



Floridae Americae Provinciae Regens & exactissima descriptio
 Auctore Iacobo le Moyne cui cognomen de Morgues, Qui
 Laudonniærum

Cartographer: Jacques Le Moyne

Date: 1591

Size: 18 x 14.5 inches

Description: Le Moyne's map includes the peninsula of Florida and the surrounding regions from the northern part of Cuba to *Prom Terra falg* or Cape Lookout. The map was included in De Bry's *Brevis Narratio Eorum Quae in Florida Americae Provincia*. Jacques le Moyne was an artist who accompanied Laudonniere to Florida in 1564. Le Moyne prepared this map, along with drawings and a narrative account. De Bry first attempted to obtain the information from Le Moyne in London in 1587, but Le Moyne, who was then working for Sir Walter Raleigh, refused to part with them. After Le Moyne's death in 1588, De Bry acquired his work from Le Moyne's widow and published them in 1591. William P. Cumming surmised that the manuscript map was the source of not only this map, but was also used by John White in making the southern part of his *La Virginia Pars* (#421A).

What makes this map particularly exciting, and also unusual for a work of this period, is that it was largely based on actual observation or, at the least, on first-hand sources. The cartographer, Jacques Le Moyne, was an artist who accompanied a short-lived French colonial enterprise in the Southeast. Settlements were established on Parris

Island in South Carolina in 1562 and at the head of St. John's River in northern Florida in 1564. From these bases, explorations were conducted and recorded by Le Moyne. Thus it can be said that on this map is some of the earliest mapping of the Georgia and South Carolina coastline based on direct observation.

The interior areas of the map were, on the other hand, based on Indian reports and rumor. Ironically, it was many of these details that were longest lived on subsequent maps. Especially conspicuous on later maps is the lake in the north-center with the falls emptying into it. Below it is an enticing note, which reads in translation: "*In this lake the natives find grains of silver.*" Likewise, the mountains above it are said to contain gold, silver and copper. Above this is a small portion of what appears to be a very large body of water, which most likely represents the Pacific Ocean as derived from Verrazano. The explorer believed that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were separated by a narrow isthmus in the area of present-day North Carolina.

After the French colonies were wiped out by the Spanish, Le Moyne made his way to London with his drawings; these included several of Indian life in addition to the one that served as the model for this map. In 1588, the German engraver and publisher, Theodore De Bry, purchased the drawings from Le Moyne's widow and produced engravings of them for inclusion in a series of works on the Americas called the *Grands voyages*. In so doing, De Bry rescued for posterity some of the earliest depictions we have of the Southeast and its inhabitants. Only a single one of Le Moyne's original drawings survives, now in the collection of the New York Public Library.

The map was a landmark for the region, containing significant new information (often inaccurate) that became a primary source for other maps for the next 150 years. It was Le Moyne's misfortune to have many of his errors incorporated and even exaggerated in Gerard Mercator's map of 1606, upon which for half a century much of the subsequent cartography of the region was based. Le Moyne's coastline is usually correct for latitude, but the shore extends too far east rather than northeast in direction. This caused a striking error in Mercator's map, with a compensating enlargement of the Virginia region; the mistake was corrected somewhat by Jansson 1641 and those who followed him.

As mentioned above, the sea shown at the top is probably the *Verrazano Sea*. A similar body of water is found in Lescarbot's map of 1611 and Seller's map of 1679. Along the coast are Latin names for rivers and bays, such as *Gironda*, *Garumna*, and *Charenta*, together with a few of the earlier Spanish names. While scholars have attempted to identify the rivers shown, Cumming questioned whether Le Moyne had definite knowledge of the number of rivers along the coast. The names were given on the first voyage under Ribaut, who in his account makes some reference to their latitude and appearance. They were eventually superseded by others when the 17th century English settlers arrived and only Le Moyne's *Portus Regalis* [Port Royal] survives.

Le Moyne's placement of *Charlefort* on an island at Port Royal and Carolina (the fort *la Carolina*) on the *River May* [current St Johns River] are helpful identifications. But the name "*Carolina*" copied by a later mapmaker, and put by Sanson in 1656 much farther north, was probably the original source of the later false belief of mapmakers (Delisle 1718, Covens and Mortier ca.1730) and even 19th century historians that the whole country was named Carolina by the French.

Le Moyne added several lakes that endured in mythological proportions in the later cartography of the southeast. In the peninsula of Florida is a lake with an island called *Sarrop*, which probably represents Lake Okeechobee. North of *Sarrop* is a larger

lake which over time became the *great inland lake of the southeast*. Le Moyne locates it slightly southeast of the mouth of the *River May* into which it flows. He calls it *Lacus aquae dulcis* [fresh water lake] and says that it is so large that from one bank it is impossible to see the other side. To the north of the lake, among the *montes Apalatci* [Appalachian Mountains] is another large lake, fed by an enormous waterfall. This waterfall may have been inspired by tales of waterfalls in western North Carolina; but it is more likely to depict the legends heard from Indians of the great falls of Niagara. Below this lake is written *In hoc lacu Indigenae argenti grana inveniunt* [in this lake the natives find grains of silver].

References:

Cumming, W.P. *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Plate 15; pp 12-13.

Cumming, Skelton, Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, p.174.

Fite, E. and Freeman, A., *A Book of Old Maps Delineating American History*, pp. 69-70, #20.

