

Why Are We Sleeping?

* From Maine to California in the schools of every city and hamlet of the nation where American history is taught, children recite in a word or two the events that occurred in the vicinity of St. Johns Bluff recorded in this chapter. They know that perhaps the destiny of a continent was settled somewhere in Florida, but they do not know that it was anywhere near Jacksonville, nor that here the first white women and children landed in the territory now the United States in the first really substantial attempt at permanent colonization, and that here according to a record inference the first white child was born—the first Protestant white child born in North America. They do not know that the first battle in North America between white races was fought at Fort Caroline. But they do know all about Jamestown and Plymouth rock and a good deal about the missions of California. Thousands of people visit those places every year for no other reason in the world than for their historic interest.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, on May 1, 1924, unveiled near Mayport an enlarged copy of the marker placed by Ribault at the mouth of the river in 1562, and which was undoubtedly destroyed by the Spaniards upon the capture of Fort Caroline in 1565. This is the only effort that has been made to commemorate any of the events of history along the St. Johns River between Jacksonville and the sea.

Bibliography, Chapter I

Ribault and Laudonniere both described their first voyage to Florida. Their accounts have been preserved in English translations, the best of which perhaps is Jared Sparks's "Life of Ribault" (1848).

Laudonniere, LeMoynes (an artist), and Challeaux, all of whom escaped from Fort Caroline when it was captured by the Spaniards, wrote of that affair. Meras, brother-in-law of Menendez, likewise an eye-witness, recorded the massacre of the Huguenots in minute detail; the full translation of his memorial will be found in Jeannette T. Connor's work, "Menendez de Aviles" (1923).

De Gourgues left a manuscript description of his voyage to Florida. The American historian Bancroft had an authentic copy of it.

English translations from source material were made by Hakluyt and published during the closing years of the 16th century. Ternaux-Compans preserved them for the French in the same way, 1841. The Virginia Historical Society in its "Early Voyages to America" (1848) condenses much of this matter.

Le Moynes's forty-odd drawings visualize a great deal around Fort Caroline not gained from the written sources.

Chapter I of this history is based on these sources, with observations by the author (indicated), who made a careful personal survey of the topographical features in relation to the record accounts. The illustrations of this chapter were prepared especially for this history.