

J. N. Glenn (a Methodist missionary at St. Augustine in 1823), as follows:

“General (John H.) McIntosh told me once that he had two boatloads of cotton that he had raised up the St. Johns River (probably at Ortega) that he wished to pass the Spanish post at Cow Ford without paying the Spanish duties. Accordingly he approached the officer in command on the subject. Just then the boats hove in sight coming down the river. The commander put up his spy-glass and remarked, ‘There is too much cotton to let it pass’. The General gave him a doubloon. He put the coin to one eye and the spy-glass to the other and said, ‘Too much yet’. The General gave him another doubloon. He then put a doubloon to each eye and said, ‘I see no cotton now’.”^e

(Francis S.) Hudnall acquired the land on which the old fort stood, even while a part of it was still in existence. He leveled the timbers for use on his farm.† The fort was enclosed by an excavation 100 feet square. Mr. Hudnall built his house directly on the east side of the moat, and while excavating found a number of Spanish coins.^h

The St. Johns River

The Indian name for the St. Johns River as interpreted by the early Spaniards was “Illaka”, meaning unusual, different from any other, moves along with the south wind.ⁱ The French interpretation was “Welaka”, a chain of lakes. The former seems more in unison with the characteristic reasoning of an Indian.

Ribault first saw the river on the afternoon of April 30, 1562, but he did not enter it until the following day, May 1st. From this fact he named it Riviere de Mai—the River May.

The destruction of Fort Caroline by Menendez took place within a day of the festival of St. Matthew and in celebration of the “victory” he named both the fort and the river San Mateo. The Spaniards later changed the name of the river to San Juan, and the English retained it as St. Johns.

†The exact site of Fort San Nicholas was on the property used by Merrill-Stevens as a war-time shipbuilding plant, back from the river about 250 yards.