



Episode 908, Story 3 – Florida Map

Tukufu Zuberi: This case investigates how a fated map may have been connected to the imperial conquest of the New World. May, 1539. Nine Spanish ships appear off a sandy New World coast. On deck, explorer Hernando de Soto and his men prepare their quest for adventure and riches. As the ships glide to their beach landing, de Soto christens the spot “Espiritu Santo,” “the Holy Spirit”. But the world already knew the area by another name – la Florida. This golden land looms large in the imaginations of Spain’s European rivals, each eager to map their own path to the new world.

Tukufu: Now a woman from Ocala, Florida owns a map that is unlike any map she has ever seen.

Ruth Sandholm: I have always wanted to follow this map into Florida’s past.

Tukufu: I’m starting my investigation by visiting Ruth Sandholm.

Ruth: Hello, I’m Ruth. Come right in.

Tukufu: Thank you very much

Ruth: Here is the map.

Tukufu: Ah-ha.

Ruth: Should I take it off the wall?



Tukufu: Yes

Ruth: My son bought this for me about 15 years ago in an antique shop in Savannah, Georgia.

Tukufu: So did the dealer provide your son with any information about the map?

Ruth: The dealer told him that it is from 1681.

Tukufu: Now, do you believe that?

Ruth: I don't know. I immigrated to this country many years ago and I don't know that much about the history of Florida.

Tukufu: She's perplexed by the unusual geographic features on the map, such as the border with Canada, and the unusual shape of the Florida peninsula.

Ruth: The title is Florida but Florida is completely different from today. And it is mostly Spanish and there is also some French. And I don't recognize the names.

Tukufu: What are your questions?

Ruth: I would like to know who made it and when?

Tukufu: Okay. Now, do you mind if I take this with me?



Ruth: No, go right ahead.

Tukufu: Okay. Do you mind if I take it out of the frame?

Ruth: No, take it out. Thank you.

Tukufu: Somehow they've taped the map to the map board. I'm not going to bother that at all. This looks like an old piece of paper. It appears to have been hand painted. Although I'm not sure it was drawn by hand. In fact I see some kind of border here which is suggestive that it may have actually been printed. And here you have something written, 1681. This notation was almost certainly added later. It's not printed on the map, it's just kind of written there, in pencil.

The penciled date can't help me authenticate it. There is no printer, or cartographer's name. And as Ruth noted, the map has multiple languages on it. Most of the villages or missions are in Spanish, as are the names "Florida," and "Mexico," which makes sense. Lac Erie and Tropicque appear French. But the English word "of" is sprinkled all over the map. At the end of the 17th century, Florida was a European battleground. Spain had claimed the territory for its empire in 1513 when Ponce de Leon arrived amidst rumors of undiscovered gold and a fountain of youth. In the 1530s, Hernando de Soto explored Florida for the Spanish crown. However, Spain's control of Florida had soon attracted attention and by 1681 a variety of European nations had their eyes on this strategic destination.

In fact, the entire area was being contested. You had the British, you had the Spanish, you had the French, and they're all in contention for control over this



particular area. Is this map from that era? Will Fleishell is a fine arts printmaker and engraver in Washington, D.C. So this is what I have.

Will Fleishell: Ah, can I take a look at that?

Tukufu: Please do.

Will: Oh boy!

Tukufu: Is this a map from the 17th century?

Will: This looks like some pretty old paper to me.

Tukufu: Will points out what he calls sieve lines on the paper.

Will: This is definitely hand made paper.

Tukufu: He explains how macerated cotton was sifted through a sieve, or screen. As the water fell through the sieve, the cotton left on top would flatten and eventually dried into paper with the marks from the sieve left behind.

Will: A cotton rag paper is resilient. It can last for centuries. It's incredibly durable.

Tukufu: Will compares our map to a piece of paper from 1712 that was made from the same technique.

Will: In my opinion, this is a piece of paper from the late 1600s.



Tukufu: But Will says the period paper doesn't prove the map was made in that era. He spots another clue.

Will: Those are plate marks.

Tukufu: Exactly what do you mean by that is a plate mark?

Will: A plate mark is the embossing that is made from a plate when it sits on a paper and run through a press and you can still see a plate mark hundreds of years later and the plate mark is indicative that this was made from a copper plate.

Tukufu: A copper plate?

Will: A copper plate. This is not a hand drawn map.

Tukufu: Will offers to demonstrate how our map was made. He engraves a design into the copper plate with a sharp tool called a burin.

Will: I'm exerting enough pressure to get the tool into the copper.

Tukufu: Then ink is added.

Will: You can see that the ink is going into the lines. I come around here and I grab the paper which has been soaking here.



Tukufu: Will uses great force to create a print – force which leaves a clear plate mark

Will: This made a mold of the copper plate and you can see the plate mark.

Tukufu: Where are they?

Will: Plate marks are right around the edge.

Tukufu: Will tells me the strong plate mark is a trademark of metal presses, which became popular in the 18th century. In contrast, the faint plate mark on our map suggests that it was printed on a wooden press, which used less pressure.

Will: They were wooden presses for the most part up until about 1750s or so.

Tukufu: So we got the old paper. We have the right kind of etchings. So all of this is indicative of a 17th century map?

Will: It looks genuine to me.

Tukufu: So who made it?

Will: It's very possible that one artist did the etching, another artist did the actual engraving. Maybe even another artist did the lettering. That's possible because already at this time period in the 16-1700s there was a division of labor in the professional print making shops in Europe.



Tukufu: But Will doubts if the multiple artisans who made the map account for the map's different languages. I'm on my way to see Daniel Murphree, an author and professor of colonial Florida history. He has asked me to meet him at the oldest masonry fort in the United States, the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument in St. Augustine, Florida.

Tukufu: How ya doin'?

Daniel Murphree: Hi, how are you? Welcome to Castillo de St. Marcos.

Tukufu: Daniel explains how the fort, built on a narrow inlet off the Atlantic, was central to the international conquest for Florida in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Daniel: This is a fort built to protect the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine. This was a time of great conflict and colonization between imperial rivalries, the French, the Spanish and the English. And so the fort was very important to allowing the Spanish to maintain control of Florida as long as they did.

Tukufu: Have you ever seen this map before?

Daniel: I've seen maps quite similar but I've never seen this exact map.

Tukufu: Can you talk about what was happening here in Florida around 1681?

Daniel: Well until the 18th century, most of the present day U.S. Southeast was depicted as La Florida. This was a term that the Spanish first coined, but it



persisted for a long time. Florida was considered to encompass the region all the way to present day Canada.

Tukufu: It says here, the Gulf of Mexico – New Spain. What is that?

Daniel: Those are our clues that this is an English-made map. Because New Spain, Nuevo Espana, would have been the way the Spanish said it.

Tufuku: So this map would have been written from the English point of view?

Daniel: Yes. I think so. In the late 17th century the English were spreading into North America. They had just established the colony of South Carolina and they were looking to add Florida to their empire. At the time there was still a belief that in Florida you could find mineral wealth. You could find agricultural wealth. Perhaps you could still find some type of fountain of youth.

Tukufu: But there are at least three languages represented in this map.

Daniel: Well I think this map represents kind of a hybrid of Spanish, French and English interpretations of North America. You see some of the earliest Spanish designations on this map which probably came from the Hernando de Soto expedition.

Tukufu: Daniel says Coza, Quignante and Guancane are examples of this.

Daniel: But you also see reference to some of the French settlements for instance you see Ft. Caroline on the east coast. And that was the first French



settlement attempt in this region back in the 1560s. They're looking at places that maybe they can obtain now that they're the growing power in the world.

Tukufu: So the British are coming?

Daniel: Correct. For instance, in 1702 the English invaded from South Carolina.

Tukufu: The target, again, was St. Augustine. Led by Colonel James Moore Jr., a force of 500 Englishmen over 300 Yamasee Indians sailed down the Georgia coast and attacked the city from the sea. As over 1,000 of the city's residents huddled inside the fort walls English cannons pounded the stone.

Daniel: They destroyed the settlement of St. Augustine but they were unable to penetrate the walls of this fort.

Tukufu: Who was the Englishman that made our map and why? Was it for James Moore's invading army? The Library of Congress in Washington D.C. holds more than five million maps in its collection. John Hebert, Chief of Geography and Map Division, helped me with the Vicksburg map investigation many years ago.

Tukufu: John how are you doing?

John Hebert: How ya doin, it's been a while since I've seen you.

Tukufu: It has.

John: Good to see you.



Tukufu: He suggests we start our search in the Map and Geography Division reference section.

Tukufu: All right. So. Here's what we have. I know that this was an actual engraving from the 17th century and I even have a date on here, 1681. I don't know if that's helpful.

John: It's all helpful. It's all helpful

Tufuku: I ask John if the map was made for James Moore's invasion of St. Augustine. He doubts it because English military maps were larger. But he has a hunch where our map came from.

John: We have this guide which is a guide to maps of the southeast. And it is quite extensive. It covers mapping of what is now the southeast U.S., Florida being part of that, from 1500 forward.

Tufuku: Okay.

John: Well, here's a 1681 map of Florida. The size is the size of this piece practically. It's four and a half by three and three quarter inches. And it appeared in Sir Jonas Moore's "A New Geography and Maps to Each Country, Third Book."

Tukufu: John says that Sir Jonas Moore was the head director of the Ordnance Survey in England, making official maps for the Crown. But Moore's publication such as this atlas reference were a more commercial venture, selling to a public



which was curious to learn about the new world British explorers discovering and conquering.

Tukufu: So it's possible that our map is in that book.

John: Yes.

Tukufu: We're getting close.

John: It surely looks pretty close to what it could be. We don't know until we actually pull it out, but absolutely.

Tukufu: Let's check out some maps.

John: Let's do it.

Tukufu: The library's most important maps are in an area called "the vault".

John: So let's see if we can find your map.

Tukufu: John locates the section on American maps in Moore's commercial volume.

John: We're getting warm. Here we go. Here's a map of Florida.

Tukufu: Okay.



John: Looks very similar in size to the one you have.

Tukufu: It does. I mean you know everything looks almost exactly like my map. Except for my map is in color.

John: Ours are uncolored. This is the original way the version came. In addition you notice that above our map is a map of New Mexico, showing California as an island.

Tukufu: Yes.

John: Obviously yours had that at one time. It's been separated, cut.

Tukufu: But if our map was made by Sir Jonas Moore and made for the general public then why isn't it all in English? John thinks he knows.

Tukufu: I just wanted to tell you, I think this was a special story. One reason it's special is because you decided to share a gift from your son with us, and I really appreciate that. And this map had a wonderful story to tell. You wanted to know, was this map made in the 17th century?

Ruth: Yes.

Tukufu: And we were able to confirm that this map was made in the 17th century.

Ruth: Thank you. I really appreciate that.



Tukufu: You also wanted to know who made the map.

Ruth: Yes.

Tukufu: This map was made by an Englishman named Sir Jonas Moore.

Ruth: That's interesting.

Tukufu: Well, our journey to answer your question got particularly interesting when we attempted to find out why there was Spanish, English, and French on this map.

John: In 1670, Pierre du Val produced this little atlas of the world. In fact, it's called "Le Monde."

Tukufu: As geographer to the King of France, du Val was an influential and prolific leading French map maker.

John: Here is du Val's map of Florida.

Tukufu: Wow!

John: Wow!

Tukufu: Du Val's map is exactly like Moore's map.

John: Moore is borrowing from du Val.



Tukufu: John says borrowing from other sources to make new maps was a common practice in the 17th century. For cartographers like Moore and du Val, map making was part science, part imagination and part pilfering. Building off information of those who came before – their charts inspired conquest and made colonization possible in the new world.

Ruth: I think, it's great. It's wonderful. And I appreciate all you have done – all the research. Thank you.