# The Archaeological History of the Sixteenth-Century French Fort Caroline in Northeast Florida

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citable link</td>
<td><a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33813395">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33813395</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Use</td>
<td>This article was downloaded from Harvard University’s DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Archeological History of the Sixteenth-Century
French Fort Caroline in Northeast Florida

Michael P. Fleck

A Thesis in the Field of History for the
Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University
March 2017
Abstract

This study investigates the history and archeology of the sixteenth-century French Fort Caroline in North Florida. In the last 150 plus years, all amateur and professional attempts to locate Fort Caroline have failed. Recent studies have reviewed the historical and archeological attempts to locate Fort Caroline and have offered new theories on where it may be located. This study builds on these works by examining previously unexplored sites that offer possibilities that match primary source descriptions of the location of Fort Caroline’s founding.
Table of Contents

List of Tables ................................................................. v
List of Figures ................................................................. vi

I. Introduction ................................................................. 1

II. Primary Source Descriptions of Fort Caroline ......................... 7
   Ribault’s First Expedition: 1562 ........................................ 7
   Fort Caroline is Built: 1564 ........................................... 11
   Downfall of Fort Caroline: 1565 ...................................... 16
   Aftermath: 1565 and 1568 ............................................. 20

III. Previous Research on Fort Caroline .................................... 23
    The Fort Caroline Archeology Project ................................ 29

IV. Conclusions on Fort Caroline’s Location ............................... 32

Endnotes ........................................................................ 39
Bibliography ..................................................................... 45
List of Tables

Table 2.1  Timeline of Fort Caroline ................................. 22
Table 5.1  Analysis of variables regarding Fort Caroline’s location ................ 38
List of Figures

| Fig. 1 | Map of the mouth of the St. Johns River | 3 |
| Fig. 2 | Map with St. Johns River, Altamaha River, St. Augustine and Charlesfort | 5 |
| Fig. 3 | *Coppie d’une letter venant de la Floride* | 14 |
Chapter I

Introduction

The remains of the sixteenth-century French Fort Caroline remain elusive after over 150 years of professional and amateur attempts to locate it. First scouted in 1562 and founded in 1564, Fort Caroline had a brief but memorable history in North Florida. Fort Caroline existed for just over a year before Spanish soldiers attacked the French settlers and razed the fort, resulting in the death or capture of many of the inhabitants, which left only a small group of survivors to tell their tale. First-hand accounts by French survivors, Spanish soldiers, and English privateers document the rise and fall of Fort Caroline and its legacy has become part of the local culture and heritage in northeast Florida.¹

Fort Caroline is widely believed to have existed somewhere on the banks of the St Johns River, which runs through present-day Jacksonville, Florida, and empties into the Atlantic Ocean near Naval Station Mayport [Figure 1- location map]. To date, no definitive archeological evidence has been discovered to conclusively determine the location of Fort Caroline. As years have passed and successive attempts to locate Fort Caroline have failed, the legend, mystique, and intrigue over Fort Caroline’s true location have grown. Combined with its status as the possible first fortified European settlement in the United States, interest in Fort Caroline’s whereabouts continues to build and has been fueled by the media in northeast Florida.²
After 150 years of professional and amateur historical and archeological efforts to locate Fort Caroline, combined with detailed analysis of primary and secondary source documents including drawings, maps, letters, memoirs, and books, no definitive archeological evidence has been recovered to show that Fort Caroline ever even existed. The question remains: Why not?

From 1850 to 1990 several scholars have sought the location of Fort Caroline including: historian Francis Parkman in 1850; President of the Florida Historical Association George Fairbanks in 1858; archeologist Clarence Moore in 1893; Frederick T. Davis in 1911; National Park Service employee Albert Manucy in 1930; Professor of Anthropology at the University of Florida John Goggin in the 1950’s and 1960’s; Robert Johnson in 1990. The general consensus of these studies was that Fort Caroline was located in the vicinity of St. Johns Bluff, an elevated land mass on the south bank of the St Johns River about five miles upriver from its mouth. Some, like Frederick Davis, concluded that Fort Caroline had been consumed and washed away by the St. Johns River due to its proposed waterfront location, man-made engineering, and geophysical changes to the river over 450 years. The National Park Service constructed the replica Fort Caroline National Memorial (FCNM) in 1963 on the riverfront just west of St. Johns Bluff, although this location has not been revealed to be the fort’s true location.

More recently, research published by Paul Gissendaner in 1995 and Rebecca Douberly-Gorman in 2013 have reviewed previous historical efforts to locate Fort Caroline in an effort to determine its location. Gissendaner’s study was based on comparison of historical maps and primary source documents. Using tabular data based on factors he provided as variables to Fort Caroline’s location, Gissendaner concluded
that Fort Caroline is most likely located in an area known as Spanish Point on the St Johns River [see Figure 1].

Douberry-Gorman disagreed with Gissendaner’s claim. She stated that Gissendaner uses sources of questionable accuracy, that his study excluded viable areas farther west up the St Johns River, and lacked any archeological data to determine areas that may have already been studied. Douberry-Gorman noted that the Spanish Point area has been subject to numerous archeological studies as part of its inclusion in the Timucuan Preserve and ongoing archeological efforts in that area of study.

Fig. 1
St. Johns River near the mouth

Douberry-Gorman’s study was based on the same previous historical research as Gissendaner but also included geophysical changes on the St Johns River introduced by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of infrastructure improvement. She also included a comprehensive historical review of archeological studies in the area. Douberry-Gorman
concluded that Fort Caroline was most likely located in an area now known as the Dames Point-Fulton cutoff channel section of the St Johns River due south of Blount Island. Her conclusion is based on French and Spanish artifacts dated to the same period as Fort Caroline discovered in that area after extensive dredging and soil movement during the creation of the Dames Point-Fulton cutoff range channel by the Army Corps of Engineers through the Fulton Peninsula.

The Fort Caroline Archeology Project (TFCAP) headed by Dr. Anita Spring and Dr. Fletcher Crowe, have claimed Fort Caroline’s location has been erroneously assumed to be on the St. Johns River by previous scholars. TFCAP contends Fort Caroline is instead located on the Altahama River approximately 70 miles farther north in southeast Georgia and that previous scholars have incorrectly assumed that the River of May, named and discovered by the French May 1, 1562, is the St Johns River in Jacksonville, Florida. Crowe and Spring have based their claim on analyses of French, English, and Spanish maps, the shape of the river, conflicting reports of Fort Caroline’s recorded latitude, and analysis of Native American languages near Fort Caroline.
The Fort Caroline Archeology Project is ongoing and actively engaged in archeological research near the Altahama River in southeast Georgia. They have yet to publish any archeological findings. Archeologist Robert Thunen from the University of North Florida has led several archeological searches for Fort Caroline near the St Johns River in the last 15 years with his colleague Dr. Keith Ashley. Thunen disagreed with Crowe and Spring’s theory that Fort Caroline was in southeast Georgia near the Altahama River.\textsuperscript{11}

Thunen’s main criticism is the distance from St. Augustine, Florida to Fort Caroline. Firsthand accounts by Spanish General Pedro Menéndez de Aviles place Fort Caroline within two day’s march of St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{12} The distance from St. Augustine to
the Altahama River is over 100 miles. This would have been nearly impossible to travel on foot in two day’s time by Spanish soldiers. In contrast, the St Johns River is about 40 miles from St. Augustine, Florida and it remains reasonable that Spanish soldiers could have made the journey in two days. Extensive archeological evidence provided in University of Florida archeologist Kathleen Deagan’s field report supports that St. Augustine was in fact the Spanish soldier’s point of origin.\textsuperscript{13} This makes Crowe and Spring’s assertion difficult to reconcile. Crowe and Fletcher instead have claimed that Spanish soldiers departed from Seloy in southeast Georgia instead of St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{14} However this contradicts historical and archeological evidence that the Spanish started from St. Augustine.

Primary sources documenting Fort Caroline describe a small cluster of buildings, encircled by earth-filled embankments and a moat or river tributary. Primary source information from French and Spanish colonists includes: the journals of Jean Ribault, leader of the first French expedition in 1562; accounts penned by Rene de Laudonnière, leader of the second French expedition in 1564 that established Fort Caroline; records of Jacque Le Moyne and Nicholas La Challeux, a French artist and a carpenter who accompanied Laudonnière on the second expedition; letters by Spanish General Pedro Menéndez de Aviles, who would later capture Fort Caroline; and the journals of Dominic de Gourges, a French national who would return to raze the fort captured by the Spanish.

Primary source descriptions of the location of Fort Caroline combined with a review of prior historical and archeological research suggest another possible location for Fort Caroline.
Chapter II
Primary Source Descriptions of Fort Caroline

Several accounts in Fort Caroline’s history document its rise and fall. These include accounts from the first French expedition to scout the fort’s location in 1562, the French voyage to found Fort Caroline in 1564, and the fort’s downfall in 1565.

Ribault’s First Expedition: 1562

Primary accounts of Fort Caroline description and location are varied and at times contradictory. Eyewitness accounts by French and Spanish colonials engaged in the founding, defense, and destruction of Fort Caroline provide insight as to the location, description, and disposition of the fort.

The first in the journey was Jean Ribault who sailed from France with two ships and several hundred men on a mission to find a suitable colony in Terra Florida. Several months later Ribault entered the mouth of the St. John’s River east of what is present-day Jacksonville, Florida, on May 1, 1562. Part of his duties included scouting out land for a potential French colony, which included a harbor sufficient for its shipping needs. Ribault explored the northern and southern banks of the St. Johns River. Ribault recorded the details in his book *The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, written in 1563 and published in an English translation the same year.

Ribault named the river he “discovered” the River of May due to the date (today it is known as the St. Johns River.) In his account, Ribault noted, “we had tarried in this
north side of the river the most part of the day, which river we have called by the name of the river of May, for that we discovered the same the first day of that month."\textsuperscript{15} After a day spent with the Native inhabitants of the region, Ribault and his company returned to their ships. The next day they returned to the banks of the river in the ship’s boats: “we returned to land again, accompanied with the captains, gentlemen, soldiers, and others of our small troupe, carrying with us a pillar or column of hard stone, our kings arms graven therein, to plant and set at the entrance of the port in some high place where it might be easily seen.”\textsuperscript{16} A suitable spot was soon found, and they “espied on the south side of the river a place very fit for that purpose upon a little hill compassed with cipers, bayes, palms, and other trees, and sweet pleasant smelling shrubs, in the middle whereof we planted the first bound or limit of his majesty.”\textsuperscript{17} On May 2, 1562, this pillar, known today as Ribault’s Monument, was erected on the southern bank of the St. John’s River within sight of the mouth of the river up on a sandy hill. Interesting to note is the phrase “the first bound or limit”\textsuperscript{18} that Ribault uses, implying that everything from one column to another would become the legal claim of France.

French Officer Rene Laudonnière accompanied Ribault on this first trip to Terra Florida. Laudonnière would command the expedition two years later that established the French colony Fort Caroline. Narratives of both these journeys written by Laudonnière were published in 1586, 12 years after his death in \textit{L’Histoire notable de la Florida, située es Indes Occidentales}. Laudonnière’s account confirms what Ribault wrote: “On the following day Captain Ribault erected a column of hard stone on the banks of this river, not far from the mouth of the river and on a sandy little knoll. The coat of arms of France was carved upon it.”\textsuperscript{19}
After establishing this monument Ribault and his men continued their exploration sailing north up the Atlantic coast. They placed another column in present-day South Carolina, establishing a second marker and claiming land between the two pillars in the name of the French King Charles IX. Ribault left behind a small contingent of men at this second location, a small French outpost named Charlesfort, and set sail for Europe promising to return.

Upon returning to Europe, Ribault was imprisoned in England and unable to send supplies and reinforcements to Charlesfort. After waiting for nearly a year after Ribault’s departure, the 27 men stationed at Charlesfort concluded no help was coming. They constructed a crude boat and sailed for home. One of those men stayed behind preferring to take his chances with the local natives rather than risk the passage across the Atlantic in such a vessel. This man was a fifteen-year-old boy name Guillaume Rouffi. Rouffi would later become the key informant to a 1563 expedition by the Spanish to destroy the stone columns placed by Ribault and negate France’s claim to the land.

When word of the French claim in La Floirda reached the Spanish court, King Phillip II of Spain ordered the French settlements destroyed and the stone markers removed. Spanish Officer Hernando de Manrique de Rojas was dispatched from Havana, Cuba, to execute these orders. The official orders stated: “There you will land men to seek a stone column or marker bearing the arms of France, which is set up there. Having found it you will remove it and destroy it, or, if it proves to be a thing that can be transported in the frigate you will bring it with you.”

Rojas’s official report on this assignment, which includes the deposition of the French survivor Rouffi, detailed the story. Rojas was unable to find the stone column
placed at the mouth of the St. Johns River. After landing in the vicinity of the St. Johns River and confirming with the local Natives that European explorers had previously been in the area, his report states: “The captain searched the village and the river banks from one extreme to the other, as also the river mouth, for the French column, but did not find it anywhere.”

It is difficult to say why Rojas and his party were unable to locate the first of these two markers. They did not have an exact location or even know which river the column was located. The only reference was a line of latitude near which it may have been located. Regardless, Rojas sailed north to the abandoned Charlesfort without ever finding the first stone column on the St. Johns River.

Rojas did note an interaction with Native Americans on what could have been the May River, however. Rojas discovered European-made gifts that matched the description of gifts exchanged with Jean Ribault a year earlier. It is unclear why Rojas did not see the first monument placed by Ribault, but it is possible the local inhabitants hid it from the Spaniards whom they distrusted based upon their previous encounters.

Rojas had similar bad luck locating the second column. His expedition searched for Charlesfort repeatedly, yet was unable to locate the second marker as well. Only after the Natives in the area directed him to the lone French survivor Rouffi was Rojas able to discern the location of Charlesfort and the second column.

Rojas’s thorough questioning of Rouffi is recorded in his report in the form of a deposition. Rojas’s report stated, “[Rouffi] answered that they set up a stone marker bearing the arms of France in the place on the coast where they first explored… and there (Charlesfort) set up another marker like the first one.”
After Rouffi guided Rojas’s party to the second marker near Charlesfort, the stone column was hauled back to the Spanish ships to remove any claim by the French to those lands. Rojas and his men then sailed back to Havana their mission concluded.

Fort Caroline is Built: 1564

Laudonnière’s book *Three Voyages* details his leadership of nearly 300 French colonists to Fort Caroline in 1564 to establish a permanent colony. It is unclear when Laudonnière’s account was written, although it was first published in 1586, nearly 12 years after his death.

The founder of Fort Caroline, Laudonnière, who also accompanied Jean Ribault on the 1562 scouting expedition that located and claimed the May River for France, provided several details that indicate the description and location of the Fort. In addition, Laudonnière’s account provided overall context of the conditions in which the French colonists lived during Fort Caroline’s brief tenure.

On June 25, 1564, Laudonnière and his ships arrived on the May River, landing at the site marked with a white stone monument by Jean Ribault two years prior. When Laudonnière landed in Florida on the banks of the May River, the local Native Americans led him to the site of the first marker placed by Ribault, the same column Spanish soldiers under Rojas were unable to find.

Laudonnière was greeted kindly by the local Native Americans who inhabited the area. Their chief, Satouriona, was waiting at the monument. Satouriona recognized Laudonnière from Ribault’s first expedition up the May River in 1562.

Laudonnière wrote, “the chief suggested going to see the stone column that we
had erected during the voyage of Jean Ribault… we found it to be crowned with magnolia garlands and at its foot were little baskets of corn… They kissed the stone on their arrival and asked us to do the same.”

After the brief ceremony at the monument and exchange of gifts with Chief Satouriona, Laudonnière and his party left the shores to return to their ship.

The following day, Laudonnière wrote, “I had not sailed more than three leagues up the river…when I discovered a mountain of modest height.” Laudonnière landed at the foot of this “mountain” and stayed several hours with his company observing the Native Americans who came out to greet him. Laudonnière and his men crossed an area of marshes, mires, and reeds to the home of another Native American tribal chief. This new chief held a feast for Laudonnière, introduced his family, and exchanged gifts in a ceremony of friendship similar to one conducted the day prior with Chief Satouriona near Ribault’s Monument.

After the exchange, Laudonnière climbed to the top of the mount where “the sea may be seen clearly and openly from it.” After he surveyed the mount, Laudonnière decided to “re-embark with my men to navigate toward the mouth of the river.” He returned down river where Laudonnière found Chief Satouriona who promised to wait until the French returned. After another exchange of gifts with Chief Satouriona, Laudonnière promised to assist Satouriona in future battles against his rivals.

Laudonnière then proceeded to sail north to explore other potential settlement sites. On this trip up the coast north of the May River he met several other tribes of Native Americans with similar friendly encounters. Ultimately, Laudonnière chose the May River as the site for Fort Caroline because, “it would be much more important to
live in a place with an abundant food supply than to be in a commodious and beautiful port.” He claimed his decision was based on the corn farms and flour production he observed by the Native Americans on the May River, although Laudonnière also mentions his desire for “the gold and silver that was found there.” Laudonnière wrote in Three Voyages that his decision to choose the May River was vetted with his officers and mutually agreed upon.

On June 29, 1564, the French ships anchored outside mouth of the May River and used their small boats to begin ferrying stores and soldiers upriver. Laudonnière wrote,

Entering it and at some distance upstream, we found a creek of substantial size, which invited us to refresh ourselves a little as we rested; and then we landed to look over a place which was free of trees and which we had observed from the creek. We decided this locality was not ideal for habitation; and so we determined to return to the location that we had first discovered when we were navigating the river. This place, next to the mountain, seemed better and more convenient for the building of a fortress than where we were at the time of our decision.

From this point Laudonnière then departed on a brief journey with his landing party through a grass valley he named the “Vale of Laudonnière.” He continued on a trail from this valley through a wooded area along the edge of the river. Laudonnière and his men then stopped for the night in this wooded area at the river’s edge and set up camp. The next morning Laudonnière selected this location as the site of Fort Caroline and began construction that day.

Laudonnière describes the initial design and construction of Fort Caroline:

Having measured out a piece of ground in the form of a triangle, we went to work, some to dig on all sides, other to cut [bundles of wood], and others to raise and give form to rampart. There was not a man among us who did not have either a shovel, a cutting hook, or hatchet, either for clearing out the trees or for building the fort. We worked with such enthusiasm that within a few days the effect of our work was apparent.
An unknown French settler who accompanied Laudonnière wrote a letter to his father concerning his experiences at Fort Caroline. Included with this letter was a hand drawn picture of Fort Caroline. This drawing is the only known first-hand depiction of Fort Caroline.

Fig. 3

*Coppie d’une letter venant de la Floride*
This picture gives some context to Laudonnière’s description. While the scale is difficult to judge, in the drawing the fort appears to be of relatively modest size and construction.

A French artist named Jacque le Moyne, a member of Laudonnière’s company wrote in his narrative of Fort Caroline that “we had marked out a triangle by stretching cords, and were digging up earth on the lines of it.” Le Moyne also wrote, “every man of our force – nobleman, soldiers, artificers, sailors, and all – was hard at work to get our post in a state of defence against an enemy, and to get a shelter from the weather.”

Less than a month later, prior to unloading his ships (which departed on July 28, 1564), Laudonnière reported the fort complete and started construction of interior buildings with the help of Satouriona:

Our fort having been completed, I began to build a barn for storage of supplies and the things that were necessary for the defense of the fort. I asked the chief to tell his subjects to make a roof palmetto leaves – because that is the only cover they put over building there – so that in succeeding days I might unload our ships and put under cover those things that were still onboard. The chief promptly commanded, in my presence, that all Indians in his company should gather palmetto leaves; and so the barn was covered in two days.

Le Moyne also recorded Chief Satouriona’s involvement with the French in Fort Caroline’s construction, “[Satouriona] sent us eighty of his stoutest men, most used to labor, who were of great assistance to us, and much hastened the completion both of our fort and cabins.”

Laudonnière described his completed fort:

Our fort was built in a triangle. The side to the west, the land side, was enclosed by a little moat under turfs turned up into the form of a parapet about nine feet high. The other side, which was toward the river, was enclosed with a palisade of planks of timber in the manner which dikes are made. It had on the south side a form of bastion where I had a barn built
for munitions. All of it was constructed of [bundles of sticks] and earth except for two or three feet of turf from which the parapets were made. I made a great place in the middle about eighteen paces long and wide and had a guardhouse built in the center of this on the south side and a residence building on the other side toward the north...

One of the sides which formed my court, which I had made good and spacious, was bounded by the munitions storehouse; and on the other side toward the river was my house, around which were covered galleries. The principal door of my quarters was in the middle of the court, and the other door towards the river.42

Laudonnière later expressed concerns about defending the fort from a surprise attack by the Natives as a result of poor diplomacy and broken promises to many Native chiefs including his former ally and neighbor Satouriona.43 By September 20, 1564, Laudonnière states that he “put the finishing touches on the fort.”44

In his narrative, Le Moyne noted that when Satouriona returned to the fort, “things were greatly changed, that he could no longer get across the ditch, but that there was only one entrance to the post, and that a very narrow one.”45

Downfall of Fort Caroline: 1565

After nearly a year at Fort Caroline, hampered by several attempted mutinies and chronic food shortages, Laudonnière decided to abandon the Fort and sail home to France. Before departing, Laudonnière wrote, “We began to tear down the houses which were outside the fort and made carbon by burning the wood from them. The soldiers even tore down the palisade on the water side, and I was not able to dissuade them from doing it. I, myself, had decided to destroy the fort before we left and to put it to fire to prevent some newcomer from using it.”46

An unexpected visit from several English ships led by privateer John Hawkins delayed Laudonnière’s departure and provided much needed relief to Fort Caroline in the
form of food stores. A member of Hawkins’ crew, John Sparke’s written account placed Fort Caroline “two leagues up” from the mouth of the May River.\textsuperscript{47}

It is unclear whether Laudonnière actually destroyed the fort. Laudonnière later mentioned that at the neighboring Natives requested, “not to tear down my house and to prevent my soldiers from tearing down the fort and their houses.”\textsuperscript{48} Laudonnière wrote that he acquiesced to the Native Americans’ request in the interest of keeping them as friends.

Le Moyne however recorded a different account noting that the Fort was indeed razed: “It was decided that before our departure the fort should be destroyed: in the first place, to prevent it being made serviceable against the French… and secondly, to prevent Satouriona from occupying it. So we destroyed the works.”\textsuperscript{49}

Laudonnière’s plan to abandon Fort Caroline and sail for France was halted at the last moment upon the unexpected return of Jean Ribault who assumed command on arrival. Here Laudonnière mentioned the presence several outbuildings, “Captain Ribault brought his foodstuffs to land and placed most of it in the house which my lieutenant had built about two hundred paces outside the fort. He did this to better cover them; and also to place the flour close to the bakery.”\textsuperscript{50}

Le Moyne also wrote of repairs made to Fort Caroline shortly after Ribault’s return by all available hands who “were on shore, and occupied about putting up houses, and rebuilding the fort.”\textsuperscript{51}

At the same time of Jean Ribault’s voyage to Fort Caroline, Spanish General Pedro Menéndez de Aviles had been dispatched by King Phillip II of Spain to destroy the French settlement in Florida. Menéndez ships arrived at the mouth of the May River
about a week after Ribault but quickly departed when they realized Ribault had reached Fort Caroline before them.

Laudonnière remained behind at Fort Caroline while Captain Ribault led an assault on hostile Spanish forces that had recently fled. Laudonnière was charged with defense of the Fort in Ribault’s absence. Details from Le Moyne’s account indicate that prior to Ribault’s departure, Fort Caroline may have still been damaged and repairs not completed. In Le Moyne’s opinion, he “would have preferred to complete the erection and arming of the fort as soon as possible.”52 Ribault, acting under orders from the French Admiral, sailed with the bulk of the able bodied men to attack the Spanish before repairs on Fort Caroline were completed.

A fierce storm wrecked Ribault’s ships before he could attack the Spaniards. This same storm also damaged Fort Caroline. Fearing an imminent counterattack from the Spaniards, Laudonnière wrote, “the day [Ribault] departed, such a great storm came up, with such heavy winds… I sent for Lord du Lys to order assembled all of the remaining men and to advise them of the urgent need we had to repair our fortifications.”53

Later Laudonnière reported, “We began to repair and refortify what had been demolished, principally on the river bank where I ordered sixty feet of timber to be replaced in order to re-establish the palisades. The planks for this came from the ship which I had built. Notwithstanding all our diligence and work, it was not possible to rebuild the fort completely because of bad weather and winds.”54

Because of that storm and the French defenses at the mouth of the St. Johns River, Menéndez chose to assault Fort Caroline by marching 40 miles overland from the newly establish Spanish stronghold St. Augustine.
Laudonnière recalls the attack:

Going to the middle of my fort, I called out to alert my soldiers. Some of the bravest of them went to the breach which was on the south side, and there they were repulsed and killed at the place were the artillery munitions were. Two battle flags came in by the same breach and were quickly set up. Two others entered through a breach on the west side. Our men who were lodged in that area came out from their beds and were killed.

As I went to give aid to those who were defending the breach on the southwest side, I was met there by a great number of Spaniards who had entered the fort by overcoming our men on that side. They drove me into the great court of the fortress. Le Moyne, who stood guard duty the night of the attack, noted the Spanish, “penetrated the works without resistance, and getting in possession of the place of arms drew up their force there.” Le Moyne’s account placed 150 French at Fort Caroline when the Spanish attacked of which only about twenty were in condition to help defend the fort. Le Moyne escaped through an opening in the fort’s wall and, “leaped down into a ditch, crossed it, and went on alone for some distance over rising ground into a piece of woods, until, having reached a higher part of the hill.” Le Moyne and other survivors made their way to the seashore through, “extensive swamps to pass, all thickly grown with large reeds.”

Laudonnière also retreated when the fort became overrun with Spaniards:

I went to the ward of my lodging, where they pursued me. If there had not been a tent there, I would have been taken. The Spaniards who followed me became involved in cutting the ropes of the tent, and as they did that I went through breach on the west side near my lieutenants lodgings and escaped into the woods.

Laudonnière regrouped with other French survivors and mentions that they needed to “get across the marshes and up to where are ships are at the mouth of the river,” but that “some of them wanted to go to a little village which was in the woods, but
the rest followed me through the reeds in the water." The distance is unknown, but Laudonnière, injured and fatigued, stated he was able to reach the French ships the next day.61

French carpenter Nicholas Challeux survived the attack and related a similar journey away from Fort Caroline after escaping, “in order to get to the wood we needed to cross a large meadow all of silt and muddy bogs, covered with reeds.”62

Captured French soldier Roberto Melenche described Fort Caroline in a deposition by Spanish authorities, “These banks are four or five leagues up the river, at which point the people of this armada established a village….They built of fort of timber and faggots, four or five leagues in the mouth of the river past the banks mentioned before.”63 Melenche also described Fort Caroline’s location on the river, “Where they built this fort the river is narrow, and they settled there to defend passage with artillery against those who might want to pass ahead because of this the fort is on the river bank and the range of artillery easily covers from one bank to another.”64

Aftermath: 1565 and 1568

Menéndez had quickly defeated the French at Fort Caroline and killed, captured, or drove off all the colonists including the execution of Jean Ribault and several hundred of his French soldiers who had been shipwrecked in the storm during their attempted counter-assault on the Spanish forces. After defeating the French at Fort Caroline Menéndez left behind a garrison of men at Fort Caroline as a Spanish stronghold. Menéndez sent aid to the captured Fort Caroline to maintain the Spanish presence on the May River.
Whereas the French had relatively good relations with Chief Satouriona and his people at Fort Caroline, the Spanish had quickly estranged themselves from the Native Americans due to their brutal tactics. Satouriona’s people had skirmished with the Spaniards and launched a series of attacks against the Spanish forces remaining at the captured Fort Caroline.

By 1568 the last chapter of Fort Caroline came to a close. Frenchmen Dominic de Gourgues led another French expedition on a mission of vengeance against the Spanish remaining at Fort Caroline in response to the cruel treatment of his French countrymen.

Gourgues’ account of this affair described Fort Caroline, “the great fort, specially began by the French, and, afterward repaired by [the Spanish], upon the most dangerous and principal landing-place, whereof, two leagues lower, and nearer toward the river’s mouth, [the Spanish] had made two smaller forts.”

Gourgues quickly allied with a sympathetic Satouriona and attacked the Spaniards who remained at the conquered Fort Caroline and two newly built Spanish redoubts near the mouth of the river. Gourgues account stated during his assault, Fort Caroline was “all consumed by fire” and the attack had resulted in, “blowing up the storehouse, and the other houses.” Gourgues executed the Spanish soldiers who he captured. Gourgues then “resolved to raze” and “overthrew all the three forts flat, even with the ground, in one day.” Gourgues’ revenge completed, he and his men sailed home never to return, the last French explorers in Florida of the century.
Table 2.1

Timeline of Fort Caroline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ribault sails from France</td>
<td>April 18, 1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribault arrives at May River</td>
<td>May 1, 1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribault places stone pillar on May River</td>
<td>May 2, 1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribault places second pillar at Charlesfort</td>
<td>June 1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laudonnière sails from France</td>
<td>April 20, 1564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laudonnière arrives at May River with 300 plus colonists</td>
<td>June 29, 1564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Fort Caroline begins on May River</td>
<td>June 30, 1564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Caroline completed</td>
<td>September 20, 1564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laudonnière falls ill</td>
<td>September 20, 1564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutiny at Fort Caroline</td>
<td>October - December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkins visits Fort Caroline</td>
<td>August 3, 1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribault returns to Fort Caroline</td>
<td>August 28, 1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish ships arrive at Fort Caroline</td>
<td>September 4, 1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish soldiers attack Fort Caroline by land</td>
<td>September 20, 1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Gourgues attacks and burns Fort Caroline</td>
<td>April 18, 1568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter III

Previous Research on Fort Caroline

Paul Gissendaner and Rebecca Douberly-Gorman’s work each provide comprehensive historical review of the search for Fort Caroline. Gissendaner cites from previous research by: George R. Fairbanks, president of the Florida Historical Association, in his 1858 book *The History and Antiquities of the City of St. Augustine, Floridas*; historian Francis Parkman in his 1865 book *Pioneers of France in the New World*; Buckingham Smith’s 1859 collection *Coleccion de vaarios documentos para la historia de la Florida y tierras adyacentes*; Woodbury Lowery’s 1905 book *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States: Florida, 1562-1574*; and Herndon Cochrane’s 1940 study “Fort Caroline.” All of these writers concluded that the Fort was located in the vicinity of St Johns Bluff as the various French and Spanish primary sources mention a “height which is a unique landmark in this otherwise flat section of Florida.” 69 This distinction is a common theme in many early historical reviews of Fort Caroline’s location and remains a possibility although no further evidence is given to say why the fort was located near St Johns Bluff.

Gissendaner’s research also included conclusions from scholars Frederick T. Davis in his 1911 book *The History of Jacksonville* and historian Albert Manucy who conducted a historic site survey of Fort Caroline in 1940 and a reconstruction of what Fort Caroline looked like 1960 for the National Park Service. Davis concluded that the river had washed the fort away. Davis reasoned changes made by the Army Corps of
Engineers in 1880, which increased current speed and water volume in the river, may have reduced marsh area near the bluff, which could have potentially washed away a possible location for the fort.\textsuperscript{70}

Gissendaner’s methodology used several historical maps, which he overlaid to create a composite image of the St. Johns River. Using documentary evidence he outlined four probable sites on the St. Johns River located on and near St. Johns Bluff. He created a matrix of questions from the documentary evidence, mostly related to the Fort’s position orientation and position relative to other landmarks. He scored each location based on these questions, ultimately favoring the Spanish Point site located southeast of St. Johns Bluff.\textsuperscript{71}

Douberty-Gorman further expanded on Gissendaner’s study to include more recent historical study as well as the archeological studies of the search for Fort Caroline. In her study, Douberty-Gorman added the research done by: Florida Congressman Charles Bennett in his books \textit{Laudonnière and Fort Caroline} (1964), \textit{Settlement of Florida} (1968), and \textit{Fort Caroline and Its Leader} (1976); Eugene Lyon’s 1976 book \textit{The Enterprise of Florida} and his 1982 study “Fort Caroline and San Mateo, Vulnerable Outposts”; Amy Bushnell’s 1982 manuscript at University of Florida, “The French Connection to Indian Trade and Wars in Florida from 1565 to 1609”; and several works by John T. McGrath including his 1995 dissertation at Boston University, “France in America, 1555-1565” and his 2000 book \textit{The French in Early Florida}. Douberty-Gorman also singled out Bennett for his work in the national Congress establishing the Fort Caroline National Memorial (FCNM) located west of St Johns Bluff.\textsuperscript{72}
Doubely-Gorman also quoted David Brewer in a 2000 report on an archeological field study conducted in the Timucuan Ecological and Historic preserve (which encompasses much of the area in question) from 1996 to 1997 regarding a belief that, “an inability to locate the [the fort] has prompted a widespread and accepted truth that the fort was located north of the modern reconstruction at FCNM and has wholly eroded in the St Johns River. Until recently, sporadic and limited archeological study has been done to dispel the public’s belief that this is the case.”

Doubely-Gorman provided a detailed archeological history of the St. Johns River area, including both direct and indirect searches for Fort Caroline. Doubely-Gorman also commented on the amount of suburban development in the area along the St. Johns River and the negative impact to potential archeological sites.

Doubely-Gorman provided a review of the following archeological searches:

1. Amateur archeologist William Jones tested St. Johns Bluff between 1946 and 1955. His survey consisted of metal detection and surface collection on St. Johns Bluff, Spanish Point, the beach at the foot of the St. Johns Bluff, and dredge soil repositories from recent Army Corps of Engineers dredging of the St. Johns River. Jones stated that all the recovered artifacts reflected the presence of all known occupants of the area throughout various time periods with the exception of the sixteenth-century French.

However, Doubely-Gorman stated that one of the artifacts recovered by Jones in his 1993 survey was in fact a sixteenth-century French Beauvais stoneware recovered from the dredge spoils moved during dredging and engineering improvements to the St. Johns River by the Army Corps of Engineers. Doubely-Gorman draws her conclusion
about the Beauvais stoneware by comparing artifacts recovered by Jones to other sixteenth-century French artifacts recovered at another sixteenth-century French archeological site Charlesfort in Parris Island, South Carolina. As stated earlier, Charlesfort was the earlier fort established by the same group of French colonials before its abandonment. Using examples from Charlesfort and other pieces recovered from a presumed sixteenth-century French shipwreck near Cape Canaveral, Florida, Douberly-Gorman identified the piece recovered by Jones as sixteenth-century French.77

2. During the 1950s William Sears from the University of Florida tested several sites in the area including the Spanish Point site proposed by Gissendaner. Sears recovered several artifacts from various periods including; 300 B.C. - A.D. 300, A.D. 500 - 850, and A.D. 900 - 1250, but nothing to indicate sixteenth-century European inhabitants.78

3. Richard Johnson led a search on behalf of the National Parks Southeastern Archeological Center (SEAC) in 1984 on St. Johns Bluff to test portions of a sand “mound-like feature.” Using a 6 x 1 meter trench, Johnson recovered various Native and British artifacts but nothing from the sixteenth-century. Johnson concluded the mound-like feature was related to gun mounts used during the Spanish-American War.79

4. Archeologist Robert Johnson surveyed areas in the Theodore Roosevelt Preserve adjacent to St. Johns Bluff and revisited the Spanish Point site. While the testing in Theodore Roosevelt Preserve did not produce any sixteenth-century artifacts, the Spanish Point site produced 166 cord-marked sherds via shovel testing. Douberly-Gorman believed these to be dated from A.D 1250-1450 based on the history of the region. Johnson also conducted shovel testing in the Fulton area and found native and
Spanish artifacts dating potentially to the sixteenth century, although results have yet to be published.\textsuperscript{80}

5. C. Fairbanks archeological testing in 1952 of the banks of the river near the FCNM to determine if the river had washed the fort away as previously claimed. The search did not produce any results conclusively linked to Fort Caroline. A student of Fairbanks, Steven Rulpe, conducted a limited survey on Calypso Island at the mouth of Shipyard Creek along the river northwest of FCNM. No evidence of Fort Caroline or its settlers were found although artifacts from later periods were found.\textsuperscript{81}

6. From 1996 to 1997, David Brewer (also representing the National Park’s SEAC) with Dr. Robert Thunen from the University of North Florida tested sections of the National Park on the bank of the river near Shipyard Creek based on aerial images of “a moat like feature” identified by Jerald Milanich of the University of Florida. Using shovel tests and 1 x 2 meter units, Brewer and Thunen were unable to find evidence of Native, French, or Spanish artifacts. In 2004, Thunen returned with students from the University of North Florida field school to FCNM to conduct a survey of an area along the river not previously tested. Shovel testing did not reveal any evidence of sixteenth-century occupation. Thunen and company again tested in 2004 at an 1898 Spanish-American war site on the south ridge of St. Johns Bluff. Shovel testing produced no positive results although the 1898 construction appeared to have disturbed the area.\textsuperscript{82}

Douberry-Gorman stated that the most comprehensive archeological search for Fort Caroline was conducted from 2012 to 2013 by the University of North Florida archeology lab led by Dr. Robert Thunen.\textsuperscript{83} Working on the broader context of the University’s Mocama Archeological Project to document native and European sixteenth-
century communities, the study conducted systematic surface reconnaissance, shovel testing, and limited unit excavation on both public and private lands west and southwest of FCNM. In total, seven locations were tested including Spanish Point and the St Johns Bluff area. No sixteenth-century Spanish or French remains were recovered.

Douberty-Gorman surmised that “the richness of the historical occupation in and around FCNM has potentially made it more difficult to pinpoint the French period of activities of the area,” further marred by “the river channel and topographical modifications which the area has experienced in the past 125 years.”

Using the comparison between the French sixteenth-century artifacts discovered at Charlesfort and near Cape Canaveral to the artifact recovered in the dredge soil by William Jones, Douberty-Gorman claimed the artifact Jones recovered from the dredge soil is in fact sixteenth-century French.

Douberty-Gorman further concluded, based on recent research, that the waterfront area in front of St. Johns Bluff had not eroded significantly as previously thought, negating previous hypotheses that Fort Caroline was washed away by the river along St. Johns Bluff.

The Army Corps of Engineers dredging project during the time of William Jones recovery was mainly in the Fulton area to create the now artificial Dames Point-Fulton cutoff channel with spoil depositories from the project dumped near St. Johns Bluff. From these points Douberty-Gorman draws her primary conclusion that Fort Caroline was located farther west from St. Johns Bluff than traditionally believed in the area bisected by the Dames-Point/Fulton cutoff range near modern-day Blount Island. She combined this theory with the assumption that the native and Spanish artifacts recovered
by archeologist Robert Johnson in this same area, do in fact, date to the sixteenth-century and part of a Spanish fort (possibly Fort San Mateo) was built later on or near the ruins of Fort Caroline, although that has yet to be confirmed.88

Although Douberly-Gorman named the Fulton area as the most probable location for Fort Caroline, she offered the small pine islands in Chicopit Bay as another possible location for Fort Caroline based on Army Corp of Engineer modifications and the primary documentary evidence. She ultimately dismissed Chicopit Bay in favor of the Fulton area due to the sixteenth-century ceramics thought to be from the Fulton area. However, Douberly-Gorman states: “Nevertheless, this area should be subjected to an intense survey before being wholly eliminated. To date these small pine islands have never been archeologically [studied].”89

The Fort Caroline Archeology Project

Dr. Anita Spring and Dr. Fletcher Crowe of The Fort Caroline Archeology Project (TFCAP) have produced a new argument that Fort Caroline was located on the Altahama River in southeast Georgia instead of the St. Johns River as traditionally believed by scholars.

TFCAP’s blog outlines seven lines of evidence to support this new assertion.90 The primary method was analysis of French, Spanish, and English maps from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On their blog, Spring and Crowe claim that these maps clearly show Fort Caroline on the river known today as the Altahama.

The geophysical makeup of the May River as described in Jean Ribault, Rene Laudonnière and Jacque Le Moyne’s first-hand accounts, has been one of the main
discrepancies in attempts to locate Fort Caroline near or on St. Johns Bluff. Spring and Crowe believe that the failure to “match coastal features with French descriptions” on the St. Johns River is because the assumption that the May River was the St. Johns River is false. In contrast, Spring and Crowe claim to match the descriptions of the May River to certain areas of the Altamaha River.

Spring and Crowe also claim the latitude of Fort Caroline is reported as 31 degrees, which is 67 miles north of the St. Johns River. They claim that errors in translation of French reports about the direction and distance the French sailed have led to the fallacy that St. Johns was the River of May.

They also claim that analysis of Native American languages of tribes near the St. Johns River area do not match known languages spoken by the French at the time. Spring and Crowe claim the French could not have been able to speak Timuquan, but rather Guale, which was a language spoken by Native Americans on the coast of Georgia.

Dr. Robert Thunen of the University of North Florida, who has led the largest archeological survey for Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River, publicly disputed the claims of Spring and Crowe at a debate on September 20, 2014. Just as Douberly-Gorman found, Thunen claimed the distance from St. Augustine, where the Spanish soldiers marched from on their counterattack on September 20, 1565, was too far to reach the Altamaha River in two days (and during a hurricane).

Crowe and Spring counter Thunen’s argument based on the notion that the Spaniards set out from a Native American village named Seloy in southeast Georgia, not St. Augustine as reported in various Spanish firsthand accounts. However, Deagan’s
recent archeological work leaves no doubt that the Spaniards were living at St. Augustine at this time.⁹⁷

According to private correspondence with Georgia State officials, TFCAP received state permits for archeological survey in the Altamaha River basin, but to date TFCAP has not published any findings to support their claim.
Chapter IV

Conclusions on Fort Caroline’s Location

Assuming that the May River was in fact the St. Johns River as traditionally believed, a probable site for Fort Caroline that closely matches the area described in various first hand accounts is Chicopit Bay. Chicopit Bay is located approximately five miles from the mouth St. Johns River on the south side of the river. Just as previous scholars had theorized, the only peak of significant identified by Laudonnière in his narrative would be what is known today as St. Johns Bluff. The area east of St. Johns Bluff, headed towards Chicopit Bay, also closely matches Laudonnière’s description the area near Fort Caroline. It is marsh, mire, and reeds in what are essentially swampy lowlands. Chicopit Bay has likely changed much geologically over the last 450 years and it is virtually impossible to determine the exact makeup of the riverfront based on available historical maps of the area. The earliest known map of the area, *Plano of the Rio de San Juan* by Mariano de la Racque is dated December 24, 1769, which still leaves nearly 250 years of potential change to a dynamic riverfront location undocumented.

Great Marsh Island located between St. Johns Bluff and Chicopit Bay is shown in various maps throughout the history of the St. Johns River to have been either swampland or terra firma. There is also a small unnamed island in Chicopit Bay at the intersection of the St. Johns River and the Intracoastal Waterway. The Intracoastal Waterway runs south from the St. Johns River and was developed starting in the 1880s by the Army Corps of Engineers, but was originally a natural body of water known as Pablo Creek.
The unnamed island at this intersection between waterways measures 500 meters east to west by 250 meters north to south, and is bordered by sandy beaches, covered with shrubs, and small trees.

Pablo Creek was the easternmost freshwater tributary on the southern bank of the St. Johns River and could refer to the small fresh water creek Laudonnière and his men first rested at as he and they explored upriver towards St. Johns Bluff.

An important point to consider in determining the probable location of Fort Caroline is its location in relation to the Native American tribes encountered during Laudonnière’s initial scouting expedition up the river. As stated earlier, when construction of the fort started one of Laudonnière’s concerns in the design was for defense from the nearby Native Americans. By this point Laudonnière had explored upriver and visited two chiefs along the southern bank of the river. Chief Satouriona was
at the first site closest to the mouth of the river and an unnamed chief was met farther upriver near the mount assumed to be St. Johns Bluff.

Both the St. Johns Bluff area and the area south of the entrance to the St. Johns River (today occupied by Naval Station Mayport) are fairly large areas of land compared to Great Marsh Island and Chicopit Bay. It is also possible that these former sites were already inhabited by Native Americans and not available to Laudonnière to build.

Chicopit Bay by comparison is a marsh-filled uninhabited land at the intersection of the river and a small southern running creek. Part of Laudonnière’s decision to make camp and build Fort Caroline in Chicopit Bay (if in fact this is the location) may have been to keep distance between the established Native American tribes in the area using the natural waterways as a barrier and eventually as a moat for Fort Caroline. This would also explain why illustrations and descriptions of Fort Caroline are shown to have western frontage of water despite being on the south bank of the river.

Additionally, the day after Laudonnière and his men camp out at their chosen site for Fort Caroline and begin construction, Chief Satouriona pays them a visit. Laudonnière mentions that Chief Satouriona is “our nearest neighbor.”98 Previous visits to the May River by both Rene Laudonnière and Jean Ribault in 1562 placed Satouriona’s territory closer to the mouth of the river than upstream near the mount. Laudonnière never again mentions the unnamed chief who inhabited the area near the mount presumed to be St. Johns Bluff. Satouriona by contrast, who lived near the mouth of the river, is a key player in several later events involving both the French and Spanish. This may indicate that Fort Caroline was closer to the mouth of the river than Spanish
Point, Fort Caroline National Memorial, St. Johns Bluff, or the Dames Point/Fulton area as previously suggested by other scholars, including Douberly-Gorman.

If Chicopit Bay was the area Laudonnière chose, that would have meant Laudonnière sailed upriver to St. Johns Bluff, landed on the south side of the river, doubled back on foot downriver through the marsh, and pushed onward to a wooded area along the banks of the river. Given that the scouting for the fort’s location was done within one day of landfall, it is reasonable that the first available site would have been chosen. A site nearer the mouth of the river also facilitated easier access by small boat to deep draft ships anchored outside the river bar and less risk for shallow draft ships that entered the river.

This area at the intersection of the St. Johns River and Intracoastal Water near Chicopit Bay also closely matches the modern landscape in both flora and terrain as described by Laudonnière. It also aligns with multiple first hand accounts including Laudonnière and Hawkins that state the distance of the fort as approximately two leagues from the sand bar at the mouth of the river and supports Laudonnière’s statement the mount (presumably St. Johns Bluff) was “no more than three leagues up the river.” During this time period, a French or Spanish league is assumed to be roughly 4,000 meters. Modern maps place Chicopit Bay roughly 8,000 meters (2 leagues) and St. Johns Bluff 12,000 meters (3 leagues) from the St. Johns River bar.

As previously concluded by Douberly-Gorman, Gissendaner’s site seems unlikely due to the results of archeological testing in the area and questionable authenticity of some of the maps used in his analysis. Additionally, his methodology could be compromised given he developed the categories that produced the result he derived.
Additionally, Douberly-Gorman also presented evidence from Brewer that contradicted previous claims Fort Caroline that the river in the vicinity of the FCNM were washed away by erosion due to increased water flow as a result of improvements by the Army Corps of Engineers. 101

Douberty-Gorman’s conclusion that the Dames-Point/Fulton area was the location of Fort Caroline is a strong argument assuming the Beauvais stoneware recovered by Jones east of St. Johns Bluff was in fact carried there due to the transfer of dredge spoil repositories. Even if this artifact recovered by Jones were definitely sixteenth-century French, this does not conclusively indicate Fort Caroline was in the same location. Douberly-Gorman’s conclusion is also based on the supporting assumption that other native and Spanish artifacts dated to the sixteenth century, discovered in the same area, a theory that has yet to be confirmed.

Spring and Crowe’s The Fort Caroline Archeology Project provide an interesting hypothesis, but given the established information about the relative distance between Spanish and French settlements, it is difficult to reconcile. Also, TFCAP’s claim about Fort Caroline’s recorded latitude being closer to the Altahama River excludes several other latitudes reported for Fort Caroline in other primary sources that are closer to the St. Johns River location. TFCAP cites the latitude of 31 degrees north (31°N) provided by the Spanish forces by a captured French. 102 Several other latitudes are recorded and reported as Fort Caroline’s including: 30 degrees (30° N) by English privateer John Sparke103 and 30 and a quarter degrees (30° 15’N) by Spanish General Pedro Menéndez De Aviles.104 The St. Johns River is located at 30° 24’ N, closer to both Sparke and De Aviles accounts, than the latitude cited by TFCAP. It is possible the difference in
latitudes reported in Spanish and French reports were due to the accuracy in measurements available at the time or other human errors in the process of calculating position using celestial navigation.

Given the proximity to the mouth of the St. Johns River, proximity to established Native American neighbors, geophysical description of the area, and lack of previous archeological study it is highly likely the islands in Chicopit Bay were the site of Fort Caroline. The islands are large enough for a modest structure as described in primary source documents by Rene de Laudonnière\textsuperscript{105} and Jacque Le Moyne.\textsuperscript{106} They had natural water boundaries and were close to a fresh water source with surrounding terrain that matches also primary source accounts. Their distance from the entrance to the St. Johns River also matches distances cited in primary sources provided by English privateer John Sparke,\textsuperscript{107} captured French soldier Stefano Rojomonte.\textsuperscript{108} The presence of several different Native American tribes in the area at the time of the French arrival might have limited areas available for the French to settle due to other sites of interest such as Mayport and near the FCNM. Since Fort Caroline’s site was scouted within one day after the French landed, the range of territory evaluated was limited. The relative distance to key figure Native American Chief Satouriona also indicates the French were close to his territory near the mouth of the May River.

Archeological testing on the Chicopit Bay islands could reveal the presence of previously undiscovered remains of Fort Caroline.
Table 5.1

Analysis of variables regarding Fort Caroline’s location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Variables</th>
<th>Fleck</th>
<th>Douberly-Gorman</th>
<th>TFCAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has western frontage of water</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archeological evidence found</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the south side of the May River</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latitude matches</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has line of sight to river mouth</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching terrain and flora</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close proximity to a “mount”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to fresh water creek</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor to Native Chief Satouriona</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within two days journey of St. Augustine</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes


10. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”


16. Ribault, *Discovery of Terra Florida*.

17. Ribault, *Discovery of Terra Florida*.

18. Ribault, *Discovery of Terra Florida*.


34. Bennett, *Three Voyages*, 70.


40. Bennett, *Three Voyages*, 72.


42. Bennett, *Three Voyages*, 72.


44. Bennett, *Three Voyages*, 93.


52. Perkins, *Narrative of Le Moyne*, 16.


60. Bennett, *Three Voyages*, 165.


64. Bennett, *Laudonnière*, 90.


68. French, *Historical Collections*, 358.


90. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
91. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
92. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
93. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
94. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
95. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
96. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”
102. Spring, “The Fort Caroline Archeology Project.”


Bibliography


