



Virginiae Item et Floridae Americae Provinciarum, nova Descriptio

**Cartographer:** Jodocus Hondius

**Place/Date:** Amsterdam/1609-1636

**Size:** 19 x 13.5 inches

**Description:** An example of Hondius's important map of Virginia and the Carolinas, from the Mercator-Hondius Atlas *Sive Cosmographie* . . .

Hondius utilized John White's map of Virginia and Jacques Le Moyne's map of Florida (431) to create what amounts to a composite of these two tremendously important late 16<sup>th</sup> century maps of the region. The map has a profound impact on the mapping of the region for much of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and became the prototype map for the region until the Ogilby-Moxon *Description of Carolina* ca. 1672. The gold bearing mountains of *Apalaty*, the lake fed by the great waterfall, the lake with the unseen shore, *Lake Sarrope*, the French names for the rivers, the location for the French fort at Port Royal: these and many other details are based on Le Moyne.

Hondius does contribute additional information to the composite. The large lake with the opposite shore invisible, which in Le Moyne lies in a southwesterly direction from the mouth of the *River May* has been moved northward to the foothills of the *Apalaty Montes*. This makes the *River May* flow in a southeasterly direction instead of in the A-shaped course given by Le Moyne. Hondius drew upon other maps as his source, including Mercator's world map of 1569 (#406), the second edition of Ortelius' map of America (1584) and Wytfliet's map of the southeast first issued in 1597, in which the river *Sola* flows in a southeasterly direction from the mountains.

According to William P. Cumming, the *River May* is Le Moyne's name for the St. Johns River in Florida, on which Fort Caroline was built. By putting the lake and the

direction the *River May* to the northwest of its mouth and changing the accompanying topographical features and Indian settlements, Hondius created geographical misconceptions of the region, which lasted for nearly 150 years. Also he moved the latitude of the mouth of the *River May* from 29°30' N.L. (St. Johns is 30°25') to 31°20'. This is actually the latitude of the Altamaha in Georgia, the first river above Florida that has its source in the Appalachian range. These factors undoubtedly encouraged the continuance of erroneous beliefs in the minds of subsequent explorers and cartographers. St. Marys River, which lies between St. Johns and the Altamaha, rises in the Okefenokee Swamp. Some writers think that the *River May* is the St. Marys River and that the great lake is the Okefenokee Swamp.

Le Moyne was not the only source for information concerning this territory; on the *River May* is drawn *Edelano Island*, which is found on many subsequent maps; and nearby is "a lake where gems are found." Ribaut's French names are given for the rivers where Le Moyne uses Latin, and the legend affixed to the map, *Verum nos earn solummodo Floridae partem hic apposuimus cujus plenior notitiam habemus ex ipso autographo illius qui hanc nomine regis Galliae accuratissime descripsit*, [But let us have affixed to it the only of Florida, part of it here, we have a fuller knowledge of the name of the king of Gaul, as the seed of the original most accurately according to the writing of it] may have as a source Laudonniere's *Histoire Notable*, Paris, 1586. The northern part of the map very closely follows the White map of 1590; however, a few Spanish names appear (*Medano, Hispanis; C. S Romano Hispanis*).



A large rectangular cartouche containing the title is in the upper left corner; connected to this, on either side are two ovals purporting to show the differences of buildings and fortifications between settlements in Florida and Virginia: to left, *Civitatum Floridae imitatio*; to right, *Civitatum Virginiae forma*. To the lower right is a cartouche which states that the middle meridian of the region is 300° (the degrees of longitude are counted east: Port Royal, which lies near 300° on the map, is 80° 40' W from Greenwich), and the latitude extends from 30°N to 37°N (the actual latitude included in the map is from 29° 50' to 39°N).

Gerard Mercator, the great geographer who invented Mercator's projection, died in 1594 after publishing only a few parts of his *Atlas*. His son Rumoldus published a

larger collection in 1595 but died in 1600. In 1602 Bernard Brusius published a collection in one volume at Dusseldorf; this was the first Mercator's *Atlas*. But in 1606 Jodocus Hondius brought out an edition of Mercator's *Atlas*, augmented by fifty new maps by himself and others, with the Petrus Montanus text. This edition was the first to contain the map of Virginia and Florida. Many editions in various languages followed; but the map itself remained unaltered, and when it is found as a separate there is no indication of which edition it is from except by a collation of the text on the back with texts in complete atlases. It was also apparently published as a separate with no text on the back.

A wild turkey and other game are illustrated, along with sea monsters, an indigenous canoe and sailing ships.

**Reference:**

Cumming, W.P., *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Plate 20, pp. 129-131.