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MANRIQUE DE ROJAS' REPORT ON FRENCH SETTLEMENT IN FLORIDA, 1564

translated by LUCY L. WENHOLD

THE FRENCH Huguenot Jean Ribaut had led an expedition to Florida in 1562, where he set up stone columns bearing the arms of France and established the tiny settlement of Charlesfort at Port Royal.¹ Philip II of Spain protested to the French government against this threat to Spanish trade and territorial claims, and then, in 1563, he directed the governor of Cuba to remove the French markers and to destroy the French fort. The mission was assigned by the governor of Cuba to Hernando Manrique de Rojas. Captain Manrique's instructions and his report, given here in translation, were taken from the General Archives of the Indies at Seville.²

In the town of San Cristobal, Havana, on the ninth of July, 1564, after midnight, there entered the harbor of this town the frigate called *La Concepcion*, in which arrived Hernando Manrique, formerly captain in Florida. Later, on the tenth of July, before His Excellency Diego Mazariegos, Governor and Captain General by appointment of His Majesty, and in the presence of myself, Francisco Zapata, government scrivener by royal appointment, the said captain, Hernando Manrique de Rojas, appeared and declared that he went, by command of His Excellency, to Florida and Point St. Helena, with a certain expedition, with instructions from His Excellency and with a royal letter from His

1. An engraving of one of the original markers and photographs of the reconstructed columns at Mayport, Florida, and Parris Island, South Carolina, are reproduced in Jeannette Thurber Connor's *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida, a Facsimile Reprint of the London Edition of 1563* (DeLand: The Florida State Historical Society, 1927).
2. *Relacion e informacion de los Franceses*. San Cristobal, Havana, July 9, 1564, General Archives of the Indies, Seville, Simancas, Secular. Audiencia of Santo Domingo. Letters and legal documents transmitted by the governors of Havana and Cuba, taken up in the Council between the years 1522 and 1599, est. 54, caj. 1, leg. 15. This report was given in part by Woodbnry Lowery in *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, Florida, 1562-1574* (New York and London, 1905), 45-8. A translation of the report was also made by Jeannette Thurber Connor but apparently it was never published.

Majesty; that he went and fulfilled his commission and was accordingly reporting to His Excellency the Governor what he had done. He returned the royal letter he had received, and delivered a stone marker bearing the arms of France, the inscription R., and four Arabic numerals. These things the Governor received in the presence of witnesses.³

The report made by Hernando Manrique is as follows:⁴

Diego Mazariegos, Governor and Captain General by royal appointment in this Island of Cuba, to you, Hernando Manrique de Rojas, citizen of this town of San Cristobal, Havana.⁵ Know that His Majesty has been pleased to state in a royal letter that certain Frenchmen have established themselves on the coast of Florida and taken possession there. He desires and commands that I obtain information concerning these persons and what settlement they have made, according as he directs me in the royal letter, the original of which you will carry with you. For the fulfillment of His Majesty's command I have decided to send to Point St. Helena a frigate with twenty-five men. As the royal service demands for this matter a qualified person who shall explore the territory and gain information as to what is happening there, I, believing you to be such a person, qualified and trustworthy, who will do in all things what is most advisable for the service of His Majesty, hereby name and appoint you captain of the said frigate, of the twenty-five men and of all others who may go in her or be required for the needs of this affair. You will go as captain under the flag, commanding and controlling the men, ordering them in whatever may seem to you most to the service of His Majesty and the success of the expedition, and punishing the disobedient for whatever offenses they may commit, as is your right. When you shall have embarked in this port, for the ordering of this expedition and the carrying out of His Majesty's command you shall keep and follow instructions signed with my name and countersigned by this present scrivener. In all respects you will act as becomes a good and loyal captain, and I will give you full

3. This document is a series of affidavits and a description, but to avoid repetition and facilitate smooth translations the names of witnesses and formal certifications of the several scriveners have been omitted wherever possible.

4. As is seen, the captain's report is preceded by a reading of the instructions given him by the governor.

5. San Cristobal, usually referred to as a *villa* but sometimes as a *pueblo*, was the governmental center of Havana.

and complete power according as I have it from His Excellency, with all its incidents and accessories, appurtenances and rights. If you enter any port of call, whether in this island or in Hispaniola or elsewhere, I command all justices, knights, gentlemen, officials and good men of the place that they give you favor and aid and such supplies, men and ships, as you may need. If you enter ports in the island of Hispaniola or in other parts of these Indies, I beseech the judges of those towns and ports that of their grace and in my name, requiring it of them also in the name of His Majesty, it being a thing so important for the royal service, that they give you whatever needed assistance you may request. In case of such necessity you will formalize your request by means of the royal letter which you carry, leaving a copy of it and keeping with you your original which was made in the city of Havana on the twenty-ninth of April, 1564.

Diego Mazariegos.

Francisco Zapata, scrivener, By order of
His Excellency the Governor.

That which you, Captain Hernando Manrique, are to do on this expedition to Point St. Helena and the coast of Florida, of which expedition I place you in charge, is the following:

Having gone out of this harbor, with fortune favoring you you will enter the Bahama Channel and sail along the Florida coast until you arrive at the shore of La Cruz which is in the twenty-ninth parallel of latitude. There you will land men to seek a stone column or marker bearing the arms of France, which is set up there. Having found it you will remove it and destroy it, or, if it proves to be a thing that can be transported in the frigate you will bring it with you. This is to be done in the presence of witnesses, and of a scrivener whom you will appoint for this and other necessary occasions.

Then you will continue along the shore of Las Corrientes which is on the thirtieth parallel and there you will find another of the same sort.

You will proceed thus along the coast until you reach the Saint Helena River which is in latitude thirty-two. You will enter the river and attempt to find a wooden fort which is there, and to learn whether there are any French in it, and if so, their number

and quality, what artillery they have, where they are established,⁶ what are their relations with the Indians, what force they have, and what preparation will be necessary in order to expel them. If you find the circumstances such that you can drive them out of the fort you will do so, bringing to me as prisoners those of them whom you can capture. You will also bring all the artillery, arms and booty which you may take from them, razing the fort so completely that no trace of it shall remain.

If by chance you encounter in Florida some captain of His Majesty with Spanish soldiers who may have gone out for the same purpose, you will require of him in His Majesty's name and with the royal letter which you carry that he allow you and your men, without depriving you of any of the latter, to explore the Florida coast in order to report to His Majesty concerning it as is his command.

If you should hear that elsewhere there is some enterprise such as the aforementioned, or should discover a settlement of French or of any other people who are not vassals of His Majesty, you will endeavor to reach the place where they are and to acquaint yourself with all the facts, acting in the matter according to the above directions. In all respects you will act as a good and loyal captain, with due regard for the royal service and in conformity with the trust and confidence I place in you.

On board the frigate called *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion*, at present anchored in the river called Las Corrientes which is in latitude twenty-seven on this Florida coast, on May 24 of this year 1564, Captain Hernando Manrique de Rojas, commander of the frigate and its men, in the presence of me, Juan Guerra, scrivener of the frigate, and of other witnesses,⁷ declared:

That in accordance with the instructions given him by the Governor, after he left the harbor of Havana he came to explore the coast of Florida in latitude twenty-seven and a half, and proceeded from that point along the coast to this harbor which is in latitude twenty-nine, without going more than half a league away from land, going northward and sailing only by day in order to have a better view of the coast. The frigate being anchored in

6. This seems to refer to a possible settlement aside from the fort.

7. These particular witnesses, whose names are omitted in the translation, signed practically all the affidavits that make up this narration.

the mouth of the harbor, he ordered Gonzalo Gayon, her pilot, to calculate the latitude. This was done by Gayon and several other persons who had the necessary knowledge, on the night of last Monday, the twenty-second of this present month, and they found the latitude to be twenty-nine. As this is the latitude in which, according to the Governor's instructions, the shore of La Cruz is and where one of the columns bearing the arms of France should be found, the captain went ashore to seek it and remove it according to his orders. He explored the shores of the harbor on the side next to the sea and on the inner, river sides and went to an Indian village which is on the bank of one of the rivers. Nowhere did he find the column nor anything that would appear to have been placed there for that purpose by the hands of Christians. He communicated with the Indians, but as neither he nor any of his men could understand their speech he could not learn anything from them about the matter. As he had been two days in that harbor and wished to go out at high tide ⁸ to continue the voyage, in order to put on record the fact that he had carried out the directions given him he commanded me, the scrivener, to make an affidavit concerning all the above, I being one of those who went ashore with him. Even so he commanded me to make a true report of all that might occur in the harbors into which he might enter, of what he might find there and what might be done, and to certify it as an eye-witness in order that His Majesty may be informed of everything. Witnesses being those aforementioned, he signed: Hernando Manrique de Rojas, before me, Juan Guerra, scrivener.

That same day the captain ordered the anchor weighed, set sail and anchored again somewhat further north. After this, on the twenty-fifth of May, he again ordered the frigate put under sail and ran along the coast until he found a river of some eight or nine leagues from the one mentioned before. He sailed the frigate in and when it was anchored he calculated the latitude and declared it to be twenty-nine and a half. Thereupon he went ashore to some Indians' huts which he saw close to the river mouth, on the arm which is on the north side. Neither in them

8. This is purely a conjectural translation. The word used here is *tiempo* which means "time" and "weather" and, less frequently; "tide", but the sense would indicate that the turn of the tide is what is here meant.

nor anywhere on the coast thereabout, on river or seashore, did he find Indians or any other people, nor any trace of them, nor did he find any of the French columns. Crossing to the other bank of the river he explored it completely, going more than a league along the other arm which is on the south side, and neither there nor in the other directions in which he explored could he find the column nor anything that appeared made for such use by Christian hands.

The same day, having sailed a league further north, the frigate anchored overnight. Next day, the twenty-sixth, we sailed along the coast northward to a river which the captain and Gonzalo Gayon, the pilot of the frigate, said was in latitude thirty. The frigate having run in and anchored in the river, the captain went ashore to an Indian village which is on the arm that runs south. There he found about eighty Indians, and from their signs he learned that there had been on that river three ships of Christians and that these had gone northward to where the point and river of St. Helena are said to be. In one of the huts of the village he found a wooden box with a lid, made by the hands of Christians. The Indians gave it to be understood that this and other things found among them had been given them by bearded men who came in the ships. The captain searched the village and the river banks from one extreme to the other, as also the river mouth, for the French column, but did not find it anywhere.

On May twenty-ninth he ordered the frigate's anchor weighed. But as the weather conditions⁹ were not good for coastwise sailing he anchored again on the coast a league north of the river just mentioned. In the afternoon of that same day, as he believed the vessels to be in a dangerous position anchored on the coast in the shallows of the river mouth, he ordered her out to sea until the night of the next day, May thirtieth, when he again anchored on the coast in latitude which he and Gonzalo Gayon declared to be thirty-two.

On May thirty-first he again set sail and entered a river which was said to be the St. Helena. There he and Gonzalo Gayon again calculated the latitude and declared it to be thirty-two.

That same day the captain went ashore and found three Indians two of whom came willingly with him to the frigate. From

9. Possibly the reference here is again to the tide.

their signs it was learned that ships of Christians had been in the harbor of St. Helena and had gone to an Indian village which, these Indians said, was called Guale, and which is situated on an arm of a river that flows out of another that is north of this harbor. This they indicated by signs and by speaking the name. Then the captain put them ashore and went to the place they indicated, which could be seen from the frigate. On June first, while in this harbor, he took the frigate's boat and went up the arm of the river. He landed near the aforementioned village and went to the *micoo*¹⁰, as he is called there. In the house of the *micoo* and in his possession were found two felt hats of the kind made in Spain, and in possession of other Indians were found other things also from Spain. Speaking by signs with the *micoo* he learned from him and from the other Indians that the aforementioned ships had been in the harbor and the Christians, whom he described by signs as bearded as we are, had been in the village and had gone away northward up the coast. The captain, with me, the scrivener, searched the entire village and its huts. Neither there nor on the shores of the rivers or the harbor did he find the fort which the governor, in his instructions, says the French built. Nor did he find any structure at all which could have been built by the French or by any other Christians for that purpose.

On the second of June he ordered the frigate sailed out of the arm of the river and anchored at a point in the harbor, above an arm on the southern side, to look for the fort and the French. He landed and explored all the shore from the mouth of the river to the seashore, along the banks and inland, and found nothing.

On June third twelve Indians came by land, among them the *micoo* of their town which is called Yanahume and lies to the south. They gave it to be understood that they wished the captain and the other people to go to their village, and they pointed with their hands to show where it was. The captain made signs to the effect that he would go there at once. He ordered the frigate under way and anchored above their town, went ashore to it and found neither French nor fort, nor anything Spanish in the possession of the Indians. From the signs made by the *micoo* and the other Indians it was learned that the Christians had gone to the

10. *Micoo*, "chief".

village of Guale and had not come to this one nor to any other of the seventeen which, according to the signs they made, are on this harbor.¹¹ They pointed with their hands to show the directions in which these villages are located and spoke their names. Other Indians who came in canoes and by land to see the frigate confirmed by their signs what the first ones had said. For this reason, and because he could not find the French nor their fort, the captain declared himself convinced that there was no French settlement there.

On the sixth of June he went ashore and explored the coast northward for about two leagues, but found neither fort nor French nor trace of them nor of any other Christians. Then, aboard the frigate *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion* anchored in the harbor, on the same day, month and year, in the presence of me, the scrivener, and of witnesses¹², the captain declared:

That as he had evidence, furnished both by the testimony of the Indians of the village called Guale and by the presence among them of things of Spanish make, that Christian vessels had been in that harbor and had gone out of it and sailed up the coast; that as he had obtained the same information from the Indians of the river which is in latitude thirty, these may be the ships of the French of whom the governor speaks in his instructions, in spite of the fact that they have not left the markers on the former harbors nor built on this one the fort and settlement which the instruction say is in latitude thirty; that it may be possible that the French left the markers on this harbor and the Indians have taken them away, or that the fort and settlement are in some place where it has not been possible to find them, or that they have been located on another harbor or other harbors further to the north,¹³ and that it is proper for the service of His Majesty to seek them well in order to report accurately to him concerning the matter. He therefore ordered Gonzalo Gayon, pilot, there present, to weigh anchor as soon the weather¹⁴ should

11. Literally: "are on the bay of this harbor," probably meaning that they were along the inner shore.

12. Names omitted.

13. *Ma's adelante*, literally: "further along," which in this case was certainly further to the north.

14. Here again the word *tiempo* is used, but the reference may have been to the tide.

allow and set sail northward along the coast until he should find another harbor, or harbors, where the French and the fort might be, or where he might obtain more exact information.

On the seventh of June Gonzalo Gayon, as ordered, weighed anchor, went out of the harbor and sailed up the coast to another harbor some three or four leagues further on. He entered it and sailed the frigate along its shores. The captain then ordered Gonzalo Gayon and me, the scrivener, and others, soldiers, to go ashore and look for the French, the fort and the marker. We explored but we found neither these nor any settlement, either of Christians or of Indians. Smoke ¹⁵ was seen inland, apparently at a distance and where the frigate could not sail because of the shallows and flooded land, and thus it was not possible to go there to make inquiries of the Indians.

That same day the captain ordered the frigate out of that harbor and sailing along the coast entered another harbor two leagues further on, where he found neither French nor fort nor Indians nor houses nor any sign of what he sought. Next day he had the anchor weighed and proceeded on his voyage to another harbor two leagues further up the coast. There he disembarked and found traces of Indians in a pine grove which is between two rivers that the harbor has. He found no huts nor Indians, though smoke appeared far inland, and neither fort nor French were found anywhere on the shores of the harbor.

On June the ninth he sailed a league further up the coast and came to two harbors joined in one. ¹⁶ He entered with the frigate and went through one of them a distance of about two leagues. Nowhere thereabout did he find the French nor the fort nor Indians nor any settlement except two abandoned houses.

On June tenth he sailed a league further to where appeared two mouths of harbors which are close one to the other. ¹⁷ Into these he did not enter as it was late and he wished to reach another harbor which was visible further on, and after sailing two

15. The word "smoke" which has no plural in English can be plural in Spanish and is so both here and where used farther on, obviously meaning that the smoke seen was rising from several fires instead of from one.

16. It seems likely that this is the meaning here, though the construction is not very clear.

17. This construction, slightly different from the one above, would seem to intimate mere juxtaposition.

or three leagues along the coast he entered harbor¹⁸ in which he anchored.

On June the eleventh he weighed anchor to go to a river which is on a point on the south side of the harbor.¹⁹ As they sailed along those in the frigate saw a canoe anchored at the point, and immediately two Indians came out of the forest and got into the canoe to go away. The captain ordered Mateo Diaz, master of the frigate, to go to speak with them and to bring them to the frigate if they would come without being made captives or harmed. They came aboard willingly with Mateo Diaz and showed by signs where their village was, on the northwest side of the harbor. The captain took the frigate to that place, and at once other Indians came on board. The captain landed and went to the Indian village. There he found in the possession of the Indians two iron axes, a mirror, some pieces of cloth, small bells, knives and many other things made by the hands of Christians. The Indians explained by signs and some intelligible words that there had been at their village thirty-four men with a ship; that thirty-three of them had gone away and one had remained with them in that land and was now in a village which they said was called Usta. They said that they would send for him and he would come the next day when the sun should be high. The captain, having understood, sent two of the Indians to the other village to summon this Christian and gave them a piece of wood with a cross made upon it which they were to give the Christian as proof that there were Christians in the land. The Indian messengers departed at once, and at noon on the twelfth of June there appeared before the captain, in the presence of me, the scrivener, and of witnesses, the said Christian, clothed like the Indians of that country, who declared himself to be a Frenchman.

Immediately the captain ordered Mateo Diaz, master of the frigate, to calculate the latitude in order to know the location of the harbor. Mateo Diaz calculated it by the sun, the captain being present, and found it to be thirty-two and a third. Then the captain said that inasmuch as it was desirable to find out some

18. Whether the one described as visible is not clearly stated.

19. The translator concludes that the point was inside the harbor, but it is not specifically so stated. However, the captain must have seen the point from where he was anchored in the harbor.

things from this Frenchman in order to know what was to be done in this matter he was giving command that the man be sworn and his deposition taken. He therefore summoned him and called Martin Perez, one of the frigate's sailors who said he was French, who should translate into Castilian the things the Frenchman might say in his deposition which might not be understood. The two were then put under oath. The Frenchman swore to speak the truth in whatever he knew and might be asked concerning the matter in which they wished him to give evidence, and Martin Perez swore to translate into Castilian whatever the Frenchman might say what was not understood, without excepting or reserving anything. In acquittal²⁰ of the oath they said: "Thus I swear" and "Amen!"

The Frenchman was asked whether he is a Christian, what is his name and of what country he is a native.²¹ He replied that he is a Christian, that his name is Guillaume Rouffi,²² and that he is a native of Unfein²³ in the kingdom of France. Asked who brought him to these parts he replied that Captain Ribaut did. Asked by the captain from where was this Captain Ribaut, with what ships he came to these parts, what force of men and what artillery he brought, he replied that Captain Jean Ribaut was a native of Dieppe, France, that he came to these parts with two armed galleasses,²⁴ one of about 160 tons and the other of sixty, a shallop with three lateen sails, and two other, smaller shallops which, at sea, were carried on board the galleasses; that the large galleass carried a hundred men, twenty-five of whom were sailors and seventy five were arquebusiers, fifteen large brass cannon and two of smaller size and eight brass falcons,²⁵ besides other arms and ammunition; that the small galleass, captained by the Frenchman Finqueville, carried fifty men, three large guns, one smaller one and six falcons, all of brass, twenty-five arquebuses and other arms and ammunition.

20. This is a literal translation, but the translator does not know what is meant.

21. This ungrammatical sequence of tenses used in the original has been retained for the sake of its vividness.

22. Written *Rufin* in the Spanish original.

23. A mis-writing of some name. No such place appears on any map of France. The small town of Envermeu, near Dieppe, is as good a guess as any.

24. *Galazas de armada*, which might mean "navy galleasses."

25. The falcon was the light ordinance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

He was asked in what season and from what port they left France, and he replied that they sailed from New Havre ²⁶ in the kingdom of France on the first day of Lent of the year 1561. Asked by whose command and at whose cost the expedition had been arranged and what had been its destination, he replied that he understood the expedition to have been made up and sent out at the command and cost of the Queen Mother ²⁷ of France, the Admiral ²⁸ and Monsieur de Vendome, and that each of these gave one thousand ducats to equip the expedition; that it came directly to this coast of Florida to settle on the Point and River of St. Helena, and to discover whether it was a good location for going out into the Bahama Channel to capture the fleets from the Indies. This he knows because he heard it said by everyone and it was common knowledge.

He was questioned as to whether they explored any other territory or harbor of the Indies or any other parts before they arrived at this coast, and how long they were on the way. He said that after they left New Havre they neither entered any other harbor nor explored any other territory than this coast of Florida; that he had heard the pilot call the first land they saw Cape Florida near the Bahama Channel; that they were two and a half months on the way from France to this land. Asked whether they met on the ocean any other ship, he replied that he heard it said that the large galleass, having gotten separated from the small one in which he was, had met off Bermuda a Spanish vessel which was returning from the Indies, but that the French captain and his men did not wish to take the ship nor attack her; that they saw no other ship during the voyage.

He was asked whether any Spaniard came in the galleasses or whether the people were all French, also whether they were Protestants. ²⁹ He replied that the pilot they brought was a Spaniard called Bartolome who had with him a son called Bartolome, and that he heard it said that they were from Seville; that there was one Englishman and that all the rest were Frenchmen and almost all were Protestants; that there was one among them who preached the doctrines of Luther.

26. *Abranova*, which can scarcely be any other than Le Havre.

27. Catherine de Medici.

28. Coligny.

29. *Luteranos*, literally "Lutherans"; a term applied by the Spanish indiscriminately to all Protestant sects.

He was questioned as to whether the Frenchmen made a settlement or built a fort or set up anywhere any markers bearing the arms of France, and if so, in what places and on what harbors they placed them and where they are; whether there are other Frenchmen besides himself or what has become of the others. He answered that they set up a stone marker bearing the arms of France in the place on the coast where they first explored; that the galleasses entered a harbor three or four leagues south of this one and there set up another marker like the first one, that on a river a little nearer this way, on the same bay they built an enclosed house of wood and earth covered with straw with a moat³⁰ around it, with four bastions,³¹ and on them two brass falcons and six small iron culverins; that twenty-six men remained in this house and fort and the others returned to France; that Captain Ribaut commanded them to remain there and promised that within six months, for which length of time he left them supplies, he would return from France with more ships and many people, with cattle and other things, to settle that land. They did not set up any more markers, and of the five they brought from France three were taken back in the galleasses.

Asked whether he would know how to go where the fort and the markers are and in what latitude they are, he replied that he would know quite well how to go to the fort and to one of the markers, that it was possible to go up the river to them without going out to sea; that he saw the Spanish pilot and two Frenchmen calculate the latitude in the harbor, that the Spaniard said it was thirty-two and a quarter and that the two Frenchmen said it was exactly thirty-two; that the other marker is where he has said, but that he does not know in what latitude it is nor whether he could find the spot unless he could see the river there which he would recognize.

Questioned as to whether the twenty-six Frenchmen whom the captain left there are still in the fort, or what has become of them, he said that two of them were drowned in crossing a river in a canoe; that the one who had been left as captain over

30. *Cava* "dug-up earth"; probably a dry moat.

31. Fort Caroline was triangular; this one seems to have been built on the more usual quadrangular pattern.

the others one day struck a soldier with a club, that the soldier drew his sword and in struggling with him killed him; that he and the twenty-two others who remained, seeing that Captain Jean Ribaut did not come nor did any other Frenchmen, decided to go away to France and for that purpose built a twenty-ton boat near the fort; that when it was finished the Indians of the country gave them a number of ropes made of the strong bark of trees and they rigged the boat with these. The Indians also supplied them with native produce and fed them until they went away in the boat to the province of Guale which is just south of this place. There they were given some native blankets which they made into sails for the boat. Those Indians also gave them supplies. They then returned to this harbor, and the declarant, realizing that there would not be in the boat anyone who understood navigation, was not willing to go with them and remained among the Indians of this section where he has been until now. It is about fourteen months since they went away and no news of them has ever been received.

He was asked whether the two falcons and six culverins and the other arms they had were carried away in the ship or were left in the fort or in some other place. He answered that to his knowledge everything was taken away in the boat and nothing at all was left. Questioned with regard to the harbor where they built the fort and where the galleasses entered, whether it is a good harbor with a good entrance, he replied that he knows it to be a very good harbor with a good entrance and five fathoms or more of water in the channel, for he saw it sounded and is himself acquainted with it.

He was asked whether the galleasses entered any other harbor of this coast. He answered that they did not, for the shallows, used also for communication with the Indians, were used for sounding the mouths of the harbors further south to see whether there was enough depth for the galleasses which were anchored outside meanwhile; that a harbor with enough water in its channel was never found, or so said those who did the sounding.

Asked whether the French took away from this land any silver or pearls or other things, he replied that Captain Jean Ribaut took two or three small pieces of silver that a sailor had gotten in barter among the Indians of the province south of Guale, that he also took some pearls, deerskins, blankets and other native

things; that the twenty-two soldiers who went away in the boat took a hatful of pearls which their captain said he had obtained in trade with the Indians.

Questioned as to whether since he had been in this country he had seen or heard it said that there had come any ship or ships, Spanish, French or of any other nation, he answered that he has not seen any ship in this country except those he has described and the one in which he now is. He said that some two months ago, as he was going out in a canoe with some Indians to hunt deer and bears, they went out to a seacoast a league from this harbor and found thick timbers of a ship and rotted fragments of sail and four kegs³² of the sort that they call *corbillon* in France and he believes that the vessel was French, both because the French are accustomed to carry in their ships these kegs to take out biscuit and because the arms of France were stamped on them and on one of them was traced with the point of a knife a name, Jean Marin; also because the Indians of the section have told him that some fifteen days before, in a province called Suye which lies some thirty leagues to the north near a large river, they saw two large ships and two small ones out at sea, that one of the small ones, which little vessels the declarant thinks must have been the ships' boats, came to the shore and the Indians fled and would not communicate with those in the boat. That likewise he had heard the Indians say that something like two and a half years ago a large ship came to a province on this coast called Amy, which is a little way beyond the province of Suye; that it entered the harbor and the ship's people killed most of the Indians who were there, that very few escaped and fled;³³ that then the ship went away leaving there a fragment of iron cannon. He has not heard from these Indians that any Christians other than those mentioned have come to these parts. He swears to the truth of what he has said and declares himself to be about seventeen years of age. He did not sign the deposition as he says he does not know how to write, and the captain signed it. Some

32. The word translated "keg" is *cesta*, "basket", and is followed by the words, *de una palla cadu una* which are probably a reference to size, but the word *palla* is not in dictionaries. A *corbillon* used on ship-board is a keg for ship biscuit.

33. The Spanish construction, difficult to render in English, implies that these Indians sought refuge among those who were Guillaume Rouffi's informant's.

things in the deposition which he, Guillaume Rouffi, did not make clear in Castilian Martin Perez explained. The latter did not sign as neither does he know how to write. The deposition was read and was certified by Hernando de Rojas before me, Juan Guerra, scrivener.

That same day, on board the frigate, the captain declared that as Guillaume Rouffi was shown to be French and had come with the other Frenchmen to take possession of this land of Florida, had built a fort and placed there markers bearing the arms of France, he should be held prisoner under close guard on board the frigate and taken to the town of San Cristobal, Havana, and delivered to the governor to be dealt with as justice might demand. He then ordered that the fort and the markers which the French had built and placed be razed and demolished so that no vestige of them may remain. On June the thirteenth, in the presence of me, the scrivener, he declared that as it seems that the fort and the one marker bearing the arms of France are near this harbor and can be reached by going up the river, and as the tide ³⁴ is contrary and it is not possible to take the frigate there, and as it is proper for him to go in person to remove and destroy the fort and the marker in the presence of a recorder who shall certify the act according to the governor's orders, he has decided to go up the river in the frigate's boat. He then commanded Gonzalo Gayon, the pilot, that during his absence he, Gonzalo Gayon, was not to allow ashore anyone of those who remained with the frigate, that he was to maintain the usual watches and take all proper precautions for the safety of the frigate and the men in his charge. This command was formally pronounced in the presence of the said Gayon and duly witnessed.

That same day the captain embarked in the boat, taking with him me, the scrivener, and other persons from the frigate. Guillaume Rouffii, the Frenchman, led the captain to the place where was the fort ³⁵ the Frenchmen built. The place is distant two leagues on the arm of a river on a large harbor, one of two ³⁶ which are close to the southern edge of it. On arrival the cap-

34. *Tiempo* again.

35. *Casa*, "house." There is something faintly derisive in the application of this term to the French structure, which must indeed have been a very flimsy piece of construction.

36. Presumably, "two rivers."

tain and the persons with him found a house and fort ³⁷ which they entered, together with me, the scrivener, and witnesses. In it was found nothing at all. Then the captain commanded that the building be set on fire and burned, and he ordered me, the scrivener, to certify in writing that the house was burned and destroyed. I, the said scrivener, hereby certify and declare that it was burned and destroyed in my presence. Witnesses: Pedro de Torrea, Salinas, Martin Perez and others.

Then the captain went in the boat to another harbor where the stone marker was said to be, to the place where Guillaume Rouffi said it was. It was found on an elevation above an arm of the river of the harbor, somewhat back in the forest. It is of white stone, about the size of a man, and on the upper part of it is inscribed a shield with a crown above it and on the shield three *fleurs de lis*, and below these the character R. which Guillaume Rouffi says is the name in cipher of the Queen Mother of France whose name, he says, is Catherine. ³⁸ Below this are four Arabic numerals which read *1561*. By order of the captain this marker was taken down and thrown to the ground. ³⁹ Thereupon the captain, in the presence of me, the scrivener, had the stone marker put into the boat to be taken to the frigate and carried to the governor at Havana. This was done and witnessed.

On June the fourteenth, on board the frigate, the captain said that as it appeared evident that the French had not made any settlement beyond his harbor and had gone back to France, it was advisable to render to his Majesty prompt account of what has been found on this coast; that since time ⁴⁰ does not allow of re-exploration of the coast already passed in order to take away the other marker which Guillaume Rouffi says the French set up in the vicinity of the Bahama Channel, because Guillaume Rouffi says he does not know in what latitude it is, that therefore he is commanding Gonzalo Gayon, pilot of the frigate, present, to sail next day for Havana by the best and shortest route; that if before

37. A combination of dwelling and bastioned stockade, one gathers.

38. The character looks more like the letter R than like anything else and can scarcely have had anything to do with the name of Catherine de Medici. Probably it was merely the usual R, the symbol of royalty that stood for *Rex* or *Regina*.

39. Throwing the marker on the ground seems superfluous since it was to be taken up again, but doubtless it was a gesture meant to indicate the offense of its presence there.

40. Time or tide or weather. The word is once more *tiempo*.

passing the other side of Bahama the wind should again become favorable for long enough to allow of running the Florida coast he should put into harbor to go in search of the marker and do with it as was done with the other one, this being to the royal service.

On June the fifteenth Gonzalo Gayon sailed the frigate out of the harbor and announced his course as *via* the Lucayas *en route* for Havana, as the conditions were not favorable for coasting Florida.

Having inspected these proceedings of Captain Hernando Manrique de Rojas, His Excellency the Governor commanded me, the notary, to make an authorized transcript of them, signed and sealed, to be sent to His Majesty in order that he may know what has been done on this expedition to Florida. Thus he commanded. Witnesses: Juan de Ynestrosa and Antonio de la Torre, residents of this town, before me, Francisco Zapata, notary.

This transcript was made from the submitted copy of these affidavits.

Nicolas Lopez, secretary of the Royal Camara
(With his rubric)

* * *

Laudionniere relates that during his second (1564) visit to Florida he "sent Capitaine Vasseur to discover-along the coasts lying toward the north, and commanded him to sail unto a river, the king whereof was called Andusta, which was lord of that place-where those of the yere 1562 inhabited. . . . and make inquiry what was become of another, called Rouffi, which remained alone in those parts, when Nicholas Mason, and those of the first voyage embarked to return into France. They understood, at their arrival there, that a bark, passing that way, had carried away the same soldier; and afterward, I knew, for a certainty that they were Spaniards which had carried him to Havana." *A notable historie containing foure voyages made by certaine French Captaines into Florida. Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida*, translated by B. F. French. (New York, J. Sabin and Sons, 1869), 285.