

"Not as Frenchmen, But as Lutherans."

* The familiar statement that Menendez hanged a number of Frenchmen and placarded them with a sign signifying that he hanged them not as Frenchmen, but as Lutherans, is omitted here as history. So far as known no eye-witness recorded the incident of the placard. The account first appeared in print in 1566 and apparently originated in France as propaganda to arouse the feelings of Protestants in connection with an effort to raise funds for the support of the widows and orphans of Huguenots murdered by Menendez in Florida. That some of the Huguenots were hanged is true, for Menendez mentions the fact in his report to the king,† and along with them two Englishmen that Hawkins had left at Fort Caroline to assist Laudonniere; but he does not mention the placard nor does Meras who recorded the details of the affair with a candor that would certainly have included this incident had it occurred.

Fate of Ribault

Ribault's fleet was buffeted by the tempest and then wrecked along the coast above Canaveral. Practically all of the Frenchmen reached the shore in safety, where they seem to have gotten together in three separate parties. The two farthest north attempted to reach Fort Caroline by marching overland; but that farthest down the coast decided to fortify and await developments.

Three days after the capture of Fort Caroline, Menendez, leaving a garrison of 300 men there, returned to St. Augustine with the balance of his force. Soon after his arrival the Indians came in with reports of the wrecks below. He knew that they were the French and he set out to finish the job begun at Fort Caroline. A party of the French had marched to Matanzas Inlet, where their progress was stopped. Menendez appeared on the opposite side. A parley ensued and the French surrendered, understanding that their lives would be spared.

On the pretext that he had but few soldiers with him and these might easily be overpowered, Menendez required the French to cross the shallow body of water in a small boat in parties of ten. As each came over it was marched back into the palmetto scrub out of sight. There, September 29, 1565, the shipwrecked and defenseless Frenchmen were tied to-

†Menendez to the King: "Unwritten History of Old St. Augustine," Brooks and Averette.