

Please close this window when finished !

PAPERS

**The
Jacksonville Historical
Society**

Volume IV
A PUBLICATION OF
THE JACKSONVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

1960

OFFICERS

JACKSONVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1959 — 1960

JAMES C. CRAIG President
EGBERT S. MOORE First Vice President
MRS. KARL BARDIN Second Vice President
FRANK L. HARRIS Treasurer
MRS. W. E. MOTT Corresponding Secretary
MISS MARTHA LEE SEGUI.... Recording Secretary
MISS AUDREY BROWARD..... Archivist
HERBERT LAMSON Historian

DIRECTORS

Mrs. James L. Borland, Harold R. Clark, Mrs. Robert B. Eleazer, Jr., Mal Haughton, Jr., Pembroke Huckins, Mrs. Linwood Jeffreys, Mrs. James H. Lipscomb, Mrs. W. S. Manning, Philip S. May, Jr., H. Plant Osborne and Mrs. Herbert Earpe Williams.

ADVISORY BOARD

Past Presidents of the Society: J. A. Austin, William D. Barfield, Burton Barrs*, H. H. Buckman II, D. Jordan Garrison, Dr. Carita Doggett Corse, Herbert M. Corse*, Richard P. Daniel, Frank H. Elmore, Jr., Albert C. Holt, Edward Jelks, Raymond H. King, Herbert Lamson, Marcy Mason*, Webster Merritt, Bayard B. Shields and Miss Dena Snodgrass. *Deceased.

The spelling is as it was taken from the original document !

JEAN RIBAUT Page 1

The record of the French Huguenot landing at the mouth of the St. Johns River on May 1, 1562, was written by none other than Jean Ribaut, the leader of the expedition. This record is one of the several original documents available on the early history of northeast Florida whichever student of the area's history should read. In 1563, Ribaut's book was published in London—a small volume of 23 pages with a lengthy title: The whole and true discouerye of Terra Florida, (englished the Florishing lande.) Conteyning aswell the wonderfull straunge natures, and manors of the people, with the Merueylous com-modities and treasures of the country: As also the pleasaunt Portes, Hauens, and ways therevnto Neuer founde out before the last yere 1562. Written in Frenche by Captaine Ribauld the fyrst that whollye discovered the same. And nowe newly set forthe in Englishe the XXX. of May. 1563. Prynted at London by Rouland Hall, for Thomas Hacket. A facsimile of the English edition appears in Jean Ribaut, published in 1927 by the Florida State Historical Society with editorial notes by Mrs. Jeannette Thurber Connor. The following excerpt from this facsimile describes Ribaut's landing at the mouth of the river: The next daye in the morninge, being the ffirst of Maye, we assaied to enter this porte with two rowe barges and aboate well trymed, finding littell watter at the entrye and many surges and brekinges of the water which might have astuned and caused us to retourn backe to shippborde, if God had not speedely brought us in, where fynding fourthwith 5 or 6 fadom water, entered in to a goodly and great river, which as we went we found to increse still in depth and lardgnes, boylling and roring through the multytute of all sortes of fishes. Thus entered we perceived a good numbree of the Indians, inhabytantes there, coming alonge the sandes and seebanck somewhate nere unto us, withowt any taken of feare or dowbte, shewing unto us the easiest land-ing place, and thereupon we geving them also on our parte tokens of assurance and frendelynes, fourthewith one of the

JEAN RIBAUT Page 2

best of apparance amonges them, brother unto one of there.kinges or governours, comaunded one of the Indians to enter into the water, and to approche our boates, to showe us the easiest landing place. We seeing this, withowt any more dowbting or difficulty, landed, and the messenger, after we had

rewarded him with some loking glases and other pretty thinges of smale value, ran incontenently towardes his lorde, who forthwith sent me his girdell in token of assurance and ffrendship, which girdell was made of red leather, as well couried and coulored as is possible. And as I began to gotowardes him, he sett fourthe and came and receved megentlye and reiosed after there mannour, all his men fiollowing him with great silence and modestie, yea, with more then our men did. And after we had awhile with gentill usage congratulated with him, we fell to the grownd a littell waye from them, to call upon the name of God, and to beseche him to contynewe still his goodnes towardes us, and to bring to the knowledg of our Savior Jesus Christ this pooer people. While we were thus praying, they sitting upon the grownd, which was dressed and strewed with baye bowes, behelde and herkened unto us very attentively, without eyther speaking or moving. And as I made a sygne unto there king, lifting up myne arme and stretching owt one fynger, only to make them loke up to heavenward, helikewise lifting up his arme towardes heven, put four the two fyng(rs) wherby it semed that he would make us tunderstand that thay worshipped the sonne and mone for godes, as afterward we understode yt so. In this meane tyme there number increased and thither came the kinges brother that was ffirst with us, their mothers, wives, sisters and children and being thus assembled, thaye caused a greate nombreof baye bowes to be cutt and ther with a place to be dressed for us, distant from theires about two ff adorn; for yt is there mannour to parle and bargayn sitting, and the chef of themto be aparte from the meaner sorte, with a shewe of great obedyence to there kinges, superyours, and elders. They beall naked and of a goodly stature, mighty, faire and as well shapen and proportioned of bodye as any people in all the worlde, very gentill, curtious and of a good nature.

JEAN RIBAUT Page 3

The most parte of them cover their raynes and pryvie partes with faire hartes skins, paynted cunyngly with sondry collours, and the fore parte of their bodye and armes paynted with pretye devised workes of azure, redd, and black, so well and so properly don as the best paynter of Europe could not amend yt. The wemen have there bodies covered with a certen herbe like unto moste, whereof the cedertrees and all other trees be alwaies covered. The men for pleasure do allwayes tryme themselves ther with, after sundry fasshions. They be of tawny collour, hawke nosed and of a pleasaunt countenance. The women be well favored and modest and will not suffer that one approche them to nere, but we were not in their howses, for we sawe none at that tyme. After that we had tarried in this northe side of the river the most parte of the daye, which river we have called by the name of the river of Maye, for that we discovered the same the ffirst day of the mount he, congratulated and made alyance and entered into amytie with them, and presented their kinge and his brethern with gownes of blewe clothe garnished with yellowe flowers de luce, yt semed they were sorry for our departure, so that the most parte of them entered into the watter up to the neeke, to sett our barges on flote, putting into us soundry kindes of ffishes, which

with a marvelous speed they ran to take then in there parkes, made in the watter with great redes, so well and cunyngly sett together, after the fashion of a labirinthe or maze, with so many tourns and crokes, as yt is impossible to do yt with more cunning or industrye. But desiering to imploye the rest of the daye on the other side of this river, to veue and knowe those Indians we sawe there, we traversed thither and without any diffycutye landed amonges them, who receaved us verry genteelly with great humanitye, putting us of there frutes, even in our boates, as mulberies, respices and suche other frutes as thay found redely by the waye. Sone after this there came thither there kynge with his brethern and others, with bowes and arrowes in there

JEAN RIBAUT Page 4

handes, using there with all a good and grave ffashion and bihavior, right souldier like with as warlike a bouldnes as might be. They were naked and paynted as thothers, there hear (hair) likewise long, and trussed up with a lace made of hearbes, to the top of there hedes, but they had neither there wives nor children in there company. After we had a good while lovengly intretayned and presented them with littell giftes of haberdasherye wares, cutting hookes and hatchettes, and clothed the king and his brethern with like robes we had geven to them on the other side, (we) enterd and veued the cuntry therabowte, which is the fairest, fruteffullest and plesantest of all the worlde, habonding in honney, veneson, wildfoule, forrestes, woodes of all sortes, paimetrees, cipers, ceders, bayes, the hiest, greatest and fairest vynes in all the wourld with grapes accordingly, which naturally and without mans heipe and tryming growe to the top of okes and other trees that be of a wonderful greatness and height. And the sight of the faire medowes is a pleasure not able to be expressed with tonge, full of herons, corleux, bitters, mallardes, egertes, woodkockes, and of all other kinde of sniale birdes, withhartes, hyndes, buckes, wild swyne, and sondery other wild beastes as we perceved well bothe then by there foteing there and also afterwarde in other places by ther crye and braying which we herde in the night tyme. Also there be cunys, hares, guynia cockes in mervelus number, a great dele fairer and better then be oures, silke wormes, and to be shorte it is a thinge inspeakable, the comodities that be sene there and shalbe founde more and more in this incomperable ande, never as yet broken with plowe irons, bringingfourthe all thinges according to his first nature, whereof the eternall God endued yt. About there howses they laboure and till there ground, sowing there fildes with a grayn called Mahis, whereofthe(y) make there meale, and in there gardens the(y) plant beans, gourdes, cowekeumbers, citrons, peasen, and many other simples and rootes unknou unto us. There spades and mattockes be of wood, so well and fytly made as ys possible, which they make with certen stones, oister

JEAN RIBAUT Page 5

shelles, and mustelles, wherwith theCy) make also ther bowes and smale lances, and cutt and pullishe all sortes of woodes that they employe about there

buldinges and necessarye use. There growith (also) many walnuttrees hazeltrees and smale cherytrees verry faire and great, and generally we have sene there the same symples and herbes that we have in Fraunce and of like goodnes savour and tast. The people are verry good archers and of great strenght; there bowe strynges are made of lether and there arrowes of eades which the(y) do hedd with the teathe of certen ffishes. As we (nowe) demaunded of them for a certen towne called Sevola, wherof some have wrytten not to be farr from thence, and to be scituate within the lande and towards the southe sea, they shewed us by signes which we understode well enough, that they might go thither with there boates by rivers in xxtie dayes. Those that have wrytten of this kingdom and towne of Sevolla, and other towns and realmes theabowtes, say that ther is great aboundaunce of gould and silver, precious stouns and other great riches, and that the people hedd ther arrowes, instedd of iron, with (sharpe) poynted turqueses. Thus the night aproching, and that it was conveynient for us to retire by daye to shipbourd, we toke leve of them muche to their greif and more to oures withowt comparison, for that we had no meane to enter the river with our shippes. And albeyt it was not ther custome either to eate or drynke from sonne rising till his goyng down, yet there kyng openly would nedes drinke with us, praying us verry gentelly to give him the cupp wherowt he had dronke. And so makyng him understand that we would see him agen the next daye, we retired agayn to our shippes, which laye about vj leages from the haven to the sewarde. The next day in the morning we retoumed to land agayne, accompaned with the captayns, gentilmen, souldiers, and others of our smale troupe, carrying with us a piller or colume of hard stone, our kinges armes graven therin, to plaint and sett (the same) at the entrye of the porte in some high place where yt might be easelly sene. And being come

JEAN RIBAUT Page 6

thither before the Indyans were assembled, we espied on the southe side of the river a place verry fyt for that pur-pose upon a littell hill compassed with cipers, bayes, palmes, and other trees, and swete pleasaunt smelling shrubbes, in the mydell wherof we planted the first bounde or lymete of his majestie. Thus don, perceiving our first Indians assembled and loking for us we went first unto them according to our promisse, not withowt some mislyking of those on the southe parte, wher we had sett the said lymete, who tarried for us in the same place where they mete with us the day before, seming unto us that there ys some ennemytie bytween them and the others. But when the(y) perceived our long tarring on this side, the(y) ran to se what we hadd on in that place where we landed ffirst and had sett our lymete, which they vewed a gret while withowt touching ytany waye, or abasshing, or ever speaking unto us therof at any tyme after. Howebeit we could scant departe but asyt were with greif of mynde from theis our first alies, they runyng unto us (all) along the river from all partes, presentyng us with some of ther harte sluns, paynted and unpaynted, meale, littell cakes, freshe watter, roottes like unto rubarbe, which they have in great estymation, and make therof a kinde of bevradg or potion of medyzen. Also they

brought us littell bagges of redd coullours and some smale peces like unto core, perceving also amonges them faire thinges paynted as yt had byn with grayn of scarlett shewing unto us signes that they had within the lande Gould, silver, and copper wherof we have brought some muster; also leade like unto ours, which we shewed unto them, turqueses, and a great abundance of perles, which, as they declared unto us, they toke owt of oysters, wherof there istaken every (day) along the river side and amonges the reedes and in the marishes and in so mervelous aboundaunce as ys scant credible. And we have perceved that ther be asmany and as faire perles found there as in any contry in the worlde, for we sawe a man of theirs, as we entered into our boates, that had a perle hanging at a collour of Gould and silver about his necke as great as an acorn at the least. This man, as he had taken ffishe in one of there ffishing

JEAN RIBAUT Page 7

parkes therby, brought the same to our boates, and our men perceving his great perle and making a wonderinge at yt forthe greatnes therof, one of them putting his ffynger towards yt, the man drewe backe and would no more come nere the boate, not for any feare he had that they would have taken his collour and perle from him; fur lie would have gevcn yt them for a lokingglasse or a knyfe, but he dowbted last they would have pulled him into the boate and so by force have carried him awaye. He was one of the goodlyest men of all his company. But for that we had no leysure to tarry any longer with them, the day being well passed, which greved us for the comodities and great ryches which as we understode and sawe might be gotten there, desiering also to imploye the rest of the daye amonges our second allies, the Indians on the south side, as we had promised themt he day before, which still tarried loking for us, we passed the river to there shore where we founde them tarring for us quietly and in good order, trymed with newe pictures upon there faces, and fethers upon ther heddes, their king with his bowes and arrowes lieing by him, sett on the ground, strewed with baye bowes, bitwen his two brethren (whiche were) goodly men (&) well shapen and of wonderfull shewe of activetie, having about there heddes and heare, which was trussed up of a height, a kinde of heare of some wilde beast died redd, gatherd and wrought together with great cunyng, and wrethed and facioned after theforme of a diedeme. One of them had hanging at his necke a little round plate of redd copper well pollished, withan other lesser of silver in the myddst of yt (as ye shallse) and at his eare a littell plate of copper wherwithe they use to scrape and take awaye the sweat from their bodies. They shewed unto us that there was grett store of thismettall within the cuntry, abowt five or six jurnaies fromthence, bothe on the southe and the nourthe side of thesame river, and that they went thither in there boates, which boates they make but of one pece of a tree working yt hollowe so cunyngly and fyttely, that they put in one of these thus shapen boates or rather great troughes, xv

JEAN RIBAUT Page 8

or xxti persons, and go therewith verry swiftly. They rowe stand upright having there owers short, made after the fashyon of a peepe (shovel). Thus being amonges them they presented us with there meale, dreassed and baked, verry good and well tasting and of good nurishment, also beanes, ffishe, as crabbes, lopsters, crevices and many other kindes of good ffishes shewing us by signesthat there dwellinges were far of, and that if there provision had byn nere haiide, they would have presented us with many other reffreshinges. The night nowe approching we were fayne to retourn to our shippes, muche to our greef, for that we durst not hasarde to enter with our shippes by reason of a barr of sande that was at (the) entre of the porte, howebeyt a full sea there is two fadom and a half of water at the most, and yt is but a leap or surge to passe this barr, not passing the lengthe of two cables, and then fourth with every where within vj or vij fadom water, so that it makethe a verry faire haven and shippes of meane burden from iijjxx to c. tonnes may entre therein at all flodes, yea, ofa farre greater burthen if there were Frenchemen dwelling there that myght scoure thentree as they do in Fraunce, and where nothing is lacking for the lief of man. The scituation is under the elevation of xxx degrees, a goodclymate, helthfull, of good temperaunce, marvelous pleasaunt, the people gentill and of a good and amyable loving nature, which willingly will obaye, ye, be content to serve those that shall with gentilnes and humanytie go aboute to allure them as yt (is) nedefull for all those that shalbe sent thither hereafter so to do, and as I have chardged those of oures that be lefte there to do, to th ende that by these meanes they may ask and learn of them where the(y)take there gould, copper, turquises, and other thinges yet unknown unto us, by reason of the shortnes of tyine wesoiurned there; for if any rude and rigorous meanes shuldbe used towardes this people, they would flye hither and thither through the woodes and forestes and abandon their habitations 'and cuntrye.