



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(The Death of a Florida Indian Chief) *Ceremoniae in Regis & Sacerdotum funere observatae. XL.*

Stock#: 86465
Map Maker: De Bry
Date: 1591
Place: Frankfurt
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 8.5 x 10 inches Including Text
Price: SOLD



Description:

Ceremony for the Death of a Chieftain

Striking image of Florida Indians gathered to celebrate the end-of-life rituals for a chief of their tribe. The members of the tribe gather and weep around a mound surrounded by arrows and with a nautilus shell on top.

This work was published by Theodor de Bry from manuscript notes and drawings made by Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, an illustrator and explorer, who sailed with René de Laudonnière, on the 1564 Huguenot expedition to Florida. Laudonnière set up Fort Caroline on the St. John's River in 1564. This is generally accepted as the oldest European settlement in Florida, but the Spanish army destroyed the



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settlement.

The text below the map translates as follows:

When a chief from that country dies, he is buried with great solemnity. The cup from which he used to drink is placed on his tomb which is surrounded by arrows stuck in the ground. His subjects mourn him for three days and three nights without eating or drinking. All his friends do the same, and in testimony of the affection they held for the deceased, both men and women cut off more than half their hair. During the next six moons, women specially chosen for the task lament the death of their king at dawn, midday and twilight with great howls. All the king's personal property is carried to his house where it is burnt. They do the same thing for priests.

Laudonniere and French Exploration in Florida

A French expedition, organized by Protestant leader Admiral Gaspard de Coligny and led by the Norman navigator Jean Ribault, landed at the site on the River of May (now the St. Johns River) in February 1562, before moving north to Port Royal Sound. There, on present-day Parris Island, South Carolina, Ribault left twenty-eight men to build a settlement known as Charlesfort. Ribault then returned to Europe to arrange supplies for the new colony, but was arrested in England due to complications arising from the French Wars of Religion, which prevented his return.

Without supplies or leadership, and beset by hostility from the native populations, all but one of the colonists sailed back to Europe after only a year. During their voyage in an open boat, they were reduced to cannibalism before the survivors were rescued in English waters. Meanwhile, René Goulaine de Laudonnière, who had been Ribault's second-in-command on the 1562 expedition, led a contingent of around 200 new settlers back to Florida, where they founded Fort Caroline (or Fort de la Caroline) atop St. Johns Bluff, on June 22, 1564. The fort was named for the reigning French king, Charles IX. For just over a year, this colony was beset by hunger, Indian attacks, and mutiny, and attracted the attention of Spanish authorities who considered it a challenge to their control over the area.

In June of 1565, Ribault had been released from English custody, and Coligny sent him back to Florida. In late August, Ribault arrived at Fort Caroline with a large fleet and hundreds of soldiers and settlers and took command of the settlement. However, the recently appointed Spanish Governor of Florida, Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, had simultaneously been dispatched from Spain with orders to remove the French outpost, and arrived within days of Ribault's landing. After a brief skirmish between Ribault's ships and Menéndez's ships, the latter retreated 35 miles south, where they established the settlement of St. Augustine. Ribault pursued the Spanish with several of his ships and most of his troops, but he was



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surprised at sea by a violent storm lasting several days. In a bold stroke, Menéndez marched his forces overland, launching a surprise dawn attack on the Fort Caroline garrison which then numbered about 200 to 250 people. The only survivors were about 50 women and children who were taken prisoner and a few defenders, including Laudonnière, who managed to escape; the rest were executed.

As for Ribault's fleet, all of the ships either sank or ran aground south of St. Augustine during the storm, and many of the Frenchmen onboard were lost at sea. Ribault and his marooned sailors were located by Menéndez and his troops and summoned to surrender. Apparently believing that his men would be well treated, Ribault capitulated. Menéndez then executed Ribault and several hundred Frenchmen as Lutheran heretics, at a place now known as Matanzas ("massacres") Inlet. This atrocity shocked Europeans even in that bloody era of religious strife. This place is known today by a fort built much later, Fort Matanzas. This massacre put an end to France's attempts at colonization of the southeast coast of North America.

Detailed Condition:

Slight toning.