

French Drawings Activity 1st – 3rd

Below, a French explorer, named Rene de Laudonniere, describes how the Timucua dried out their meat so it would last a long time. Since the Timucua did not have refrigerators, this was very important. Look at the picture below. With a grown-up's help, use clues in the picture, the French description, and common sense to decide what seems true and what seems false about this picture. Write your answers on a separate sheet.

How the Indians Prepared Game - (Preserving the Meat) - Theodore De Bry



French Descriptions by Rene de Laudonniere: “In order that the game lasted longer, they prepared it in the following way. They pushed four large wooden forked stakes into the earth and laid sticks over these like a grate onto which they laid out the game and fish. Beneath this they build a fire, the smoke from which hardens all the food. They were very careful to ensure it was dried out really well so that it would not rot, as can be seen in this picture. I believe these food supplies were prepared in this way to help them through the winter during which they lived in the woods. For this purpose they had storehouses for food, as I have said, and these were built under a crag or rock at the water’s edge, not far from the dense wood so they could collect what they needed by small boat.”

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ANSWERS

WHAT'S TRUE IN THE PICTURE: The animals shown on the drying rack probably do show some of the Timucua people's main animal foods, including fish, fox, snake, deer, and alligator. The smoke billowing up around the animal meat would have helped the meat dry thoroughly and given it a smoky flavor. The men are wearing loin cloths and ear decorations. They are also wearing their hair in buns. The fact that there are eight fish on the rack should tell us that the Timucua ate a lot of fish.

WHAT'S FALSE IN THE PICTURE: The shape of the wooden rack is probably not quite right. It may not have had forks at the top of the posts. Also, the animal meat would have been cut up into thin strips like a piece of bacon or beef jerky, so that each piece of meat would dry completely and evenly. The artist probably left the animals whole in the picture to help teach people what kinds of animals the Timucua were hunting. The description tells us that food was stored under a rock at the edge of the water. There aren't many rocks in eastern Florida, so this information is probably not true. We do know that special huts were built for storing food. This drawing also shows the MEN drying the meat. This may mean that men helped with at least some of the cooking, but since we know women did most of the cooking, this may be an error.