

Overview

As part of the expedition of René de Laudonnière to northeast Florida in 1564, Jacques Le Moyne crafted this map that features Native American settlements, rivers, and European holdings. The general shape of Florida is rather crude, but it influenced the cartography of the region for more than one hundred years. Notice the mention of Lake Okeechobee (“Lac et Insula Sarrope”) in southern Florida. Le Moyne also includes the St. Johns River (“F. Maij.”) in northeastern Florida where the French-held Fort Caroline (“Carolina”) was located. At the top of the map, cutting through part of the present-day United States, is an area of water many European explorers hoped would provide the sought after passage through North America to China.

Who is the Cartographer?

Artist Jacques Le Moyne arrived at the French-held Fort Caroline, Florida in 1564 with orders from the king to document “the seas, the depth and course of the rivers, also the ports and the dwellings of the inhabitants.” Le Moyne worked in the area until Fort Caroline was attacked and burned by the Spanish. While Le Moyne escaped, it was doubtful he was able to take any drawings with him. Upon his return to France, many scholars believe Le Moyne recreated his drawings about Florida from memory. After Le Moyne died, Belgian engraver Theodor de Bry purchased the drawings from Le Moyne’s widow – de Bry made engravings from the drawings and published them in *Grands Voyages*. While the engravings paint a remarkable picture of Florida, de Bry never visited the New World, leaving scholars to believe he possibly embellished Le Moyne’s drawing by adding details he heard from returning Spanish explorers.

Essential Questions

Le Moyne’s drawing and de Bry’s engraving produce a misshaped Florida. How do you think the product of an artist and engraver influences map readers and other cartographers?

Why do you think this map includes a lake that we cannot identify today?