



Laudonniere & Fort Caroline: History and Documents

Charles E. Bennett

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This classic historical resource remains the most complete work on the establishment of Fort Caroline, which heralded the start of permanent settlement by Europeans in North America.

America's history was shaped in part by the clash of cultures that took place in the southeastern United States in the 1560s. Indians, French, and Spaniards vied to profit from European attempts to colonize the land Juan Ponce de Leon had named *La Florida*.

Rene de Goulaine de Laudonniere founded a French Huguenot settlement on the St. Johns River near present-day Jacksonville and christened it Fort Caroline in 1564, but only a year later the hapless colonists were expelled by a Spanish fleet led by Pedro Menendez de Aviles. The Spanish in turn established a permanent settlement at St. Augustine, now the oldest city in the United States, and blocked any future French claims in Florida.

Using documents from both French and Spanish archives, Charles E. Bennett provides the first comprehensive account of the events surrounding the international conflicts of this 16th-century colonization effort, which was the actual "threshold" of a new nation. The translated Laudonniere documents also provide a wealth of information about the natural wonders of the land and the native Timucua Indians encountered by the French. As a tribe, the Timucua would be completely gone by the mid-1700s, so these accounts are invaluable to ethnologists and anthropologists.

With this republication of *Laudonniere & Fort Caroline*, a new generation of archaeologists, anthropologists, and American colonial historians can experience the New World through the adventures of the French explorers. Visitors to Fort Caroline National Memorial will also find the volume fascinating reading as they explore the tentative early beginnings of a new nation.

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