

however, and the Frenchmen were allowed to go about unmolested.

Ribault was greatly impressed with the natural growth on this side of the river. Trees, shrubs, plants and vines all excited his interest and wonder. His relation mentions grapes "of surpassing goodness" and vines that grew to the top of the tallest oaks; palms, cedar, cypress and bay trees.

The Frenchmen spent the afternoon wandering over the high land near the mouth of the river. Toward sundown they again entered their shallows and returned to the ships outside the bar.

Ribault Proclaims Possession

The next day (May 2d) the small boats were manned and Ribault, his officers and gentlemen again entered the river and brought with them a "pillar or column of hard stone with the King's arms engraven thereon, to plant and set the same at the entry of the port, in some place, where it might be easily seen" (from boats entering the river). Coming to land on the south side, they selected a suitable spot on a little hill; here with appropriate ceremonies the monument was erected, and possession was taken of the country in the name of the king of France.

* Shore-line and channel conditions at the mouth of the river have changed greatly since that day. The oldest maps show a projection on the south side of the mouth of the river like a protruding underlip. These primitive dunes were eventually washed away. A part of the lip evidently was where the sand field is making up on the left as you approach the south jetty on the beach, and according to many lines of reasoning this is where the monument was set up. Le Moyne's drawing indicates a sand dune location.

The monument was erected before any Indians appeared; but soon they came, viewed the stone for a time in silence, and then retired without touching it or speaking a word. Ribault named the river the Riviere de Mai, or River May, because his tour of exploration was made on the first day of May. This is the only name that he bestowed at the River May.

The day passed very much as the preceding one, except that the Frenchmen became greatly excited when they noticed that some of the natives were wearing ornaments of