

SOME EARLY FRENCH GUIANA TRACTS  
AN ADDITION TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EL DORADO  
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## I

A YEAR ago a bookseller sent on approval to the John Carter Brown Library a tract entitled *Projet d'une compagnie pour l'Amerique*. The little book was offered in all good faith as a piece that related to a hitherto unknown French scheme for the settlement of Florida. This relationship was affirmed furthermore in an accompanying bibliographical note written over the signature of a bookman learned in the matter of American origins. The Library purchased the book, finally, on its own estimation of it as one of a group of writings published in connection with a mid-seventeenth century scheme for the colonization of Guiana. The effort to bring the owner of the tract to the acceptance of this view resulted in the recognition and the listing in series of a group of Guiana tracts that formerly had not appeared in the bibliographies. It is the character of this by-product that seems to justify setting forth here what otherwise would have been a routine investigation.

The title and description of the pamphlet are as follows:

(1) *Projet d'une compagnie pour l'Amerique*.  
n. p. n. d. (c. 1651)

Sm. 4to. A<sup>4</sup>, pages 1-8, comprising text, with heading as above and with head piece of type flowers and ornamental initial letter. Place and date of publication not given, but see note to no. 2, in the ensuing series of titles. The following

paragraph occurs at end: "Ceux qui voudront estre plus amplement instruits de ce dessein, s'adresseront chez Monsieur Blanche Notaire au Chastelet de Paris dans la ruë des Assises au coin de la ruë S. Iacques de la Boucherie, & ils scauront en ce lieu les personnes à qui il faudra parler." (J. C. B.)

Here follows a synopsis of the note that came with the book:

*Location.* Refers to the mainland by implication, because the islands inhabited by the French are mentioned in contradistinction to the situation of the proposed colony. The coast must be the east coast of Florida because of the fine climate, perpetual spring, flowers and foliage; because the animals and plants mentioned belong to Florida; and because the description of the route across as consuming only a month or five weeks, no rocks, no capes, wind aft, etc., indicates a landfall on the east coast of Florida as the end of the journey.

*Date.* After 1632 because the ornamental initial "P," in this pamphlet showing signs of wear, is used in Claude Collet's "Les Voyages de Champlain," Paris, 1632. Probably about the year 1642, for reasons derived from a consideration of the European political situation at that time.

When the book first came to the Library for examination, I was inclined to accept as strongly probable its Florida association. A friend who looked through it, however, suggested that its descriptions of climate and of fauna and flora might refer to Central America or to the north coast of South America as fittingly as to Florida, and as this comment was uttered there was born an uneasiness that led me after many days to consult the Oracle that sits at Fifth Avenue and Forty Second Street. Mr. Eames replied that he had never seen or heard of the tract, but that it reminded him somehow of a pamphlet in the British Museum entitled: "*Memoire pour servir de breve instruction, etc. . . .*" As this *Memoire* had recently been issued in the series of photostat reprints that we know as the Massachusetts Historical Society Facsimiles the next step in the investigation was easy. Thereafter, "one book opening another," I found that the *Memoire* was one of a series of six tracts that deal with the project for the colonization of Guiana instituted by Estienne le Roux,

Seigneur de Royville, in the year 1651, and that five tracts pertaining to this "Compagnie de Terre ferme de l'Amerique ou France Equinoctiale" already had been issued as part of Mr. Ford's valuable facsimiles. The colonization scheme in question was one of the best known French efforts for the settlement of Guiana, and I believe and hope to show that the *Projet* offered to us last fall as a Florida item was printed soon after the formation of the Compagnie on August 29, 1651, and that it has a definite place as the first number in this series of Guiana tracts. Because the Seigneur de Royville was the principal concessionaire of the grant in question, it will be well to designate the following tracts as the Royville series:

- (1) *Projet d'une Compagnie.* (Previously described)
- (2) *Acte d'Association passé entre les sous-signez, & Reconnu pardeuant Rallu & Blanche Notaires, pour l'établissement des Colonies dans la Terre Ferme de l'Amerique.*

4to. A<sup>4</sup>; pages 1-8; text with heading as above, head piece of type flowers and ornamental initial; p. 7: conclusion of *Acte*, signed "De la Boulaye, le Roux de Royville, de l'Isle Marivault, & F. Dolu," dated August 29, 1651; (p. 8: signed, "Rallu." "Blanche." and dated September 4, 1651.) Although this *Acte* was accomplished before the publication of the *Projet*, which says "Plusieurs personnes . . . ont fait une Compagnie," yet I think it was not published until after the *Projet* had appeared in print. It contains the names of the concessionaires and other specific information. It would not have been reasonable to publish these matters and later to publish the *Projet* and leave out of it the names of the principals and the name of the company itself. Therefore I place the *Acte* as second in the series headed by the *Projet*. (Bib. Nat., No. 118, MHS. Facsimiles).

- (3) *Lettres Patentes dv Roy, en Forme de Concession, accordées aux sieurs de l'Isle Mariuault, de Royuille & leurs Associez pour l'Etablissement des Colonies dans la Terre Ferme de l'Amerique.*

4to. A<sup>4</sup>; pages 1-7: text with heading as above with decorative woodcut head piece and ornamental initial; p. 7: conclusion of concession dated September 1651; p. 8: blank. (Bib. Nat., No. 134, MHS. Facsimiles.)

(4) Articles et Statvts passez & arrestez entre les Seigneurs associez de la Compagnie de Terre ferme de l'Amerique ou France Equinoctiale, pour l'establissement du Christianisme, commerce & negoce audit pays, en consequence des Lettres patentes du Roy accordées aux sieurs de Royuille & de Lisle Mariuault & leurs associez: et de l'acte d'association passé pardeuant Rallu & Blanche Notaires au Chastelet de Paris le 4. Septembre 1651.

4to. A-E<sup>4</sup>, (E<sup>4</sup>, probably blank); pages 1-37: text with heading as above and with decorative head piece and ornamental initial; p. 37: dated at end, May 3, 1652; p. 38, blank. (Bib. Nat., No. 64 in MHS. Facsimiles.)

(5) Memoire povr servir de breve instruction, tant aux Directeurs & Commissionnaires Provinciaux de la grande Compagnie de l'Amerique, qu'à ceux qui s'y voudront interesser, ou passer dans le País. [Royal Arms] A Paris, chez Gvillavme de Lvyne, Marchand Libraire au Palais, sous la montée de la Cour des Aydes. M. DC. LIII.

4to. A-B<sup>4</sup>, C<sup>4</sup> with an inserted leaf, numbered 25 and 26, D<sup>4</sup>, E<sup>2</sup> (E<sup>2</sup> probably blank); pages 1-34, should be 1-36 as pp. 25 and 26 are repeated. Contains a general description of the country and of the scheme, together with blank forms of agreement, indenture, etc. (Bib. Nat., No. 68 in MHS. Facsimiles.)

A variant issue of this tract in the British Museum ends on page 35 instead of page 34 and has part of page 33 and all of page 34 reset, with additional matter relating to the opportunities for the religious education of youth in the colony.

(6) Lettre escrite de Cayenne; contenant ce qvi s'est passé en la descente des François, & leur establissement en l'Amerique. [Decorative device] A Paris; chez Gvillavme de Lvyne, Marchand Libraire, au Palais, sous la montée de la Cour des Aydes. M. DC. LIII.

Sm. 4to. A-B<sup>4</sup>, (B<sup>4</sup> probably blank); pages 1-14; p. 1: title, verso blank; pp. 3-14: text with heading, decorative head piece and ornamental initial. In this letter by one of the faction responsible for Royville's death are related the events leading up

to that catastrophe, the landing and beginnings of the colony. (Bib. Nat., No. 88 in MHS. Facsimiles.)

The interest that one feels in this series of titles is quickened when investigation shows that only one of them is mentioned in the chief bibliography that deals with Guiana. Ternaux-Compans (*Notice historique sur Guyane Française*, Paris, 1843.) knew only of the *Lettre écrite*. It is further remarkable that the six items are represented in each case by single known copies. Five of the titles are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, a variant of one of these is in the British Museum and the latest to be identified, the *Projet*, is at Providence. The Massachusetts Historical Society Facsimile Series with its intended reproduction of the *Projet* will soon have completed its republication of the whole group of pamphlets. That these tracts have been added to our resources is owing to the breadth and inclusiveness of the plan of that series and to the sensitiveness of the editor's instinct for the rare and important in early Americana.

The typographical features of the six pamphlets, two of them bearing the imprint of Guillaume de Luyne, are of such a character that one is not able to claim an identical typographical origin as evidence of their unity. All of them are printed in the letter commonly used by the better Parisian printers of the day. The use in the *Projet* of the ornamental "P" from Champlain's *Les Voyages de la Nouvelle France*, Claude Collet, Paris, 1632, might point to the Collet establishment as the place of origin of that tract; the use of a head piece in the *Lettres patentes* and in the *Articles et statuts* of a different size but of the same design as one in the Champlain might suggest the Collet shop as the source of these two tracts also, and the identity of the typographical flowers in the *Acte* and in the *Projet* might point to a common typographical derivation for these two productions. I believe, however, that the identification of printers by types and ornaments is a dangerous method to employ when dealing with the produc-

tions of cities where many printers were at work with much the same equipment in their type cases, for at this time individuality in these details long since had departed from the European shops. I came to the end of what was to me an interesting typographical comparison believing as I still believe that I had proved nothing by the process. On the other hand it was true that I had found nothing in the course of my study of these details which rendered untenable the theory that the first four tracts of the group at least were the issue of the same press at or near the same date.

My reasons for placing the *Projet* in the Royville series are based on the general tone and on the literary likenesses between it and the other tracts that compose the group. To these reasons must be added that indescribable mental reaction that is sometimes called a "hunch." For the understanding of this learned body, I translate that term as a state of spiritual certainty that cannot be proven or accounted for, but which nevertheless is recognized as playing an important part in religion, in war, in business, in love and in historical research. I shall not attempt further to define that which defies definition, but more practically I shall give you the reasons for my belief that the *Projet* was a preliminary announcement of Royville's scheme for the colonization of the ancient El Dorado.

Briefly the story of the Royville venture in colonization is this. The body of laws and regulations drawn up in advance for the government of the colony formed one of those beautiful, theoretically perfect constitutions that provide ideally for the government of an ancient static community but take no account of the actual conditions of a new land and little of the eccentricities of human nature. Among other defects, it provided for so many civil and military officers that the unproductive caste thus established formed more than a quarter of the whole roster of the expedition. Unfortunately the colony had in it no John Smith to force the drones to labor in the inevitable struggle for

food and shelter. While the ships that bore the colonists still lay in the Seine, the Abbé de l'Isle Marivaut met his death by drowning. Early in the voyage, Royville aroused jealousies and such a determined opposition, that the loss of the temperate and popular Abbé, the second in command of the expedition, was soon perceived to have been particularly grievous. Royville's unpopularity brought about his assassination during the voyage at the hands of some of the associates, and after the landing, internal dissensions and war with the natives brought on the final ruin. A remnant of the colony, aided by the English at Surinam, found its way back to France late in 1653. So ends this story of one of several unsuccessful efforts of the French to settle and develop Guiana, not a futile effort because its failure left hope alive, and taught men once more that if they would bring back the wealth of the Indies they must carry the wealth of the Indies with them, whether in actual gear or in the form of intelligence and loyalty and stable purpose.

The story of the attempted settlement of Guiana by Royville and his associates has been well and fully related in the *Voyage de la France Equinoxiale* by Father Antoine Biet. Full of zeal and of hope for success in the conversion of the natives, this good priest shared from the beginning the misfortunes of the Royville expedition. When, sadder and wiser, he sat down in 1664 to tell the story of the great failure, he had for material his first-hand observation of events in the actual settlement, and, from the sense of a significant passage in his narrative, I believe that he had at hand or well placed in his memory the first four of the six promotion tracts that have been described here. The later tracts, the *Memoire* and the *Lettre écrite*, published in 1653 while he was attempting to find his way home from Guiana, are not mentioned by him in this place. I give now the gist of the paragraphs in which occur the allusions that have been referred to.

Passing as of uncertain value to the argument a

general reference in the Preface of Biet's *Voyage* to printed "projects," we come to solid ground on pages 2 and 3 of the narrative. The author mentions the *Articles et statuts* and the *Lettres patentes* of the company in such terms as leave no doubt that he was familiar with the first at least in its printed form. In the opening sentences of the passage moreover, there seem to be clear references to the *Acte d'Association* and to the *Projet*: "Ils commencerent," says the historian, "tous cinq à former leur Compagnie, & afin d'y donner plus de poids, ils consignerent entr'eux la somme de huit mille escus entre les mains d'un notable Bourgeois, qui furent mis dans un coffre fort." I believe that the writer of these words had in sight or in mind the *Acte d'association*, the tract that records the formation of the company and describes in detail the "coffre fort" of one Blanche, a notary, which was to be used as the depository of the funds. Father Biet's next sentence contains matter even more significant. "Ils formerent," he writes, "un projet de leur dessein, qui a esté veu de toute la France; . . ." The word "projet" here is not capitalized, or used as a title, but simply as a general term descriptive of the sort of document that our *Projet* represents. It is clear, however, that this "plan" or "scheme" could not have been "seen" by all France unless it had been a printed piece. It seems to be certain from this statement that there was issued a printed *projet* of the Royville plans, and assuming on Biet's authority that such a piece once had existence, I want to bring out some evidence that this "projet de leur dessein, qui a esté veu de toute la France" was the *Projet d'une Compagnie* that we have before us.

A comparison of the *Projet* text with the texts of the two descriptive pamphlets of the Royville series brings out so many resemblances in matter and in style between them that one would suspect a common literary origin and a common purpose for the three tracts even if other evidence to this end were not adducible. The result of a textual comparison that does not claim to



have exhausted the possibilities of the procedure is given in the following parallel columns:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Projet</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>"Plusieurs personnes . . . ont fait une Compagnie pour ce sujet, . . ."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Acte</i></p> <p>Signed by four persons.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p> <p>"qui depuis tant de siecles, par un secret, &amp; neantmoins juste jugement de Dieu, demeurent ensevelis dans les tenebres de l'infidelité; . . ."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>"qui jusques à present par un secret &amp; neantmoins juste jugement de Dieu en ont esté privez: . . ."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>Recognizes that the missions cannot be established without supporting colonies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>Recognizes that the missions cannot be established without supporting colonies.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>Commerce and manufactures recognized as essential to the subsistence of colonies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p> <p>Business and commerce recognized as aids to evangelization.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p> <p>Those who are interested will be told to whom to apply for further information by calling "chez Monsieur Blanche Notaire au Chastelet de Paris dans la ruë des Assises au coin de la ruë S. Jacques de la Boucherie, . . ."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pages 4, 6 and 8</p> <p>Strong box to be kept in the house of "M. François Blanche Notaire au Chastelet de Paris scize ruë des Arcis, . . ."</p> <p>Compagnie to meet every Thursday at house of "dudit Blanche, Notaire,"</p> <p>"en la maison de Blanche, l'un desdits Notaires sousignez, scize ruë des Arcis, Parroisse S. Jacques de la Boucherie: . . ."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Projet</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> <p>Description of country and climate: "Toute l'annee y est un perpetuel printemps, les arbres y estant continuellement verds &amp; chargez de fleurs &amp; de fruits . . ."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Memoire</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p> <p>Description of country, and climate: "Toute l'année y est un perpetuel Printemps, . . . Les arbres y sont toujours couverts de feuilles de fleurs &amp; de fruits."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p> <p>" . . . la Culture de la terre y est si facile qu'un seul homme avec ses bras peut faire du pain pour une Famille entiere de vingt personnes; . . ."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p> <p>" . . . la culture de la terre y est si facile, qu'un seul homme avec ses bras peut faire du pain pour la nourriture de cinquante personnes, . . ."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pages 5, 6 and 7</p> <p>Products of the country.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p> <p>Products of the country.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pages 2 and 3</p> <p>Description of voyage: Crossing takes a month or five weeks, quiet sea, no rocks, no capes to double, always a pursuing breeze, hardly more than ten or twelve days at sea without meeting islands where one is able to refresh himself.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p> <p>Description of voyage: Voyage short, and one is able to land every ten or twelve days during the five or six weeks of the voyage. After leaving Madeira there is always a favorable east breeze all the year around.</p>

In these extracts and references I have compared the *Projet* with the *Acte d'association*, which is probably the second of the Royville series, and with the *Memoire* which is shown by its date of imprint to be the last or the next to the last. Both of these tracts, like the *Projet*, are descriptive in character. From internal evidence there is seen to be no question whatever that the *Acte* and the *Memoire*, the *Lettres patentes*, the *Articles et statuts* and the *Lettre escrete* pertain to the same project, even though the location of the proposed colony, named in the last four tracts, is not designated in the *Acte* any more than it is in the *Projet*. I shall attempt later to account for this circumstance. The comparison of the *Projet* with the *Acte* and with the *Memoire* has shown that there are points of identity and points of resemblance to be observed in each case that could not have been accidental. They must be accounted for either by an identity of authorship, by the use of one as a guide in composing the others, or by a common source yet to be found from which were taken the identical phrases and similar descriptions common to the three tracts.

Perhaps the most positive resemblance between the *Projet* and the *Acte* is found in the occurrence in each of a M. Blanche as a prominent agent of the promoters. In the *Projet* this individual is described as Monsieur Blanche, a notary of the Châtelet of Paris, dwelling in the *Rue des Assises* at the corner of the Rue S. Jacques de la Boucherie. In the *Acte* we read of M. François Blanche, a notary of the Châtelet of Paris, situated in the *Rue des Arcis*, in the parish of S. Jacques de la Boucherie. This difference of street name might cause one to think that here were two Messieurs Blanche, but I believe that a compositor's error has clouded this issue. According to Rohegude and Dumolin, *Guide pratique à travers le vieux Paris*, Paris, 1923, the ancient *Rue des Arcis* was a continuation of the Rue S. Martin, in its turn continued by the Planche Mibray and the Pont Notre Dame. It crossed the Rue S. Jacques de

la Boucherie at a point close to the Church of S. Jacques de la Boucherie; that is, the church of which the famous Tour S. Jacques is now the sole physical reminder. Rochegude does not mention a *Rue d'Assises* either here or elsewhere in Paris, nor have I found such a street name in any ancient directory of the city. I take it therefore that this word was intended in the *Projet* for *Rue d'Arcis*, a substitution that might readily be made by a compositor addicted to the practice of spelling by ear. If this explanation of the different street addresses be accepted, one may assume that the M. François Blanche who in the *Acte* was named as the custodian of the company funds was the same M. Blanche to whom the *Projet* directs the inquiring adventurer.

It is possible, of course, that this M. Blanche could have been agent simultaneously, or at closely succeeding periods, for two companies—one for Florida and another for Guiana colonization—but if this had been the case, I believe he would have seen to it that the publicity writers of the rival companies did not steal each other's fine phrases and in general so describe the two countries that they could not be distinguished by the public for whom the tracts were intended any more readily than by perplexed bibliographers three hundred years later.

We come now to the consideration of less concrete evidence. All of the ancient colonization companies gave the glory of God and the conversion of the savages as important motives of their enterprises. There is so great an insistence on this motive in the *Projet* that one begins to accept it at face value. There would be a reason for this if the *Projet* be indeed part of the Royville series, for, as Father Biet makes clear in his later history of the colony, the presence of the Abbé de l'Isle Marivaut as one of the promoters of this company gave it a missionary intention that was anything but perfunctory. At a time when this well loved Abbé was on the point of asking for a small con-

cession in America wherein he might establish a mission and a seminary he met Royville and was easily persuaded to merge his projected religious enterprise with the secular plans of his new friend. Anyone who reads the Royville pamphlets perceives a religious fervor in all of them that generally in colonization literature is not felt as sincere to the same degree as in these devoutly worded tracts. The fact that the religious element is insistently declared in the *Projet* provides another thread of connection, though a slender one, between it and the other tracts.

One finds a further indication of the Guiana association of the *Projet* in the statement on page 7 that stories of the existence of mines of gold and silver must be true "puisque les anciens habitans François nous l'ont tous attesté conformément à la creance des Sauvages . . ." I believe the only known French inhabitants of Florida up to this time had been the members of the short lived Laudonnière colony, which nearly a century earlier had been wiped out by the Spaniards. On the other hand, since that hapless attempt at settlement there had been made by the French at least three efforts at planting Guiana, and it is known with certainty that Royville had been in touch with a returned member of Bretigny's Guiana expedition of 1643. Indeed, in his *Relation* of the Royville colony, D'Aigremont tells us that its leader's inspiration had come from the stories of the beauty and greatness of the country related to him by the Sieur de Maucourt, a Guiana resident of several years standing. It seems to me that it must have been Maucourt and others of the Bretigny colony how are referred to here as the "anciens habitans François." From the standpoint of probability alone this seems more likely to be the case than that the reference should be to tales surviving from Laudonnière's half-forgotten Huguenot colony of nearly a century earlier.

A curious circumstance makes difficult in one particular the judgment between Guiana and Florida as the

location of the colony proposed in the *Projet*. Ordinarily the lists of natural products in two different colonization tracts would form a satisfactory means of distinguishing between widely separated countries described in each, but in the present case a natural phenomenon deprives us of this simple means of identification. The Gulf Stream, sweeping the Florida coast, compensates that section for its twenty degrees of northward position with relation to Guiana. The consequence is that the climate and the fauna and flora of the two sections are so much alike that only by a scientific classification can the distinction between their endemic plants and animals be shown. As would be expected we have anything but a scientific list of these in the *Projet*, and for this reason the investigator is deprived of what might have been a decisive aid in his labor. For the first time to my knowledge the Gulf Stream, that benign current, has entered the arid field of bibliography as a complicating and disturbing element! To mention concrete examples of the confusion thus created, one finds that the most distinctive trees described by the writers on Guiana, the Brazil wood, the fustic tree and other dye woods are named also as indigenous plants in Bartram's survey of East Florida, and that the lamentin or manaté or sea-cow, an amphibian beast mentioned by all Guiana promoters, is found to be endemic also along the Florida river banks. The only bit of evidence against the Florida theory from the comparison of products is hardly conclusive. The author of the *Projet*, in listing his trees, does not refer to certain growths that are to be found in Florida, as for example the common oak, the chestnut, the maple and the hickory. This omission has a significance, however, that may not be entirely overlooked. When the common familiar trees of the homeland existed in a new country, the writers of promotion tracts were likely to mention them with emphasis. These gentry were adepts in what we express in our cant as "the psychology of selling," and

they were quick to assure the prospective settler of similarities rather than of differences in the conditions and products of the old and new land.

When we consider the short list of manufactured products mentioned in the *Projet* however, we are immediately aware that the case for the attribution of the tract to Guiana has been strengthened. The cotton plant of course is indigenous to both countries, but we are not told anywhere that the Florida Indians had built up a regular trade in cotton cloth with the French West Indies. On the other hand, no writer on Guiana fails to mention a certain important cotton cloth product of the native tribes. We must quote two of these references: Raleigh writes of the "great store of cotton" and of the trade in "those beds which they call Hamacas or brasill beds." The *Projet* has the following paragraph: "Une quantité incroyable de Cottons filez & non filez, des lits de coton qu'ils appellent Amacs, & de la Pite qui est une espece de Chanvre bien plus blanc que le nostre, dont on fait des toiles & des cordages. Ces lits de Cotton ont grand cours dans toutes les Isles habitées par les François, & le trafic en est considerable."

This lively trade in cotton hammocks between the people of the *Projet* country and the inhabitants of the French West Indies must have emanated from Guiana rather than from a country where the spinning and weaving of the cotton staple seem to have been processes unattained by the aboriginal inhabitants.

The source from which these descriptions are obtained is a matter of some interest. The author of the *Memoire* affirms that his description of the Guiana country has been taken from page 58 . . . "de l'Hydrographie, qui est le cinquiesme tome de l'Athlas achevé d'imprimé l'an 1650." The reference is to volume five of Janson's great Atlas, published in Amsterdam, 1646-1650, whence, in many instances word for word, the descriptive passages of the *Memoire* have been extracted. This source does not seem to

have been used by the author of the *Projet*. The Janson *Hydrographie*, published as it was in 1650, might have been used by an author writing, as did the author of the *Projet*, if my assumptions are correct, at some time after August 29, 1651, but evidently this great descriptive volume had not yet come into his hands, for he seems to have gone to other sources for his information.

It proves to be difficult, however, to point to any single printed work from which the descriptive passages of the *Projet* could have been taken. There was already in existence at this time a respectable body of Guiana literature in which the country in general is described in the terms used by Raleigh in the *Discoverie* of 1596. The De Bry version of Raleigh's book, in all editions, omits some of the items in the detailed lists of the English original, so that the author of the *Projet*, who includes these names of products, could not have had the popular De Bry translations before him at the time of composition. It is probable that Raleigh's original narrative was made use of by this writer or that he was familiar with a version of it made by some earlier writer on Guiana whose work I have not been able to identify. It is known that Raleigh's account of Guiana affected the whole of the literature of the subject for half a century after its publication. Mocquet's narrative is sometimes quoted in the Guiana tracts of French writers, but the resemblance of the *Projet* to this relation is quickly seen to be less than to Raleigh's *Discoverie*.

In the *Acte* no more than in the *Projet* is the whereabouts of the proposed colony made certain. The author of the descriptive note that came to us with the pamphlet, convinced that the location was Florida, seemed to think that this reticence was induced by fear of alarming the Spaniards, and if the location had been Florida this explanation would be satisfactory. When one assumes, however, that the colony proposed in the *Projet* was to be established in Guiana, an equally

cogent motive for silence as to its location is immediately found. If this hypothesis as to location is correct, the *Projet* and the *Acte* were published before the concession had been granted to Royville and before the existing charter of an earlier enterprise, the *Compagnie du Cap de Nord*, had been withdrawn by the *Lettres patentes* of September 1651. This company, composed of merchant adventurers of Rouen, had been given in 1640 the same concessions in Guiana that Royville now sought from the King. It had failed to make a successful settlement or to convert the heathen to the Christian and catholic faith, but now on August 29, 1651, the date of the *Acte*, in spite of its failure, it still held the monopoly of all the territory between the Orinoco and the Amazon. Until the *lettres patentes* for the new company should have been issued and the charter of the Rouen company revoked, therefore, it was only common caution on the part of the Royville associates to refrain from encroachment on chartered rights even to the extent of mentioning in the preliminary tracts that Guiana was the location of their proposed colony.

This brings me to the point of summarizing my reasons for believing the *Projet* to be one of the tracts in the Royville series relating to the attempted settlement of Guiana in 1652.

1. The inherent probability that this is the case which is likely to be felt by one who examines the whole series.

3. Biet's statement that the concessionaires of the Royville grant had formed "un projet de leur dessein, qui a esté veu de toute la France; . . .".

3. The extraordinary textual parallelisms of the *Projet* and the *Acte* and the *Memoire*.

4. The occurrence of M. Blanche, the notary, as agent in both the *Projet* and the *Acte*.

5. The unusual degree of insistence on the religious motive that runs through the series, including the *Projet*.



6. The reference to "les anciens habitans François" in the *Projet*.

7. The reference in the *Projet* and in earlier Guiana literature to the manufacture by the natives of cotton hammocks and to the trade in these articles that existed between them and the inhabitants of the French West Indies.

Not all of these pieces of evidence are of equal weight nor added together even do they compel conviction, but I believe that they must be taken into consideration if the *Projet* is to be claimed as a Florida tract and not as a piece of French Guiana colonization literature.

## II

The French plans for the colonization of Guiana seem to have been genuine settlement and development enterprises. After Raleigh found that the road to El Dorado led to the scaffold and the headsman's "sharp medicine," the promoters of other expeditions to Guiana went about their business as soberly as successful colonizers everywhere must do. The earlier history of Guiana development, however, is a story of a different sort. From the year 1531, when the Spaniard Martinez came back from his wanderings with his tale of Manoa the Golden, the glittering city by the shore of an inland sea, down to Raleigh's failure in 1617, the search for El Dorado provides one of those exhibitions of persistence and of human intrepidity that relate men to the gods. Whatever may be our judgment of their motives, whether we label them with "greed for gold" or "lust for empire" or with some other moralistic tag, we can feel nothing but admiration for their high adventurousness and pity for their sufferings and ultimate failure.

It was only incidental to their real purpose that these expeditions in search of El Dorado opened unknown rivers and plains to human knowledge and made evident the immensity and the commercial richness of a

country that by the adventurers had been looked upon simply as a barrier between them and the fabulous gilded city of the Incas. There is cause for rueful mirth in the reflection that the wealth they sought lay thereabouts all the time, placer gold in plenty, as witnessed the old legends of a river running over sands of gold. Nearly 300 years after Raleigh's death some of the richest gold deposits of the earth were discovered in Guiana.

Between the French expedition to the Guiana Coast under Ravardiere in 1604, described in the fine narrative of Jean Mocquet, and their successful settlement under la Barre in 1664, there were granted three other royal charters for the colonization of a domain that today is the only remaining French possession on the American mainland. The history of these unsuccessful efforts may be read in many contemporary publications, but none of the stories is as well documented as that which relates the mischances of the Royville company. In addition to the promotion tracts that have been listed here there exist a *Relation du Voyage . . . fait . . . sous la conduite de Monsieur de Royville*, by J. de Laon, sieur D'Aigremont, one of the military officers of the company, issued in 1654, and the formal history, already cited, entitled *Voyage de la France Equinoxiale*, published in 1664 by Antoine Biet, superior of the priests who went into the country. Often one has occasion to observe, as here, how well known are the stories of frustrated enterprises, how broad the stage and how large the audience when men walk maladroitly.

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