



Three Voyages

Rene Laudonniere

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This translation of an eyewitness account by a major participant offers valuable information about all three attempts to establish a French colony on the south Atlantic coast of North America.

Rene Laudonniere's account of the three attempts by France to colonize what is now the United States is uniquely valuable because

he played a major role in each of the ventures—first, in 1562, as second in command during the founding of the ill-fated Charlesport, then as commander for the establishment of Fort Caroline on Florida's St. Johns River in 1564, and finally as the one to welcome French reinforcements the following year. It was also Laudonniere's destiny to witness the tragic fall of Fort Caroline to Spanish claims one month later.

Laudonniere wrote his chronicle, *L'histoire Notable de la Floride*, in 1565 following the fall of Fort Caroline as he recuperated in England. Much more than an account of his feelings and adventures, Laudonniere's history reveals him to be an exceedingly able and accurate geographer with a highly developed interest in anthropology.

The first English translation was published by Richard Hakluyt in 1587. Charles E. Bennett's graceful and accurate rendering in modern English was first published in 1975 by the University Press of Florida. Besides the account, thoroughly annotated and with present-day names identifying sites visited by the Frenchman, this volume includes a valuable introductory essay. The appendices to the volume are four noteworthy documents, the last of which—a guide to plants of 16th-century Florida—will be of exceptional interest to naturalists, gardeners, and students of folklore. The account itself will fascinate professional historians and anthropologists as well as general readers interested in the exciting and often moving events of early European settlement in the New World.

Rene Laudonniere was a French adventurer and explorer of the 16th century who wrote *L'histoire Notable de la Floride*. **Charles E. Bennett** is a historian and former Florida congressman. He was coauthor of the Moss-Bennett legislation and was instrumental in the establishment of the Fort Caroline National Memorial and the Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve. **Jerald T. Milanich** is Curator in Archaeology at the

Florida Museum of Natural History.

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