose territories the captive castaways passed protected them from famine and flood, and the peoples of Spanish Florida helped them on their journey up the east coast to St. Augustine and Charles Town.

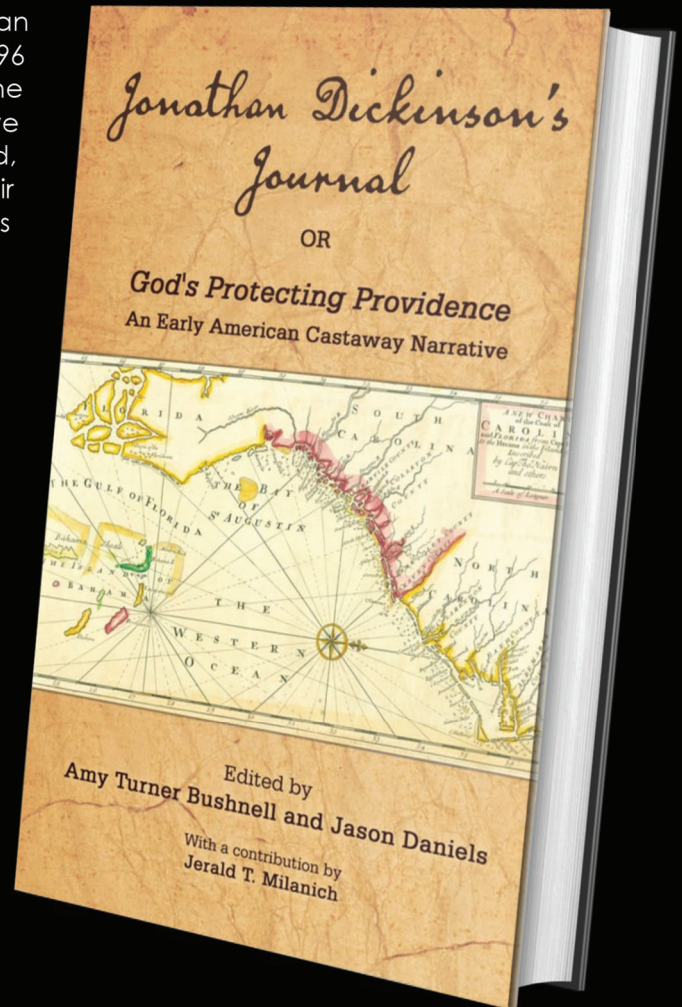
First published in 1699, the narrative has become a valuable resource for historians, archaeologists, and ethnographers.

Studies of "Jonathan Dickinson's Journal" are about to enter a new phase.

Looking through the Loudoun Mansion (Germantown) Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Jason Daniels came upon a 111-page manuscript in a copyist's hand, dated 1696 and titled "Journal of the Travels of several persons their sufferings—being cast away in the gulph among Cannabals of Florida."

This earlier version, stopping when the party was debriefed in St. Augustine and differing markedly from the first printed edition of *God's Protecting Providence*, leaves no doubt that Dickinson's original account was drastically cut, rearranged, and rewritten before it was approved for Quaker consumption.

As far as we know, this badly damaged copy is the only proof that an earlier version of the narrative actually existed. With permission from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, it is published here for the first time.



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NEW FROM FHS PRESS!

Anthropology in Florida

Rhea M. Smith

April 1933

Source: *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Apr., 1933) pp. 151-172

Any attempt to investigate the origin and customs of the aborigines of Florida through reliance on written materials is almost immediately frustrated by the paucity of such material and the scantiness of data available. Even an attempt to summarize the work done by field investigators leads to the baffling task of trying to reconcile conflicting theories, a condition that arises from the fact that the conclusions reached as to the origin, antiquity, and life of the early peoples of Florida are so indefinite. Yet there are few regions in the United States more abundantly supplied with mounds that call for further investigation. Dr. Aleš Hrdlička wrote of the southwestern coast in 1918:

This region contains a wealth of archaeological remains which would long since have created quite a stir if located in a more accessible part of the country.¹

But before venturing into the archaeological work that has been done in Florida, it is best to ascertain the ethnology and affiliations of the early inhabitants of the state. The first question that arises, of course, is that of the antiquity of man in Florida, although the problem is largely an archaeological one. This problem is the "subject of many discussions and controversies."² In some places human bones have been found in a petrified state or in close association with those of extinct animals and these have been taken as proofs of man's antiquity in Florida. Yet in many cases the association of fossils of extinct species has been intrusive while the petrification and inclusion of bones in rock is frequently rapid. The undergrowth and the trees growing on the mounds indicate some age as does the size of the mounds, since it must have taken some time to build them, whether for burials, domiciliary purposes, or mere refuse heaps. Many of them are undoubtedly prehistoric, with no trace of articles of European introduction, yet in others articles showing European influence are found

in the upper layers. Despite the more or less accidental finds of recent years, which might be held to impute some antiquity to man in Florida, the conclusion reached by Dr. Hrdlička over ten years ago, although conservative, still seems to be the most satisfactory. He wrote that no human remains from Florida or any other part of the Americas

could conscientiously be accepted as representing man of antiquity beyond a few thousand years at most and of other than the ordinary Indian type; nor are there apparent any indications that anything much older may in these parts of the world be yet discovered.³

So he held a few centuries before the coming of the whites as the earliest date for prehistoric man in Florida, as represented in the work of the mound builders. With no archaeological evidence of a pre mound building occupation, such an earlier people "must have been few in numbers, of similar culture and of Indian derivation." Thus the peopling of Florida "was a relatively late event in the peopling of the continent, and one without much consequence,"⁴ although hunting parties probably came from the north before the actual settlement. It is probable, however, that peoples in a hunting stage of culture reached all parts of the New World; so, this implies nothing peculiar to Florida.

The origin of the Florida population has not been definitely ascertained, although there are several theories, but the present tendency is to point to the north and northwest as the source of derivation. Frank Hamilton Cushing concluded that the key dwellers of the Ten Thousand Islands were alien comers to Florida,⁵ and that the mound builders of the lake regions of northern Florida

were originally a people of the sea, not of the mainland, were a people who had once lived as the key dwellers lived, on island mounds in the sea or its shoals, here using



In 1896, Frank Hamilton Cushing led an archaeological excavation on Marco Island, uncovering ancient artifacts of the Calusa, including the Key Marco Cat.

such implements as their ancestors had there used, and carrying ancestral ideas of habitation and of utensils down from generation to generation, and so, slowly up into the land.⁶

They built mounds in the sea and this custom became so fixed traditionally

that withersoever they or rather their descendants went thereafter, they continued the practice as an essential tribal regulation.⁷

In the discussion that followed the advancement of this conclusion Dr. Brinton held that the culture of Florida developed from a northern center, from north Florida and Georgia,⁸ while Dr. Putnam advanced the theory that the people came across the Isthmus from South America, extending through the Central American region and along the Gulf of Mexico over into Florida, finally being driven onto the keys.⁹ This latter theory is substantiated to some extent by an axe that Cushing found at Key Marco that indicated relations with Central America, and by the fact that successive waves of immigration swept across the Mississippi, of which the Seminoles were among the last.¹⁰

On the other hand Cushing continued to maintain that these Indians were Arawaks or Caribs who came up from South America despite linguistic evidence, since the skulls were more nearly of the Antillean type than of the northern Indian type.¹¹ And there is evidence that there was an Arawakan colony from Cuba on the southwestern coast within the territory of the Calusa. Their ancestors had landed in Florida in search of the fountain of youth and were

forcibly detained by the Caloosa chief, who colonized them in a settlement, where for a long time afterward they still preserved their separate identity.¹²

So regular communication probably existed between the tribes of Florida and the Antilles in early times.

Fewkes also concluded that the evidence is fairly good that the archaic culture of the Greater Antilles extended over the northern portion of the peninsula of Florida under a superficial Muskogean or later development.¹³

And the similarities in culture found in the Cuban and Floridian mounds are probably due to contact and interchange of cultures.

The proximity of Florida to Cuba, and the existence in both of pile-villages and shell-heaps showing that their makers were possessed of a very similar culture, has led Dr. Fewkes to the conclusion that there were probably early connections between them.¹⁴

But Charlotte Gower concluded that the Cushing hypothesis had been largely discredited by the absence of supporting evidence and that

The resemblances between Antillean and south eastern cultures are not sufficiently great to justify the belief in any actual migration of peoples from the southern to the northern continent by way of the islands.¹⁵

Dr. Hrdlička, who concluded that none of the Florida types of skulls point to a derivation from the southward, gave the most authoritative statement as to the origin of the aborigines of Florida, based on physical anthropology:

It would seem from the present facts that the bulk of the Muskogean people must have been derived originally from the more northern long headed tribes; that they extended once well towards the south from the Atlantic to and beyond the Mississippi, but did not occupy, or occupied but sparsely or only in spots, the territory along the Gulf; and that then came a relatively strong invasion from the West or Southwest—possibly from Mexico—of people of a distinct type not hitherto represented east of the Mississippi; that this current overflowed the Gulf states and Florida, overcame and absorbed whatever there may have already been there, extended as far as it could north ward, and in the course of frequent warfares as well as in amicable relations, became extensively mingled and even admixed with the contact tribes, admixing them to a similar extent. The strongest of these contact tribes formed eventually a political union together with the main portion of the southern stock, which union was the

Muskhogeian confederacy; and they possibly accepted more or less the language or perhaps the main language of the more highly cultured southerners.¹⁶

There are two strong impressions in regard to the Florida Indians—the first, that so little is known about them, and the second, that they have so completely vanished. We do know that in the northern part of the peninsula were the Timucua and in the south the Calusa. The Ais, Tekesta, Hobe, and other tribes were scattered along the southern and eastern coasts—all of them of a rather low culture, some without agriculture—and were more or less subject to the Calusa.¹⁷ The Calusa tribe held the southwest coast from about Tampa Bay to Cape Sable and Cape Florida,

together with all the outlying keys, and extending inland to Lake Okeechobee. They claimed more or less authority also over the tribes of the east coast north to about Cape Canaveral.¹⁸

Nothing definite is known in regard to the linguistic affinity of the Calusa or their immediate neighbors, although the dialects of the west coast are generally classed with the Muskhogeian.

These Indians, living “partly in amity, partly in discord,” were grouped in “villages along the Atlantic and the Gulf coasts, about the inland sounds and lakes, and along the rivers.” Their organization and culture was in general like that of the southern tribes. They lived on molluscs, fish, game, roots, wild fruit, and vegetables that were raised in gardens or small fields. “They were largely a canoe people, and the men were reputed as fighters.”

Living predominantly on the low swampy mangrove- and insect-plagued keys and coasts that were further liable to inundation during storms, they constructed extensive shell-heaps that would serve as safe, dry and clean platforms for their habitations. They also constructed canals and sheltered lagoons for their canoes, brought where necessary the shell detritus and muck for their gardens, and built sand and shell mounds for burials and other purposes.¹⁹

Physically the Timucua of northern Florida, the St. Johns River Indians, and the Calusa were the same people, although Dr. Hrdlička found two types of skulls, one a prevalent and fundamental type and the other less numerous and more recent. The brachycephals were found over the northern two thirds of the peninsula, while the oblong heads were more frequent in the southern third and along parts of the east coast. The former have physical affinities to the immediate north and west, but were probably derived from the northwest, west, or southwest, and indications favor Mexico. Since the discovery this type has become very largely extinct except in the mixed survivors of the Choctaw. The more oblong-headed elements of Florida are identified with the Seminoles and other Muskhogeian tribes of northern derivation. In stature the Florida males were decidedly robust, not giants in stature, but strong in frame and musculature, so that it “can be readily understood that they had the reputation of fierce fighters.”²⁰

As for the Seminoles, they were Creeks who came across the Mississippi before Columbus and dwelled north and northwest of the peninsula, settling in the northern part of Florida after 1732 and making frequent incursions into central Florida. Most of them were transported to the Indian Territory after the second Seminole War (1836-1842) and the remnants, about 600 strong, dwell in the Everglades. Thus the Seminoles do not belong to the prehistory of Florida, but there is much work to be done in securing more detailed and authentic information concerning their customs and manner of living.

Most of the data that have been assembled in regard to prehistoric man in Florida have come from archaeological investigation, but in this work there is much yet to be done. There is need for the discovery and mapping of unexplored mounds so that they can be scientifically investigated before the process of levelling them off into fields increases with the growth of the population of Florida. In addition, curio seekers have destroyed many mounds and this tendency will continue as long as unqualified persons are permitted to dig into mounds. In 1882, Andrew E. Douglass wrote that the mounds were



fading away under the corrosion of agriculture and the elements, and the more serious evil of the curiosity of relic hunters, intent simply upon the acquisition of some object of pecuniary value, in different meanwhile to the characteristics of the mound they destroy, and to the facts attending the locality of the objects obtained which may invest them with peculiar archaeological value. Relics of metal have gone into the melting pot and others of stone have been broken in the handling and finally thrown away and lost.²¹

There is much weight to Dr. Hrdlička's plea for the erection of national reservations where the mounds are particularly interesting or plentiful, where archaeologists may be able to work carefully and leisurely in the task of ascertaining more concerning the prehistoric peoples of Florida. He spoke of "Brown's Place" on Turner's River as "the most noteworthy group of shell heaps and mounds to be found in the entire region."

The site is so characteristic, and probably so important to science, that steps, it would seem, ought to be taken to preserve it for posterity, which could best be done by making it a national reservation. The expense of this at present would be in. significant, and little time should be lost in having it carefully surveyed, which could be done with no great cost or difficulty at a time when the mosquito pest abates in some measure.²²

But even the task of digging into a mound by competent persons is not an easy one. Numerous obstacles exist. The chief is, of course, the financial one, concerned with the equipment and maintenance of the expeditions for work in regions that are often inaccessible except by boat as is the case in the Ten Thousand Islands. And the mounds generally lie along the coast or some waterway and are overgrown with

trees and underbrush so that the physical labor required is not small, particularly when the mounds are, as in the keys, in swampy regions that are covered with rank vegetation and trees. Also, the digging cannot commence until the permission of the owner of the land has been obtained which in some instances has been difficult. But finally and second to the financial obstacle in difficulty is the biological one. It is hard to choose a season when the mosquitoes or sandflies or redbugs or snakes are not decided pests and a menace to the proper attention to the work. And often after all these obstacles have been overcome the returns are very small.

One of the early investigators of the Florida mounds was Dr. Jeffries Wyman, who worked in the fresh water shell mounds along the St. Johns River, particularly around Lake George and Palatka, at various times from 1860 to 1875. He concluded that most of these mounds were completed and had been abandoned before the whites landed in Florida. He wrote in 1875:

The only records we have of the earliest inhabitants of the St. John's are the shell mounds and the comparatively few implements they contain. Judging from these of the progress the natives had made, it is clear that they too had passed out of the primitive stage, had become hunters, had made some progress in the useful arts, and however rude their implements they were such as could only have been the result of long continued efforts. They have left no signs of having learned the art of agriculture, but their tools, if they had any, may have been of a perishable nature. In the oldest mounds no pottery has been discovered, the builders of them no doubt having been ignorant of it. Though implements of wrought shell, bone, and stone are met with, they are not numerous, and those of stone from the interior of the mounds are quite rare.²³

He also concluded that the older natives subsisted chiefly on fish and shellfish since the bones of animals obtained by hunting on land were in comparatively small numbers. But when the whites came these natives had outlived the mode of life which gave rise to these habits or had been replaced by others of different habits.

Carlos, King of the Calusa, as depicted by Theodore Morris.

The stone implements found by Wyman showed that the builders of these mounds were acquainted with their use from the beginning, though they were perhaps not in common use. There was a certain lack of skill in manufacture evident in the earlier implements of stone, but those found on the surface were well wrought and corresponded to those found in Georgia and neighboring states. The stone implements included chips, hammerstones, arrowheads, and rude celts. Pottery was scarce and always rude in manufacture and ornamentation, obviously made by hand and stamped in squares. The shell implements were more common and included chisels, gouges, and drinking shells. He found few shell ornaments and an entire absence of pipes and metals.

Wyman concluded that these ancient inhabitants of the St. Johns were cannibals due to the condition of the human bones found and because of the absence of evidence to show that they were broken up while exposed on the ground by animals. It was reported by early writers that the Floridians were eaters of human flesh, and this has since been borne out by archaeological findings such as Wyman's. Among the animal remains found in the mounds were those of the bear, raccoon, hare, deer, otter, opossum, turkey, alligator, turtle, gopher, and of various birds and fish.²⁴

Some ten or fifteen years later Andrew E. Douglass investigated the sand and shell mounds of the north Atlantic coast between the St. Johns River and Mosquito Inlet, excavating more than forty mounds, but he was chiefly concerned with the burials, and his principal conclusion was that "the whole district supported a most abundant population in ancient times" due to the number of the mounds.²⁵ This, of course, has not been definitely ascertained. The Calusa are reported by Fontaneda as not having over 1500 to 2000 persons, while Brinton estimated that the aboriginal population of the whole peninsula never exceeded 10,000, "which for the maximum of the Floridian native population about the time of discovery is probably too low." Hrdlička continues:

The natives were much more than mere hunting tribes, but it remains certain that the estimates of the Spaniards, as on so many other occasions, were exaggerations. Much larger numbers

could not possibly have melted away so completely between the sixteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century as have the Floridians, of whom since about 1820 not a known living trace remains; they have not even left any mixed population, though some traces of their blood are probably coursing in the veins of the Seminoles who have roamed since over the southern parts of the peninsula.

The material remains of the old native Floridian population, the shell heaps and mounds,

constitute an index of expended labor, of the number and extent of the settlements, and of the approximate number of the burials...

but they are complicated by the uncertain time element. And it is

improbable that all the sites were occupied or peopled to the maximum at the time of discovery, and the accumulation of burials has doubtless taken many generations, yet plainly these remains enclose a story which, when once properly interpreted, will be of great help to the student seeking a solution of the question of the numbers of the Floridian population.

And he concluded that there were no great numbers except in a few localities. The settlements were small and the burial mounds were not abundant enough in number of contents to denote more than a moderate population, so that from 25,000 to 30,000 would be a fair approximation at the time of discovery.²⁶

The most interesting work and certainly the richest in return was that of the Pepper Hearst Expedition under the direction of Frank Hamilton Cushing, which explored the region in the Ten Thousand Islands and made some remarkable discoveries at Key Marco in 1895. Hrdlička described these keys:

These keys, formed by oyster bars, sand and the roots of the mangrove tree, are from a few feet to a number of miles in area, and are, as a rule, just above the level of the sea. But an insignificant proportion of these islands have been utilized by the keydwellers.²⁷

Cushing termed the aboriginal culture of the Florida Keys a pile-dwelling one, but Hrdlička thought the term an unmerited one. The remains in the Ten Thousand Islands consist of shell heaps from an acre to fifty acres in size, arranged in such a way as to indicate a system of construction.

These heaps are not simple kitchen middens, but purposely built ridges or mounds, from all available shell. They were elevated platforms, which the Indian was obliged to build before he could feel assured of the safety of his habitation from inundation during high tide or storms. They are rather sterile though not barren of remains, both cultural and skeletal; but rare individual isolated shell mounds have served for burials.²⁸

It is not necessary to enter into a description of the various objects of wood and shell that were found “in the muck at the bottom of a small triangular court enclosed between ridges of shell,”²⁹ for they are described in detail in Cushing’s preliminary report. It is evident that they represented

the remains of a people not only well advanced to ward barbaric civilization, but of a people with a very ancient and distinctive culture.³⁰

The collections represent what Cushing called a Shell Age phase of human development and culture. The peoples who once inhabited Key Marco understood plaiting, weaving, and basketry making. They were a maritime folk engaged in fishing in the waters of the Ten Thousand Islands that teemed with fish. They had fish preserves in the lagoons that were shut off in such a manner that fish were unable to escape, an invention of theirs that probably spread to the interior of the southeastern states. The important possession of each man was his canoe, generally a light, flat bottomed affair, built rather narrow in order to run the tidal currents and low breakers. It is evident that dogs were used in hunting at Key Marco, for skulls were found that are identified as of the same type as the Inca dogs of Peru.

This “desert of the waters” in which these aborigines lived

both forced and fostered rapid and high

development of the people who entered it and elected or were driven to abide in it.

To build the shell keys and provide an ample supply of fish it was necessary for the men “to unite in each single enterprise” which led “to increased communality, but also to a higher, and in this case, an effective degree of organization.” The dangers which were greater than those of human foemen necessitated

far more arduous communal effort in the construction of places, rather than houses, of harbors and storm defenses, rather than fortified dwellings, and the construction of these places under such difficulty and stress, led to far more highly concerted action and therefore developed necessarily not only sociologic organization nearly as high, but perforce a far higher executive governmental organization.

So it was probable that a favored class was developed and chieftains were nearly regal in power and tenure, even in civil office.³¹

These people were probably the Calusa and the power of the Calusa chief was indeed great. Special food was prepared for him and first born sons were sacrificed in his honor, while human sacrifices were made at his death.³²

Hrdlička, who also explored this region in 1918, concluded that the southwestern coast

was peopled during late pre-Columbian and well into historic times by a large Indian population of homogeneous nature culturally, though possibly not somatologically.³³

The remaining problems that confront the anthropologist in this region are, first, what became of all this population as well as of the more northern coastal groups; second, what were these groups; and, third, did the remains of the Calusa group merge with parts of the Seminole tribe.

Of course we know of their struggles with the Spanish and their partial deportation; but it seems strange that such a large population, not only of the west coast but of other parts of Florida, should have completely disappeared since the Spanish connections with the Peninsula.³⁴



The most extensive work that has yet been done in Florida archaeology was that undertaken by Clarence B. Moore who published accounts of his investigations from 1894-1918 in the *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*. His work covered practically the whole of the west coast from Pensacola to the Ten Thousand Islands and the St. Johns River mounds. It was a monumental task, particularly in the value of the collections of skeletons and skulls and pottery he made from the mounds, which serve as the basis for the detailed study of the archaeology of the state. His conclusions had to do principally with burials and pottery and it is necessary to mention some of them, not only because of the importance of his work, but because of the value of his collections as keys in the study of the aborigines of Florida.

He found the shell deposits of the southwestern coast of great interest as monuments of the aborigines, but their contents offered him little reward for his investigations. The sand mounds of the southern coast were mainly for domiciliary purposes, and those that contained burials yielded but few artifacts and little pottery. The failure to place earthenware with the dead was attributed to the fact that the custom did not obtain there. Moore wrote in 1905: "An attempt to duplicate a discovery such as Mr. Cushing's would resemble a search for a needle in a haystack."³⁵

He found Wyman's investigations among the sand mounds of the St. Johns to have been superficial. While objects of European origin, such as glass, bells, and buttons were found, they were largely intrusive and most of the mounds were of precolumbian times. Here the custom of burying the most valued possessions with the dead did prevail, although in a few mounds sherds and earthenware were entirely absent. Moore's work was so thorough in this region that he could write in 1894:

We are of the opinion that no extended notice of the river mounds can ever again

be written, and we sincerely hope that others may be induced to take up and to publish reports of the mounds of the east coast, of the west coast, and of the interior, that the archaeology of Florida may be redeemed from the obscurity that has hitherto characterized it.³⁶

Moore's investigations along the east coast corroborated the conclusions of A. E. Douglass that most of the mounds were pre-Columbian since the objects connected with white civilization were entirely superficial. His investigations in Duval County along the St. Johns between Jacksonville and the sea led him to conclude:

It is evident that this part of the river sustained a considerable population in former times, rendered possible, perhaps, by the great abundance of oysters in the waters near the river's mouth, where the low marshes are still studded with shell-heaps and a few years back contained deposits of great size.³⁷

In his work along the St. Johns Moore studied copper objects especially and concluded that the copper found with objects of European make was almost universally not copper but brass, and that brass did not occur with the original deposits of copper in mounds that otherwise contained only objects of unquestioned aboriginal origin. The workmanship of the copper along the St. Johns was found to be aboriginal and its production was also aboriginal, as he showed by proofs of a mechanical, archaeological, and chemical nature. This copper Moore held to be derived from various sources, but the main supply was obtained from the Lake Superior region. This, therefore, indicates that the aborigines of the St. Johns were in contact with the northern Indians and possibly had more knowledge of workmanship in copper than is generally supposed.³⁸

Probably the greatest contribution Clarence B. Moore made, besides his exhaustive investigation of several hundred mounds, was his collection of pottery, the detailed study of which in relation to the pottery of neighboring regions might lead to a greater knowledge of the life of the aborigines. In 1901, after his investigation along the northwest coast, he wrote:

A Tequesta woman making pottery, as depicted by Theodore Morris.

Little of interest but earthenware has come from the mounds and cemeteries lately explored by us, but of earthenware a most striking collection has been obtained. This ware is purely aboriginal in style, no trace of European influence appearing in its make or decoration, which latter is largely symbolical. A mixture of cultures is plainly apparent in this ware.³⁹

The early inhabitants of the peninsula were ignorant of pottery but

Ample proofs are found that centuries of pottery making preceded the coming of the whites and this fact coupled with that of the absence of pottery in the inferior strata of many of the accumulations goes to show that the peninsula had been occupied for a long period.⁴⁰

In his study of the Moore collection Holmes concluded in 1894:

In general the pottery of the shell deposits appears to be rude, while that of the mounds . . . and usually that scattered over dwelling sites, is of a higher grade, often exhibiting neat finish, varied and refined forms and tasteful decorations.⁴¹

There were vessels for use in all the domestic operations and there were others for ceremonial occasions and for burial with the dead. In the burial deposits the pottery was often very fragmentary, mere sherds, due no doubt to the poverty or the customs of the Indians, but other mounds had whole vessels. The fragments, however, show the “killing” of pots by the perforation of the base to free the spirit to accompany the dead person, or the breaking of them to prevent usefulness to robbers bold enough to desecrate the grave for the store of utensils. But Moore held that the perforation was for the purpose of killing the vessel rather than protection against marauders. There was also freak ware made especially for burial purposes, either in imitation of real vessels with open bases, or rude and eccentric forms which would be of no use to anyone. The use of the figured stamp with a variety of figured surfaces in finish and decoration was common in Florida.

In general there are three types of wares found in Florida, the Florida ware proper, which “is more of its kind than is any other of its aboriginal productions”;⁴² the South Appalachian stamped ware; and the Gulf coast ware. This outside influence probably came through trade for Moore wrote:

On the whole we are inclined to believe that the best ware found in the peninsula was exceptional and perhaps got there through barter... Had the natives of the peninsula possessed vessels of the highest grade in great numbers, we believe, in one way or another, more indication of it would come to light.⁴³

At any rate in

material and decoration the pottery of the Florida northwest coast averages far above that of such mounds in peninsular Florida in which earthen ware is met with.⁴⁴

And it is here that the influence from Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia was the greatest. But

Superior as is the earthenware of the northwest Florida coast to most of that of the peninsula, it does not excel a few of the finest specimens met with by us in the mounds of the St. Johns River.⁴⁵

Thus the two regions nearest the outside influence had a superior quality in their earthenware which is in accord with the importation theory.

But it is not possible here to summarize the work of Clarence B. Moore. It is more the hope that this brief study may lead others to similar work in Florida. The plea for investigations that may clear up the doubt and controversy concerning the aborigines of Florida cannot be repeated too often. Thus far the great contributions have come from experts who have come from outside the state. What is Florida going to do to enable someone in the future to write more fully concerning the aborigines of Florida?

The need of expert investigation of these mounds should be obvious. Too many mounds are still being destroyed by amateur diggers, too much valuable evidence being lost. There is a wealth of information still locked up in the mud and sand off the Florida coast and inland too. What fascinating stories are yet to

be written about the prehistory of Florida, as the material is unearthened. Floridians can best contribute by locating new mounds, carefully mapping and measuring them, and then cooperate with competent anthropologists with financial aid for scientific excavation. The interest of anthropologists has been shown in the contributions they have made in getting at the truth about the aborigines of Florida. It is now time for the scientific and historical organizations of Florida to come to their aid in complete and unselfish cooperation that the prehistory of the State may be written.

Notes

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2. *Ibid.*, 68.
3. *Ibid.*, 68–69.
4. *Ibid.*, 69–70.
5. Frank Hamilton Cushing, *The Pepper-Hearst Expedition: Preliminary Report on the Exploration of Ancient Key Dweller Remains on the Gulf Coast of Florida*, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XXXV, No. 153, p. 68.
6. *Ibid.*, 74.
7. *Ibid.*, 7.
8. *Ibid.*, 109–110.
9. Hrdlička, 78–79.
10. *Ibid.*, 64.
11. Cushing, 111; Hrdlička, 79.
12. James Mooney, “The Ethnography of Florida,” *American Anthropologist*, N. S., 7:368A–B.
13. Charlotte D. Gower, “The Northern and Southern Affiliations of Antillean Culture,” *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, No. 35, 1927, p. 11.
14. *Ibid.*, 15.
15. *Ibid.*, 48.
16. Hrdlička, 114–116.
17. Gower, 11.
18. Hrdlička, 58.
19. *Ibid.*, 57–58.
20. *Ibid.*, 127, 130–131.
21. A.E. Douglass, “A Find of Ceremonial Weapons in a Florida Mound, with Brief Notice of Other Mounds in that State,” *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, XXXI, 585.
22. Hrdlička, 36, 39.
23. Jeffries Wyman, *Fresh-Water Shell Mounds of the St. Johns River, Florida* (Salem, Massachusetts, 1875), 47.
24. Wyman, 68; Gower, 36.
25. Douglass, 585–592.
26. Hrdlička, 66–68.
27. *Ibid.*, 7.
28. *Ibid.*, 48.
29. Hrdlička, 8.

30. Cushing, 82.
31. Cushing, 84.
32. Gower, 35.
33. Hrdlička, 51.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Clarence B. Moore, “Miscellaneous Investigations in Florida,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, XIII, Part 2, Philadelphia, 1905, p. 304.
36. Moore, “Certain Sand Mounds of the St. John’s River, Florida,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, X, Part 2, Philadelphia, 1894, p. 246.
37. Moore, “Certain River Mounds of Duval County, Florida,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, X, Part 4, Philadelphia, 1896, p. 449.
38. Moore, “Certain Sand Mounds of the St. John’s River Florida,” p. 241.
39. Moore, “Certain Aboriginal Remains of the Northwest Florida Coast,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, XI, Part 4, p. 496.
40. W. H. Holmes, “Earthenware of Florida,” *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, X, Part 1, Philadelphia, 1894, p. 110.
41. *Ibid.*, 106.
42. Moore, “Certain Sand Mounds of the St. Johns River Florida,” p. 246.
43. Moore, “Certain Aboriginal Remains of the Northwest Florida Coast,” *Journal of the Academy of Sciences of Philadelphia*, Second Series, XII, Part 2, Philadelphia, 1902, p. 352.
44. *Ibid.*, 351.
45. *Ibid.*

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The Devil in the Details: Theodore de Bry, Jacques le Moyne, and Sixteenth-Century Engravings of Timucua Indians

Jerald T. Milanich

January 2017

Source: *Handfuls of History: Stories About Florida's Past*. An earlier version of this article appeared in *Archaeology* magazine as "The Devil in the Details" (vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 26-31)

It was only a small mistake, and I was more than willing to overlook it. When you are holding a Rosetta stone, you don't quibble about details.

The 1591 engraving of Timucua Indians that I was examining mistakenly depicted them imbibing Black Drink, a tea brewed from the parched leaves of the Yaupon holly, out of a chambered nautilus shell rather than from a cup fashioned from a whelk shell. Nautilus shells come from the Pacific Ocean, while whelks are found, among other places, on the coasts of Florida, home of the Timucua Indians. Hundreds of large whelks fashioned into drinking cups have been excavated from archaeological sites across the southeast United States.

Why was I unwilling to question the engraved rendering of the nautilus shell cup? Because there were other Timucua Indian items depicted in that and other of the 1591 engravings published with it that looked similar to excavated artifacts. I wanted to believe all the rest of them were real. As it turned out, I should have heeded that old adage, "The devil is in the details."

This story begins in 1590, when a Flemish engraver, Theodor de Bry, and his family began publishing illustrated books on the Americas, each accompanied by texts originally penned by explorers and colonists who had made the sea journey across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe. The de Bry family first reprinted Thomas Hariot's narrative *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. Originally published in 1588, the book recounted English attempts to colonize what is now eastern North Carolina (then called Virginia) from 1582 to 1588.

To illustrate the text, de Bry engraved twenty-three images, all based on watercolor paintings by John White, one of the English colonists. It was a bestseller, and the family quickly produced other volumes, including accounts of the West Indies, Brazil, and other places in Central and South America. All fourteen books in the series about the Americas contained similar engravings depicting scenes and people from the New World, paired with the information from previous European accounts. De Bry himself never set foot outside Europe.

The second de Bry volume, published in 1591 in both Latin and German editions, was titled (in English) *A Brief Narration of Those Things Which Befell the French in the Province of Florida in America*. It focused on the southern Atlantic coast of the United States, part of what was then called La Florida, especially the 1564-1565 French settlement of Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River east of modern Jacksonville. Prominent in the forty-two engravings are Timucua-speaking Indians who lived in northern Florida and southern Georgia, especially the Saturiwa, who lived near Fort Caroline, and the Outina, who were up the St. Johns River northward from Palatka.

The engravings, said to be based on the watercolor paintings of Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, who had accompanied the French expedition to Florida, were published by de Bry with a narrative and a map, both of which are generally attributed to le Moyne. Like the 1590 North Carolina volume, the Florida book was hugely popular in Europe, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the images were soon being copied and even



Theodore de Bry's engraving of a nautilus snail shell atop a Timucua Indian burial mound.

“colorized.” Though well-known to scholars and bibliophiles, de Bry’s Florida engravings gained an even larger following in 1946 when American author Stefan Lorant published *The New World*, in which he translated the text thought to be from le Moyne into English and reproduced the engravings and map.

For archaeologists who, like myself, work in the southeast United States, *The New World* provided an easily accessible portal to the past. The de Bry engravings, for instance, show Timucua Indian burial ceremonies, chiefs being carried in litters, the use of deerskin disguises for hunting, and, yes, Indians participating in a Black Drink ceremony using a nautilus shell cup. There are also Indian houses and palisaded villages, pottery vessels, foods, clothing, ornaments, and weapons, as well as tools and tattoos. Lorant had opened the doors to a veritable museum of sixteenth-century Indian artifacts and customs. Just as informative was

the map, which gave us the locations of tens of Indian towns, many mentioned in Spanish documents.

Since 1946 several generations of archaeologists have drawn on the Lorant/de Bry Florida book to inform their research. In the mid-1980s excavations in Tatham Mound (see chapter 6) in west-central Florida revealed both shell cups and handfuls of stone arrow points. We correlated this archeological evidence with one of de Bry’s engravings and its legend showing the placement of a shell cup on a mound with “arrows . . . planted in the ground all around it.” And those round copper, and sometimes silver, ornaments excavated at sites throughout Florida? They are very similar to those worn by Timucua Indians in the de Bry engravings.

Starved for images of southeastern Indians at the time of first contact with Europeans,

museum designers and book illustrators have also used the de Bry engravings, relying on them for book covers and exhibits. Le Moyne, de Bry, and Lorant have given us a Rosetta stone. And the chambered nautilus? It was easy to overlook it in our quest for knowledge and parallels between artifacts we dug up and objects illustrated by de Bry in 1591.

In *The New World* Lorant tells us how the engravings and narrative came to be. Le Moyne escaped the 1565 Spanish conquest of Fort Caroline and returned to France, later moving to Black Friars on the (then) outskirts of London. There he is thought to have painted the watercolors depicting the French colony and the Indians who lived nearby, intending to publish them with a narrative he was supposedly writing. After le Moyne's death in 1588, his widow sold the paintings and narrative to de Bry, who is thought to have used them as the basis for the 1591 book on Florida. At least

that's what de Bry intimates in the introduction to his 1591 book.

According to Lorant, two sources document the existence of le Moyne's paintings and text. One is the English explorer-geographer Richard Hakluyt, who, in the introduction to his 1587 English translation of French accounts about the Fort Caroline colony (published as *A Notable Historie Containing Foure Voyages Made by Certayne French Captaynes unto Florida*), wrote:

“of chiefest importance are liuely drawn in colours at your no smale charges by the skilfull painter James Morgues, yet liuing in the Blacke-fryers in London... which was an eye-witnesse of the goodnes & fertilitie of those regions, & hath put downe in writing many singularities which are not mentioned in this treatise: which he meaneth to



publish together with the purtraitures before it be long.”

The second is the comment by de Bry himself.

“Scholars have long lamented the loss of all but one of Jacques le Moyne’s original watercolors of Florida. That one painting, which shows Timucua Indians with the French leader René de Laudonnière, is now in the collections of the New York Public Library. It measures 7 by 10 inches, about the size of the de Bry’s 1591 engraving of the same scene.”

It is puzzling why none of le Moyne’s other paintings of Florida exist, especially since today there are perhaps two hundred paintings and drawings by him in museums and private collections, including works believed done in France before he went to Fort Caroline and others done after he returned to France and

then moved to England. All of these extant paintings depict plants (especially flowers, fruits, and nuts), insects, and other animals. None is of Florida scenes, nor, as far as I can tell, are there any plant or animal species native to the southeastern United States.

But if he had le Moyne’s paintings on hand, why did de Bry erroneously engrave a chambered nautilus and not a Florida whelk shell? That question first surfaced way back in 1972 and 1973 while I was studying the de Bry engravings when on a postdoctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History. William Sturtevant, a specialist in North American Indians at that institution who was mentoring my studies, pointed out that error in the engraving, along with several other puzzling things in other of the 1591 images. For instance, many of the feather headdresses worn by the Timucua Indians looked like those worn by Amazonian Indians, such as the

The left image of Brazilian Indians is from André Thevet’s 1557 book *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique*; right is de Bry’s 1591 engraving of Florida Timucua Indians.





Hans Staden's drawing of Brazilian Indians

Tupinamba from Brazil. The wooden clubs in the engravings were also straight out of the Amazon. And French soldiers were wearing their military headgear backwards. Another observation was that some scenes in the engravings are of events like the construction of a French fort (Charlesfort) on the South Carolina coast that took place in 1562 when the

French first visited the coast of the southeast United States. But Jacques le Moyne was not on that expedition. How could he have made paintings based on firsthand knowledge?

At the time, my answers to these perplexing inaccuracies was that deBry and his workers had used literary license in making the engravings.



Thevet's version of the same scene.

Perhaps there were not exact correlations between paintings and engravings. Looking back, I was too stubborn and too caught up in my research to consider the possibility that my Rosetta stone was carved in something a lot softer than basalt.

Two years later one of my University of Florida undergraduate students, Janet McPhail, began a study of the de Bry engravings, comparing scenes of the Florida Timucua Indians with those of Brazilian Indians drawn by Europeans prior to 1591. Her discoveries were a bit startling. De Bry had not only borrowed headdresses and clubs from Brazilian Indians for his Florida engravings of Timucua Indians, he apparently lifted whole scenes. One source he used was the sketches made by Hans Staden, a German shipwrecked on the Atlantic coast of Brazil in 1547. Staden

was later rescued, and in 1557 published an account of his adventures, including hand-drawn illustrations. To illustrate his Florida book, de Bry also appears to have borrowed images from three books written by André Thevet. Thevet, a French priest and cosmographer, published books with information about Brazil, the Caribbean, and the east coast of North America in 1557, 1568, and 1583. De Bry would have had access to both Staden's and Thevet's works. My Rosetta stone was turning into talc.

On the other hand, we did have the one extant le Moyne painting in the New York library. Didn't its existence weaken the claim that de Bry drew heavily on sources other than le Moyne for his Florida engravings? Alas, the attribution of that particular painting has now been called into question. In a 1988 article in the journal



De Bry's application of the scene to Florida Indians.

European Review of North American Studies, anthropologist Christian Feest has convincingly argued that the painting is actually a copy of the engraving, not vice versa. That painting was never made by Jacques le Moyne. Someone looked at de Bry's engraving and painted a copy, almost the exact same size as the original engraving. The painting looks nothing like the work of le Moyne. And the colors in the painting seem off; for instance, the Indians depicted are pinkish in color.

Another painting, this one of oil and painted on what is thought to be bark, recently surfaced on the European art market (and was offered for sale in the United States). It clearly is a composite copy of two of the de Bry engravings, and not an original.

After reexamining all the evidence, I now question whether Jacques le Moyne actually did any paintings of Florida Indians. What if

the paintings sold by his widow to de Bry were only ones of plants, insects, and other animals, all European species? Could it be that de Bry simply engraved scenes based on the le Moyne narrative, which is itself largely cribbed from other firsthand French Accounts written about Fort Caroline? Indeed, both editions of the 1591 Florida book make it clear that large portions are taken from René de Laudonnière's narrative about Charlesfort and Fort Caroline, an English version of which had been published by Richard Hakluyt. Lorant did not include that information in his 1946 book.

I believe that not knowing what a Timucua Indian feather headdress or war club looked like, de Bry simply borrowed from other sources, including Staden's illustrated account of his adventures among the Brazilian Indians and from Thevet. I also think that de Bry's depictions of Timucua Indian men and women were taken from two watercolor paintings done by John



John White's watercolor painting of a Timucua woman.

De Bry's engraving of a Timucua woman.





De Bry's engraving of a Timucua man. He apparently has the same manicurist as the man in White's painting (long, sharpened nails).



John White's Timucua man.

White, the Englishman who was at the North Carolina colony and who did the paintings of the Indians there. White might well have been hired by Richard Hakluyt or de Bry to paint the two Timucua Indians so de Bry would have images on which to base his engravings. White never saw a Timucua Indian, and used his knowledge of North Carolina Indians, and previously published French accounts from Florida, to inform his two watercolors of the Timucua man and woman.

I am afraid there is no Rosetta stone, no miraculous portal to the past for southeastern archaeologists. Until someone finds an actual, documented le Moyne drawing or painting of Florida Indians, I am going to assume we have duped ourselves.

The same thing is true of the so-called le Moyne map of Florida that de Bry published in 1591 in his Florida book. I spent hours poring over it in order to track Indian towns, information I published in a book on the Timucua Indians. In his 1992 volume *A Foothold in Florida*, author W. John Faupel concludes that much of the information contained in the map actually came from Spanish sources that post-date Fort Caroline. The engraved map is a creation of de Bry, not le Moyne, and, as it turns out, it, too, like the engravings of Timucua Indians, contains numerous errors. It is not an accurate depiction of sixteenth-century Florida. Boy, do I feel like a fool for believing it.

I am even beginning to think de Bry and/or Hakluyt composed the narrative in the 1591 volume, piecing it together from the other French accounts of Charlesfort and the Fort Caroline colonies, all of which were published in English by Hakluyt. A perusal of the title page of the original German and Latin 1591 editions of the Florida books suggests this is the case. And, as noted above, the 1591 narrative itself actually acknowledges many direct quotes from René de Laudonnière's own account of Florida. If any information in the book came directly from Jacques le Moyne, it was not much.

As one of my colleagues, who had been planning to use information gleaned from the de Bry engravings to write about pre-Columbian American Indian architecture, put it, "This is depressing." Another friend who does paintings of Florida Indians and bases some

details on de Bry engravings was not too happy either.

But we are not the only ones who have been fooled. For more than seventy years, de Bry's renderings have influenced how archaeologists, not to mention museum visitors, view Florida Indians. For instance, I once curated a museum exhibit that featured, among other things, a life-size reproduction of a Timucua Indian house, drawing in large part on the flawed de Bry engravings. Florida Indian houses, as we have learned from newly interpreted Spanish documents and excavations at the seventeenth-century Spanish-Indian mission village of San Luís in Tallahassee, did not look like those engraved by de Bry. Fortunately that house exhibit has now been relegated to the scrap heap and I can sleep easier.

If I feel a bit put out, just think about the student at a southern university who wrote an entire thesis on the tattoo motifs de Bry engraved on his Indians. Those designs—like the canoes, village palisades, corncribs, handled baskets, shell cups, headdresses, clubs, and other items shown in the engravings—are all bogus. If objects in the engravings appear to be accurately depicted, it is only coincidence.

Can we blame de Bry for all this? I think not. When people bought the Florida volume, they likely knew exactly what they were getting: entertainment and information. And de Bry knew what he was doing: marketing books made more appealing because they had well-done illustrations. It was we modern researchers who made the error of accepting the engravings as fact and unquestioningly using them as a firsthand source of information.

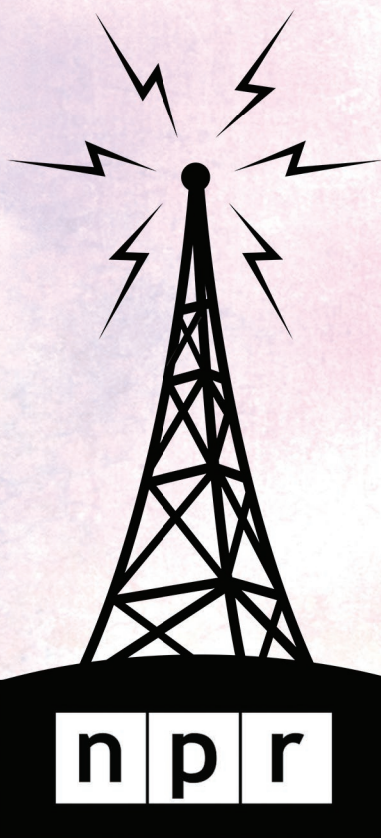
If there is one thing I have learned from this, it is that other figurative land mines may be planted out there, primed to blow up in the faces of archaeologists and other researchers. Where and what those may be remains to be seen. If I were searching for them, I would begin with a hard look at other early European images of Indians in the Americas, starting with the de Bry family's thirteen other volumes. And don't forget to look closely at the details.



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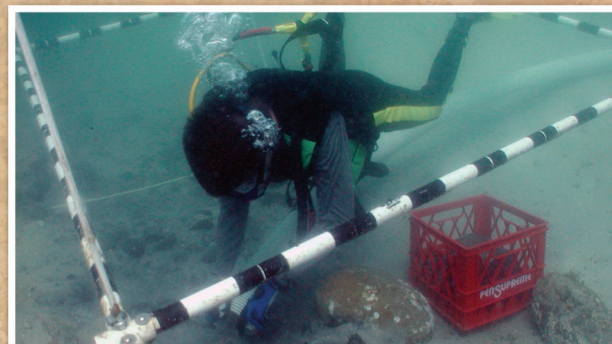
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