The Annotated Pickett's History of Alabama

And Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi, from the Earliest Period

BY ALBERT JAMES PICKETT

Edited, Annotated, and Introduced by James P. Pate

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The Annotated

PICKETT'S HISTORY OF ALABAMA

And Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi, from the Earliest Period

BY

Albert James Pickett

Edited, Annotated, and with an Introduction
by James P. Pate

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* *Reprinted from the 1896 edition (see page xxxvi).*

** *All other illustrations were taken from the 1851 two-volume edition, courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.*

A Note on Organization and Presentation

The pages that follow present Pickett's 1851 text as he published it except that typos have been corrected and some punctuation and spellings have been slightly modernized for ease of reading.

Pickett's original text runs in the wider inside column and is set in Caslon, a typeface that would have been quite at home in the "steam-power press" shop of Walker and James, publishers, in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1851. Pickett's footnotes are referenced in his text with the symbols * † ‡ § and ¶ and appear at the bottoms of the pages. For contrast, editor Jim Pate's contributions in the front matter and his annotations are set in a contemporary typeface, Warnock. The annotations are referenced within Pickett's running text with footnote numbers and appear in semibold and semibold italic in the narrower column running along the outsides of the pages.

Pickett's original layout used margin notations to indicate the date of the events being discussed on a given page. That reader convenience was not available in the present edition because the annotations occupy the side margins. Instead, running years are indicated at the inside margins of the page headers.

The four pages that immediately follow this one contain facsimiles of the original frontispiece, title page, copyright page, and dedication from volume one of Pickett's 1851 two-volume edition. Those pages are followed by the text of Pickett's original Preface, also annotated by Pate. Then comes the Volume One Table of Contents, as Pickett presented it, except for the page numbers, of course. Then the body of Volume One follows, then Volume Two, then Pickett's Bibliography and the editor's Suggestions for Additional Reading, and then a new Index.

Chapter II – Part I

THE ABORIGINES OF ALABAMA AND THE SURROUNDING STATES

The Indians of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi were so similar in form, mode of living and general habits, in the time of De Soto and of others who succeeded him in penetrating these wilds, that they will all be treated, on the pages of this chapter, as one people. Their color was like that of the Indians of our day. The males were admirably proportioned, athletic, active and graceful in their movements, and possessed open and manly countenances. The females, not inferior in form, were smaller, and many of them beautiful. No ugly or ill-formed Indians were seen, except at the town of Tula, west of the Mississippi.[1] Corpulency was rare; nevertheless, it was excessive in a few instances. In the neighborhood of Apalachee, in Florida, the chief was so fat that he was compelled to move about his house upon his hands and knees.[2]

The dress of the men consisted of a mantle of the size of a common blanket, made of the inner bark of trees, and a species of flax, interwoven. It was thrown over the shoulders, with the right arm exposed. One of these mantles encircled the body of the female, commencing below the breast and extending nearly to the knees, while another was gracefully thrown over the shoulders, also with the right arm exposed. Upon the St. John's River, the females, although equally advanced in civilization, appeared in a much greater state of nudity—often with no covering in summer, except a moss drapery suspended round the waist, and which hung down in graceful negligence. Both sexes there were, however, adorned with ornaments, consisting of pretty shells and shining pearls, while the better classes wore moccasins and buskins of dressed deer leather. In Georgia and Alabama the towns contained storehouses, filled with rich and comfortable clothing, such as mantles of hemp, and of feathers of every color, exquisitely arranged, forming admirable cloaks for winter; with a variety of dressed deer skin garments, and skins of the

[1] Garcilaso de la Vega talks about the Indians having been "handsome and graceful" until the Spaniards encountered the Tula, who had "ugly faces" and "deform themselves." Rangel simply writes that the Tula "were the best warriors the Christians came upon . . . with the greatest courage in the world." *De Soto Chronicles,* 1: 305; ibid., 2: 413; Hudson, *Knights of Spain,* 320–26.

[2] Pickett may have misinterpreted Garcilaso, who reports that the "cacique of Apalache"—Capafi—was a cripple and made his escape from his Spanish guards by crawling on his "all fours." *De Soto Chronicles,* 2: 215–26; Hudson, *Knights of Spain,* 142–44.

martin, bear and panther, nicely packed away in baskets.* Fond of trinkets, the natives collected shells from the seaside, and pearls from the beds of the interior rivers. The latter they pierced with heated copper spindles, and strung them around their legs, necks and arms.† The queen upon the Savannah took from her neck a magnificent cordon of pearls, and twined it round the neck of the warlike but courteous De Soto.‡ In the interior of the country, pearls were worn in the ears; but upon the coast, fish bladders, inflated after they had been inserted, were greatly preferred.§ The chiefs and their wives, the prophets and principal men, painted their breasts and the front part of their bodies with a variety of stripes and characters.[3] Others, like sea-faring people, had their skins punctured with bone needles and indelible ink rubbed in, which gave them the appearance of being tattooed.¶ Juan Ortiz, so long a prisoner among the Floridians, when discovered by De Soto, was taken for an Indian, on account of his body being "razed" in this manner.** It will be remembered that the Alabamas, upon the Yazoo, painted in stripes of white, yellow, black and red, and "seemed as though they were dressed in hose and doublets."†† Lofty plumes of the feathers of the eagle, and other noted birds, adorned the heads of the warriors. At the Battle of Vitachuco, in Middle Florida, ten thousand warriors appeared in this magnificent native head-dress. They also punished and deformed themselves in the display of their more peculiar ornaments.[4] Upon an island in West Florida, they wore reeds thrust through their nipples and under lips.‡‡ Indian grandees were often seen promenad-

[3] **Pickett cited Jacques le Moyne de Morgues as one of his main sources—specifically citing seventeen sketches—in this section of his original Chapter II. He also reproduced six sketches attributed to Le Moyne but actually engraved by Theodore de Bry, based on Le Moyne's watercolors and printed in his *Les Grand Voyages,* a multivolume work published between 1590 and his death in 1598. De Bry published *Brevis narratio eorum quæ in Florida Americæ provincia Gallis acciderunt* in Frankfort in 1591—volume two of ten volumes, most published after his death. This work is based on a narrative written by René Goulaine de Laudonnière and the papers and sketches and/or watercolors of Le Moyne that De Bry purchased from his widow in the 1580s. Pickett purchased a copy of "Le Moyne's Florida Folio" for $9 from Bartlett & Welford in September 1847. See Bartlett & Welford to AJP, New York, 16 September 1847, Albert James Pickett Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History [Hereafter cited as Pickett Papers, ADAH]; Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, *Brevis narratio eorum quæ in Florida Americæ provincia Gallis acciderunt* (Frankfort: Johann Wechel and Theodor de Bry, 1591); and Miles**

* Portuguese Narrative, 711.

† Portuguese Narrative, 701.

‡ Portuguese Narrative, 714.

§ Le Moyne's Florida plate 38. Renaud de Laudonnière, an admiral of France, made a second voyage to Florida, and landed upon its shore in 1564. Attached to this expedition was a Frenchman, named Jacques Le Moyne, who was an admirable painter. Laudonnière left some soldiers at a fort which he built upon the St. John's, and with them this accomplished artist. Le Moyne was frequently dispatched with small detachments along the coast, and at some distance in the interior, to make surveys of the rivers and to cultivate the friendship of the natives. During these excursions he made admirable drawings of the Indians, their houses, farms, games, amusements, manners, customs and religious ceremonies. Returning to France, he related his adventures to Charles IX, and exhibited to him his pictures. These, with his explanatory notes, were published by Theodore de Bry, in 1591, in the Latin language, at Frankfort. The copy in my possession, a most interesting book upon the ancient Indians of Florida and the adjoining states, contains forty-two plates, a few specimens of which are introduced in this volume.

¶ Le Moyne, plate 38.

** Portuguese Narrative, 702.

†† Portuguese Narrative, 727.

‡‡ Expedition of Narvaez contained in Herrera, *General History of the Vast Continent*

Chiefs, with their ornaments and war implements, upon their march against the enemy. Drawn from life by Jacques le Moyne in 1564.

ing, of an evening, enveloped in beautiful mantles of deerskins and of the martin, trailing behind them, and often held up by attendants. Among the prettiest ornaments were flat shells, of varied colors, which they suspended from girdles around their waists, and which hung down around their hips.

The bow, the most formidable weapon of the ancient Indians, was long, elastic, and exceedingly strong. The string was made of the sinews of the deer. The arrows, of strong young cane, hardened before the fire, were often tipped with buck horn, and invariably pointed either with palm or other hard wood, flints, long and sharp like a dagger, fish bones shaped like a chisel, or diamond flints.* The Spaniards soon ascertained that they pierced as deep as those which they themselves shot from the crossbow, and were discharged more rapidly.† The quiver which held them was made of fawn or some other spotted skin, and was cased at the lower end with thick hide of the bear or the alligator. It was always suspended by a leather strap, passing round the neck, which permitted it to rest on the left hip, like a sword. It was capable of holding a great many arrows. Shields were universal appendages in war, and were made of either wood, split canes strongly interwoven, alligator hide, and sometimes that of buffalo. The latter was often the case west of

and Islands of America, 4: 33.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, 266.

† Portuguese Narrative, 102.

Harvey, *Painter in a Savage Land: The Strange Saga of the First European Artist in North America* (New York: Random House, 2008).

[4] Garcilaso seems to be relying on Elvas for certain elements, but he quotes liberally from some remnants of Alonso de Carmona's manuscript that he refers to as his *Peregrination*—an eyewitness account that has been lost for centuries. Biedma refers to Elvas's Vitachuco as Yvitachuco. While Garcilaso writes several pages about the Spanish in Vitachuco, the chroniclers devote no more than a few sentences. *De Soto Chronicles,* 1: 71, 227; ibid., 2: 153–74, 178–83, 208–09.

the Mississippi. Of various sizes, but ordinarily large enough to cover the breast, these round shields were painted with rings and stripes, and suspended from the neck by a band. Sometimes a noted chief protected his breast and a portion of his abdomen with three of them.[5] These, with a piece of bark covering the left arm, to prevent the severe rebound of the bow-string, were all that shielded the natives in time of war. Wooden spears, of the usual length, pointed with excellent darts of fish-bone or flint, were, also, much used. And, strange to say, swords of a palm wood, of the proper shape, were often seen. A chief, in Georgia, seized one of this description, which was borne by one of his servants, and began to cut and thrust with it to the admiration of De Soto and his officers. The war clubs were of two kinds—one, small at the handle, gradually enlarging at the top in oval form; and the other, with two sharp edges at the end, usually employed in executions.[6] Decoration with plumes, appears to have been more common in general costume and pleasant excursions, than in war. In enterprises of the latter character, the natives sought to appear as ferocious as possible. The skins of the eagle, of the wolf and of the panther, with the heads of these animals attached, and well preserved, were worn by warriors, while the talons and claws were inserted as ear ornaments.*

When about to make war, a chief dispatched a party, who approached near the town of the enemy, and by night stuck arrows into the cross-paths and public places, with long locks of human hair waving from them.† After this declaration of war, he assembled his men, who, painted and decorated in the most fantastic and frightful manner, surrounded him on all sides. Excited with seeming anger, he rolled his eyes, spoke in guttural accents, and often sent forth tremendous war whoops. The warriors responded in chorus, and struck their weapons against their sides. With a wooden spear he turned himself reverentially towards the sun, and implored of that luminary victory over his enemies. Turning to his men, he took water from a vessel on his right and sprinkled it about, saying, "Thus may you do with the blood of your enemies." Then raising another vessel of water, he poured its entire contents on a fire which had been kindled on his left, and repeated, "Thus may you destroy your enemies and bring home their scalps."‡ Having marched his army within the vicinity of the enemy, he bid his prophet to inform him of their number and position, and in what manner it was best to bring on the attack. The old man, usually a hundred

* Le Moyne, plates 11, 12, 13, 14.
† Le Moyne, plate 33.
‡ Le Moyne, plate 11.

[5] Pickett seems to be describing the shields worn by the Timucuan Indians in De Bry's rendering of Le Moyne's plate number 14, "Order of March Observed by Outina on a Military Expedition." "Theodor de Bry's Engravings of the Timuca," https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/debry/.

[6] While the bow and arrow was the main weapon of quick strike raids and surprise attacks, the war club was used in close combat and was a symbol of war and masculinity for these Mississippian warriors. Biedma, Elvas, Garcilaso, and Rangel report the use of these weapons in the battles and skirmishes during De Soto's expedition. David H. Dye, "Warfare in the Protohistoric Southeast," in *Between Contacts and Colonies: Archaeological Perspectives on the Protohistoric Southeast*, ed. Cameron B. Wesson and Mark a. Rees (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 128–32.

A chief addressing his warriors, who are armed, painted and plumed, and ready to march against the enemy. Drawn from life by Jacques le Moyne in 1564.

years of age, advanced, and a large circle was immediately formed around him. He placed a shield upon the ground, drew a ring around it five feet in diameter, in which he inscribed various characters. Then kneeling on the shield, and sitting on his feet, so as to touch the earth with no part of his body, he made the most horrible grimaces, uttered the most unnatural howls, and distorted his limbs until his very bones appeared to be flexible. In twenty minutes he ceased his infernal juggling, assumed his natural look, with apparently no fatigue, and gave the chief the information which he desired.* Some of our ancient natives marched in regular order, with the chief in the center, but it was their common habit to scatter in small parties, and take the enemy by surprise.[7] But in the arrangement of their camp, which was always made at sunset, they were exceedingly particular. They then stationed detachments around the chief, forming a compact and well-arranged defense.†

The women who had lost their husbands in battle, at a convenient time surrounded the chief, stooped at his feet, covered their faces with their hands, wept, and implored him to be revenged for the death of their companions. They entreated him to grant them an allowance during their widowhood, and to permit them to marry again when the time appointed by law expired. They afterwards visited the graves of their husbands and

* Le Moyne, plate 12.
† Le Moyne, plate 14.

[7] **Pickett used the sketches attributed to Le Moyne—plates 11, 12, 13, 14, and 33—in De Bry's *Brevis narration eorum quæ in Florida Americæ provincia Gallis acciderunt* and the Laudonnière-Le Moyne narrative to discuss the Florida Indians—Timucuans—encountered by De Soto's expedition. However, modern scholars question the origin, authenticity, and accuracy of these sketches. See Christiane F. Feest, "Jacques Le Moyne Minus Four," *European Review of Native American Studies* 2, No. 1 (1988): 33–38; Miles Harvey, *Painter in a Savage Land: The Strange Saga of the First European Artist in North America* (New York: Random House, 2008), 84–85.**

deposited upon them the arms which they used in hunts and wars, and the shells out of which they were accustomed to drink. Having cut off their long hair, they sprinkled it also over their graves, and then returned home. They did not marry until it had attained its ordinary length.*

The natives drank a tea, which, in modern times, was called black drink. It was made by boiling the leaves of the cassina plant until a strong decoction was produced. The chief took his seat, made of nine small poles, in the center of a semi-circle of seats; but his was the most elevated of all. His principal officers approached by turns, one at a time, and placing their hands upon the top of their heads, sung "*ha, he, ya, ha, ha*." The whole assembly responded, "*ha, ha*." After which they seated themselves upon his right and left. The women, in the meantime, had prepared the black drink, which was served up in conch shells and handed to certain men, who distributed it around. The warriors drank large portions of it, and presently vomited it with great ease.[8] It seemed to have been used at the early period of 1564, as it is at present, to purify the system, and also to fulfill a kind of religious rite.†

The punishments of that day were summary and cruel. For a crime deserving death, the criminal was conducted to the square and made to kneel with his body inclined forward. The executioner placed his left foot upon his back, and with a murderous blow with the sharp-sided club, dashed out his brains.‡ Juan Ortiz and his companions were stripped naked, and forced to run from corner to corner through the town while the exulting savages shot at them by turns with deadly arrows. Ortiz alone survived, and they next proceeded to roast him upon a wooden gridiron, when he was saved by the entreaties of a noble girl.§ Whenever they made prisoners of each other, those who were captured were often put to menial services.[9] To prevent them from running away, it was customary to cut the nerves of their legs just above the instep.¶

When a battle was fought, the victors seized upon the enemy and mutilated their bodies in the most brutal manner. With cane knives the arms and legs were cut around, and then severed from the body by blows upon the bones, from wooden cleavers. They thus amputated with great skill and rapidity. The head was also cut around, with these knives, just above the ears, and the whole scalp jerked off. These were then rapidly smoked over a fire, kindled in a small round hole, and borne off in triumph toward home, together with

[8] **The cassina tea or black drink was produced from roasted leaves of the yaupon holly and was used widely among southeastern Indians. Scholars generally agree that the Indians used it for three purposes: as a stimulating drink with a high caffeine content; as a medicine to improve their well-being; and as an emetic to induce vomiting. The most common ceremonial shell cup used has been identified as a lightning whelk (i.e., *Busycon perversum*). Charles M. Hudson, ed., *Black Drink: A Native American Tea* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 1–5; Jerald T. Milanich, "Origins and Prehistoric Distribution of Black Drink and the Ceremonial Shell Drinking Cup," Ibid., 83–88.**

[9] **While Biedma and Rangel provide no details of Juan Ortiz's captivity, Elvas gives considerable insights on his lengthy imprisonment. Garcilaso romanticizes his captivity and embellishes it with his killing "a lion"—maybe a wolf or panther but not a lion. He gives credit to Alonso de Carmona as his source for details of Ortiz's story. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 60–62, 225, 255; ibid., 2: 102–19; *De Soto Chronicles*, 80–82.**

* Le Moyne, plate 19.
† Le Moyne's Florida, plate 29.
‡ Le Moyne's Florida, plate 32.
§ Garcilaso de la Vega.
¶ Garcilaso de la Vega.

Indians engaged in scalping and cutting up the enemy. Drawn from life by Jacques le Moyne in 1564.

the arms and legs, suspended upon spears.* The joyous and excited inhabitants now assembled upon the square and formed a large area, in which these trophies were hung upon high poles. An old prophet took a position on one side of the circle, held in his hand a small image of a child, and danced and muttered over it a thousand imprecations upon the enemy.[10] On the other side, and opposite to him, three warriors fell upon their knees. One of them, who was in the middle, constantly brought down a club, with great force, on a smooth stone, placed before him, while the others, on either side of him, rattled gourds filled with shells and pebbles, all keeping time with the prophet.†

The houses of the chiefs, with but few exceptions, stood upon large and elevated artificial mounds. When the Indians of 1540 resolved to build a town, the site of which was usually selected upon low, rich land, by the side of a beautiful stream, they were accustomed, first, to turn their attention to the erection of a mound from twenty to fifty feet high, round on the sides, but flat on top. The top was capable of sustaining the houses of the chief, and those of his family and attendants; making a little village by itself of from ten to twenty cabins, elevated high in the air. The earth to make this mound was brought to the spot. At the foot of this eminence a square was marked out, around which the principal men placed their houses. The inferior classes joined these with their wigwams. Some of these mounds had several stairways

[10] **Pickett's description of the mutilated bodies of the Timucuans defeated enemies and the antics of the prophet are drawn from the De Bry renderings of Le Moyne's sketches and/or watercolors and the Laudonnière-Le Moyne narrative from the French colonizing effort in 1564—1565. De Bry, *Brevis narration eorum quæ in Florida Americæ provincia Gallis acciderunt*; Charles E. Bennett, *Laudonniere & Fort Caroline: History and Documents* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1964), 22–32.**

* Le Moyne, plate 15.
† Le Moyne, plate 16.

to ascend them, made by cutting out incline-planes fifteen or twenty feet wide, flanking the sides with posts, and laying poles horizontally across the earthen steps—thus forming a kind of wooden stairway. But, generally, the lofty residence of the chief was approached by only one flight of steps. These mounds were perpendicular, and inaccessible, except by the avenues already mentioned, which rendered the houses upon them secure from the attacks of an Indian enemy.[11] Besides the motive for security, a disposition to place the chief and his family in a commanding position, and to raise him above his subjects, caused the formation of these singular elevations.*

Upon the coasts of Florida, the houses were built of timber, covered with palm leaves, and thatched with straw. Those of Toa, between Apalachee and the Savannah, and for some distance beyond, were covered with reeds in the manner of tiles, while the walls were extremely neat. In the colder regions of the territories of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, every family possessed a house daubed inside and out with clay, for a winter house, and another, open all around, for summer; while a crib and kitchen, also, stood nearby. The houses of the chiefs, much larger than the others, had piazzas in front, in the rear of which were cane benches of comfortable dimensions.[12] They contained, also, lofts, in which were stored skins, mantles, and corn, the tribute of the subjects.† Upon the headwaters of the Coosa, it will be recollected, that De Soto found the house of a chief standing upon a mound, with a piazza in front, "large enough for six men to promenade abreast."‡ The town of Ochile, in Middle Florida, contained fifty very substantial houses.[13] The chief's house was built in the form of a large pavilion, upwards of one hundred and twenty feet in length by forty in width, with a number of small buildings, connected like offices.§ Narvaez found a house large enough to contain three hundred men, in which were fishing nets and a tabor with gold bells.¶ The Indian grandeur and spacious dimensions of the houses of Mabila, in Alabama, have already been described. In the province of Palisema, west of the Mississippi,[14] the house of the chief was covered with deerskins, which were painted with stripes of various colors, and with animals, while the walls were hung, and the floor carpeted, with the same materials.**

In the first town which De Soto discovered, at Tampa Bay, was found a

[11] **From their earliest contacts, the De Soto expedition encountered elevated artificial mounds with a chief's house and other structures that housed his extended family, retainers and guards. The De Soto chroniclers reported that the chiefdoms had mound and town centers that were often palisaded to provide for defense. Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 69, 126, 162, 290–91.**

[12] **While Pickett uses Toalli from Elvas's writings, Rangel refers to the river and town as Toa which is the name used by modern scholars. Rangel reports that Toa was a large town, and more recent researchers locate Toa in the upper Flint River watershed. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 75–77, 269–70; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 152–57, 468, 475, 480.**

[13] **Pickett continues to rely on Garcilaso's narrative, which misplaced Vitachuco and Ochile, belonging to the Apalachee province—not the Timucuan chiefdom. Garcilaso's Ochile is the equivalent of Biedma's Aguacalecuen, Elvas's Caliquen, and Rangel's Aguacaleyguen. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 66–67, 189 n.76, 226, 263–65; ibid., 2: 153–57, 153 n. 4; John H. Hann, "De Soto, Dobyns, and Demography in Western Timucua," *Florida Anthropologist* 43 (March 1990): 5–6.**

* Garcilaso de la Vega, 136.
† Portuguese Narrative, 701.
‡ Garcilaso de la Vega, 294.
§ Garcilaso de la Vega, 101.
¶ Herrera, vol. 4.
**Portuguese Narrative.

large temple, on the top of which was a wooden bird with gilded eyes.* The chief, Ucita, made Juan Ortiz keeper of the temple, situated in a lonely forest in the outskirts of the town. In this temple were deposited dead Indians, contained in wooden boxes, the lids of which, having no hinges, were kept down with weights.[15] The bodies and bones were sometimes carried off by panthers and wolves. In this horrible place was poor Ortiz stationed to watch, day and night, and threatened with instant death if he allowed a single body to be taken away. At length, constant anxiety and fatigue overcame him, and one night he fell asleep. The heavy falling of a coffin-lid awoke him. In his terror he seized a bow, and running out, heard the crackling of bones amid a dark clump of bushes! He winged a powerful arrow in that direction. A scuffle ensued, and then all was still! He moved towards the spot, and found an enormous panther, dead, by the side of the body of the child of a principal Indian. He replaced the latter in its box, exultingly dragged the animal into the town, and was from that time respected by the Indians.†

Narvaez, upon first landing in Florida, found a temple in which were chests, each containing a dead body, covered with painted deerskins. The commissary, Juan Xuárez,[16] considering it to be idolatrous, ordered them to be burned.‡ A remarkable temple was situated in the town of Talimeco, upon the Savannah River, three miles distant from Cofitachequi, now Silver Bluff. It was more than one hundred feet in length, and forty in width. The walls were high in proportion, and the roof steep and covered with mats of split cane, interwoven so compactly that they resembled the rush carpeting of the Moors. (The inhabitants of this part of the country all covered their houses with this matting.) Shells of different sizes, arranged in an ingenious manner, were placed on the outside of the roof. On the inside, beautiful plumes, shells and pearls were suspended in the form of festoons, from one to the other, down to the floor. The temple was entered by three gates, at each of which were stationed gigantic wooden statues, presenting fierce and menacing attitudes. Some of them were armed with clubs, maces, canoe-paddles, and copper hatchets, and others with drawn bows and long pikes. All these implements were ornamented with rings of pearls and bands of copper. Below the ceiling, on four sides of the temple, arranged in niches, were two rows of wooden statues of the natural size—one of men, with pearls suspended from their hands, and the other of women.[17]

On the side of the walls were large benches on which sat boxes containing

* Portuguese Narrative, 701.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, 274–82.

‡ Herrera, 4: 30.

[14] While Elvas uses Palisema and describes the interior of the cacique's house, Rangel calls this village Palisma and reports they reached it on Thursday, 8 September 1541. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 123, 208 n. 209, 304.

[15] Pickett and Garcilaso retell the Ortiz captivity saga based largely on Elvas's *La Florida*. While Rangel uses Oçita, modern scholars use variations of the spelling of Ucita, including Ecita, Ocita, and Uzita. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 57–61, 186 n. 48, 186 n. 51, 254; Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*, 53–54.

[16] Father Juan Xuárez served as commissary with the expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez in 1527–1528. Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*, trans. Fanny Bandelier; revised trans. Harold Augenbraum (1905; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 14.

[17] Talimeco was part of the chiefdom of Cofitachequi in the vicinity of Camden, South Carolina—not near Augusta, Georgia, on the Savannah River. Rangel reports the "temple or oratory" contained breastplates, corselets, helmets, and "good shields," all made from "hides of cows." He was impressed with the "caney or house of the cacique" which was covered

the deceased chiefs and their families. Two feet below these were statues of the persons entombed, the space between them being filled with shields of various sizes, made of strong woven reeds, adorned with pearls and colored tassels. Three rows of chests, full of valuable pearls, occupied the middle of the temple. Deerskins, of a variety of colors, were packed away in chests, together with a large amount of clothing made of the skins of wildcat, martin, and other animals.[18] The temple abounded in the most splendid mantles of feathers. Adjoining was a store-house, divided into eight apartments, which contained long pikes of copper, around which rings of pearls were coiled, while clubs, maces, wooden swords, paddles, arrows, quivers, bows, round wooden shields, and those of reeds and buffalo hide, were decorated in like manner.* Everywhere upon the route through Alabama and the neighboring states, De Soto found the temples full of human bones. They were held sacred, but sometimes were wantonly violated by tribes at war with each other. On the west bank of the Mississippi, De Soto, joined by the Indian forces of the chief Casqui, sacked the town of Pacaha. The invading Indians entered the temple, threw down the wooden boxes containing the dead, trampled upon the bodies and bones, and wreaked upon them every insult and indignity.[19] A few days after the chief of Pacaha and his people came back to the ruined town, and gathering up the scattered bones in mournful silence, kissed and returned them reverentially to their coffins.†

The productions of the country were abundant. Peas, beans, squashes, pumpkins and corn grew as if by magic. Persimmons, formed into large cakes, were eaten in winter, together with walnut and bear's oil. A small pumpkin, when roasted in the embers, was delightful, and resembled, in taste, boiled chestnuts. Corn was pounded in mortars, but Narvaez saw stones for grinding it upon the Florida coast.‡ The Indians prepared their fields by digging up the ground with hoes made of fish bone. When the earth was leveled in this manner, others followed with canes, with which they made holes, certain distances apart. The women next came with corn, in baskets, which they dropped in the holes. The virginity and richness of the soil produced the crop without further labor. [See Frontispiece.] The granaries were sometimes erected in the woods, near navigable streams, and were constructed with stone and dirt, and covered with cane mats. Here were deposited corn, fruits, and all kinds of cured meat, for subsistence during the winter hunts in that part of the country. The universal honesty of the people was a guarantee that the

* Garcilaso de la Vega, 274–82.

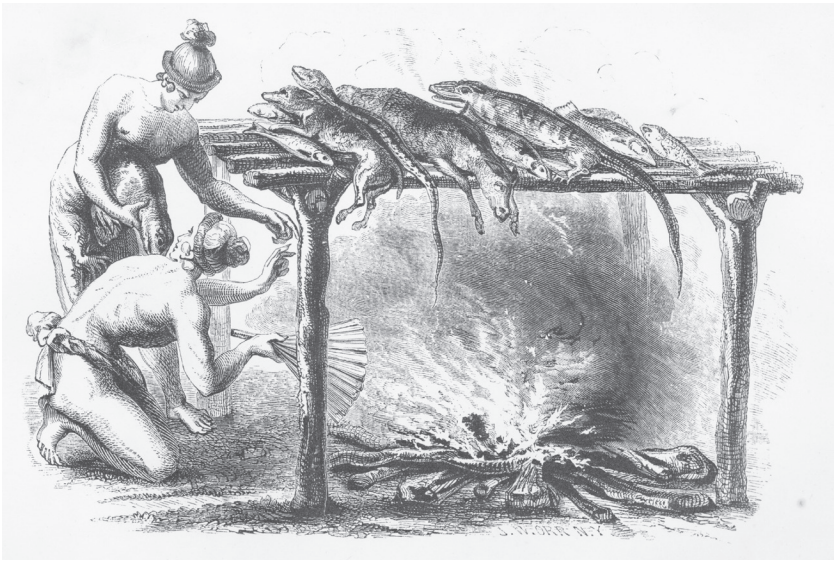
† Portuguese Narrative, 701.

‡ Herrera, 4: 30.

with excellent and beautiful mats. Unlike Garcilaso, Rangel does not mention the wooden statutes in the temple or that Talimeco had been deserted due to a "recent pestilence." *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 195 n. 118, 280; ibid., 2: 298–304; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 178–79.

[18] Elvas provides some additional details of the temple at Talimeco, and he also shares that "two years ago there had been a plague in the land." However, Garcilaso's detailed description here is based on his access to the lost works of Alonso de Carmona, Juan Coles, and an anonymous source—possibly Captain Gonzalo Silvestre. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 83, 406; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 178–79.

[19] The chiefdom of Casqui was located on the St. Francis River in Arkansas some twenty miles northwest of modern Memphis, Tennessee. The province of Pacaha and its principal town was located on Wapanocca Bayou, about twenty miles north of Memphis, in Crittenden County, Arkansas. Biedma and Rangel report that that these two chiefdoms were bitter enemies and often at war. Biedma describes Pacaha as "well palisaded and with a moat of water around it." Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*, 118; *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 238,



Indians preparing meats to be deposited in their winter hunt houses. Drawn from life by Jacques le Moyne in 1564.

contents of these granaries would remain undisturbed, until consumed by the owners.[20]

Hunting and fishing occupied much of the time of the natives. The hunter threw over his body the skin of a deer, with the head, horns and legs admirably preserved. Round wooden hoops gave the body of the skin its proper shape, inside of which the Indian placed his body. Then, in a stooping position, so as to allow the feet to touch the ground, he moved along and peeped through the eye-holes of the deer's head, all the time having a drawn bow. When near enough to the deer, he let fly a fatal arrow.[21] The deer, in that day, unaccustomed to the noise of firearms, were gentle and numerous, and easily killed by a stratagem like this.*

At certain periods the Indians were a social people, and indulged in large feasts. At other times, they resorted to bow-shooting, ball-plays and dancing.†

The population was much greater when De Soto was in the country than it has been since. Large armies were frequently arrayed against him. In Patofa, Florida, he was even furnished with seven hundred burden bearers. In Ocute, Georgia, he was supplied with two hundred of these indispensable men. At Cofaqui, in the same state, four thousand warriors escorted him, while four thousand more transported the effects of his army. It has been seen what a

* Le Moyne's Florida, plate 25; Bossu, *Travels Through That Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana*, 1: 259.

† Le Moyne, plate 28.

241, 301; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 293–95, 298–303.

[20] From Florida to the Mississippi River Valley, the De Soto chroniclers talk less about the farming techniques of the Mississippian peoples and more about the variety of foods and the abundance or lack of corn—maize. Elvas reported that the town of Coligua along the White River in Arkansas had such an abundance of "maize" that they threw out the old "in order to store the new." He also wrote that the beans and pumpkins were superior to those in Spain. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 81, 95, 122–23, 241, 304; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 123–24, 127, 315.

[21] Pickett's description of the stalking of deer comes directly from De Bry's rendering of a sketch or watercolor attributed to Jacques le Moyne. See plate number XXV in De Bry, *Brevis narration*.

numerous population was found in the province of Coosa, and what forces opposed him at Mabila, Chicaza and Alibamo.[22]

The ingenuity of the natives, displayed in the construction of mounds, arms, houses and ornaments, was by no means inconsiderable. At Chaguate, west of the Mississippi, earthenware was manufactured equal to that of Estremoz or Montemor.* At Tula, in Arkansas, salt was made from the deposits formed upon the shores of a lake; and again, at several saline springs.[23] The salt was made into small cakes, and vended among other tribes for skins and mantles.† The walls which surrounded the towns, with their towers and terraces, have already been mentioned in the preceding chapter. Entrenchments and ditches were also found over the country. The most remarkable of the latter was at Pacaha, west of the Mississippi. Here a large ditch, "wide enough for two canoes to pass abreast without the paddles touching," surrounded a walled town. It was cut nine miles long, communicated with the Mississippi, supplied the natives with fish and afforded them the privileges of navigation.[24]

The construction of canoes and barges, connected with the things which have already been enumerated, affords abundant proof that our aborigines were superior, in some respects, to the tribes who afterwards occupied Alabama, but who were also ingenious in the manufacture of articles. The queen of Savannah, borne out of her house in a sedan chair, supported upon the shoulders of four of her principal men, entered a handsome barge which had a tilted top at the stern—under which she took a seat upon soft cushions. Many principal Indians likewise entered similar barges, and accompanied her to the western side, in the style of a splendid water procession.[25] When De Soto first discovered the Mississippi, a chief approached from the other side with two hundred handsome canoes of great size, filled with painted and plumed warriors, who stood erect, with bows in their hands, to protect those who paddled. The boats of the chiefs and principal men had tops—like that of the Georgia queen—decorated with waving flags and plumes, which floated on the breeze from poles to which they were attached.[26] They are described by the journalists to have been equal to a beautiful army of galleys.‡

The natives worshipped the sun, and entertained great veneration for the moon, and certain stars. Whether they also believed in a Great

* Portuguese Narrative and Garcilaso.
† Portuguese Narrative and Garcilaso.
‡ Portuguese Narrative, 729.

[22] The De Soto expedition seized or requisitioned burden bearers or *tamemes*—loosely translated as porters or "carriers of loads on their backs"—from Florida to Arkansas. Pickett seems to have transposed some information, and the four thousand burden bearers cannot be documented by the De Soto chroniclers. Elvas records that the cacique of Ocute provided four hundred *tamemes* and the caciques at Ulibahali and Tallise gave the "necessary *tamemes*." Biedma reports that the cacique of Cofaqui "provided eight hundred Indians to carry our food and cloths" and others to serve as guides. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 77, 94–95, 194 n. 110, 229, 273.

[23] Not only did the people of Chaguate produce pottery of "refined clay," but Elvas reported that they presented the expedition with "a rich gift of blankets and skins." Both Elvas and Rangel report the Spaniards produced an abundance of salt at Tula, near modern Fort Smith, Arkansas. Ibid., 1: 140–41,149, 209 n. 213, 305; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 353–58.

[24] Biedma and Rangel confirm Elvas's description of Pacaha. Biedma notes that the town was heavily palisaded and surrounded by a moat "dug by hand." Rangel provides a more detailed comment, declaring Pacaha "very well palisaded, with towers on the walls, and with a ditch roundabout, and most filled with water, which enters through an irrigation ditch that flows from the river [Mississippi]." *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 117–18, 239, 301; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*,

Spirit is not stated. When the Indian ambassadors crossed the Savannah to meet De Soto, they made three profound bows towards the east, intended for the sun; three towards the west, for the moon; and three to the governor.* Upon the east bank of the Mississippi, all the Indians approached him without uttering a word, and went through precisely the same ceremony; making, however, to him three bows much less reverential than those made to the sun and moon. On the other side of that river, he was surrounded by the chief and his subjects. Presently, his Indian majesty sneezed in a loud manner. The subjects bowed their heads, opened and closed their arms, and saluted the chief with these words, "may the sun guard you"—"may the sun be with you"—"may the sun shine upon you"—and "may the sun prosper and defend you."† About the first of March, annually, the natives selected the skin of the largest deer, with the head and legs attached. They filled it with a variety of fruit and grain, and sewed it up again. The horns were also hung with garlands of fruit. This skin, in all respects resembling a large buck, was carried by all the inhabitants to a plain. There it was placed upon a high post, and just at the rising of the sun, the Indians fell down on their knees around it, and implored that bright luminary to grant them, the ensuing season, an abundance of fruits and provisions, as good as those contained in the skin of the deer.‡ This was the practice upon the coast of East Florida, and, doubtless, it was observed all over the country. It was certainly a very practical mode of asking favors of the sun.

When a chief or prophet died upon the St. John, he was placed in the ground, and a small mound, of conical form, was erected over him. The base of this mound was surrounded with arrows, stuck in regular order. Some sat, and others kneeled around it, and continued to weep and howl for the space of three nights. Chosen women next visited the mound for a long time, every morning at the break of day, at noon, and at night.§ Indeed, great respect appears to have been paid to the chief when alive, and to him a cruel sacrifice was accustomed to be made. The first born male child was always brought out before the chief, who sat upon a bench on one side of a large circle. Before him was a block, two feet high, and near it stooped the young mother, weeping in great agony. The child was brought forward by a dancing woman, placed upon

* Garcilaso de la Vega, 256.
† Garcilaso de la Vega, 439–40.
‡ Le Moyne, plate 35.
§ Le Moyne, plate 40.

293–95.

[25] The De Soto chroniclers referred to Pickett's "queen of Savannah" as the "La Senora of Cofitachequi"—the Lady of Cofitachequi. At one point in his narrative, Rangel talks about De Soto's greed and how he wanted more than the "queen or cacica of Cofitachequi, lady of Talimeco, offered him." Garcilaso compares the meeting between De Soto and the Lady of Cofitachequi with when Cleopatra received Marc Antony on the "River Cydnus in Cilicia . . . though inferior in grandeur and majesty." More recent research places Cofitachequi in the valley of the Congaree-Broad River basin in South Carolina and near Columbia, South Carolina. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 82–83, 195 n. 118, 229, 290; ibid., 284–86; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 175.

[26] Elvas refers to the "great lord of Aquixo" who arrived with the "two hundred canoes full of Indians" with bows and arrows and shields to protect the paddlers. Although De Soto, walking along the bluff of the Mississippi, invited the cacique to land, he only sent three canoes to deliver fish "and loaves made of the pulp of plums in the shape of bricks." Rangel reports a confrontation on the Mississippi, but he does not mention Elvas's "beautiful galleys." The Spaniards finished their piraguas during their thirty-day stay south of Memphis and then crossed the Mississippi into Arkansas. *De Soto Chronicles*, 1: 111–13; 2: 389–90; Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 284–87.

Indians bearing, in a chair, a young girl, who has been selected as one of the future wives of the king. Drawn from life by Jacques le Moyne in 1564.

the block, and a prophet dashed out its brains with a club; at the same time many females danced, and raised their voices in song.*

If a chief desired to marry, he was accustomed to send his principal men to select, from the girls of nobility, one of the youngest and most beautiful. Painted with various colors and adorned with shells and pearls, the chosen one was then placed in a sedan chair, the top of which formed an arch of green boughs. When placed by his side, on an elevated seat, great pomp and ceremony, an array of ornaments of all kinds, and music and dancing, characterized the affair, while she and her lord were fanned with beautiful feathers.

The treatment of diseases in that day were few and simple. The doctor sometimes scarified the patient with shells and fishes teeth, and sucked out the blood with his mouth. This he spurted in a bowl, and it was drunk by nursing women who stood by, if the patient was an athletic young man, in order to give their children the same vigor. It was customary, also, to smoke the patient with tobacco, and other weeds, until perspiration ensued and re-action was produced.†

* Le Moyne, plate 34.
† Le Moyne, plate 20.