

Trial & Error:

Royal Authority & Families in the Colonization of the British Floridas, 1763-1784

by

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Dedication

*A native New Englander, my mother's favorite poem was Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken."*

*The poem's final lines capture one my mother's all-time favorite images and emotional sentiments: "somewhere ages and ages hence: two roads diverged in a wood, and I...I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference." I dedicate this work to my mother, Diane, and to my father, Frederick, with love, gratitude, appreciation, and respect. For me, they have made all the difference.*

## Acknowledgements

In another life, I discovered British Florida by accident. Dr. Daniel L. Schafer introduced the twenty-one-year period of British control of my home state during an out-of-area seminar required for my Master's Thesis. At the time, I fancied myself a historian of Medieval Britain who could do her research and live in Florida while working on that topic. The choice of which seminar to take had come down to what I considered to be the lesser of two evils: the history of World War II or Florida History. As a native Floridian, the latter won.

At a loss for how to proceed for a suitable topic for the class' required research paper, I visited Dr. Schafer's office one day during his office hours. He told me about a woman who had lived in St. Augustine and who had been married to an important government official in the British colonial administration. He had a letter he had found in the archives of the Jacksonville Public Library and suggested that I should see what I could find out about Forbes. Dr. Schafer considered Dorothy Murray Forbes to be a silly and spoiled little girl who did not know what she was getting into when she married the Reverend John Forbes in 1769 and left the comforts of Boston for the frontier of St. Augustine. I quickly came to view her as something much more. Once I discovered the Jacksonville letter to be only a partial transcript, I knew I had to find out more about Dorothy. My pursuit of information about Dorothy's life and the sources that documented her fate became a major focus of my life for the next decade. Without Dr. Schafer's advice, the research that served as the basis for this dissertation would not exist. I owe him a great debt of gratitude for his knowledge, suggestions, and kind support in the early phase of my

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I continued the research that became the foundation of this dissertation before I even began my studies at the University of South Florida. Alissa Craddock of the University of North Florida's Interlibrary Loan Department and Joanie Reynolds and Kristen Palmiere of the University of Central Florida's Interlibrary Loan Department facilitated the first stage of research when I collected scattered primary and secondary sources from across the United States. The Interlibrary Loan staff at the University of South Florida continued those efforts when I began my doctoral program in 2009. I have always believed that librarians are the lifeblood of a historian's success. Without these ladies and their hard-working staffs, I could not have accumulated the substantial body of primary sources and secondary literature that resulted in my manuscript. The time, effort, and patience of the librarians made my research accomplishments possible.

Over the course of my research on British Florida, several institutions provided funding for me to go on research trips to archives in the United States and abroad. The National Endowment for the Humanities provided two one-week scholarships for me to conduct participate in teaching workshops that integrated research opportunities at institutions in Boston, Massachusetts and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during the Landmarks in History Workshops in 2008 and 2009. Thank you to the archival staff of the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), the Milton Historical Society, the Forbes House Museum, the Baker Library at the Harvard

University School of Business, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the American Philosophical Society. A special thank you to Peter Drummey of MHS for letting me have access to the original folios and letters that constitute the Forbes Papers when the ancient microfilm of the collection proved insufficient to read clearly on the available readers. I also wish to thank Roderick McDonald, Michelle Craig McDonald, and Patrick Spero for their advice and assistance during my time in Philadelphia. Roderick, Michelle, and Patrick took a young adjunct community college professor and treated me like I was a seasoned and advanced colleague. I will always respect them and be thankful to them for their kindness. Thanks are also due to the National Archives staff in Washington D.C. and the Federal Records Center in Philadelphia. I must express my gratitude to the staff at the Massachusetts Archives in Boston, the Georgia Archives in Morrow, the State Archives of Florida in Tallahassee, and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson. I also wish to thank the staff of archives held by the Rhode Island Historical Society, the South Carolina Historical Society, and the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society in North Carolina for helping me locate sources remotely via correspondence. A faculty research grant from American Military University provided funding for three weeks of summer research that I conducted in Great Britain in 2012. Thank you to the wonderful staff at the National Archives (formerly the Public Records Office) at Kew and the British Library for assisting me while I was in London during the calm before the storm of the Summer Olympics in June 2012. I also owe an extreme debt of gratitude to the descendants of Elizabeth Pilot who allowed me access to their copy of Pilot's diary on a chaotic trip to Bangor, Northern Ireland during a mass transit/rail strike.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to three institutions in Florida and their excellent personnel. James Cuisick of the PK Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida

in Gainesville, Charles Tingely of the Research Library at the St. Augustine Historical Society in St. Augustine, and Dean DeBolt of Special Collections at the University of West Florida in Pensacola facilitated access to crucial documents. I also wish to thank the staff of the Pensacola Historical Society (now Historic Trust) for their help in obtaining important West Florida sources.

It has often been said that successful long-term research projects like the one that resulted in this dissertation are possible only because a community of scholars makes it so. I owe a great debt to senior scholars Carole Watterson Troxler, J. Barton Starr, Amy Turner Bushnell, Kathleen Deagan, and Margo Stringfield for their time, patience, and efforts on my behalf. Even if their kindness was as simple as speaking to me for five minutes during a conference reception, chairing or commenting on a conference panel with me, or allowing me to pick their brains via email, I would not have gained the needed insight which shaped this dissertation without their help.

Although she unexpectedly passed away in a house fire in the summer of July 2017, I also must thank Constance B. Rynder. Connie was the first historian who ever believed in me and my research abilities. She took a chance on an intelligent and mildly irritating overachiever undergraduate honors student when she did not have to do so. Never naturally a patient woman, she had the patience of a saint which made our mentorship and subsequent friendship possible. I miss her terribly, but I know she is looking down from somewhere with a smile on what I have accomplished because of her help, support, and faith.

I also want to thank Rosalind J. Beiler and Ezekiel Walker of the University of Central Florida. Dr. Beiler served for me as the first example of what a successful historian of Early America could be like. I will be forever grateful for Dr. Walker's knowledge and insight into

historiography and the place of Africa and slavery in the Atlantic World. Their support again helped me to transition from a somewhat well-meaning but cocky researcher to a serious historian who could engage with complex historical arguments with the hope of one day making my own. I like to think that day has finally come because of them.

A special note of thanks must also be extended to the friends who have helped me through the dissertation process. Rachel Nostrom provided a kind ear when I needed to reason things out and make sure I was on the right track several times throughout the process with particular emphasis on giving me her opinion on the application of certain archaeological theories to my research. Sarah Mabery seemed to me a perpetual cheerleader when I needed to get my pep talks. Finally, Diana Miller Reigelsperger. When I found out Diana was moving into a house one block from my home, I thought about planting a Union Jack flag on her front lawn as a welcoming gift. Fear of receiving an imperial flag of the Spanish Bourbons planted in my yard halted my original plan. Even though she may not remember it, Diana is responsible for serving as the inspiration for the titles of two of this dissertation's chapters. They emerged during talks when we attended conferences in St. Augustine and Baltimore. She has been a constant source of encouragement, insight, hope, and relief. I hope we can continue what may have become our tradition of discussing the minute details of Colonial Florida during the eighteenth century over late night bottles of wine. I also need to thank her husband, Jason, for his patience in letting two history nerds gossip about individuals, like Francisco del Moral Sánchez and Jesse Fish, when I am sure he was tired of hearing about Florida colonials long dead.

Although he may never know it, I am where I am today because of the guidance and insights of Brent Weisman. He taught me everything I know about what it means to be an archaeologist, a historical archaeologist, and a historical archaeologist in Florida. I will also

never be able to repay his kindness and words of wisdom for me on one very difficult April afternoon when he reassured me of the worth of my project and efforts as we walked circles around one of the floors of the SOC building. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Dr. Weisman.

This dissertation would not exist without the input, support, and guidance of faculty and staff at the University of South Florida. The abilities of Theresa Lewis and Sue Rinehart with procedural paperwork has been nothing short of amazing. I wish to especially thank Sue who had to do a tremendous amount of amazing hopping over deadlines and getting forms approved with the College of Arts and Sciences and with Graduate Studies in the final weeks before the dissertation defense was held. I most assuredly would not have been able to finish when I did without her guidance, hard work, and tremendous patience. Thank you, Sue. Truly. I also wish to thank John Belohlavek and Thomas Pluckhahn for their early support and guidance of my educational endeavors at USF. I also wish to thank the faculty who served on my doctoral committee. Francis L. Ramos introduced me to the world of colonial Latin America. Her suggestions about the influence of Bourbon imperial policy, marriage and families in colonial Latin America, and gender and sexuality shaped my notions of that Florida could and should be brought into the larger Atlantic World of the eighteenth century. Without the efforts of Brian Connolly, this dissertation would look very different. He guided my exploration into the notions of gender, sexuality, and families in the Anglo-American literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I know I became a better thinker and a better writer because of his efforts. I must also thank Philip Levy for serving as my committee chair and mentor over several years. As a doctoral student, I know guiding my progress and development was no easy task. I wish to thank him for his efforts, patience, and encouragement when he could have simply



walked away many times in the long process that was required to produce a successful dissertation manuscript.

I do not know how to say thank you to the single greatest scholarly influence on this dissertation. If Dan Schafer introduced me to British Florida, Robin F.A. Fabel taught me how to be a true scholar of the topic. I first met Robin when I spent a ridiculous amount of time trying to track down a primary source he mentioned in a couple lines of an article that is one of many Robin has written over the years. His encouraging initial response to my email established what I know to be one of the greatest friendships of my life. He has served as a role model, mentor, and as a true friend. I will always treasure our conversations whether by email, handwritten letter, or on my trips to visit him at his home in Fairhope, Alabama. Quite early in our friendship Robin once introduced me to a public audience as the foremost authority on women in British Florida. It was a standout moment that I will always keep in my heart and in my memory. Robin came to serve as the outside reader on my dissertation committee at the last minute. It was not an easy process for him. It required more time, effort, and patience on his part than I can say. I will always be forever humbled by the kindness and generosity that he and Juanie Noland have shown on my behalf.

Lastly, what scholar can achieve anything without their family? I must note the unfailing kindness of Diane Haddick and Blake Delodder. I always looked for Haddick's handwritten, zany, and somewhat quirky notes of encouragement in the mail with an anticipatory eye when they appeared. She may have been my mother's best friend, but I consider her to be family. She means more to me than I think she will ever know. I know I must thank Blake for the scholarly books that Haddick usually passed on to me in the mail and the wonderful discussions we have had on my visits to Cheverly. I have never known a kinder woman than my aunt, Karen Miklos,

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## Abstract

This dissertation will examine the relationship between families, the British Crown, and colonization patterns in mid-eighteenth-century Florida. Agents of royal authority, such as colonial governors, and White, European, Protestant families, would serve as the bulwark upon which the Crown would design and implement its ideal colonization scheme. Carefully created by royal officials, adherence to the plan would result in the successful establishment and growth of loyal and productive colonies. Noncompliance ultimately foreshadowed failure. The state used the social unit of families in East and West Florida as a "tool of empire" to ensure the political, economic, and military success of the British Empire. Families responded to their usage as a "tool of empire" in several ways. Colonists resisted the Crown by adapting the institution of marriage to create families for the purpose of establishing and expanding kinship networks for their own benefit. These kinship networks put families at odds with the Crown as they worked to gain political, economic, and/or social prestige. Subsequent conflicts between agents of royal authority and families intensified during the ensuing competition for power as loyalty and obedience among most of the original families disappeared. British Florida became a "successful failure." Settlements that most closely implemented and maintained the Crown's colonization scheme grew and began to prosper during the late 1760s and early 1770s. Settlements that substantially deviated from the approved plan never showed signs of stable growth and ultimately failed. At the end of the American Revolution, the British returned East & West

Florida to Spain. A distinct *floridano* social identity emerged during the Second Spanish Period that led to the coalescence of an American identity by 1821.

**Introduction**  
**Families and the State**  
**in the Colonization of British East and West Florida**

On October 7, 1763, King George III of Great Britain issued a proclamation clarifying the significance of the terms of the peace treaty that he had signed that February with Louis XV of France that had ended the French and Indian War. This "British Proclamation of October 7, 1763," is better known as the Proclamation of 1763. Famous for the restrictions it placed on colonists who wished to settle west of the Appalachian Mountains, it contained many important other provisions. Article Twenty of the treaty contained instructions for the establishment of "four distinct and separate governments" for new colonies, including those territories that would become East and West Florida.<sup>1</sup> Two days before the publication of the treaty, the king had ordered the Privy Council to issue orders for the creation of official seals for each of his new colonies. The Privy Council stipulated that the design for the seal for East Florida should include "a fortified town and Harbour" while the seal for West Florida should include "a representation of a cultivated Country interspersed with Vineyards and Corn Fields."<sup>2</sup> These great seal designs hint at the British Crown's earliest conceptions of what they believed their new colonies greatest values to be. More importantly, they suggest what roles the Crown wanted the new territories to play as important cogs in the growing British imperial machine. East Florida, like Georgia before her, would serve as a strategic bulwark against encroaching rival claims from the Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> "The British Proclamation of October 7, 1763, Creating the Government of West Florida," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (October 1930), 611.

<sup>2</sup> James Munro, ed. *Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series. Volume IV. AD 1745-1766* (London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 573-574.



Empire. West Florida would contribute to the mercantile imperial economy by providing agricultural staples and other cash crops in amounts to rival the contributions made by Virginia and South Carolina. To achieve these objectives, a month later, the Privy Council ordered the Board of Trade and the Treasury to begin aggressive campaigns designed to populate the countries with loyal “Protestant Inhabitants either from Your Majesty’s other Colonies or from Foreign parts” for the settling of “Townships.”<sup>3</sup> The British Crown targeted a specific group of individuals to achieve this goal: white, Protestant families who possessed ties to other colonies and would owe the government if they improved their social standing and possessions. The fortunes of various families and the British Crown remained intertwined with the establishment and attempt to help East and West Florida grow into successful colonies for the duration of British control of these territories between 1763 and 1784.

This dissertation argues the British Crown used families as a social unit of organization upon which they designed ideal colonization schemes to ensure the loyalty and growth of their empire in the Atlantic World of the late eighteenth century. The state used families as a “tool of empire” in East and West Florida in an experiment of colonization patterns. The usage of both colonies by the Crown suggests that East and West Florida shared more in common that

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<sup>3</sup> Munro, *Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series*, 610., In November 1763, the *London Gazette* ran one such ad: “The Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations having received information, that many persons are desirous of grants of land in his Majesty’s Provinces of East and West Florida in America, in order to the cultivation of the same for the raising of silk, cotton, wine, oil, indigo, cochineal and other commodities, to which the said lands are adapted, their lordships, therefore, to avoid any delay in the making of such settlements, do, by his Majesty’s command, give publick notice, that his Majesty has been pleased to direct, that the lands in his Majesty’s said Provinces of East Florida and West Florida shall be surveyed and laid out into townships, not exceeding twenty thousand acres each, for the convenience and accommodation of settlers, and that these townships, or any proportions thereof, will be granted upon the same moderate conditions of quit rent and cultivation as are required in other colonies, to such persons as shall be willing to enter into reasonable engagements to settle the lands within a limited time, and at their own expence, with a proper number of useful and industrious Protestant inhabitants, either from his Majesty’s other colonies, or from foreign parts; and all persons, who may be willing to obtain such grants, are desired to send in their proposals in writing to John Pownall, Esquire, Secretary to the said Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations.” K.H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, November 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77444&strquery='east Florida>"

previously considered by historians who seem to always treat them as separate entities with little in common by the same name. The Crown hoped to establish successful settlements with unquestionable allegiance, but those families responded to this practice by using adapting the institution of marriage to create families as a way to position themselves in expanded kinship networks that sought to accumulate political, economic, and/or social prestige. Subsequent conflicts between the state apparatus in the colonies and those families and their corresponding kinship networks emerged during the ensuing competition for power and resulted in a majority of the families in colonial Florida feeling less allegiance to the British Crown instead of more loyalty as the state had originally anticipated. The cumulative result of these struggles resulted in East and West Florida's populations beginning to develop personal identities distinct from that as citizens of the British Empire. British Florida became a "successful failure" for the Crown. Settlements that most closely implemented and maintained the Crown's colonization scheme grew and began to prosper during the late 1760s and early 1770s. Settlements that substantially deviated from the approved plan never showed signs of stable growth and ultimately failed. At the end of the American Revolution, the British returned East & West Florida to Spain. The British period in Florida history added a final element that combined in the colonial period to form the *floridano* (native Floridian) identity at the end of the Second Spanish Period. The usage of families by the Crown in its ideal colonization scheme further justifies this study's simultaneous and unified treatment of both colonies in the first major academic work that considers both East and West Florida in tandem during the British period.

This work will seek to place itself in dialogue with historiographical literature that considers the place and purpose of families in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. Historians have long recognized that a shift occurred during the eighteenth century in how individuals

constructed the social groups that constituted households and families as compared to their counterparts in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. A substantial body of literature exists that considers why this change occurred in the wake of Enlightenment ideals spreading among the colonial population and the rise of individualism in an age of revolutionary fervor. This work will attempt to demonstrate that ideological shifts and changes in the expression of sentiment were not the only reasons why families in the colonies of British North America came to reject bonds of loyalty to their king and mother country. These chapters will show that the use of faithful families by the British Crown to achieve imperial aims in East and West Florida—the last two colonies settled by the British Empire on the eastern seaboard of North America—resulted in those families ultimately reacting against this usage as so-called “tools of empire” by the state at the cost of their loyalty. Eventually, the majority of families in East and West Florida placed individual aims above those of the Crown. Great Britain made a crucial miscalculation in gambling their expectations of success for their colonies on competing social groups, and this mistake ultimately resulted in their loss of East and West Florida in 1783.

### **The Historiography of Families in the Eighteenth Century**

Some historians concerned with the social history of the family in the colonial southeast have questioned the establishment of a new social hierarchy. They have maintained that social order, once established, affected the ways in which men and women negotiated for power. Kathleen M. Brown’s study of Chesapeake society in the seventeenth century argues that both male and female colonists faced radical shifts in the progression of normative gender roles developing as life in Jamestown emerged after its settlement in 1607. The harsh realities of survival in a new colony on the isolated edge of Great Britain’s fledgling empire did not allow colonists to indulge in the same ideological luxuries they had embraced while living in England.

Brown's case study of Thomasine Hall, an immigrant to Jamestown in 1629, demonstrates that social stability and happiness of the colonists remained of paramount concern to colonial leaders.<sup>4</sup> Hall caused great turmoil and confusion among the Jamestown population when an investigation failed conclusively to identify Hall as either a male or a female. His frequent shifts between male and female performative behavior challenged the new colony's social hierarchy when it demonstrated that differences between men and women were not as definitive as colonists had initially thought. Hall, who dressed and behaved as a member of either sex whenever the whim took him, so distressed some of the colonists in Jamestown that a group of married women originally pressed colonial leaders to bring him up on legal charges.<sup>5</sup> The General Court called Hall before it to answer charges of sexual misconduct (fornication). However, he eventually became subjected to an inquiry about whether he could be biologically called a male or a female. Brown uses Hall's case in the General Court to show the importance of clearly delineated gender roles in colonial society.<sup>6</sup> When colonists became unsure as to what place an individual held in society, that uncertainty could quickly transform into civil unrest and social upheaval. Thus, successful colonies that maintained a happy population were ones that relied on the acceptance and perpetuation of traditional patriarchal values. A consequence of this necessity is that the family unit eventually became one of the most important social groupings in colonial society.

The importance of the family as a social unit has particularly concerned some historians who have written on topics of gender and sexuality in South Carolina. Of all the southern

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<sup>4</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, *Goodwives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C. and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 78.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, *Goodwives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 77.

<sup>6</sup> See also Brown's earlier version of her research on Thomasine Hall in Kathleen Brown, "'Changed... into the Fashion of Man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6, No. 2 (Oct., 1995), 171-193.

colonies settled by the English in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, South Carolina possessed one of the highest mortality rates. The high mortality rate, the low immigration numbers of white colonists, and the substantial economic profits made by planters in South Carolina have resulted in some historians arguing that the family cannot be considered as a significant unit of social organization in the colonial southeast. For such historians, the family must be considered the most important social unit. In Cara Anzilotti's work on female planters in South Carolina, she suggests that because of the high mortality rates among white colonists, the continuance of a family's lineage, the promulgation of its holdings, and the safeguarding of its reputation were the primary goals around which colonists ordered society.<sup>7</sup> She places more emphasis on the significance of the collective unit itself than the actions of individual family members. Her definition of family, thus, falls in line with those offered by historians like Philip J. Greven.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, a useful research methodology that can be used to understand the social significance of families in the colonial southeast can be found in the employment of family strategies as a mode of analysis.

The concept of family strategies first emerged in the late 1970s in the research of historians drawing on the theories of anthropologists like Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>9</sup> In research that attempted to understand how industrialization shaped the place of women and families in society,

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<sup>7</sup> Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Philip J. Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1972). For a further explanation of the applicability of quantitative approaches that seek to understand collective family behavior, but not individual family behavior, see Tamara K. Hareven, "Cycles, Courses, and Cohorts: Reflections on Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Historical Study of Family Development," *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1978), 104-107.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction," chap. in *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales, Economies, Sociétés, and Civilisations*, Robert Forester and Orest Ranum, eds., Elborg Forester and Patricia M. Ranum, trans. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 120. For a summary of Bourdieu and Fredrik Barth's anthropological theories that culminated in family/marital strategies, see Pier Paolo Viazzo and Katherine A. Lynch, "Anthropology, Family History, and the Concept of Strategy," *IRSH* 47 (2002), 425-430 and 441-447.

Louise Tilly and Joan Scott proposed family strategies as a methodological approach. Tilly and Scott's approach relied on a definition of family "as a conjugal kin group living in the same household," usually consisting of parents and children bound together as an "organizational unit" who "shared values having to do with a collective commitment to economic survival."<sup>10</sup> Tilly and Scott referred to this as the "family economy."<sup>11</sup> To support the family economy, families acted using strategies, or applications "of (culturally specific) perceptions to the practical (subsistence) demands of daily life."<sup>12</sup> For Tilly and Scott, family strategies offered a way to understand collective behavior of families as an organizational social unit. They assumed that "a kind of collective ethos—a notion of shared interest—informed the behavior of individual family members."<sup>13</sup> While Tilly and Scott argued that industrialization caused the family economy to shift from a collective unit of production to one of "reproduction and consumption" in the "family consumer economy," the use of family strategies as a way to understand collective behavior remains an effective way to understand the reasons why individuals acted in specific ways.<sup>14</sup>

Tilly later refined the definition of family strategies she had proposed with Scott in the early 1980s as a useful analytical tool for social historians by linking it to Bourdieu's research on marital strategies.<sup>15</sup> She argues that methodologically, one way to "conceptualize and examine the links between individual lives and collective behavior is through the concept of family

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<sup>10</sup> Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, 227.

<sup>12</sup> Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, 229.

<sup>15</sup> Leslie Page Moch, Nancy Folbre, Daniel Scott Smith, Laurel L. Cornell, and Louise A. Tilly, "Family Strategy: A Dialogue," *Historical Methods* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1987), 124.

strategies.”<sup>16</sup> In her later writings, Tilly justifies family strategies as “useful to the social historian seeking to understand the behavior of ordinary people in the past—people who, even if they left autobiographical statements, are seldom aware of what in their lives is unique and what they share with others in response to similar constraints and opportunities.”<sup>17</sup> The use of family strategies allows historians to identify patterns of behavior of households to understand what caused these trends to emerge.<sup>18</sup> Many different types of family strategies have evolved regarding various issues that include “migration, fertility, schooling, labor force participation, co-residence of children, and age of marriage.”<sup>19</sup> These strategies affect individuals, depending on their place and activities in the household in different ways. But, the experience of all family members “are shaped by their position in the family, by the economic and social structures in which the household is located, and the processes of change which these structures are undergoing.”<sup>20</sup> She agrees with Bourdieu’s point that these strategies produce social relations and can change over time. “Whether, how, and when they change are the important questions” to understand “social behavior in the past at a level where analysis is meaningful.”<sup>21</sup> Tilly believes that the use of different family strategies results in different behavior patterns for families.<sup>22</sup> Within this context, a study of family strategies allows historians to understand how and why families behaved in certain ways as they pursued social power and how intent shaped and can reveal individual experience.

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<sup>16</sup> Louise A. Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies in the French Proletariat,” chap. in *Family and Sexuality in French History*, Robert Wheaton and Tamara K. Hareven, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 202.

<sup>17</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 202.

<sup>18</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 202.

<sup>19</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 203.

<sup>20</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 203.

<sup>21</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 203.

<sup>22</sup> Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies,” 203.

The decline of the popularity of family strategies as a research methodology among social and family historians has limited its application in current research since the 1990s. Wishing to focus more on individual experience, cultural historians spearheaded a movement in which scholars relied less on demographic approaches to data analysis. Instead, they suggested that scholarship should concentrate on questions of individual experience, agency, and sentimentality as they emerged in primary source documents like personal correspondence, diaries, and literary works. For example, Jay Fliegelman has argued that “by the middle of the eighteenth century family relations had been fundamentally reconsidered in both England and America.”<sup>23</sup> ‘Bonds of affection’ largely tied American society together as its population transformed from a group of British colonists to independent citizens of the United States. Fliegelman’s research is merely one example of a plethora of monographs released in the last thirty-five years that focused on family history from the perspective of individual family members and how emotional ties affected those individuals’ actions.<sup>24</sup>

While research focused on the study of affection and sentimentality among families in the colonial period offered new avenues for research in the 1990s, it occurred because of the sacrifice of the usage of the family strategies methodology. Perhaps because the family strategies methodology intertwined so substantially with a quantitative data analysis approach, it has largely fallen out of favor in the last two decades of scholarship. The question that now should be answered is what has been lost by the rejection of the family strategies methodological approach, and how might it be reintegrated into a body of scholarship so heavily dominated by sentimental

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<sup>23</sup> Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1.

<sup>24</sup> For further examples, also see Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005) and Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (London and New York: Verso, 1988).



considerations? John Demos noted that “the enterprise of family history is very much ongoing. No single question can be considered as finally resolved, and new questions are popping into view all the time.”<sup>25</sup> Demos’ thoughts support the idea that there is a need to reconsider the status of the historiography of family history so that suggestions can be made and followed to ensure the future growth of the field. A return to the usage of family strategies as an analytical model will allow historians to consider the consequences the actions of families had beyond enriching their own kinship networks. Individuals did not just change their own economic or social fortunes by placing their families’ goals above everything else. In fact, the state would be substantially affected by the reaction of families in the broader context of imperial success. Returning to the framework of family strategies will allow a consideration of political and legal ramifications. A truly inclusive approach to the study of families in the colonial southeast is one that considers both the individual’s role in a family and the family’s role in a society engendered by the state to ensure success of empires where families are used as the single most significant social grouping.

A few historians have begun to recognize the importance of using both quantitative—as represented by the family strategies methodology—and qualitative approaches in order to achieve the most complete understanding possible in considering the social history of the colonial southeast. Ben Marsh’s research on the settlement of Georgia in the early 1700s is one example that shows what insights can be gained from studying the role of both individuals and families together in one’s analysis. For example, Marsh argues that the British government relied on encouraging the immigration of women to Georgia in the 1750s. He believes the state did this

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<sup>25</sup> John Demos, *Past, Present, and the Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 14.

to create family units to stabilize the failing population numbers after the Crown took over control of the colony from the trustees who had governed it for more than fifty years.<sup>26</sup> Marsh also considers the experience of women who immigrated to the colony in his analysis, such as when he pays particular attention to the ways in which women dealt with the experience of widowhood.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, in her work on colonial South Carolina, Lorri Glover examined the nature of how sentimental ties were maintained over the years despite substantial geographic distance that usually separated various family members for long periods. Glover studies the colonization patterns of South Carolina from its earliest stages, when it began as “a family affair... [as] the free white men and women who first came to colonial South Carolina did so primarily with the endorsement and encouragement, and in some cases at the behest, of their families.”<sup>28</sup> Glover also notes that South Carolina families differed from those who lived in other colonies as they “migrated expressly to build international family empires.”<sup>29</sup> As settlers attempted to build economic and political lives in South Carolina, Glover argues, siblings and kin groups contributed to the success of business ventures and attainment of social status as the process ensued.<sup>30</sup> Thus, kinship networks played a crucial role in determining which families would succeed and which ones would fail in colonies like South Carolina.<sup>31</sup>

Like Cara Anzilotti, Glover concurs about the prominent role that the family unit played in the planter-dominated society of the South Carolina Low Country in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>26</sup> Ben Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women: Female Fortunes in a Southern Colony* (Athens, Ga. and London: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 95.

<sup>27</sup> Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, 112-113.

<sup>28</sup> Lorri Glover, *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds Among the Early South Carolina Gentry* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Glover, *All Our Relations*, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Glover, *All Our Relations*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Glover, *All Our Relations*, 17.

Whereas Anzilotti argues that females gained more power when male family members died unexpectedly and at relatively young ages because of high mortality rates, Glover is more concerned with why family members remained emotionally intimate with one another in the face of such constant losses. She believes the maintenance of emotional ties between family members served as the main reason why these individuals acted to better their family's place in colonial society because such behavior served as "the model for class identity and culture" among the planter elite.<sup>32</sup> Glover suggests emotion as a motivating factor of individual action that cannot be overlooked as one seeks to understand how and why families operated in the 1700s. In her study of families in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, Sarah M.S. Pearsall echoes Glover's beliefs. She goes one step further than Glover to explain the ways in which families maintained their bonds of affection over great distances and physical separations that lasted for long periods of time by writing letters to one another. "fractured families" overcame the challenges to maintaining emotional ties that were so crucial for the betterment of family fortunes in the colonial period, Pearsall suggests, via correspondence.<sup>33</sup> Families overcame the obstacle of space, as Pearsall argues, by "sentimentalizing families" and familial relationships in letter writing to cope "with the dislocations of the eighteenth century" and nurture their ties "through the invocations of 'family feeling'."<sup>34</sup> Pearsall defines 'family feeling' as "a phrase which denotes the linkage of familial relations with claims to sentiment."<sup>35</sup>

Historians of families in the history of colonial Latin America have likewise advanced similar findings but in a deeper way than their counterparts in North American historiography.

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<sup>32</sup> Glover, *All Our Relations*, 140.

<sup>33</sup> Sarah M.S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

<sup>34</sup> Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 7.

Scholars have debated both methodological approaches and analytical outcomes in the study of family in Latin American history. One of the first issues family historians faced stemmed from a conflict over how to define the concept of family.<sup>36</sup> Beginning in the 1980s, Diana Balmori argued that Latin American historians primarily viewed family as an economic “enterprise” and that research produced studied the subject from the perspective of property and labor in the haciendas, occupational groups competing for wealth, and elites attempting to maintain social prestige.<sup>37</sup> Balmori’s assessment mirrors similar categorizations found in the corpus of literature of families in other geographic regions during the early modern period. Studies in family history began among European social historians who worked on French, Italian, and English subjects in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>38</sup> While Balmori’s assessment revealed some similarities in historiographical patterns across the geographic regions, by the 1980s, Nara Milanich stressed that Latin American historiography “exhibited its own trajectory and a different chronology.”<sup>39</sup>

Although it began to develop slightly after its European or American counterparts, research on family history demonstrated a “narrative of decline” in Latin American scholarship during the 1980s.<sup>40</sup> In the late 1980s and early 1990s, cultural history gradually replaced social history as a preferred analytical model. Some scholars viewed family history as a type of

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<sup>36</sup> For an overview of a similar debate among historians of family in Europe and North America, see Lawrence Stone, “Past Achievements and Future Trends,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12, no. 1 (Summer 1981), 51-87.

<sup>37</sup> Balmori, “Trends in Latin American Family History,” 114.

<sup>38</sup> For example, on France, see Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Knopf, 1962) and on England see, Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800.*, Abridged Edition (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1979).

<sup>39</sup> Nara Milanich, “The Historiography of Latin American Families,” chap. in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American History*, Jose C. Moya, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 382.

<sup>40</sup> Milanich, “The Historiography of Latin American Families,” 382. For an example of the demographic approach to family history, which largely remains confined to article publications or edited monographs of collected works, see A.J.R. Russell-Wood, “Female and Family in the Economy and Society of Colonial Brazil,” chap. in *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, Asunción Lavrin, ed. (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 60-100.

scholarship that relied too heavily on the quantitative methodologies of social historians instead of the qualitative discursive approach preferred by cultural historians. With the exception of works on gender and sexuality, which gained widespread prominence in the historiography of the late 1990s and early 2000s, and overlapped with some traditional family history topics, the scholarship has only recently begun to recover in the late 2000s with the promotion of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary modes of analysis.

Although works on family remained sparse in the late 1980s and early 1990s, occasional publications hinted at the complex issues post-structuralist scholars could understand through the lens of family history. For example, Patricia Seed's work on marriage in colonial Mexico employed documentary analysis in an attempt to focus on what she called "the problem of language" in both literary and prescriptive writings.<sup>41</sup> Seed, echoing the linguistic turn of the 1980s, defined "the problem of language" as a concern for historians who needed to examine the ways in which socially constructed "words, concepts, and language" have changed over time.<sup>42</sup> Milanich points out that as the studies of families became less popular in the 1990s, the study of women's history increased in popularity.<sup>43</sup> She admits that while the two approaches certainly intersect, they ask a variety of different questions and remain distinct sub-disciplines of inquiry. Milanich theorizes that the decline of family history occurred as post-structural theorists challenged a methodological approach that relied on demographic methodology to analyze quantitative evidence.<sup>44</sup> However, in her assessment of possible avenues for future research, she also stresses that future approaches must rely on the simultaneous use of terms such as families,

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<sup>41</sup> Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts Over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 9.

<sup>42</sup> Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Milanich, "The Historiography of Latin American Families," 390-391.

<sup>44</sup> Milanich, "The Historiography of Latin American Families," 391.

households, and kinship. She defines families as domestic relationships, both public and private, households as domestic units where members usually share kinship ties, and kinship as 'relatedness' -- either biological or social. She suggests that simultaneous use of such terms will allow historians to gain a richer understanding of social patterns and trends in the colonial period.

Other historians have turned to the study of kinship networks to find new opportunities to understand the role that families played in the social history of colonies in Latin America. The study of elites and the use of kinship networks to maintain power is one of the most pervasive themes present in the historiography of families in colonial Latin America. Throughout the 1980s, historians studied the formation of social hierarchies in places like Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Venezuela, and Brazil. By studying the ways in which the elite distinguished themselves from other social categories, historians like Robert J. Ferry and John E. Kicza showed the ways in which families helped to form the foundation upon which colonial economies established themselves. For example, Ferry's research on Caracas argues that cacao beans provided significant wealth when grown as a cash crop. Elites perpetuated the complex economic system that emerged from growing cacao by employing specific marriage strategies.<sup>45</sup> These elite families in Caracas countered the Spanish legal custom of bi-partible inheritance to retain wealth and social influence over several generations by perpetuating endogamous marriage practices.<sup>46</sup> Ferry defined the elite as a collective group. His research shows how some family historians favor an approach that focuses on the group perspective of families and family lineages as opposed to individual identity and personal action.<sup>47</sup> Kicza echoes Ferry's opinions

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<sup>45</sup> Robert J. Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas: Formation and Crisis, 1567-1767* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas*, 10.

in his study of the formation of elite power networks in Mexico City during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like Ferry, Kizca argues that the pinnacle of economic and political power for Mexico City came between 1750 and 1821, -as "the Great Families" dominated colonial society.<sup>48</sup> He separates "the Great families" from other elites as those wealthy families who possessed diverse business holdings, distinct self-notions of honor, and placed children in key political posts and marriage alliances to maintain a long-term position of social power.<sup>49</sup>

Some historians, like Susan Midgen Socolow, have shown how changes in the connection between elites, wealth, and the economy shifted at the end of the eighteenth century. Socolow's research shows how the *comerciantes* (merchants) of Buenos Aires in the late-eighteenth century used marriage as a way to solidify kinship ties in a way reminiscent of what Ferry and Kizca found for Caracas and Mexico City.<sup>50</sup> However, since almost no residents in colonial Buenos Aires could claim a clear relationship to any important noble Spanish family at the end of the eighteenth century, occupation and wealth played a more important role in determining social status and marriage partners than family lineage. Research by Ferry, Kizca, and Socolow demonstrates that families used marriage as an institution to consolidate social power and subsequent political power in the colonies.

Most recently, Jane E. Mangan makes the connection between the Spanish Crown, marriage, families, and colonization issues in Peru during the sixteenth and seventeenth

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<sup>48</sup> John E. Kizca, *Colonial Entrepreneurs, Families, and Business in Bourbon Mexico City* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 13. For an additional perspective that echoes Kizca's findings, see Edith Courterier, "Women in a Noble Family: Mexican Counts of Regla, 1750-1830," chap. in *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, Asunción Lavrin (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 129-149.

<sup>49</sup> Kizca, *Colonial Entrepreneurs, Families, and Business*, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Midgen Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires, 1778-1810: Family and Commerce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1-2.

centuries.<sup>51</sup> She argues that “the [Spanish] Crown attempted to control the marital unit that it saw as a cornerstone of its emerging colonial society.”<sup>52</sup> The issue of abandoned Spanish wives languishing on the Iberian peninsula while their conquistador husbands explored and plundered the lands of the New World has long reinforced the mestiza stereotype for which colonial Latin American becomes so well known. Mangan spins this stereotype on its head when she argues the Spanish Crown first began to have concern for separated husbands and wives as early as the reigns of Isabella I and Ferdinand II in the late 1400s.<sup>53</sup> Charles V, Mangan revealed, attempted to treat the concern of his grandparents by issuing a royal order that married men could not travel to the New World unless accompanied by their Spanish wives. Religious concerns about individual sin and staining personal morality fueled the royal actions. On October 19, 1544, Charles V issued a Royal Cédula on the issue of what Mangan identifies as the “*vida mariable*” or “married life.”<sup>54</sup> The Cédula codified all royal policy that had been disseminated to the public since the days of Christopher Columbus, and it represents the Crown’s first attempt to control the personal marital relationships of its colonists for the public good of its colonies and their long-term survival. The Cédula may have been the first attempt to control colonists using marriage but it would not be the last.<sup>55</sup> Mangan’s research reveals how Latin American historians have begun to identify the value that families as a social unit had in the colonial world for the Spanish Crown. This study seeks to blend the approach of Latin American family historians with that of Anglo-America in the eighteenth century. The importance of families as a social unit,

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<sup>51</sup> Jane E. Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations: Creating the Bonds of Family in Conquest-Era Peru and Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>52</sup> Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*, 70.

<sup>53</sup> Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*, 73.

<sup>54</sup> Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*, 75-76.

<sup>55</sup> Interracial marriages, bigamous marriages, and illegitimacy continued to be major issues for Spanish society even after Charles V passed the *vida mariable* Cédula. It eventually necessitated the passage of an entire legal act known as “the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage” in 1776 under Charles III. See Steinar A. Saether, “Bourbon Absolutism and Marriage Reform in Late Colonial Spanish America,” *The Americas* 59, no. 4 (2003), 475-509.



acknowledged by and elevated by the state for its usage to ensure imperial aims will have drastic ramifications for East and West Florida during the eighteenth century.

By using primarily qualitative sources, scholars like Marsh, Glover, Pearsall, Balmori, Seed, Milanich, Ferry, Kicza, Socolow, and Mangan merge the quantitative aspects of family strategies that illuminate collective intent with the qualitative considerations of individual agency and sentimentality to obtain a more accurate view of the historical experience than has previously been possible. The study of family strategies in the analysis of kinship relations is not incompatible with considering the influence of sentimentality. In fact, they complement one another to such a degree that social historians will be able to gain a complete understanding of the role that families played in the colonial society of British North America that remains absent from current scholarship.

### **The Historiography of British Florida: Going Beyond the Success or Failure**

#### **Question**

After the Spanish ceded East and West Florida to the British in 1763, colonial administrators strongly encouraged the immigration of families to the new colonies. When British men immigrated to these new lands, they brought their wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters with them as they attempted to form familial units that would allow them to participate in the social hierarchy as influential power brokers. It is the link between families and the state, as they competed for social power, which shows why the study of families in British Florida represents a marked opportunity to broaden the application of family strategies in research about the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. In turn, the study of families, the kinship networks they established, and the strategies they used in British Florida will unite the work of scholars in the historiography of Anglo-American families like Ben Marsh, Lorri Glover, and Sarah M.S.

Pearsall and colonial Latin America as represented in the works of Diana Balmori, Patricia Seed, and Nara Milanich. By examining Great Britain's brief tenure in East and West Florida, historians can see the process by which socially constructed families changed from an economic collective influenced by English law to a group of individuals voluntarily bound to one another by sentimental attachments with a distinct American identity. This process reveals how conflicts between royal authority and the colonists' kinship networks shaped imperial policy for the British Crown in the late eighteenth century and adapted the institution of marriage with the consequence of contributing to the shifting personal identities of individuals who lived on the Anglo-Iberian borderlands frontier of the late 1700s. Within this context, the use of a family strategies methodology will blend quantitative and qualitative approaches to reveal the agency of both individuals and families within the social hierarchy of colonial settlements.

The history of colonial Florida during the British period has remained a more popular topic for study by local historians than to academic scholars. There are groundbreaking works by academic scholars Charles L. Mowat on East Florida and Cecil Johnson on West Florida, first published in the 1940s, that have remained the standards on their respective topics despite their age.<sup>56</sup> Since their publication, most literature on the field of colonial British Florida has emerged in relation to the end of the First Spanish Period (1513-1763) or from the transition to the Second Spanish Period (1764-1821) and American statehood on topics ranging from diplomatic to

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<sup>56</sup> See Charles L. Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Berkeley, Ca. and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943) and Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida, 1763-1783* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1942; reprint, New Haven, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971). In his preface to the first edition, dated July 14, 1943, Charles L. Mowat thanked Clinton Howard for suggesting East Florida during the British period as a possible research area and dissertation topic. The pair apparently became colleagues during Mowat's time as a part of the Department of History at the University of California – Los Angeles. Johnson subsequently became acquaintances with fellow Florida historian Joseph B. Lockey. From his acknowledgements, it appears that Mowat knew of Cecil Johnson but did not have much of a relationship with him prior to their publications of their respective works on East and West Florida. Johnson was a member of the faculty at the University of North Carolina and his book on West Florida beat Mowat's work to publication by some months. Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, vi.

political to military histories. In recent years, more academic scholars have begun to explore the complex social history of East and West Florida between 1763 and 1784.<sup>57</sup> Almost exclusively, these works have not focused upon topics of gender, sexuality, and the history of the family. Instead, they focused on questions about migration, the nature of mercantile economies, the rise of plantations, and the utilization and expansion of Atlantic World slavery. All of these works share a unified theme in that they each address their divergent topics from the perspective of individual experience and agency.

The process of colonization during the mid-to-late eighteenth century has occupied historians who raise the question of what the British achieved throughout the enterprise of populating East and West Florida. Conflicting threads of scholarly dialogue have emerged in this debate primarily over the point of how to define a successful colonization enterprise. Bernard Bailyn has argued that one of the characteristics of a successful colony would be one that grows and expands because immigrants view it as a place of refuge from political, economic, social, cultural failures in the Old World. It would also be a place where new opportunities awaited them.<sup>58</sup> Bailyn has evaluated the settlement of East Florida as a failure using this definition by studying its inability to meet and sustain increasing demographic benchmarks. He suggests that “Xanadu” ultimately failed to attract a substantial freeholder population. Subsequently, it never made its economic investors and landholders any money because too few people worked the infertile land of the colony’s plantation to turn a profit.<sup>59</sup> In his study of investor Richard

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<sup>57</sup> For the most recent historiographical evaluation of the field, see Sherry Johnson, "The Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Florida," *the Florida Historical Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2015), 296-326.

<sup>58</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 7.

<sup>59</sup> He refers to East Florida as Xanadu, borrowing poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s name for the capital of a mythic opulent paradise ruled over by Kublai Khan. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 470-471.

Oswald's land holdings in East Florida, David Hancock upholds Bailyn's failure thesis.<sup>60</sup> He cites as evidence of this judgment that only one or two landholders, out of the dozens of men who had invested in East Florida, actually received a substantial monetary return on their original expenditure. Hancock further offers a lack of any significant agricultural exports from East Florida as evidence to support his evaluation.<sup>61</sup> Thus, both historians link the pattern of increased immigration to the colony and a substantial monetary return for investors as a way to define successful colonization experiment.

Other historians have challenged Bailyn's failure thesis both directly and indirectly. Daniel L. Schafer directly engaged both Bailyn and Hancock by arguing that the former "was mistaken" and the latter fell "also off the mark."<sup>62</sup> Schafer suggested that the American Revolution and the presence of Loyalist refugees, who swelled the population of the colony after 1776, had a greater role in explaining the failure of the colony than either environment or infrastructure concerns.<sup>63</sup> Later, Schafer argued that perhaps the study of the question of whether the colony could be deemed a success or not, or what he referred to as "'the Failed Xanadu' school of historiography," should be set aside in favor of pursuing other questions. In particular, he argued that the study of the individuals who lived on plantations in East Florida to be of greater importance than if historians once and for all settled the question as to if British colonization efforts had been a success or a failure.<sup>64</sup> Robert Olwell, more subtle in his critique

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<sup>60</sup> David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community: 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 153.

<sup>61</sup> Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 159.

<sup>62</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, "'A Swamp of an Investment'?" Richard Oswald's British East Florida Plantation Experiment," chap. in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. by Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000), 12.

<sup>63</sup> Schafer, "'A Swamp of an Investment'," 12.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010), 8.

of Bailyn and Hancock, concurred with Schafer that historians studying British Florida should go beyond questions that examined its success or failure as a colony.<sup>65</sup> Advocating an approach that he refers to as “new imperial history,” Olwell believes it valuable to study colonial Florida by scrutinizing “the workings of the empire through a microscope” and to instead “see a world in microcosm” in order to understand the nature of empire in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World and the people who lived in it.<sup>66</sup>

Social historians who have written on British Florida identify three main groups in their study of how interactions can help historians gain a greater understanding of the nature of empire in the eighteenth century during an age of revolution. They loosely identify these groups as being either Europeans (primarily Britons), Native Americans, or African slaves. Robin F.A. Fabel, in his study of these groups in West Florida, sought to understand how “communities in crisis years” along the Mississippi River during the 1760s and 1770s responded to British imperialism and state policy.<sup>67</sup> He further argues that this group would have remained loyal to the British crown and maintained her empire in this area during the American Revolution if the state had resolved the colonists’ grievances about certain policies enacted by government officials. Fabel’s approach is evocative for social historians of British Florida for three reasons. First, he notes the importance of identity among colonial social groups as it related to the success or failure of imperial policy in frontier settlements. Second, he suggests that the British colonial population of West Florida would have remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution if some attempt had been made by the state to negotiate a type of middle ground related to the

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Olwell, “Seeds of Empire: Florida, Kew, and the British Imperial Meridian in the 1760s,” chap. in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, eds. Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 267.

<sup>66</sup> Olwell, “Seeds of Empire,” 266-267.

<sup>67</sup> Robin F.A. Fabel, *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759-1775* (Gainesville, Fla: University Press of Florida, 2000), 11.

passage of government edicts. Third, he emphasizes the connection between failure of self-identified social groups to support imperial aims, i.e., European settlers (primarily merchants), Cherokees and other Lower Mississippi small tribes, and African slaves/freemen (here, the Black Caribs of St. Vincent) because they privileged personal goals over those of the state.

In a slightly different context, Daniel S. Murphree has followed Fabel's model in his study of cultural identity in colonial Florida.<sup>68</sup> While Murphree's study chronologically spans the whole of the colonial period in Florida, from the arrival of the Spanish in 1513 to the end of British dominion in 1784, he suggests that individuals and groups self-identified and interacted with one another based on this self-determination throughout the colony's entire history. Thus, he echoes Fabel's sentiments in their parallel assessments on the interaction of different social groups during the British period. More specifically, Murphree's analysis focuses on the attempts of British colonists to anglicize the native tribes that they encountered as they sought to civilize their "native barbarity/heathenism."<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, Murphree suggests, the British viewed the natives as a group that could only be civilized with European help. While this assessment is not a new argument, Murphree does make a new contribution when he asserts that this belief is a reason why the British passed laws in colonial Florida that inflamed "misunderstanding and intercultural strife" between the groups. The passage of racist legislation ultimately cost the British their Florida holdings during the American Revolution.<sup>70</sup>

In her study of the Minorcan immigration to East Florida in the 1760s, Patricia C. Griffin actually parallels Fabel and Murphree's approaches, even though her research predates them by

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<sup>68</sup> Daniel S. Murphree, *Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783*. (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2006), 99.

<sup>69</sup> Murphree, *Constructing Floridians*, 102.

<sup>70</sup> Murphree, *Constructing Floridians*, 121.

more than a decade.<sup>71</sup> The well-known mass migration of Minorcan colonists to New Smyrna, at the behest of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, has been one of the most frequently studied topics by historians of Florida during the British period. However, Griffin's work remains in dialogue with Fabel's and Murphree's for several reasons. First, her work shows that individual groups of colonists can and did self-identify, not only because of cultural or racial affiliations, but also along lines determined by family kinship networks. Second, the Minorcans remained a distinct ethnic group that failed to assimilate into the society established by the British, first in the settlement at New Smyrna and later in St. Augustine. Eventually, the Minorcans formed their own quarter within St. Augustine. Their foreign languages, dark physical coloring, and their Catholic religion resulted in the Minorcans intermarrying among themselves and maintaining ties to one another instead of the British crown.<sup>72</sup> Kenneth H. Beeson, in another study of the Minorcans in East Florida, suggests an important consequence of the British Crown's failure to ensure that individual groups were satisfied with state policy. He argues that the Minorcans, who felt no loyalty to the British government, actually worked as spies for the Spanish Crown in the late 1760s and early 1770s.<sup>73</sup> The intelligence the Minorcans sent to Havana, Beeson believes, offered another reason why the British ultimately deemed colonial Florida as the less important colony when faced with a choice of which territory to hold on to at the end of the American Revolution.

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<sup>71</sup> Griffin bases her analysis on a theoretical model of community, as espoused by anthropologists Conrad Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball that defines community as a settlement of individuals and their respective households are drawn together and shaped by interactional processes, including the environment and human interaction. Patricia C. Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1991), i.

<sup>72</sup> Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach*, 193.

<sup>73</sup> Kenneth Henry Beeson, *Fromajadas and Indigo: The Minorcan Colony in Florida* (Charleston: The History Press, 2006), 19.

The scholarship on the Minorcans and their motivations is an example this work suggests can be expanded and applied to other social groups based on kinship affiliation in East and West Florida. Families in British Florida established a pattern by building kinship networks to consolidate power in the colony and the institution of marriage played a significant role in the establishment of those networks. The history of kinship relations as a way to accumulate power is a well-established historiographical subfield in the study of early modern Europe and Anglo-America. As historian Rosemary O'Day has argued, "there is evidence from all... societies, and from across the social hierarchy, that 'family connections' were stressed and cultivated [for personal gain]."74 In short, a study of family and social power, using the methodological tool of family strategies to analyze agency from individual and collective perspectives, reveals social trends in the colonies of East and West Florida during the British period.

These trends are an example of Anglo-American culture in transition. Despite traditionally being thought of in terms of demographic research, family strategies can be used to understand the ways in which families adapted the institution of marriage to gain and maintain power in colonial settlements. An examination of secondary literature on families in the colonial world has shown that themes of legal and imperial authority, individual versus collective identity and agency, parent versus child, consent, and social status pervade the literature on family history in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. These considerations emerge from both the Anglo-American and Latin American historiographical traditions. In order to integrate the contributions of both historiographical schools, this work seeks to demonstrate the commonalities shared by both approaches in the examination of East and West Florida. The

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<sup>74</sup> Rosemary O'Day, *The Family and Family Relationships, 1500-1900: England, France, and the United States of America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 125.



Floridas existed as a liminal space affected and shaped by trends from both Spanish and British influences. Exchange between both cultures on the Anglo-Iberian borderlands frontier of the Floridas contributed to the ways in which families would defeat the British Crown's attempt to use these colonies as experiments for adapting the ideal colonization scheme.

### **Conclusion: The Crown & Families in the Experiment of the British Floridas**

This study will focus on the colonization process the British Crown designed to settle East and West Florida specifically focusing on the role that families and their kinship networks played in that process. It will demonstrate the need for historians to go beyond the "success or failure" question that has dominated the historiography of British Florida for decades. The correct question that historians should be asking is not if East and West Florida were a success or failure for the British Crown. Instead, there are more worthy issues that need to be considered when looking at the significance of the British Floridas. For example, why did the British Crown see East and West Florida as valuable test grounds for a newly designed colonization scheme in 1763? How and why did the state and colonists elevate the family as a unit of social organization? What role did the institution of marriage have in the conflicting notions of family held by the Crown and its colonists? How did the emergence of distinct kinship networks ultimately undermine and cause the failure of the Crown's colonization experiment in Florida? Finally, how were the state and its citizens shaped by the failure of the British colonization scheme in East and West Florida between 1763 and 1784? These answers to these questions will collectively reveal the importance of families and their relationship to the Crown as they shaped imperial policy and the emergence of a distinct personal identity for colonists who lived in Florida.

The chapters will be organized in a rough chronological order and more specifically around distinct points of view when considering the colonization scheme and its results in the British Floridas. It will begin with an analysis of the British Crown's acquisition and colonization plans for Florida in 1763 and conclude with a discussion of the ways in which settlements failed or succeeded based on how many deviations from the approved plan occurred by 1784. This study consists of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. This introduction will serve to provide the historiographical background on issues of the history of families in the colonial southeast, including East and West Florida, from both Anglo-American and Latin American scholars. It will also incorporate a discussion of why family strategies is an appropriate research approach to use in answering questions about the experiences of families who lived in British Florida. Within each of the anticipated chapters, the themes of family, kinship networks, power relationships, sexuality, morality, marriage, and evolving personal identities will be examined against the backdrop of shifting imperial politics and attempts by the state to control its frontier population. The conclusion will consider the legacy of families who stayed in East and West Florida after the British evacuated the colonies in 1784 and how this shaped the territories' movement to become possessions of the United States in 1821.

Chapter One will cover the years from 1762 to 1771. This period was chosen because Great Britain first began negotiations with Spain to acquire Florida in 1762. It was also chosen because 1771 was the year that East Florida's first governor, General James Grant, departed from the colony for Great Britain. This period also corresponds to the arrival, tenure, and departure of West Florida's first governor, Commodore George Johnstone, who had left that colony for Great Britain by 1767. It will largely rely on the perspective of the state in its analysis. The chapter will argue that the British state colonized East and West Florida with a specific plan that relied on the

use of model family units, i.e., Protestant white families—either of English or foreign heritage—who would owe their allegiance to the crown. The British Crown believed that the use of such families in settling East and West Florida would ensure a stable, loyal population that would remain in the new colonies for the long-term and thus ensure their success. The three main areas of evidence that will be examined in support of this argument include the Crown's recruitment of prominent families from other colonies like South Carolina to settle in Florida, a pro-Florida public relations campaign waged in British newspapers in the mid-1760s, and the way the Crown ordered that land allotments be granted in the new colonies to benefit specific type of groups, namely the families that wanted to settle there.

Chapter Two will cover the years from 1764 to 1781. This period was chosen because it roughly corresponds to the time when families first arrived in East and West Florida and they worked together to support the aims of the British Crown and how that behavior had changed by the capture of West Florida by Spanish general Bernard de Gálvez in 1781. This time demonstrates when the first hints of disagreement emerged between colonial officials and some of the families who had begun to chafe at the restrictions placed upon them at the behest of the Crown. This chapter will argue that families competed for power, prestige, and influence in the colonial social structure of East and West Florida using strategies that eventually brought them into conflict with the state over individual/personal aims versus group/public goals, which in turn started to undermine their affinity and support for the British government. It will particularly consider the issue of how life on the Anglo-Iberian borderlands frontier shaped the emergence of a separate American identity for colonists as opposed to its emergence from ideological shifts for either the Patriot or Loyalist mindsets. The main areas of evidence that will be considered include how marriage and business relationships led to the establishment of kinship networks

and the ways in which corresponding political power blocks emerged out of these networks' formation. This chapter will argue that colonists adapted the institution of marriage because of the importance of the family as a social unit in colonial society after seeing the Crown attempt to do the same thing. This chapter will argue that families in British Florida adapted the institution of marriage as a tool to use in the strategies they employed to further their own individual ambitions over those of the state and that they collectively began to develop separate familial identities that differed from the state's conception of family. It will particularly examine how marriage on the Anglo-Iberian frontier changed in light of shifting religious and legal definitions of marriage in both the British and Spanish cultures, i.e., Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act of 1754 and the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage of 1776. It will consider the ways in which types of alternative families emerged out of a growing practice of common law marriages in settlements where individual performativity of married life conveyed the desired marital identity and had greater importance than official legal status. Issues of race and ethnicity will also be treated through consideration of interracial relationships and long-term extramarital affairs, some of which resulted in illegitimate offspring.

Chapter Three will cover the years from 1765 to 1777. This period was chosen because this chapter will examine the years during which colonists established brand new townships in East and West Florida in areas previously unsettled by the Spanish and French. It will specifically focus on the settlements of Rollestown (founded in 1765 by Denys Rolle) and New Smyrna (founded in 1767 by Dr. Andrew Turnbull) and in East Florida and Campbelltown (founded in 1766 by Montfort Browne) in West Florida.<sup>75</sup> This chapter will argue that the most

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<sup>75</sup> This chapter will deliberately exclude the settlements of St. Augustine, Pensacola, St. Marks, Mobile, Natchez, and Baton Rouge from its analysis. These towns were omitted because they had been previously settled by the Spanish and/or French and retained some substantial legacy of those prior settlements in either demographic or infrastructure considerations. Rollestown, Campbelltown, and New Smyrna were completely new settlements with

successful of the newly established (but ultimately failed) townships was New Smyrna, because it alone contained a population with a significant number of family units, as compared to Rollestown and Campbelltown. However, it too ultimately failed to establish itself as a successful township because the families Turnbull helped to immigrate to East Florida were not Protestant, they failed to assimilate into the British culture, and they ultimately revolted against British authority.

Chapter Four will cover the years from 1775 to 1820. This period was chosen because it corresponds with the outbreak and duration of the American Revolution. By the mid-1770s, more families privileged individual family aims over those of the state in East and West Florida to the point where the state questioned the colonies' loyalty. The state doubted the loyalty of these colonies even though the arrival of Loyalist refugees in the late 1770s swelled the population of East Florida by 15,000% and firmly reestablished the majority of the colonies' demography as unquestionably faithful to the British Crown. It will also consider what role the British government's determination of East and West Florida's loyalty played in its negotiation for the return of the Bahamas from the Spanish in the peace talks held in Paris in 1782. In addition, it will study how families dealt with the transfer of East and West Florida from British to Spanish control in different ways as some evacuated the colonies while others stayed despite the loss of British suzerainty in those territories. Finally, it will suggest that the emergence of a

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no prior histories attached to the sites where they were established. Possible settlements not considered in this analysis, but that fit the established criteria and might offer future opportunities for further research, are William Elliot's Stobb's Farm on Mosquito Inlet in East Florida and Manchac in West Florida. Settlements established after the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775 are also deliberately excluded as state policy regarding colonization changed because of threat of invasion and massive refugee migration. The Crown initially suspended all land grants in North America in mid-1775, but Governor Peter Chester of West Florida rescinded this order himself on November 11, 1775 in response to lands in his colony with the hopes of attracting refugee Loyalist settlers. See Robert V. Haynes, *The Natchez District and the American Revolution* (Jackson, M.S.: University Press of Mississippi, 1976), 29-30.

distinct familial identity that placed its aims over those of the state planted the seeds of rebellion that would occur against Spanish authorities in West Florida in 1810 and in East Florida in 1812.

The Conclusion will consider the whole of the British tenure of East and West Florida during the mid-eighteenth century and the legacy the British Florida had into the early nineteenth century. It will focus on a conflict that existed between the British Crown's romanticized notion of family as an idea and the harsh reality of family as a social unit comprised of individuals with their own thoughts, opinions, motivations, and goals. Last, it will consider the winners and losers of the British experiment in the colonization of East and West Florida instead of considering the "success or failure" question.

In short, this dissertation will seek to consider the relationship between the British crown and families who played a role in the colonization of East and West Florida between 1763 and 1784. The conflict between the goals of the imperial state and individuals reveals the importance of the family as a social unit in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. By considering both the significance of strategies that families employed to build kinship networks and to gain power at the cost of challenging state aims, this study believes the family unit underwent a significant change in filial devotion to the British Crown and personal identity as British subjects. Colonists defeated a colonization scheme and inadvertently changed themselves in the process. The conception of how colonists in Florida viewed themselves and their families has substantial ramifications for themselves as individuals and for the British Empire at large. The British Floridas may not have been so insignificant as once thought. In fact, the attempts of the Crown to develop, design, implement, and improve their great colonization scheme would push East and West Floridas significance beyond asking the mere question as to if they were successful colonies or abject failures.

**Chapter 1**  
**“Everything is to Be in Some Measure Created”:**  
**Agents of Royal Authority and the Ideal Colonization Process**

On June 8, 1763, King George III gave orders to his ministers for the creation of new governments for territories that the British Crown had received from Spain in late 1762.<sup>76</sup> On Friday, July 15, 1763, the Board of Trade and Plantations met in London. William Petty, Earl of Shelburne and George III's Secretary of State, met with four other councilors. Among the business they conducted, the Board acknowledged receipt of instructions from John Perceval, 3rd Earl of Egmont, sent on behalf of the king. These instructions included the names of the men George III had appointed as the royal governors of East and West Florida. The Earl of Egmont further ordered the Board to write to the new governors to solicit “their opinions by what method, the most reasonable and frugal, the new established colonies in America may be peopled and settled.”<sup>77</sup> On July 22, 1763, a royal official named John Pownall, acting for the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantation and the king, wrote to the newly appointed governors in completion of the king’s orders. Pownall’s correspondence to General James Grant and Commodore George Johnstone instructed each of the men to think about “the new[ly] established colonys in America” and cultivate ideas about state policy that would allow the territories to be

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<sup>76</sup>K. H. Ledward, ed., “Journal, July 1763: Volume 70,” *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77440>.

<sup>77</sup> Ledward, ed., “Journal, July 1763: Volume 70.”

“be people[d] and settled with useful, industrious inhabitants, either from His Majesty's colonys that may be overstocked with inhabitants or from any foreign parts.”<sup>78</sup>

The king's solicitation of the governors' ideas on the formulation of state policy for the Floridas so soon after their acquisition reflects the larger process the British Crown utilized in the establishment of their newest colonies. Before a single English settler arrived in East or West Florida, the Crown wanted to develop and promote a detailed plan to colonize the new territories that the state designed to ensure the long-term success of its new lands.<sup>79</sup> While it took some months to come together, the plan developed by the Crown eventually coalesced around a foundation that required a specific group of people: families. The British state colonized East and West Florida with a specific plan that relied on the use of model family units, i.e., Protestant white families—either of English or foreign heritage—who would owe their allegiance to the Crown. The British Crown believed that the use of such families in settling East and West Florida would ensure a stable, loyal population that would remain in the new colonies for a long duration and thus ensure their success. Once implemented, the Crown intended that officials like Grant and Johnstone would act as agents of royal authority to ensure the recruitment, immigration, and continued success of families during their tenure in the Floridas. In short, governors who acted as conduits for the transmission of royal authority would ensure the state's

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<sup>78</sup> Letter, Thomas Pownall to General James Grant, July 22, 1763 CO5/563, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain and Letter, Thomas Pownall to Commodore George Johnstone, July 22, 1763 CO5/599, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>79</sup> When it became clear that the Spanish planned to evacuate virtually the entire population of Florida in 1762, they made plans to relocate approximately 3700 men, women, and children. According to J. Leitch Wright, "The unenthusiastic mass exodus began in the spring of 1763 and was completed early the following year." Residents from Pensacola and the military inland garrison of San Marcos sailed for Campeche and Veracruz while St. Augustine's colonists began the evacuation to Havana. The evacuation ended when the final boat carrying the Spanish Governor Melchor Feliú departed from St. Augustine on January 21, 1764. See J. Leitch Wright, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), 109; Robert L. Gold, "The Settlement of the Pensacola Indians in New Spain, 1763-1770," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 45, no. 4 (Nov. 1965), 567; and Charles L. Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 8.



most important tool of colonization – families – would survive and thrive and the colonies along with them.

### **Selecting Agents of Royal Authority**

King George III and his ministers carefully weighed the choices of the men who would become the first governors of East and West Florida. "The most highly coveted post within the colonial secretary's gift was that of royal governor...when one considers the difficulties the colonial governors often encountered; it is surprising to find so many candidates for appointment."<sup>80</sup> They eventually chose two men who possessed similar backgrounds, comparable skill sets, and like-minded ambitions. The king selected two Scots who were members of the minor nobility, lifelong bachelors at the time of their appointments, and career military officers. The similarities in their individual demeanors, backgrounds, and goals were not a coincidence. George III, as advised by councilors like John Perceval, the Second Earl of Egmont, chose men like Grant and Johnstone because he believed they possessed the tenacity and ardor required to make East and West Florida and her people valuable assets to the British Empire while not getting bogged down in the personal pursuit of power, prestige, and wealth at the expense of the government. A closer examination of their backgrounds shows why both the king and his councilors possessed such hopes.

General James Grant was born in late October or early November 1720 on his family's estate of Ballindalloch, near Moray in Scotland.<sup>81</sup> A younger son of the Laird of Ballindalloch, Colonel William Grant and his wife, Ann, Grant had two older brothers (Andrew and Alexander)

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<sup>80</sup> B.D. Barger, "Lord Dartmouth's Patronage, 1772-1775," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (April 1958), 192.

<sup>81</sup> For more details on Grant's early and personal life and his personal papers see, Philip C. Tucker, "Notes on the Life of James Grant Prior and Subsequent to His Governorship of East Florida," *The Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1929), 112-119 and George C. Rogers, "The Papers of James Grant of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 77, no. 3 (1976), 145-160.

and three sisters (Anne, Grace, and Henrietta). He received a thorough education for a younger son of his family's background and standing and even completed some training in the law. However, Grant abandoned plans to continue in the legal profession when, in late 1744, he entered military service with the purchase of an officer's commission in His Majesty's Royal (Royal Scots) Regiment of Foot in the British Army. The new officer saw action during the French and Indian War, rising to the rank of major by 1757 when he became a member of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. He fought in the Battle of Fort Duquesne in 1758 and the Anglo-Cherokee War of 1761 before he participated in the British siege and occupation of Havana in late 1762. Grant never married. Known to be a social and affable individual who enjoyed good food, fine wine, and intelligent conversation, Grant possessed a keen interest in gardening and agriculture. Throughout his life, he maintained a voluminous personal correspondence, including several journals and diaries.<sup>82</sup> He remained active in both business and politics after he left the military, serving as a member of Parliament from Tains Burghs in the 1770s and again from 1787 until his retirement in 1802. He died on April 13, 1805 at his family's estate of Ballindalloch Castle in Scotland.

Like Grant, George Johnstone was also the younger son of a minor Scottish lord. Born on in 1730 at the family's principle residence in Westerhall to James and Barbara Murray Johnstone, he joined a family as a younger son with many siblings.<sup>83</sup> One of fifteen children (fourteen surviving), he was the fourth of seven sons (James, Alexander, William, George, John,

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<sup>82</sup> The definitive biographies of Grant are Paul David Nelson, *General James Grant: Scottish Soldier and Royal Governor of East Florida* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1993); Daniel L. Schafer, *Governor James Grant's Villa: A British East Florida Indigo Plantation (St. Augustine, Fla.: The St. Augustine Journal of History, 2001)*; and Daniel L. Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James Grant Recorded in His Own Hand at the Governor's House in St. Augustine, Florida, from January 1, 1767 to March 6, 1767," *El Escribano* 41 (2004), 69-96.

<sup>83</sup> For the most recent treatment of the Johnstone family and their place in the larger British empire during the eighteenth century, see Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Patrick, and Gideon) and eight daughters (Elizabeth, Henrietta, Barbara, Margaret, Elizabeth, Sophia, Charlotte, and Mary). Johnstone joined the military as a teenager around 1743 and spent several years in the merchant navy before he became an officer in His Majesty's Navy in 1755.<sup>84</sup> He served with distinction throughout a number of battles, skillfully commanding vessels like the *Hornet* and the *Hind*. A well-respected sailor, Johnstone later developed a polarizing reputation. He had no problem occasionally challenging his commanding officers' orders when he disagreed with their judgments or decisions. Eventually, the sailor went a step too far in his constant challenges to the chain of command. In 1757, fed up with what his superiors viewed as constant disobedience to authority figures, his commanding officer brought him up on formal charges of disobeying a direct order. Facing court-martial and a substantial amount of evidence about his sometimes cantankerous personality, Johnstone was not surprised when a tribunal found him guilty of the charges leveled against him. However, Johnstone seemed to be unprepared for the punishment the tribunal passed against him. Considering his prior service record, particularly the bravery he displayed in battle, the tribunal passed an extremely light sentence by only issuing him a formal reprimand.<sup>85</sup>

The court martial did not spell the end of Johnstone's military career but did reflect that the man's temper occasionally got the better of him in both his professional and personal lives. Quick to take insult when people questioned his personal honor, Johnstone participated in more

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<sup>84</sup> "George Johnstone (1730-1787)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Volume 10: Howard-Kenneth* eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 963-965 and Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 15. For the most important scholarship on Johnstone, see John D. Born, Jr., *Governor Johnstone and Trade in British West Florida, 1764-1767* (Wichita, K.S.: Wichita State University, 1967); Robin F.A. Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida'—A Case of Lobbying?" *Alabama Review* 29, no. 3 (July 1976), 164-176; Robin F.A. Fabel, "Governor George Johnstone of British West Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976), 497-511; and Robin F.A. Fabel, *Bombast and Broadships: The Lives of George Johnstone* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1987).

<sup>85</sup> Fabel, *Bombast and Broadships*, 4.

than one duel during his lifetime. In his youth, lived the lifestyle of a confirmed bachelor, although rumors about his numerous affairs provided regular gossip for the social ton in London. In the early 1760s, Johnstone unofficially settled down, beginning a long-term relationship with a woman named Martha Ford by whom he had four sons (John, George Lindsey, James Primrose, and Alexander Patrick) and one daughter (Sophia). As a younger son, he likely never expected to inherit his father's title and that expectation likely contributed to his decision to join the military in his youth. Upon his father's death, the family title passed to his older brothers, James and William Johnstone Pulteney, in turn. When it became clear that his brother William's only child would be a girl, the Commodore stood as heir apparent to his brother's title, the Baronet of Westerhall.<sup>86</sup> Eager to produce a legitimate heir himself, Johnstone temporarily set aside his mistress and married a woman named Charlotte Dee on January 31, 1782. Their only child, a much hoped for legitimate son and heir, arrived the following year when his wife gave birth to James Lowther Johnstone. Johnstone would have inherited the baronet himself had he predeceased his older brother. In later life, Johnstone remained active in politics, serving as the member of Parliament from Cockermonth in the late 1760s, from Appleby in the 1770s, and from Lostwithiel and Ilchester in the early 1780s. Known by many people as the Commodore Johnstone also maintained a keen economic and personal interest in the affairs of the East India Company until his death on May 24, 1787 in London. Upon his death, his claim to the Westerhall baronet passed on to his only son. Upon William Johnstone Pulteney's death on May 30, 1805, John Lowther Johnstone became the sixth baronet.

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<sup>86</sup> Poultney's daughter, Henrietta Laura Johnstone Pulteney (known as Laura) became the 1<sup>st</sup> Countess of Bath through marriage.

The appointment of two Scots as governors to the Crown's newest possessions did not please some people in Great Britain.<sup>87</sup> Popular opinion held that Englishmen were more appropriate choices to act as agents of royal authority abroad. Memories of the Scottish rebellion against Hanoverian authority a generation before lingered keenly among the English nobility who had fought and financed a brutal response to the challenges of George II's rule.<sup>88</sup> On September 17, 1763, *the North Briton* published an anonymous letter attacking Grant's and Johnstone's appointments. "Our hopeful administration have placed our new subjects in Florida under the government of Scotchmen," the anonymous critic wrote. He then chastised the appointments as "partial and flagrant."<sup>89</sup> The author wished the news of the appointments to be mere gossip or that the choices might be prevented from being implemented if the government saw "how incongruous it is to justice, how repugnant to policy and how baneful to liberty."<sup>90</sup>

Grant was not in Great Britain to respond to the letter upon its publication, but Johnstone was. He staunchly defended the appointments, accusing the critiques leveled against them by an anonymous source as both "insulting and injurious in respect to the parties appointed."<sup>91</sup> Within days of the letter's publication, Johnstone wrote to *the North Briton's* publisher, one Mr.

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<sup>87</sup> Prime Ministers as John Stuart, third Earl of Bute and George Grenville first favored the policy of appointing Scots to significant government posts in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Many Englishmen revolted against the promotion of whom some considered to be an "alien" and "inferior" social group. For more on the shift towards the appointment of not only Scottish but Irish colonial officials, see J. Russell Snap, "An Enlightened Empire: Scottish and Irish Imperial Reformers in the Age of the American Revolution," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 33, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), 388-403.

<sup>88</sup> The Jacobite Rising of 1745 saw the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Stuart and Catholic claimant to both the Scottish and English thrones. While the Battle of Culloden finally curbed the Scottish rebellious nature of many highland families, the disloyalty they demonstrated against George II sat unwell with many members of the English nobility who believed Scotsmen could not be trusted to act of agents of royal authority they had challenged only a generation earlier. See Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>89</sup> *An Appeal to the Public, in Behalf of George Johnstone, Esq., Governor of West Florida, in Answer to the North Briton Extraordinary, and in Consequence of Other Matters Not Taken Notice of in that Extraordinary Publication*, (London: Printed for C. Moran, Under the Piazza, Convent Garden, 1763), 5.

<sup>90</sup> *An Appeal to the Public, in Behalf of George Johnstone*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> *An Appeal to the Public, in Behalf of George Johnstone*, 5.

Sumpter, and he demanded to know the identity of his and Grant's anonymous critic. Sumpter refused to divulge the information, but he did agree to pass along Johnstone's reply to the original anonymous letter writer. In his response, Johnstone offered to meet his critic on the field of honor in Hyde Park with dueling pistols. His critic never personally responded to Johnstone's offer, but he did write a second anonymous piece which the paper subsequently published. Never one to back down from a fight, Johnstone's eventual response resulted in a public tug of war detailed in subsequent editions of the paper. He chastised the personal attack on "his character...[as it] had been grossly and villainously traduced."<sup>92</sup> Johnstone's anonymous critique continued to harangue him each time he replied as it seemed to him that the governor would only be content when he had satisfied "the necessity of bringing the whole of the extraordinary matter before the tribunal of the public."<sup>93</sup> For his part, Grant never issued a public comment on the matter but seemed content to ignore the libel leveled against him. The feud lasted for several weeks during the fall of 1763 until it eventually gave way to newer and more incendiary public scandals.

The episode of the attack on Johnstone's and Grant's appointments in the pages of *the North Briton* reveals several key aspects of the governors' personalities. The respective responses of each man indicate inherent character traits that would become both assets and liabilities to the Crown in East and West Florida as the governors acted in the king's name. A perceptive and astute man, James Grant saw and thought much, but acted slowly. He tended to err on the side of caution, not afraid to ask for help to achieve his goals. While slow to anger, he could hold a grudge when he felt he had been slighted or betrayed. Grant would wait a long time,

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<sup>92</sup> John Wilkes and Charles Churchill, eds. *The North Briton, Volume 3* (London: Printed by Special Appointment for E. Sumpter, Bookseller, in Fleet-Street; reprint, Dublin: Reprinted and Sold by Booksellers, 1763), 188.

<sup>93</sup> Wilkes and Churchill, eds. *The North Briton, Volume 3*, 188.

sometimes years after the fact, before he would avenge himself or perceived slights or wrongs. In comparison, while George Johnstone was incredibly perceptive and well informed like his counterpart, he quickly took offense and became angry. Johnstone preferred to act swiftly and definitively to avenge any slights to his person sometimes acting rashly in the heat of the moment. While Grant rarely regretted his actions, Johnstone sometimes would later see the error of his ways, even if he could not admit them because of his arrogant and self-assured bearing. These characteristics permeated both men's responses to *the North Briton* controversy and foreshadowed their individual administrations in East and West Florida.

Grant, while keenly aware *the North Briton* situation, decided to remove himself from the public war of words so that he could focus on more important and practical matters. He spent the fall of 1763 preparing to depart for his new position in Florida, meeting with investors, consulting members of the king's inner circle, and securing provisions to take with him upon his departure. While aware of what people thought about him, Grant kept his own thoughts and opinions out of the formal record, so he did not waste time on what he viewed as an exercise in futility. Grant decided the best course of possible action relied on ignoring the press. He would take a similar approach to his administration in East Florida. Throughout his tenure in the colony, Grant remained incredibly well informed about the happenings in the capital of St. Augustine, at military outposts like St. Marks, and in the far reaches of distant plantation settlements at Rollestown and New Smyrna. While Grant preferred to work with his subordinates to achieve predetermined goals as he outlined them, the governor of East Florida rarely micromanaged. He put his faith in the people he had recruited and trusted them to do their jobs until they gave him a reason to distrust them. While Grant restrained his initial inclinations of anger, when he felt he had been crossed, he never forgot or forgave such transgressions. During

the years he served as governor of East Florida, Grant viewed the position as an honor and an opportunity of which he would make the best. But he never viewed it as the most important thing in his life. In many ways, he saw his appointment as governor of East Florida as just another achievement in a life full of several impressive accomplishments.

On the other hand, Johnstone's passionate response to *the North Briton* controversy begins to reveal the extent to which he personally identified with the post to which he had been appointed. For Johnstone, becoming Governor of West Florida became a personal duty as much as a private honor. Second, it demonstrates that Johnstone would not shirk from protecting that to which he felt a duty to defend, be it his Scottish homeland, his personal reputation, the honor of his fellow governor, or the region to which he had been appointed as one of the most senior royal officials. Last, Johnstone's written exchanges prove his familiarity with the ways in which the printed word could be used to attract the public attention when such attention could benefit whatever his goals might be. Throughout his years as governor of West Florida, Johnstone worked with the idea that the success or failure of the colony equaled his own success or failure in life. He rarely trusted those individuals he recruited to assist him in doing their individual jobs. Johnstone constantly overreached his authority and became bogged down in petty quarrels that distracted him from accomplishing larger goals for West Florida.

Although the exchange in *the North Briton* quickly devolved into Johnstone and his critic castigating one another over political semantics and personal insults, it is important to note the original point over which it began, i.e., Grant and Johnstone's nationality.<sup>94</sup> Johnstone himself summed it up best when he said the critiques against his and Grant's appointments were patently unfair because "these conclusions are drawn entirely on consideration of the place of my

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<sup>94</sup> For a complete summary of how the exchange transpired, see "Affairs in England," *The Scots Magazine*, Volume 25, November 1763, 626-627.



nativity.”<sup>95</sup> He went on to chastise his critic for possessing such an outdated and prejudicial opinion. The future success of the empire, men like Grant, Johnstone, and the king had realized, depended on the Crown finding the best men to do the best jobs possible to ensure the greater good. “As I do not feel any defect from that circumstance [of having been born in Scotland],” Johnstone wrote, “but on the contrary am conscious of possessing a perfect good-will of every man, without ever enquiring where he was born.”<sup>96</sup> It did not matter where someone had come from *before* their arrival in East and West Florida. The Crown felt the more important consideration to be what those individuals would do for the greater good of the colony, acting as conduits of royal authority that followed the king’s colonization scheme, *after* their arrival in their new homes.

### **The State Develops the Ideal Colonization Plan**

Plans for using white Protestant families to settle the Floridas began to emerge as early as the spring of 1763. Gossip from the king’s inner circle filtered down so that investors and land agents knew that petitions focused on the migration of white Protestant families would be those most favorably received and first to be approved. In late July 1763, George III received a petition from a Monsieur Gilbert who proposed that a group of French Huguenots could be transported from England to East Florida for the purpose of colonizing the new territory. The king forwarded the memorial to the Board of Trade, and the board heard it at their October 20th meeting. These French Huguenots had originally requested settlement in South Carolina. However, upon news of Florida’s transfer from the Spanish to the British, their agent conveyed their desire “of being settled in East Florida upon the River St. John’s instead of Carolina” with a hope “that they should be transported at the publick expence, supplied with tools and implements of husbandry,

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<sup>95</sup> Wilkes and Churchill, eds. *The North Briton*, Volume 3, 190.

<sup>96</sup> Wilkes and Churchill, eds. *The North Briton*, Volume 3, 190.

and with provisions so long as they should be in necessity thereof."<sup>97</sup> The Board of Trade acted with caution. They tabled the issue, not immediately approving or rejecting the request, until such a time as they had gained input from the new colonies' governors. On July 21, 1763, the Board of Trade ordered its secretary to write to the Governors of East and West Florida and to ask their formal opinions as to what they believed the best ways to colonize the new territories might be with a specific focus on seeing the lands in Florida peopled "with usefull industrious inhabitants."<sup>98</sup>

In December 1763, George III signed formal instructions for both Johnstone and Grant, and the Secretary of State conveyed the information to both governors and the Board of Trade.<sup>99</sup> The Board of Trade ordered Johnstone and Grant to appear before them on the evening of December 15, 1763 at seven o'clock.<sup>100</sup> For what seems to have been the only documented occasion, both men appeared in the same place at the same time in their capacities as royal governors of East and West Florida. While at the meeting, the men discussed what their initial impressions were of how best to carry out their instructions. Their discussion most likely mirrored earlier pieces of correspondence that had been conveyed from Grant and Johnstone to the Board of Trade during the summer and fall of 1763. It seems likely that the discussion held at the meeting of the Board of Trade focused on several important but different matters for each

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<sup>97</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, October 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77443>"

<sup>98</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, July 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77440>"

<sup>99</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, December 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77445>"

<sup>100</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, December 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77445>"

governor and his new territory. Grant suggested the colonies' borders should be formally surveyed and adjusted accordingly to reflect any inaccuracies reflected on old maps. For Johnstone, he felt he needed to procure an appropriate supply of gifts to give local natives.<sup>101</sup> Both men wished to arrange for passage on a "ship of war" from the Admiralty as soon as possible.<sup>102</sup> The points raised by each man did not surprise the king's councilors.

The verbal statements Grant and Johnstone made on December 15, 1763 echoed previous written reports that they had submitted to the Board of Trade the previous summer. On July 30, 1763, Grant conveyed to the Board of Trade his opinion as to what he believed would be the most cost effective and logical ways "of peopling and settling the newly gained territories in Florida."<sup>103</sup> He began by acknowledging that East Florida as a blank slate where the British had to create everything from scratch. He acknowledged that much of the onus for the establishment of the new colony would be "upon the Publick," but he also warned that such burdens "should not be of long duration."<sup>104</sup> Grant cautioned the Board of Trade that initial settlers needed to receive "sufficient encouragement," particularly from the Governor, who had been "entrusted with the Charge" of the colonists' success as the supreme agent of royal authority in the colony.<sup>105</sup> He believed that the colonists should be able to support themselves within five years. If they had not become self-sufficient in that time, Grant stated, he thought that they would become "an

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<sup>101</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, January 1764: Volume 71," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77617>"

<sup>102</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, January 1764: Volume 71," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77617>"

<sup>103</sup> Letter, James Grant to John Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>104</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1.

<sup>105</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1.

unnecessary burden upon the Mother Country and the Infant Colony will be no longer worth its food."<sup>106</sup>

Grant cautioned the Board of Trade against authorizing a plan that would fund the immigration of colonists at the government's expense, believing that "one man who finds his way to a new colony with a view towards industry and improvement, is a greater acquisition than twenty new settlers, who are transported at the expense of the Government."<sup>107</sup> Instead, Grant advocated a careful selection of which type of colonists the government should subsidize for transport to East Florida. Exceptions, Grant said, should be made for those who possessed skills vital to the sustenance of the fledgling government, including military garrison stationed at St. Augustine. Such exceptions might include surgeons, carpenters, masons, and armorers. He also believed that the Provision Commissary should be stocked with medicines for the surgeons' use as well as "shoes, stockings, tools for husbandry and building...and all other sort of seeds."<sup>108</sup> Grant also strongly suggested that the government purchase "one hundred negro slaves" for the purpose of "carrying on publick works, making roads, supplying the troops... [with food and supplies such as]...rice, Indian Corn, Indigo, Cotton, Silk, Cochineal, Myrtle Wax...Pitch, Tar, Turpentine, etc."<sup>109</sup> The list of Grant's suggestions acknowledged that "it is no doubt necessary to make a beginning...[with at least] five hundred settlers."<sup>110</sup> Having heard of the application of the French Huguenots to settle in East Florida, Grant showed eagerness to have them immigrate to his new colony as long as they did so not out of "penury and want, but from a desire to live under a free government."<sup>111</sup> He further advocated that no land grants should be made except for

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<sup>106</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1.

<sup>107</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1.

<sup>108</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1.

<sup>109</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/1-2.

<sup>110</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/2.

<sup>111</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/2.

people who had actually traveled to and intended to reside in East Florida.<sup>112</sup> He concluded his suggestions with a simple reminder that establishing and maintaining peaceful contact with the natives of East Florida should be of paramount concern to royal officials in St. Augustine.

George Johnstone's ideas on how West Florida should be colonized are a bit more complicated to assess than Grant's. Like his counterpart, he responded to the Board of Trade's inquiry with a letter dated July 27, 1763.<sup>113</sup> His response began by advising that the Board of Trade should approach any decisions regarding Florida with a mentality akin to treating the territory as having been "in a state of infancy."<sup>114</sup> Johnstone based his detailed thoughts on the firm notion that the success or failure of the colony was determined before a single settler set foot on the ground in West Florida. Barring an inhospitable climate which would make colonization impossible, he believed the onus to plan, implement, and ensure an infrastructure that would allow colonists to "be settled on the most advantageous footing" to be on the state.<sup>115</sup> If the state could accomplish such a goal, he believed that nature would allow for people "to continue to multiply."<sup>116</sup> Growth of the population, Johnstone suggested, had to be the most important benchmark by which the success of the colony could be measured. If growth occurred, Johnstone told the Board of Trade, than "we may pronounce the institution good."<sup>117</sup> Above all, Johnstone warned, the Crown had to prevent East and West Florida from "being made up of the scum of all the other overflowing societies."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Grant to Pownall, July 30, 1763 CO5/540/3.

<sup>113</sup> Letter, George Johnstone to John Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>114</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

<sup>115</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

<sup>116</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

<sup>117</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

<sup>118</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

Obviously, Board of Trade need to ensure in settling both East and West Florida that each colony would significantly contribute to the greater economic good of the British Empire.

Johnstone directly addressed this concern in his letter to the Board. In order to integrate West Florida into the imperial mercantile system, the Governor of West Florida advocated connecting British shipping routes between Pensacola and Great Britain via Jamaica. He believed that the establishment of such shipping routes would allow the colony to achieve some "small commerce."<sup>119</sup> Johnstone also advised that the Crown should order any British warships on the East Coast to make port occasionally at Pensacola, to further integrate the colony into the British empire by making the presence of the royal navy felt.<sup>120</sup>

The ideas for colonizing West Florida that dominated Johnstone's missive to the Board of Trade reflected his tendency to micromanage. Johnstone offered opinions on everything from the demographic profile of colonists whom he considered the most ideal to settle in West Florida to how they should be recruited and at what cost. He believed these colonists should be white Protestant males over sixteen years of age. Johnstone advocated the awarding of cash stipends to those colonists who immigrated to West Florida, payable upon their arrival in Pensacola. In hopes of attracting colonists of what he considered to be the most useful professions, he suggested that the amount of the cash stipends all settlers would receive should be increased for certain professions. Preferred colonists who would receive the premium stipend included shipmasters, shipwrights, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, indigo makers, bricklayers, sailmakers, millwrights, and masons especially those who had been born in Great Britain. Johnstone also did not discount the value of men of color in the colony. While such craftsmen would only receive a ten-pound stipend, in contrast to the twenty-pound stipend their white counterparts were offered,

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<sup>119</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/3.

<sup>120</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/3.

as long as they were freedmen, the governor believed they could be of benefit to the colony. To entice the skilled workers to remain in West Florida, in addition to their cash stipend, Johnstone argued that the colonial government should provide the new arrivals "the necessary tools of his profession."<sup>121</sup> Additionally, the governor wanted each craftsman to receive a metal pot, a musket, powder and shot for six months, and food rations that included "three pounds of salt meat a week, two pounds of saltfish, and four pounds of biscuit or rather a proportion of quantity of flour."<sup>122</sup> By providing such an extensive allotment of provisions to these colonists, Johnstone believed, it would not only "make it in the interests of the person to go [to West Florida]" but also "after their arrival to remain there."<sup>123</sup>

Like the Earl of Hillsborough and James Grant, Johnstone fervently believed that a sustained effort to recruit colonists in the press should be initiated and maintained. He suggested officials should concentrate on newspapers and other publications circulated in the countries of Germany, Switzerland, France, and Holland. Johnstone believed this would attract upstanding white Protestant colonists to people the new colony. To encourage such colonists to bring their families with them when they immigrated, because Johnstone acknowledged the crucial link between familial immigration and the long-term viability of West Florida as a new British colony, he ended his letter to the Board of Trade with one final interesting suggestion. Once a colonist had settled in the colony and either married, if unmarried upon his arrival in West Florida, or he brought his spouse with him, Johnstone believed that colonist should be further rewarded after "having two children born in the colony" by the state having "furnished [him] with two slaves."<sup>124</sup> By suggesting the state provide a specific reward to those families that

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<sup>121</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/2.

<sup>122</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/2.

<sup>123</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/2.

<sup>124</sup> Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/3.

reproduced in the colony, Johnstone not only identified the link between a perpetuating family unit and ensuring the long-term viability of West Florida as a British colony. He also suggested a precise way by which the population would be automatically increased by the importation of additional slaves at a consistent rate. Johnstone's plan sought to stimulate the population numbers of both the white and black populations in West Florida in hopes of developing a plantation elite similar to those which already existed in neighboring colonies like South Carolina and Georgia.

Interestingly, Johnstone's response sent to Pownall did not represent the first time he had supplied a codified plan for colonization of West Florida. In fact, Johnstone had arranged to have his ideas to colonize what would become West Florida written and circulated before George III even considered possible candidates for governor to the new possession. In either late 1762 or early 1763, an anonymous source sent a two-page unsigned document entitled "Thoughts concerning Florida" to William Petty, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Shelburne (later 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Lansdowne), in his capacity as president of the Board of Trade. Johnstone's biographer, Robin F.A. Fabel, does not believe that Johnstone himself wrote the document for two reasons. First, the document was not written in his distinct handwriting. Second, the references to Johnstone, who is the only individual referenced by name in the entire document, were written in the third-person.<sup>125</sup> However, Fabel does believe that someone wrote the "with Johnstone's knowledge and probably at his instigation."<sup>126</sup> It seems likely that Johnstone went to great effort to become a leading voice to the king on the issue of how to handle the Florida question from the outset because of his personal belief and interest in the new acquisition.

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<sup>125</sup> Robin A. Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida'-A Case of Lobbying?" *The Alabama Review* 29, no. 3 (July 1976), 164

<sup>126</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 166.



A closer examination of the contents of “Thoughts concerning Florida” reveals the extent to which Johnstone felt a personal connection to the new territory and his efforts to ensure its success. It began by outlining its purpose to provide a list of suggestions "to the British government on how to best organize a new colony."<sup>127</sup> These suggestions included dividing Spanish La Florida into two separate colonies; the establishment of a major port on the western side of the peninsula--preferably at Tampa Bay, but if not at Tampa then at Pensacola--; establishing and maintaining trade routes with the natives of Florida and possibly even the Spanish across the Mississippi River in Louisiana; and lastly the “encouragement of population” to immigrate to the new lands.<sup>128</sup>

Like Johnstone’s signed list of suggestions to Pownall and the Board of Trade that he sent in July 1763, the plan in “Thoughts concerning Florida” was incredibly detailed and precise. For example, the plan explicitly specified the in the ways in which the colony’s population should be recruited. It suggested that as much effort as possible should be made to maintain the population that had lived in Florida under Spanish dominion. It also called for efforts to encourage immigration from overpopulated older British colonies located on the North American mainland, converting Natives, importing African slaves, and encouraging other British immigration whenever possible.<sup>129</sup> Ideally, the document suggested, the colonization efforts should begin with the arrival of 1300 new colonists, of which about 500 should be women.<sup>130</sup> The long-term retention of these colonists, the document determined in its conclusion, would require a government that guaranteed "a strict administration of justice, complete religious

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<sup>127</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 164.

<sup>128</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 170-171.

<sup>129</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 171.

<sup>130</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 173 and Robin F.A. Fabel, *Bombast and Broadides: The Lives of George Johnstone* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 25-27.

toleration, a system for proper disposal of the effects of those who died...and a distinct code of legislation for the colony." Until the colony's leadership established a strong state presence to accomplish these goals, the document concluded with the opinion that the governor, at least initially, "should be given wide discretionary powers" to ensure the common good.<sup>131</sup>

The British Crown, as advised by its loyal officials like Grant and Johnstone, considered such suggestions with great care.<sup>132</sup> Eventually, the Crown revealed its formal colonization strategy when the Secretary of State completed a draft of the official instructions to royal appointments and George III signed them on them on November 21, 1763.<sup>133</sup> The Secretary of State then authorized the delivery of official instructions to Grant and Johnstone on December 2, 1763.<sup>134</sup> Both men received almost identical directives. Within his instructions, the king ordered that the governors act in his name and with his power to establish a civil government. The Secretary of State had crafted the general instructions to imbue Grant and Johnstone with the king's royal majesty and authority. The king granted them titles that included "Captain General and Governor-in-Chief" of the provinces of East and West Florida.<sup>135</sup> However, even as George III elevated the status and power of the governors within their individual colonies, he made it clear that they acted as the king's representatives. As such, outside of the colonies, the governors were answerable to a slew of higher authorities beginning with the king and his Privy Council.

Additionally, George III wanted the governors to understand they were tools of the king's law, but they were not above it. The instructions clearly stated their authority would be subjected

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<sup>131</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 171.

<sup>132</sup> The definitive work on the royal instructions sent to all governors by the Crown in the colonial period is Leonard Woods Labaree's two-volume work. See Leonard Woods Labaree, *Royal Instructions to British Colonial Governors, Volumes One and Two* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967).

<sup>133</sup> James A. Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued to George Johnstone, British Governor of West Florida, 1763-1767," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Oct. 1938), 1033.

<sup>134</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1026.

<sup>135</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1026.

to any "reasonable laws and statutes as shall hereafter be made and agreed upon by you with the advice and consent of" the governor's council and the legislative assemblies of each colony once they had been established.<sup>136</sup> The king ordered that the governors should first focus on the task of establishing the civil governments. Those governments, in turn, would play a crucial role in the creation and administration of the king's law. The governors, as agents of royal authority, working in tandem with the king's law, would ensure a well-balanced environment from which colonists would be able to derive the calm stability so crucial to ensuring the colonies' long-term successes.

Not one to leave such an important task to chance, the king ordered the governors to establish the colonies' civil governments by acknowledging the appointments of the members of the Governors' Council. Acknowledgement of these appointments would be followed by each official, including Grant and Johnstone, taking the oath of their office. Once sworn in, the king intended the governors to disseminate royal authority from themselves to the others lieutenant (deputy) governors and council members.<sup>137</sup> Once in office, the governors had use of the Great Seal of each colony with which they would sign off on various types of official business. One of the most important types of business the king wished for them to pursue, although at their personal discretion as circumstances dictated locally, was the establishment of the "General Assembly of the Freeholders and Planters within the Province."<sup>138</sup> Once established, the king wished for the governors to use the General Assembly as a tool just as the way he used meetings of Parliament to his own benefit. George III believed the assemblies should be called when and as often as the governors deemed necessary.<sup>139</sup> Once elected and duly sworn into office, the

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<sup>136</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1026.

<sup>137</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1026.

<sup>138</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1027.

<sup>139</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1027.

governors were supposed to work in tandem with the members of the General Assembly to "make, constitute, and ordain laws, statutes, and ordinances for the publick peace, welfare, and good government of Our said Province and of the People and Inhabitants thereof."<sup>140</sup>

Once the governors established a council and assembly to help create and administer the king's law within the colony, the instructions from George III indicated a long list of tasks that needed to be completed for the betterment of the colonies' populations. First, the governors were tasked with establishing an appropriate court system to deal with both criminal and civil offenses. This included the appointment of officers of the court, such as justices of the peace and sheriffs. The governors also had the responsibility of appointing members to ecclesiastical positions.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, the governors had the right to muster and command troops in the face of attack by "all enemies, pirates, and rebels both at land and sea."<sup>142</sup> Once the Governor's Council felt enough effort had been put forth to establish the social infrastructure of the colonies, as represented by political, legal, and religious hierarchies, the king wished for the governors to focus on building the physical infrastructure of the new colonies' individual settlements. Johnstone and Grant received broad powers to "erect, raise, and build in Our said Province such and so many Forts, Platforms, Castles, Cities, Boroughs, Towns, and Fortifications."<sup>143</sup> Finally, the instructions referenced the peopling of the new provinces when the governors were authorized "to settle and agree with the inhabitants of Our said Province for such Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments" upon "moderate quit rent services."<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1028.

<sup>141</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1029.

<sup>142</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1030.

<sup>143</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1030.

<sup>144</sup> Padgett, ed., "Commission, Orders, and Instructions Issued," 1032.

While George III had given Grant and Johnstone copious specific details about how the political, legal, military, economic, and social infrastructures should be established, quite surprisingly the instructions contain little to no details about the ways in which the king wished for potential colonists to be recruited. Such a glaring omission, particularly in light of the substantial input the king had received during the planning process on this issue, is not accidental. The main reason why Grant and Johnstone received no instructions about how to recruit colonists to their new colonies was because the British Crown still had no idea as to the best way to proceed on the matter. As late as the spring of early 1764, the king and his councilors were still formulating policy on how best to direct its royal officials to handle the population issues.

When George III selected men, like James Grant and George Johnstone, to be governors of East and West Florida, the king took the first step in creating and establishing the state's ideal colonization plan. This plan, one that relied upon families to serve as the foundation for continued success, had only been partially developed by the winter of 1764. The king and his councilors had spent over a year soliciting input and opinions from the governors and potential investors about the best ways to people the colonies. However, the Crown's official stance on immigration remained a mystery to the general public. Hints as to what would become the official instructions regarding the peopling of the colonies can be found in some unsigned documents circulated among the Privy Council and the king's closest advisors. One of the earliest references made to what would become the official colonization plans for Florida can be found in an anonymous document entitled "Hints Relative to the Division and Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Verner W. Crane, ed., "Hints Relative to the Division and Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 8, no. 4 (Mar. 1922), 367-368.

Although undated, the document likely can be traced to early 1763. While it focused more conclusively on other territories gained by the British after their victory in the French and Indian War, two important points were made about Florida. First, the document proposed boundaries for the Florida territory. "Georgia, which is at present of too narrow limits ever to become a flourishing province, should be extended southward to the River St. Marys and a line running westward from thence to St. Mark's in the Bay of Apalache, would be a proper boundary on that side. All the peninsula southward of this line ought to be comprized in the province of Florida," the anonymous author wrote.<sup>146</sup> Even more interestingly, perhaps for the first time, someone made the written suggestion that "the country situated between St. Marks and the River Mississippi, should be formed into another province." Aside from splitting the Spanish territory of La Florida into two distinct territories, the plan opined that successful colonization should be based on the establishment of colonial governments that mirrored those of Georgia and should be "settled either by foreign Protestants or the King's natural born subjects who are intitled to British Liberty."<sup>147</sup> Other early drafts of the colonization plan would build upon this first suggested model.<sup>148</sup>

Besides the heavily Johnstone-influenced "Thoughts concerning Florida" and Grant's suggestions, the Earl of Shelburne received an influx of other schemes for colonization, both solicited and unsolicited, between late 1762 and 1764. William Knox, a man thought to be familiar with Florida and the southeast region, wrote one of the earliest plans of colonization. He had served as secretary of the governor of Georgia between 1757 and 1761. He listed his

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<sup>146</sup> Crane , ed., "Hints Relative to the Division and Government," 372.

<sup>147</sup> Crane , ed., "Hints Relative to the Division and Government," 372.

<sup>148</sup> For a concise summary of these plans, see Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2011), 431-433.

suggestions in a document that he entitled "Hints Respecting the Settlement of Florida."<sup>149</sup> The main thrust of Knox's suggestions centered on his opinion that Florida possessed a climate comparable to other territories in the West Indies. These territories, Knox believed, were known to be excellent places to grow lucrative cash crops like cotton, indigo, silk, and vineyards for the production of wine. These territories also could produce valuable naval stores such as pitch, tar, turpentine, and lumber. In his opinion, Knox even thought that sugar might be able to be grown there. However, he advised the king of a sounder decision for the British government. Knox suggested the state to encourage the planting of cotton to avoid saturating the large sugar industry that had developed throughout British holdings in the Caribbean.<sup>150</sup> Knox argued that the successful cultivation of these crops relied upon the recruitment of Greeks and other "Inhabitants of the Archipelago" (British Minorcans) who possessed an active Christian faith.<sup>151</sup> Knox proposed that the Greeks and Minorcans should gather on the island of Minorca with their families and their priests as soon as they were ready to depart on ships bound for Florida.<sup>152</sup> The knowledge these people possessed about growing cash crops in tropical climates, Knox argued, outweighed their ethnicity and Catholic religion.

While William Knox mentioned the possibility of using people from the Mediterranean as a main source of colonists for the British Floridas in "Hints Respecting the Settlement of Florida," the specifics of the approach crystallized in a proposal submitted by Archibald

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<sup>149</sup> William Knox, "Hints respecting the Settlement of Florida," Knox Manuscript, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

<sup>150</sup> Charles L. Mowat, "The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 30, no. 3 (Dec. 1943), 360.

<sup>151</sup> Peter M. Doll, *Revolution, Religion, and National Identity: Imperial Anglicanism in British North America, 1745-1795* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 2000), 214-215; Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press Books, 2006), 217-218; and Mowat, "The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida," 360.

<sup>152</sup> Fabel, "George Johnstone and the 'Thoughts Concerning Florida,'" 174.

Menzies.<sup>153</sup> Dated October 23, 1763, Menzies submitted a detailed plan for colonizing the new British territories entitled "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies on the Continent of America."<sup>154</sup> The scheme suggests that the key to successfully populating East and West Florida lay not just in the use of families to settle the new territories, but in the demographic makeup of the colonists brought in to settle the new lands. Menzies acknowledged that "a large expensive dominion, without inhabitants, must be an expence, in lieu of an advantage to the mother-country."<sup>155</sup> However, the author warned, the Crown needed to take "the utmost attention" to make certain that their plan did not result in the "nourish[ment of] vipers in our bosom" as a consequence of "bringing in an improper kind of inhabitants" because of cost-

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<sup>153</sup> Archibald Menzies was a Scot residing at Megerny Castle in Perthshire when he allegedly wrote his plan. Born on March 15, 1754, he would have been nine years old when the Earl of Shelburne received the plan that bore his name. While later in life Menzies would become a famed surgeon, botanist, and well-traveled naturalist, at the age of 9, it is unlikely he wrote the proposal himself. Instead, it is possible that someone like George Johnstone crafted the plan himself and simply used Menzies' name given the stigma the it might receive if Johnstone's name were attached to it directly. The writer of the plan seems to hint at this in a pun when he stated in the opening paragraphs of the proposal that "as every scheme that may have a tendency to the good of this country (however unknown the person may be who proposes it) will, I am convinced, be attended to by our present government." See Archibald Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies on the Continent of America," Unpublished Manuscript. John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1. The young Menzies had been apprenticed to a professor of Botany at Edinburgh University named Dr. John Hope. Hope was a contemporary and perhaps intimate of Patrick Murray, fifth Lord Elibank. In the mid-1700s, Lord Elibank was famous for the cadre of artists, authors, scientists, and accomplished thinkers he kept as members of his vibrant, intellectual social circle. George Johnstone's biographer, Robin Fabel, suggests the close relationship that existed between Lord Elibank and the governor. Lord Elibank was the brother of Johnstone's mother, Barbara. In Johnstone's words, he viewed Lord Elibank as "my adopted father." See Fabel, *Bombast and Broad-sides*, 3. In their discussions at Lord Elibank's country home of Ballencrieff Castle in Haddingtonshire, where Fabel believes Johnstone spent much of his leisure time as opposed to with his parents at his birth place of Westerhall, it is possible that Johnstone debated the merits of his settlement ideas for Florida. In Menzies, Hope could have provided Johnstone, via Lord Elibank, the perfect pen name while he acted as ghost writer for the proposal. After graduating with his medical degree from Edinburgh University, Menzies later joined the Royal Navy. He traveled extensively throughout his life, making at least "four separate and major ventures that took him to Nova Scotia, the east coast of North America, and the West Indies" between 1781 and 1802. See DJ Gallow and EW Groves, "Archibald Menzies MO, FLS (1754-1842): Aspects of His Life, Travels and Collections," *Archives of Natural History* 14, no. 1 (1987), 3. While it is possible that he visited Florida during this time, no specific records indicate he visited the territory he had a hand in helping the British Crown to colonize in the 1760s. Menzies retired to London where he died at his home on February 15, 1842. For further resources on Menzies' life, see Richard H. Dillon, "Archibald Menzies' Trophies," *The British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 3 and 4 (1951), 151-159 and E.J. Godley, "A Note on Archibald Menzies," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 88 (Nov. 1960), 63-64.

<sup>154</sup> Archibald Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies on the Continent of America," Unpublished Manuscript. John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

<sup>155</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 1.



cutting measures.<sup>156</sup> The 'proper' kind of inhabitants, according to this proposal, included people that possessed three defining attributes. First, they needed to be able to cultivate "the natural produce of that country."<sup>157</sup> Second, the state thought it most desirable if they had a religion that would prevent them from "forming connections with the French or Spanish."<sup>158</sup> Last, and perhaps most importantly, they needed to be people who "will readily intermarry and mix with our own people settled there."<sup>159</sup> The author goes on to suggest that the ideal population would include people he encountered while on recent travels to the Levant. Specifically, he believed oppressed and poor Greek and Turkish farmers would jump at the chance for a new life. Armenians settled in Turkey could round out the diverse group of immigrants recruited to a new life in East and West Florida.

On the surface, Menzies' plan is a natural progression from Knox's. It possesses many similarities about recruiting colonists who possessed certain skill sets that would be beneficial to the development of industry within the colony. However, it does depart from Knox's plan in several key ways. Menzies' placed more emphasis on the professional skills colonists possessed more than their personal backgrounds. His plan is startling for another reason. "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies on the Continent of America" is the first and only known plan that went on to elaborate on the *specific* roles that women, marriage, families, and the production of children would play in the long term success of East and West Florida. While George Johnstone had hinted at this necessity, he never went beyond broad insinuations about

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<sup>156</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 1.

<sup>157</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 1.

<sup>158</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 1.

<sup>159</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 1.

the role families would play in Florida. It is Menzies who lays out the precise roles and functions the families would play in the colonization of British Florida.<sup>160</sup>

First, the plan argued that British men should be encouraged to marry the "remarkably handsome" Greek, Turkish, and Armenian women who immigrated to the colonies.<sup>161</sup> "This circumstance," the plan predicted, "would naturally prompt [other] inter-marriages between our peoples and them, and soon put an end to all distinctions."<sup>162</sup> Menzies likely made his observations to address preemptively some criticisms his plan would have likely faced when considered by some of the more elite and powerful echelons of polite British society. While racial intermixing between white Europeans and indigenous peoples or African slaves in territories controlled by the Spanish and French was not a new phenomenon, the British often seemed reluctant to comingle with anyone not of a similar ethnic and physical background in their colonies.<sup>163</sup> By pointing out that the majority white population of British Florida could quickly assimilate any outsiders who looked differently from them, Menzies displayed an unusually insightful accumen. He presented the British government with a solution as how to people Florida with those who would be most suited to the task, while simultaneously addressing any moral objections that might be made over his unorthodox suggestions that could be seen as a challenge to establish a white, Protestant social majority. Second, Menzies' plan would allow for kinship networks to develop between British families and non-British families. These kinship

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<sup>160</sup> For example, see Johnstone's broad comments in Johnstone to Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1.

<sup>161</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 3.

<sup>162</sup> Menzies, "Proposal for Peopling His Majesty's Southern Colonies," 3.

<sup>163</sup> On the issue of *mestizaje* in Spanish colonies in the New World see Kathleen A. Deagan, "Mestizaje in Colonial St. Augustine," *Ethnohistory* 20, no. 1 (1973), 55-65 and Kathleen A. Deagan, "Accommodation and Resistance: The Process and Impact of Spanish Colonization in the Southeast," chap. in *Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East*, edited by David Hurst Thomas, 297-314 (Colombian Consequences, Vol. 2, David Hurst Thomas, general editor, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1990). For details on the common practice of racial mixing in the French colonies, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

networks would help expand trade opportunities and would increase the social diversity of the colonies' populations. Last, the plan provided a means by which the colonies' populations could quickly become self-sustaining if a high enough birth rate grew among newly married couples. The state considered one of the signs of a healthy colony a large population. A substantial demographic presence also gave that colony a larger significance in considering the economic and political processes of the British empire as a whole. Simply put, Menzies' scheme offered suggestions on how to increase the population, integrate families into the colonial infrastructure, and guarantee the long-term success of East and West Florida in several different ways. Unfortunately, only some aspects of Menzies' plan would make it into the final colonization scheme adopted by the Crown in 1764.

While the aforementioned plans likely only represent a handful of those received by the British government, they demonstrate the mountain of suggestions the Board of Trade had to dig through as they decided on what ideas to include into the official colonization scheme. It was no easy task, given the number of plans, who wrote them and for what purpose, and how ideas sometimes conflicted with one another. Throughout the spring and summer of 1763, the Board of Trade continued to hear from and speak with some of the leading nobles in the realm. Men such as the Earl of Bute, the Earl of Eglinton, and the Earl of Hillsborough all received huge land grants in East and West Florida. Eager to make a profit from their investment, these nobles wanted to have input into the final colonization plan officially approved by the king. For example, by July 21, 1763, Alexander Montgomerie, the 10th Earl of Eglinton, informed the Board of Trade that he had formulated several "proposals for the speedy and effectual settlement of the Colonies of Georgia, East Florida and West Florida" and that he wished to discuss them with the Board. As one of the largest land holders in West Florida, the Board agreed to hold off

on making any formal decisions until Eglinton could give them his input.<sup>164</sup> Once again, while the Board of Trade had begun to formulate a master plan that it could present to George III for approval, delays caused the process to stall several times resulting in a final plan not being authorized and released until 1764.

### **Tales of Florida in the British Press**

Even as the Board of Trade continued the laborious process of culling through the detailed multitude of plans that had come before them from various individuals with differing motivations, whispers about the acquisition of Florida by the British Crown had already begun to circulate in the general public. As early as November 1762, an anonymous author wrote a piece published by the *Royal Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Companion*. The piece, entitled "A Description of Florida," touted the land as a region with air that was "pure and temperate" and one whose people would always be "in general health." With such moderate temperatures, the weather saw the land as "much tempered at times by the sea-breezes" into a sort of edenic paradise. The article further embroidered the pretty picture to let the public know fair weather was not the only thing to be found on her shores. For the more industrious types, in Florida they could find an abundance of natural resources including timber. Colonists would find a lot of good land known to yield excellent crops, including cotton, as well as grazing pastures for cattle and sheep in Florida. The excessive number of natural waterways made it easy to travel in and around. And additional food stocks could be harvested from the plentiful freshwater lakes and rivers where shellfish, such as pearl-producing oysters, teemed. In short, according to the

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<sup>164</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, July 1764: Volume 71," Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767, *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77623&strquery=Florida>.

description of Florida published in *the Royal Magazine*, anyone who travelled to Florida and failed to have a positive image of the newly acquired lands simply could not ever be pleased.

The description painted in *the Royal Magazine* whet the appetite of some of the most important and wealthiest nobles in both England and Scotland. These men were the type that not only were always on the lookout for new investment opportunities, but they had the capital on hand ready to invest. Pleased by what they heard from governmental officials who had firsthand knowledge of Florida, and further encouraged by descriptions included in publications like *the Royal Magazine*, their notice further stoked public interest in the new colonies. In the December 25, 1762 edition of *the North Briton*, an anonymous author known only by the penname ‘Viator’ wrote a description of Florida. He claimed he wrote the description based on first-hand knowledge he had gained of the territory the previous year. “I have traversed by far the greatest part of this our new acquisition; and I do assure you and the public that I never saw a finer country than Florida is for the most part,” Viator reassured his readers.<sup>165</sup> He went on to describe the type of infrastructure that he had noticed as already existing in the territory. Florida, Viator observed, possessed “neat and comfortable houses on the plantations; well built, though, I confess, small towns, and these in a well improved, and richly cultivated country, are what constantly strike the eye of the traveler.”<sup>166</sup> He went on to concede that although he would not comment on the opportunities for profitable types of commercial endeavors that might exist in Florida, several interesting possibilities most certainly did exist. Viator’s readers welcomed his optimistic assessment with glee and the general opinion about the acquisition of Florida turned increasingly positive.

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<sup>165</sup> *The North Briton*, Volume XXX, December 25, 1762, in *The North Briton, from No. 1 to No. XLVI Inclusive with Several Useful and Explanatory Notes, Not Printed in Any Former Edition* (London: Printed for W. Bingley at No. XXXI in Newgate-Street, 1769), 99-100.

<sup>166</sup> *The North Briton*, Volume XXX, December 25, 1762, 99-100.

Noticing the ever-increasing amount of public interest that Florida had garnered, one of the king's geographers solicited a ghostwriter to publish a new tome. Official quickly recruited a travel writer in London named William Roberts. He worked "in collaboration with the English Geographer Royal" on the book.<sup>167</sup> In early 1763, Roberts submitted his final draft of work to a London publisher named Thomas Jeffreys.<sup>168</sup> Well aware of the demand for information about Florida, Jeffreys accepted the piece with little revision and immediately sent it to press.

In the publisher's preface to William Roberts' work, *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida*, Thomas Jeffreys explained the reasons why he published the book. While he had received some pressure from friends, who were eager to drum up public support for application of land grants in Florida, Jeffreys acted for a deeper reason. He believed his actions represented a public service "since whatsoever can assist the navigation of that coast must be of the greatest utility at this juncture when the settling of that country is still under the consideration of the government."<sup>169</sup> Jeffreys' statement proves that while the details had not yet been agreed upon by the Board of Trade, even the press knew the British Crown intended to take special care in the development of a precise plan for colonization of East and West Florida.

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<sup>167</sup> *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (1939; Tallahassee: Florida Department of Public Instruction, 1956), 138.

<sup>168</sup> Thomas Jeffreys was a well-known printer in eighteenth-century London with his shop in Charing Cross. Originally trained as a cartographer, he had been appointed a geographer to George III in December 1760. The publication of William Roberts' book was merely the first in a long line of works that Jeffreys' published about East and West Florida. For the next several years, he gained fame as a publisher of many famous maps, including several of East and West Florida. According to his biographer Laurence Worms, "as the leading map supplier of his day," Jeffreys was "a principal figure in the emergence of London as an international center of cartographic enterprise" in the mid-1700s. Jeffreys published the map of "North America and the West Indies" in 1768 and John Bew's "Plan of St. Augustin in East Florida" in 1783. He also later adapted several maps based on surveys conducted by the royal engineers. For example, he published a map of "East Florida" in 1769 that was based on information originally found in William Stork's work on the territory. See "Jefferys, Thomas (c.1719–1771)," Laurence Worms in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/view/article/14696> and Charles Assheton Whatley Pownall, *Thomas Pownall: M.P., F.R.S., Governor of Massachusetts Bay, Author of the Letters of Junius* (London: Henry Stevens, Sons & Stiles, 1908), 280.

<sup>169</sup> William Roberts, *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida with a Particular Detail of the Several Expeditions and Descents Made on That Coast* (London: Printed for T. Jeffreys, 1762), iii.

Roberts agreed with Jeffreys in his author's preface noting that he believed Florida to be "an acquisition likely to become of much future use and consideration to us, as Britons."<sup>170</sup> He then elaborated by stating "and it is certainly much to the interest of Britain, that Florida should be well overspread with inhabitants, as soon as possible, from a consideration of what good consequences will follow from this circumstance."<sup>171</sup> Roberts wrote what would become a widely distributed publication about the new territories, one that would go through several printings. Unfortunately for the British Crown, not everyone agreed with Roberts and Jeffreys' positive sentiments. Some of the popularity of *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida* resulted from people that circulated it as evidence of why people should have a negative opinion of the new acquisitions by the king.

A certain portion of the British population had reacted with great negativity when the preliminary terms of the peace treaty between the Spanish and British became known publicly. The publisher of *the North Briton*, John Wilkes, took an immediate dislike to supporters of the acquisition of Florida. Writing in response to the publication of the description penned by the anonymous author known only as Viator in December 1762, Wilkes chastised those who believed the overtly optimistic descriptions they read about the new territories. In the January 29, 1763 edition of *the North Briton*, Wilkes opened his article with what appeared to be a simple fact that should act as a warning to any British citizens who were thinking about getting involved with an enterprise in Florida. "As to the inhabitants of this populous country," Wilkes began, "it is well known, that Florida has been chiefly peopled by convicts from New-Spain."<sup>172</sup> In short,

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<sup>170</sup> Roberts, *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida*, iv.

<sup>171</sup> Roberts, *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida*, vi.

<sup>172</sup> *The North Briton*, Volume XXXV, January 29, 1763, in *The North Briton, from No. 1 to No. XLVI Inclusive with Several Useful and Explanatory Notes, Not Printed in Any Former Edition* (London: Printed for W. Bingley at No. XXXI in Newgate-Street, 1769), 115.

Wilkes viewed Florida as nothing more than a dumping ground the Spanish had been using for centuries to siphon off the dregs of colonial society from places throughout Mexico and the Caribbean. If the British were wise, Wilkes believed, Florida should be abandoned at all costs. He hoped that the British would be smarter than their Spanish neighbors and that Great Britain “shall not adopt their policy.”<sup>173</sup> While it is likely that Wilkes employed a certain amount of hyperbole in his statements, it does hint at an interesting fact. Some members of the general public likely viewed Florida as merely a place for the other thirteen mainland colonies to send their unwanted citizens, undesirable rejects, and social outcasts. These assumptions represent the type of things the Crown worked so hard to avoid in the crafting of its careful colonization scheme.

At the end of his article, Wilkes addressed one of the *North Briton*'s pro-Florida contributors to warn him about the possible consequences of his continued interest and support. “If no untimely end prevents the dullest play-wright of our times,” Wilkes wrote, “he may then at last present us with a woeful Tragedy, both new and interesting, drawn not from fable and invention, but founded on his own real adventures, and hair-breadth escapes.”<sup>174</sup> In short, nothing good could come of anyone who had anything to do with Florida. Wilkes' vitriol about the acquisition of Florida continued to grow throughout the spring of 1763. “Are WE solemnly to mock God by our rejoicing,” Wilkes asked his readers in an article he published on April 30, 1763, “that our minister [John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bute] has made a scandalous exchange of the Havana, so important in itself, and which left all the settlements of Spain in the new world at our

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<sup>173</sup> Wilkes and Churchill, eds. *The North Briton*, Volume 3, 115.

<sup>174</sup> Wilkes and Churchill, eds. *The North Briton*, Volume 3, 115.



mercy, only for the wretched Florida?"<sup>175</sup> Wilkes continued his anti-Florida stance through the months after he critiqued Bute's decision to trade the British-occupied port of Havana in Cuba for Florida. This mentality and press record that ultimately culminated in the aforementioned fight with Commodore George Johnstone.

After the criticism levied against the Crown for the acquisition of Florida by such individuals as Wilkes, other shrewder voices quickly jumped to the king's defense. Men like Grant and Johnstone countered that it hardly mattered if the paradise reputation of Florida had been exaggerated. After all, these strategic minds pointed out, Florida held value not just as a piece of territory because of its colonization potential.

In a letter published in January 1763, one anonymous observer pointed out that it was a benefit to gain Florida for several reasons. First, it contained the already established settlement of St. Augustine with its impressive fortification at the Castillo de San Marcos. The location had been of paramount importance since its establishment in 1565 because it was the final place where fleets could be attacked before moving into the Gulf Stream and setting sail for Europe. Second, it was a base from which the Spanish had launched countless attacks against British interests in Georgia and South Carolina for well over a century.<sup>176</sup> Its acquisition removed these threats from the wealthy agricultural endeavors on plantations around Savannah and Charleston.

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<sup>175</sup> *The North Briton*, Volume XLVI, April 30, 1763, in *The North Briton, from No. 1 to No. XLVI Inclusive with Several Useful and Explanatory Notes, Not Printed in Any Former Edition* (London: Printed for W. Bingley at No. XXXI in Newgate-Street, 1769), 158.

<sup>176</sup> These attacks had come at a regular pace during the first half of the seventeenth century during the constant outbreak of fighting between the Spanish and the English. One of the most famous battles occurred in 1702 when James Moore laid siege to St. Augustine and burned it to the ground during Queen Anne's War. Thirty-eight years later, James Oglethorpe attempted to repeat Moore's achievement, but he was stymied during his siege of the city in 1740 during the War of Jenkin's Ear. See Charles W. Arnade, "Raids, Sieges, and International Wars," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1996), 100-116; Charles W. Arnade, *The Siege of St. Augustine in 1702* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1959); and Verne Elmo Chatelain, *The Defenses of Spanish Florida, 1565-1763* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1941).

Third, "it was a city of refuge that presented asylum to all the negroes of South Carolina who were tired of servitude."<sup>177</sup> Slaves possessed more rights under Spanish law than British law. The memory of the free-black community of Fort Mosé, although destroyed in 1738, lingered.<sup>178</sup> By taking control of Spanish Florida, the British Crown removed the hope of any nearby refuge for runaway slaves from other colonies.<sup>179</sup> In short, the anonymous observer argued, "the possession of St. Augustine, therefore, stops up an ugly gap in our Southern colonies."<sup>180</sup>

Another letter published a few months later in *the London Chronicle* in late May 1763 stated its belief that the acquisition of Florida would be good, if for no other reason than that it would render settlements in Georgia "safe and valuable."<sup>181</sup> Overall, the negative response to Florida's acquisition by the British Crown far outweighed the positive one.<sup>182</sup>

### **Putting the Ideal Colonization Plan into Action**

By November 1763, it seemed the Board of Trade had solidified its colonization plans even if they were not yet ready to make them public. Having considered countless suggestions

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<sup>177</sup> *The London Chronicle*, January 11-13, 1763, 44-45.

<sup>178</sup> Encouraged by a different type of slavery that existed under Spanish law, slaves from British colonies often had fled to Fort Mosé between 1738 and 1763 to seek their freedom. Under Spanish law, if slaves had converted to the Roman Catholic faith and had been married according to the Catholic rite, owners could not separate husbands and wives via separate sales. Families could not be arbitrarily broken apart. Slaves could also own and sell some forms of property under the Spanish legal code that dated to the thirteenth century. Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, (Urbana, Ill. and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 7-8. See Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," chap. in *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development*, Fifth Edition, eds. Stanley N. Katz, John M. Murrin, and Douglas Greenberg (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 593-613 and Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 66-67.

<sup>179</sup> For more on the role that Spanish Florida played as a slave refuge for runaway slaves from British colonies during the First Spanish Period, see Shane Alan Runyon, "Fort Mosé: The Free African Community and Militia of Spanish St. Augustine," M.A. Thesis, Montana State University -- Bozeman, Bozeman, Montana, 1999; Bennie Wilton Howe, "The Fugitive Slave Problem in South Carolina and Florida, 1670-1769: A Contrast in Attitudes," M.A. Thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1961; and, Ashley S. Green, "Either We Must Take St. Augustine or St. Augustine Will Take Us' -- The Significance of Florida as a Sanctuary: Slave Runaways from South Carolina," M.A. Thesis, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado, 1995.

<sup>180</sup> *The London Chronicle*, January 11-13, 1763, 44-45.

<sup>181</sup> *The London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, Volume 13 (London: Sold by J. Wilkie, 1763), 510.

<sup>182</sup> For an overview and summary of the early primary sources on the English opinion of Florida's value as a new province, see Lawrence C. Wroth, "Some Materials of Florida History in the John Carters Brown Library of Brown University," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (July 1941), 35-43.

from aristocratic investors, the governors of East and West Florida, and many private citizens, the Board of Trade crafted a plan that took what they considered the best ideas from those submitted plans into one coherent colonization scheme. On November 4, it first approved a plan to send "to his Majesty upon the method of peopling the new government with useful and industrious inhabitants" for East Florida.<sup>183</sup> The Board drafted and approved a separate plan for West Florida. While the plans had distinct similarities, the creation of two separate colonization plans indicates the government's realization that East and West Florida were two distinct territories with different goals and needs. Within ten days, the king approved the final plans.<sup>184</sup> Still, the Board of Trade had several tasks to complete before revealing what its official colonization scheme would be to the wider world.

On November 21, the king ordered the Board of Trade to begin an advertising campaign in local papers and circulars that reflected this plan. Officials specifically mentioned *The London Gazette* as a desired publication to run an ad in revealing the details of the colonization plan. The colonization plan approved by the king included the following considerations. First, the king acknowledged that the primary goal of settlement was to pursue cultivation of profitable cash crops such as "silk, cotton, wine, oil, indigo, [and] cochineal."<sup>185</sup> Second, the king ordered settlement to commence immediately. To aid that goal, the Crown ordered that the territories would be "surveyed and laid out into townships, not exceeding twenty thousand acres each."<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, November 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77444&strquery=Florida>

<sup>184</sup> James Munroe, ed. *Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series*, Volume IV, AD 1745-1766 (London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 610-611.

<sup>185</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, November 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77444&strquery=Florida>

<sup>186</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, November 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77444&strquery=Florida>

To recruit "a proper number of useful and industrious Protestant inhabitants," who would be willing to settle in the new colonies "at their own expence," the Crown instituted a quit rent system designed to benefit families who came to East and West Florida with their families.<sup>187</sup> The Crown's final plan to colonize East and West Florida thus linked long-term growth and economic success with the immigration of white Protestant families to the new territories. They had finally achieved the king's goal of crafting the ideal colonization plan. It was a goal that many different people had been working towards for almost two years. And it would never have been conceived if not for the British victory that ended the French and Indian War.

Charles M. Andrews first suggested that Great Britain realized it needed a formal plan and distinct policy for any new colonies it acquired after its holdings in North America grew with the defeat of the French.<sup>188</sup> While Andrews became concerned with the nature of the new colonies like East and West Florida, because he viewed them as important cogs in the machine of the British Empire, he did so primarily for economic reasons.<sup>189</sup> Still, the creation of a colonization process he identified as the foundation upon which the Crown should establish its new territories is crucial to understanding why the state implemented policy changes Andrews identified in the mid-eighteenth century. Additionally, these policy changes hold great significance in other contexts. They help to illustrate the evolution of the king's views of royal authority and the nature of empire in the second half of the eighteenth century. Specifically, Andrews shows the king and his ministers had come to believe that the process of colonization, maintaining royal control, and the development of effective policy to regulate imperial policy

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<sup>187</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, November 1763: Volume 70," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 11: January 1759 - December 1763*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77444&strquery=Florida>

<sup>188</sup> Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution: Four Essays in American Colonial History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1924; revised edition 1931; reprint 1961), 69-120.

<sup>189</sup> Andrews describes what is now a classic mercantile explanation of the British imperial organism during the colonial period. See Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 88-95.

were crucially intertwined. This intersection necessitated the king to reject prior ideas and models of colonization. Additionally, Andrews demonstrates that the Crown knew that individual families would be the key to achieving all three goals. Families would be the crucial bulwark upon which the Crown could expand a lasting empire in which it would remain in complete and total control. In short, East and West Florida marked a test case for what the Crown planned to use as a standardized model to implement whenever it acquired new territories to increase the size, scope, and value of its empire.

Andrews defines the period of British colonization from the founding of Jamestown in 1607 to the establishment of her final mainland North American colonies in 1763. During that period, he observes, the Crown added 33 distinct colonies to its empire. The earliest colonies, Andrews notes, developed under Robert Walpole's policy of salutary neglect.<sup>190</sup> Under this now well-known policy, colonists exercised greater freedom to establish governments and social hierarchies unique to each territory. Their unregulated actions resulted in the emergence of a patchwork of diverse populations, varied cultural and political frameworks, and different economic systems scattered along the eastern seaboard who were united only in their loyalty to the Crown. As wealth and prosperity increased in many of these colonies, Great Britain found itself unable to continue ruling their overseas domain as they had previously done utilizing Walpole's hands-off approach. Instead, frequent international conflicts with other empires like the Spanish, French, and the Dutch required Great Britain to enforce more restrictive policies across the whole of her colonies for the good and protection of the whole British Empire.

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<sup>190</sup> The notion of salutary neglect and its connection to the outbreak of the American Revolution is one of the most studied and most debated concepts in the historiography of Early America. For an overview of the issue, see James A. Henretta, *Salutary Neglect: Colonial Administration under the Duke of Newcastle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Legacy Library, 1972). For a recent assessment of the concept, see J. Rewell Carr, "Fragile Peace and Salutary Neglect in British America," chap. in *Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American Revolution, 1650-1750*, (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2008), 127-142.

Combined with the growing public commentary on the nature of government and authority that emerged during the Enlightenment, that loyalty to the Crown began to waver. Finally, it had no choice but to overhaul all policies related to establishment and regulation of its colonies.<sup>191</sup> If Great Britain was to be a true empire in more than name, it would have to establish a form of what Andrews refers to as ‘territorial imperialism.’<sup>192</sup>

The term ‘territorial imperialism,’ Andrews states, is one that is best defined as the practice of acquiring territory, establishing a centralized government to administer colonies, ensuring the maintenance of those new colonies economically, politically, and militarily, and using royal authority as the legitimization of any actions completed in the process of fulfilling the first three goals.<sup>193</sup> Great Britain had no trouble acquiring the new territory, the first step in the process of implementing ‘territorial imperialism.’ The second and third steps, according to Andrews, proved more challenging. He specifically notes that a sparse population in newly acquired territories made it difficult for royal officials to satisfy the remaining hallmarks of the process. “In 1763, the most troublesome and embarrassing problem for [British territorial] imperialism was that of administering the wide stretching areas of largely unoccupied land, stretching westward to the Mississippi and southward to the Gulf of Mexico.”<sup>194</sup> Although he does not call these territories by specific name, Andrews is referring to East and West Florida.

At first, Andrews argues that establishing the new colonies under a scheme influenced by territorial imperialism possibly positioned the new colonies in direct opposition to older colonies that had already established themselves as productive parts of the British mercantile economy.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 69-70.

<sup>192</sup> Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 123.

<sup>193</sup> Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 123.

<sup>194</sup> Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 124.

<sup>195</sup> Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 126-127.

One of the consequences of this choice, Andrews observes, would be another type of imperial policy. For Andrews, the old imperialism practiced in colonies like Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania in the seventeenth century conflicted with territorial imperialism of Canada and the Floridas in the eighteenth century. Their conflict created new imperialism. It would be that new imperialism that would be crucial to the future of British expansion in North America in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After their infamous defeat of the enemies at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, Britain would begin to embrace new imperialistic ideas. This type of new imperialism would require the Crown to acquire territory, formulate a colonization scheme, and disseminate royal authority via trusted agents before the first settler even set foot in Great Britain's new holdings. In a way, the new imperialism that would be practiced in East and West Florida as test cases served as a forerunner to the practices that would dominate their empire throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>196</sup>

The British Crown had high stakes in making certain their new territorial acquisitions would be successfully established and maintained to ensure they thrived in the future. While the obvious advantages represented by Florida's acquisition from the Spanish could be seen in their value as new economic pieces in the British mercantile empire, and in its strategic importance to counterbalance Spanish influence, others existed. Perhaps more nuanced, these advantages would be just as important, if not of greater value, when assessed from the broader perspective of

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<sup>196</sup> Like many of the first historians in the twentieth century who considered the significance of East and West Florida in the broader scope of imperial affairs during the eighteenth century, Cecil Johnson initially dismissed much of their broader importance. However, twenty-two years after Johnson published *British West Florida, 1763-1783*, he revisited his earlier work. In 1965, at a meeting of the Mississippi Historical Society, he revised his earlier stance. As some of his fellow scholars on colonial Florida had begun to do in light of calls to consider the long term meaning of British Florida in the Atlantic World, the paper Johnson gave at the conference admitted his error in dismissing the significance of East and West Florida in the larger examination of the British Empire in the eighteenth century. "My study," Johnson explained, "would indicate that West [and East] Florida was of considerable significance as an example in colonial administration in the late pre-Revolutionary period." See Cecil Johnson, "West Florida Revisited," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 28 (May 1966), 131.

imperial policy. First, the type of new imperialism practiced in East and West Florida had significance in reference to the Crown's future imperial colonization plans. Second, West Florida became the first British colony to be settled west of the Appalachian Mountains.<sup>197</sup> Finally, West Florida's creation also finally gave the British Crown a long sought after port on the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>198</sup> While the British government designed the Proclamation of 1763 to halt expansion by white settlers onto Indian lands west of the Appalachians, it acted only as a temporary stopgap. Eventually, the British planned to expand their imperial reach as far and as wide as they could. They likely hoped to eliminate the Spanish from North America as they had the French in 1763. In some ways, West Florida became more important than her sister to the east. It would be the Crown's test case for how it would populate and administer the new territories it planned to acquire west of the Mississippi River.<sup>199</sup> Any mistakes made in West Florida would give the Crown insight on how to tweak its colonization plan to achieve greater success in the future. But throughout the entire process, the Crown never wavered in its belief that the best way to ensure immigration and control its inhabitants upon their arrival resulted from tying people and their families to the land.

Within six months of the start of the publicity campaign, the Board of Trade began to be flooded with land grant applications and settlement proposals. Some people applied for smaller tracts of land that were only large enough to establish a plantation on in East or West Florida. However, some more wealthy individuals, eager to see a larger return on their investment, took it

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<sup>197</sup> Clinton N. Howard believed that "West Florida, when it was set up as a colony [that] lay west of the Appalachian Mountains proved more important in the next hundred years than that Pensacola and Mobile were British and later American ports of entry and exit into the gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean." See Clinton N. Howard, "Colonial Pensacola, the British Period, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (Oct. 1940), 109.

<sup>198</sup> For a detailed description of "the first British port upon the Gulf" see Clinton N. Howard, "The Military Occupation of British West Florida, 1763," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (Jan. 1939), 184.

<sup>199</sup> Clinton N. Howard, "The Military Occupation of British West Florida, 1763," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (Jan. 1939), 181-182.



upon themselves to suggest they could act on the Crown's behalf in establishing the larger townships. The nobles would become land brokers who would both help and harm the colonization process. The Board of Trade received what would become one of its most famous applications when they received a memorial in May 1764 from one Denys Rolle, Esquire that contained "his proposals for settling a colony at or near St. Mark's between St. Mark's and the River Apalachicola, or on that river."<sup>200</sup> On Tuesday, May 8, 1764, the Board of Trade voted to approve the following applications, and it recommended the king make the grants to the following individuals:

Denys Rolle, esquire, twenty thousand acres of land in East Florida; Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Douglas, ten thousand acres of land in West Florida; Matthew Weld, esquire, twenty thousand acres of land in West Florida; Giles Phillips, esquire, ten thousand acres of land in West Florida; Jacob Blackwell, esquire, five thousand acres of land in West Florida; Edmond Browne of New Grove, esquire, Thomas Browne, esquire, Captain Thomas Browne, Lieutenant Montfort Browne and Lieutenant William Browne, twenty thousand acres of land in West Florida; [and] James Bruce, esquire, 4,000 acres of land.<sup>201</sup>

While Rolle's application would prove to be the ideal realization of the Crown's colonization scheme in action, some of the other approved applications foreshadowed a troubling practice and the first threat the Crown's new plans faced—land speculation.

Prior to the official announcement of the actual terms of the Treaty of 1763 that fall, attempts at land speculation had begun to proliferate in both East and West Florida. Agents

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<sup>200</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, May 1764: Volume 71," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77621&strquery=Florida>.

<sup>201</sup> K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, May 1764: Volume 71," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77621&strquery=Florida>.

familiar with the communities in East and West Florida worked quickly on behalf of many London merchants and would-be land speculators to secure title from lands owned by the massive drove of Spaniards. These men and women planned to evacuate en masse for fear of how they would be treated once the two empires completed the official transfer of Florida from Spanish to English hands. Investors saw East and West Florida as the perfect place to make a tremendous amount of profit--both in power and money. These opinions were reinforced by a rumor that George III would act with great favor towards any individual who looked to make an investment in Florida. Court gossip asserted that two of the king's younger brothers, Edward, Duke of York, and Henry, Duke of Cumberland, planned to act as formal patrons to a company formed by royal favorites with the goal of settling the Floridas.<sup>202</sup> While the royal brothers were the most prominent individuals among the group of potential investors, they were not alone in their power, wealth, or prestige.

The list of founding members of the company would read like a who's who of eighteenth-century Hanoverian politics. Beginning with the Prime Minister, George Grenville, other investors were thought to include former prime minister John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, the future famed abolitionist William Murray, 1st Lord Mansfield, Rear Admiral Augustus Keppel, naval officers like Marriott Arbuthnot and John Lindsay, as well as wealthy London merchants such as John Kinnion and Samuel Touchet.<sup>203</sup> Petitions from businessmen eager to invest in the Florida enterprise quickly flooded the Secretary of State's office and continued to do so for several years. A London merchant named Michael Henries of Philpot Lane received a typical example on September 3, 1766. Henries stated that he possessed "an intention to make a

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<sup>202</sup> C.N. Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida, 1763-1768," *The Journal of Southern History* 6, no. 2 (May 1940), 209-210.

<sup>203</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 210

settlement or settlements in Your Majesty's Province of East Florida," and he petitioned for an allotment of five thousand acres.<sup>204</sup> "These men, some believed, thought the acquisition of Florida heralded a new era of potential colonial proprietorships. Perhaps hoping to be the next William Penn, some members of the public thought that some of these men thought that East and West Florida might not just increase their wealth. But given the royal interest in the Florida endeavor, some individuals saw it as an avenue to increase the scope of their personal power and influence. Unfortunately for any individuals who had such hopes, the Crown had determined that East and West Florida would never be colonized "in the old proprietary sense."<sup>205</sup> Instead, they would be governed as royal colonies regardless of what investors or settlers hoped. As long as the Crown could rely upon its appointed officials to follow the guidelines that had been outlined for them in the instructions they received, instructions that reflected the intentions of the formal colonization plan developed and approved on behalf of the king by the Board of Trade, all would be well. Only when royal agents began to rebel did the Crown realize the threat posed to the success of the colonization process.

The Crown established land distribution policies to be carried out by the governors in order to serve as the primary mechanism by which specifically recruited white, Protestant families would become firmly rooted in East and West Florida. To achieve this goal, the Crown devised a detailed process of how land would be allocated. It framed this process around the person of the royal governor, or in his absence, the lieutenant governor. The governors had authority to grant lands in the new colonies from one of three sources. First, the governor had the right to grant land "under the authority of royal mandamuses" sent to him by the Privy

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<sup>204</sup> "The Petition of Michael Henries of Philpot Lane, London Merchant," September 3, 1766, CO5/542/7, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>205</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 210.

Council.<sup>206</sup> Second, land could be granted as a result of "royal instructions to the governor."<sup>207</sup> Lastly, the Proclamation of 1763 spelled out the process whereby veterans and families could apply for land.<sup>208</sup> The entire process had been designed to bolster royal authority and maintain royal control of the new colonies.

By keeping royal authority vested in a single person who, in many ways, became the gatekeeper for colonists who wished to settle in the new territory, the Crown had a fairly simple task of watching one person to make sure the lynchpin to their operation never failed. Additionally, by focusing royal authority in a single person, it ensured the Crown retained control over its implemented colonization scheme many years after it initiated the process. By focusing and maintaining such tight control over its colonization scheme and subsequent settlement patterns, at least in theory, the state ensured the population of East and West Florida would remain loyal to the Crown in growing times of unrest and uncertainty in the colonies.

Cecil Johnson described the land grant process as one that illustrated "the operation of the machinery for imperial control of the colonies."<sup>209</sup> First, a petitioner would submit an application to the Privy Council for consideration. The Privy Council would meet in committee to then consider the application. If they felt it to be valid, they would send it to the Board of Trade to have it further vetted. When the Board of Trade had completed its assessment, it presented its findings to the original committee within the Privy Council that had originally referred the petition to them. If the committee agreed with the Board of Trade's findings, it submitted the petition back to the general meeting of the Privy Council. At that point, if the petitioner had

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<sup>206</sup> Cecil Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1933), 541.

<sup>207</sup> Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," 541.

<sup>208</sup> Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," 541.

<sup>209</sup> Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," 541.

cleared all the described hurdles, the Privy Council would issue a formal order to the governor to grant the petition under royal mandamus. The requirements for approved petitions stated that the grantee had "to settle the land with white Protestants within ten years of the date of the grant in the proportion of one person for every hundred acres; and if one-third of grant were not thus settled in three years, the whole would revert to the king: likewise any part not settled in ten years would similarly revert."<sup>210</sup> Thus, the Crown made the approval process conditional upon the petitioner successfully carrying out the primary goal of the Crown's colonization scheme—permanent settlement by the desired and predetermined demographic of colonists.<sup>211</sup> It remained the task of the royal governors to oversee this entire process from start to finish as the most powerful agent of royal authority in each colony.

### **Families & Land Policies in British Florida**

Between November 1763 and February 1764, James Grant made preparations to depart for his new post in East Florida. Grant spent a large amount of time during those months collecting presents for the natives he anticipated encountering upon his arrival in his new colony.<sup>212</sup> Taking several months longer than had been initially been anticipated by the Board of Trade, by May 1764, when Grant had still not left England, he began to receive pressure to leave for the New World. Finally, in early June 1764, Grant took passage on a sloop named *Ferret* from Spithead. His voyage lasted for seven weeks. He arrived in St. Augustine on August 29, 1764.<sup>213</sup> Like Grant, Johnstone spent the months between his appointment and his departure for West Florida gathering presents for the natives. He finally departed from England for Pensacola

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<sup>210</sup> Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," 542.

<sup>211</sup> Interestingly, a minor tweaking of the process occurred in May 1767 to make it harder for colonists immigrating to East and West Florida from England and Ireland to get land petitions approved. Cecil Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1933), 542.

<sup>212</sup> Nelson, *General James Grant*, 46.

<sup>213</sup> Nelson, *General James Grant*, 47.

in the second week of July 1764 aboard the transport ship *Grampus*. The normal ten-to-twelve-week voyage actually took almost twice as long as it should have because Johnstone stopped over for a seven-week visit to Jamaica. He picked up 1328 gallons of rum, numerous seeds for planting, and even recruited some settlers to come with him to West Florida.<sup>214</sup> He departed for West Florida on a packet and arrived on October 21, 1764.<sup>215</sup>

Upon their arrival in their respective capitals, Grant and Johnstone faced a number of tasks for which they had spent months preparing in order to carry out the Crown's colonization plan for East and West Florida.<sup>216</sup> Within a few months, Grant appeared to have been the more successful of the two despite the fact that he appeared to doubt personally the long-term potential of the plans.<sup>217</sup> A visitor named Lord Adam Gordon observed that within a few weeks of his arrival "Governour Grant has fitted up the House and formed his Establishment, his Council and Courts. Many Gentlemen of worth and Substance, from Carolina and Georgia, are in terms to Settle in this Province, and intend to plant Indigo, Rice and Cotton, all which, it is presumed must answer well."<sup>218</sup> All in all, he left St. Augustine with a positive opinion that he expected to see mirrored in East Florida's nearby sister colony. Gordon soon found himself severely disappointed.

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<sup>214</sup> Fabel, *Bombast and Broadsides*, 29.

<sup>215</sup> Fabel, *Bombast and Broadsides*, 29.

<sup>216</sup> James Grant sent a letter to the Board of Trade dated 2nd of September, 1764. It contained an account of his arrival at St. Augustine and the state of affairs in that province. Likewise, the Board of Trade received a letter from Governor Johnstone to Mr. Pownall, dated February 19th, 1765. Like Grant's report, Johnstone's letter contained an account of the state of the Province of West Florida, the measures taken for its settlement, and the steps necessary for its improvement.

<sup>217</sup> Nathan Hill correctly notes that Grant did not necessarily believe the Crown's plan of relying upon white settlers, their families, and indentured servants would lead to long-term success in East Florida. Nathan W. Hill, "Colonizing Schemes in an Integrated Atlantic Economy: Labor and Settlement in British East Florida, 1763-1773," Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, 2006, 26.

<sup>218</sup> Lord Adam Gordon, "Journal of an Officer Who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765," in *Travels in the American Colonies*, ed. Newton D. Mereness (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1961), 393.

In August 1764, Gordon had arrived in Pensacola. He immediately took account of the status of the main settlement. He noted that "the Fort [Fort King George] is an Oblong Square with a double Stockade and a very narrow Ditch dug in the sand. Four Bastions are intended-- The Governour's is the only tolerable House in the place.-- It is covered with Shingles, and has a Balcony both ways up one pair of Stairs.--All the other Houses are on the ground, and covered with Palmetto Leaves.--It is a very poor place...for many Miles around...At present there appears scarce probability of improving such desert sands." He did admit that such a bleak outlook might be overcome by the effects of trade with the Spanish, but he would not say for certain.<sup>219</sup> When he departed Pensacola, Gordon left with a decidedly more negative opinion as compared to the one he had upon his arrival.

Although his negative response is understandable, since confronted by a Pensacola left in shambles by the evacuation of the Spanish, Gordon may not have been entirely fair in the totality of his assessment. At the time of Gordon's visit, Johnstone had not even arrived in Pensacola in order to begin making the changes and the improvements that people saw as having been accomplished by Grant in St. Augustine. Gordon's more positive view of East Florida lingered in the opinions he shared with his friends and family members. "Augustine has all the appearance of a place that will thrive."<sup>220</sup> He attributed this opinion not just to the success of Grant's early efforts, but to a number of other factors. St. Augustine, Gordon believed, possessed several natural advantages that were lacking in Pensacola. St. Augustine had "several good houses in it, the Streets are not ill laid out...it is remarkably healthy, perhaps the most so of any Town in

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<sup>219</sup> Gordon, "Journal of an Officer Who Travelled in America," 381-382. Despite plans to improve the quality of the town's infrastructure, Pensacola continued to suffer from a lack of implementing those plans for several years. For several descriptions of the town's lack of developmental progress between 1763 and 1766, see Clinton N. Howard, "Colonial Pensacola: The British Period, Part II," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (Oct. 1940), 110-117.

<sup>220</sup> Gordon, "Journal of an Officer Who Travelled in America," 391.

America."<sup>221</sup> In short, St. Augustine had a better position from which to become the capital of the new British territory of East Florida than Pensacola had for that of West Florida.

By the end of 1764, Grant had managed to overcome the difficulties he faced in East Florida with more success than Johnstone had in West Florida.<sup>222</sup> A closer examination of the challenges faced by both governors upon their arrival in North America reveals some of the reasons why Grant ultimately achieved more success as a governor than Johnstone. Difficulties confronted both men when they had to contend with the abandoned Spanish settlement infrastructures in both St. Augustine and Pensacola. Obviously, the two men had no realistic possibility of selecting provincial capitals in each colony built in new locations from the ground up. They understood the folly individuals faced in the reality of trying to establish completely new capitals just because the first step of the British colonization process called for that very happenstance to occur. The Crown had just seen its agents purposefully deviate from the approved colonization scheme for the first time because reality conflicted with what sounded good in theory. It would not be the last time this occurred.

In bypassing step one of that colonization process, several interesting things occurred. First, the experience of the Floridas under British control would vary drastically compared to its thirteen sibling colonies since the British did not have to start from scratch. Second, in bypassing the selection of a new location for the capital, the governors skipped the portion of the process whereby “English” houses and other vestiges of the colonial infrastructure would be created in the British style. Instead, the British simply tried to graft “Englishness” onto houses, churches, gardens, roads, and military installations already in existence in St. Augustine and

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<sup>221</sup> Gordon, "Journal of an Officer Who Travelled in America," 393.

<sup>222</sup> A discussion of the establishment of Grant's civil government can be found in Howard L. Johnson's "A Study of the Civil Government of British East Florida." See Howard L. Johnson, "A Study of the Civil Government of British East Florida," M.A. Thesis, Appalachian State Teacher's College, 1952.



Pensacola. While subsequent expansion and growth in each settlement would be explicitly dictated by the British colonization process, as overseen by royal engineers Elias Durnford in Pensacola and James Moncrief and Frederick George Mulcaster in St. Augustine, the initial infrastructure of the colony resulted in a foreign and somewhat exotic flavor never truly disappearing from East and West Florida.<sup>223</sup> Changes soon occurred when the governors gave orders to begin improving their respective colonies. With the dilapidated state of many areas of each capital, as first observed by British officials who arrived in Florida in 1764, few people resisted Grant and Johnstone's orders. Engineers worked with surveyors and private citizens to improve lots, structures, roads, and fortifications. For other smaller projects, the governors' secretaries forwarded instructions to settlers on how to improve certain conditions.<sup>224</sup> Slowly but steadily, each settlement began to improve its overall condition. Still, the third and final ramification of the governors' actions would not be felt as more people immigrated to the colonies and increased the overall population. Only then would it become apparent as to how significant it had been that both Grant and Johnstone individually chose to deviate from the Board of Trade's colonization scheme when faced with the realities of life in the New World. A dangerous precedent had been set, and it would not be the last time that either governor would act in such a way, something that occurred more frequently once families arrived en masse in the new territories.

The Crown and its chief agents in East and West Florida, James Grant and George Johnstone, had long recognized the importance of families in the colonization process. Subsequently, the governors and other officials in both colonies did all they could to encourage both men and women to immigrate to Florida. They especially encouraged widows to come to

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<sup>223</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 166 and Johnson, *British West Florida*, 22.

<sup>224</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 8.

British Florida with their dependents, enticed with promises of cheap land that they could procure and hold in their own names. In a proclamation made by James Grant in 1764, the governor of East Florida let it be known that "...100 acres will be granted to every person, being master or mistress of a family, for him or herself."<sup>225</sup> However, any women who believed they would find some utopian paradise in East or West Florida upon their arrival where they faced more opportunity and had more rights than in other colonies found themselves sorely disappointed. Instead, as soon as any such arrivals reach the Floridas, both unmarried young women of marriageable age and widows found a state apparatus that strongly encouraged to find a groom, wed, and produce more children. Traditional families, with fathers, mothers, and children, would remain the preferred social unit in the new colonies.

As the months of 1764 passed, as both Grant and Johnstone had hoped, immigrants began to trickle into both East and West Florida. Even as both colonies saw their populations begin to grow, not surprisingly, men came in larger numbers than women. In an attempt to stimulate more immigration by females, both Grant and Johnstone let it be known they were very open to any ideas other people might be able to suggest to help them achieve this goal. By 1765, the requested assistance had begun to arrive in the form of land agents who wished to act as intermediaries for groups of colonists who wished to resettle from other colonies to East and West Florida. For example, in a letter to Governor James Grant written in February 1765, John Savage proposed a plan whereby he would act as an agent for a number of men and women who wished to relocate from Bermuda to East Florida. Savage hoped that Grant would be pleased about his plan as "...I fancy you'll see a large proportion of women [in the group] which may be an advantage, as its likely you'll have young [single] men looking out for settlements, and I hope

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<sup>225</sup> James Grant, "A Proclamation of East Florida," in William Stork, *A Description of East-Florida*, Third Edition (London: W. Nicoll, 1769), 30.

they'll have an opportunity to get good wives."<sup>226</sup> Still, the assignment of land to some groups of settlers had remained problematic for both Grant and Johnstone. For the governors, who had spent the first months after their respective arrivals in St. Augustine and Pensacola had worked so hard to recruit new immigrants to their colonies and improve the settlements, continued to face a challenge that had haunted Florida since before the British formally acquired it in 1762. Despite the Crown's best efforts to stamp out such endeavors, land speculators continued to operate in both colonies to the detriment of the official colonization scheme.

When land speculators had made unofficial overtures to the Board of Trade in 1763 and received a very cool reception, they sought other avenues by which they might obtain land titles in East and West Florida. Many investors hired local agents to buy the land directly from Spanish citizens before and during their evacuation. Spanish land holders sold tens of thousands of acres cheaply to British agents who offered them hard cash in return for their land titles. Their often times successful attempts to procure the choicest pieces of lands outside the approved colonization scheme threatened to upend the plans the Crown had worked so hard to develop between early 1762 and late 1763. During the first few months after representatives of the Spanish king officially completed the transfer of Florida to British military officers, the colonies remained in flux. The military officials who had been dispatched by the king to take control of the new territories had little-to-no ability to regulate any civil matters. Such issues had to wait for the arrival of the civil government, as represented by the most important agent of royal authority in the colony, i.e., the governor.

After Grant and Johnstone finally arrived in St. Augustine and Pensacola in mid-to-late 1764, they both attempted to put an end to the actions of land speculators. But they also realized

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<sup>226</sup> Letter, John Savage to James Grant, February 23, 1765, in possession of CO5/548, p. 371, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

they could not arbitrarily negate transactions that those land speculations had subsequently engaged in with British colonists who had moved to East and West Florida and bought lands in what they thought were good faith transactions. To quell panic among the small but valuable group of immigrants who had already come to Florida, both Grant and Johnstone made public announcements that they had no intentions of unilaterally seizing private property. But both governors let it be known that British subjects would have to petition the Crown for clear title to their lands. It was the best compromise the two men could devise given their royal command to adhere to the stipulations regarding the colonization process.

The governors' compromise received mixed reactions. It pacified some individual settlers who had already taken possession of the land and had begun to improve it. Others, particularly absentee landowners who also happened to be wealthy investors living in Great Britain, responded less favorably. In turn, while the governors tried to reassure the investors that many would receive grants to lands they already owned, they could not give unilateral or universal assurances. They might receive such grants, or at least "a considerable proportion" but only if "the grants did not interfere with the plans for the laying out of the colony, a program which the government was following."<sup>227</sup> Above all else, the governors worked to ensure that everyone understood East and West Florida had been founded as royal colonies and it was as royal colonies they would remain. In their allocation of land grants, the governors worked to protect royal interests and royal prerogative. Simply put, "the emphasis upon Crown ownership is unmistakable" when considering the motivations of the British officials<sup>228</sup> In the words of Clinton Howard, "the ceded territory in North America was the property of the Crown to be

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<sup>227</sup> C.N. Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida, 1763-1768," *The Journal of Southern History* 6, no. 2 (May 1940), 212.

<sup>228</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida, 212.

disposed of or to be retained in the manner which the Crown thought proper."<sup>229</sup> Anyone who challenged this immediately found themselves at odds with both Grant and Johnstone.

The clear reminders made to the public regarding the land acquisition process not only affected people who had bought land from the Spanish prior to the transfer of Florida to British control. Aside from a trickle of immigrants who had made their own way to East and West Florida in late 1763 and early 1764, the first large groups to apply en masse in person to the governors were some of their own soldiers. For example, many members of the Thirty-Fifth Regiment, the military soldiers who'd been assigned to the garrison in Pensacola since 1762, decided to take advantage of a perk the king had extended to members of the British military who had served the Crown during the French and Indian War. Governor Johnstone quickly approved several applications from a number of veterans who decided to settle in West Florida. "The establishment of former soldiers as settlers on the frontier was appreciated by the government as a means of providing an experienced militia to aid the regular troops in the defense of the colony."<sup>230</sup> It was yet another sign of successful recruitment of colonists the governor valued per the colonization scheme.

The results of following the king's official colonization scheme could easily be seen within the first two years of the governors' arrival in the territories. Clinton Howard suggested that, between 1764 and 1766, West Florida saw rapid growth at the settlements of Pensacola and Mobile. A number of foreign immigrants from France, Acadia and Germany populated "the southwestern corner of the province."<sup>231</sup> By 1767, further settlements flourished along the valleys of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers and towards the settlement at Natchez. By 1768,

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<sup>229</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida, 212.

<sup>230</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 206.

<sup>231</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 213.

simply put, "in the matter of towns the achievement of the British in the first five years was considerable."<sup>232</sup> Howard noted that several settlements had been laid out in town plans and garden lots had been granted to settlers in Pensacola. Most interestingly, as the colonial infrastructure formed, so too did a corresponding social hierarchy. "Social classes, based largely on financial standing, rapidly formed."<sup>233</sup> Town properties in West Florida were allotted on a type of lottery system. All petitioners found themselves divided into separate classes. They had a first, second, and third choice of lots, determined by their financial standing. The Crown believed those who had the best finances would have the most likely ability to improve their property which is exactly what the Crown wanted for the betterment of the colony at large.<sup>234</sup> A similar process occurred under Grant in St. Augustine. Initial results of the Crown's efforts to colonize their new holdings appeared to not only meet expectations, but to exceed them. Unfortunately, such early positive results could not and would not be sustained.

### **Conclusion: The Failure of the Crown's Colonization Scheme**

As time passed, the Crown eventually replaced both James Grant and George Johnstone as the governors in East and West Florida.<sup>235</sup> After their replacement, Grant and Johnstone's successors failed to carry out the Crown's instructions regarding land policy as meticulously as the first governors had. Perhaps because men like Patrick Tonyn and Peter Chester did not feel a

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<sup>232</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 213.

<sup>233</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 215-216.

<sup>234</sup> Howard, "Some Economic Aspects of British West Florida," 217.

<sup>235</sup> Declining health issues necessitated Grant's return to Great Britain in 1771. At first, Grant thought he would return, and an interim governor was appointed in the person of John Moultrie. In 1773, Grant ran for office as an MP and became a member of Parliament. His victory made it clear he would not return to his post in East Florida. Patrick Tonyn became his official replacement in 1774. The Board of Trade recalled Johnstone for several reasons in 1766. He hoped to return to West Florida, but military appointments and personal business ventures kept him from ever returning to Pensacola. Lieutenant Governor Montfort Browne served as interim governor until the Crown named John Eliot as Johnstone's first official successor in 1769. Eliot committed suicide within a month of his arrival in West Florida causing Elias Durnford to serve as acting governor for almost a year. A final replacement arrived in Pensacola in the form of Peter Chester in 1770.

familiarity with and loyalty to the colonization scheme since they had not worked to create it, both men quickly shied away from following its instructions as closely as their predecessors had. An emphasis on approving smaller land grants to veterans and families quickly found itself replaced by a tendency to approve large land grants to absentee owners involved in land speculation. So-called "ordinary persons" and their families, the bulwark of the Crown's colonization schemes, quickly found their "family right" applications lost in the approval of a land boom of royal favorites and rich London-based merchant entrepreneurs.<sup>236</sup> In the end, speculators won and the Crown lost despite Grant and Johnstone's efforts to combat such a happenstance.

The ultimate failure of the Crown's colonization scheme is not really all that surprising because it had been designed to achieve two seemingly similar but, in reality, two quite contradictory aims in the process of making East and West Florida successful colonies. First, the Board of Trade crafted a plan that would be able to lure the desired type of white Protestant families to populate East and West Florida. Second, the Board of Trade wanted to create an easily understandable and easily accessible land distribution policy. While some may have thought that making land easy to procure was a consideration made in support of luring white, Protestant families to the colonies, some have argued there was an additional interest prompting the policy's creation. According to Charles L. Mowat, royal officials hoped to make attractive lands easily obtainable in Florida by colonists for another reason.<sup>237</sup> The Crown wanted to tempt these individuals to move south instead of going west. For much of the eighteenth century, a scarcity of land in the coastal tidewaters of southern colonies like the Carolinas and Georgia had

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<sup>236</sup> Charles L. Mowat, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," *Agricultural History* 14, no. 2 (Apr. 1940), 75.

<sup>237</sup> Mowat, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," 75.

resulted in an increasing displeased population settling in the backcountry. These colonists viewed a move west into the highly sought-after Indian lands located west of the Appalachian Mountains as the answer to their problems. However, the Crown had signed the Treaty of Paris with provisions designed to pacify the fears of native allies who had fought on the side of the British during the French and Indian War. The main fears the Crown had to work to quell were the natives fear of white encroachment onto their fertile farming lands in the Ohio River Valley. East and West Florida seemed to offer a viable alternative that the Crown hoped would be acceptable to both the back-country settlers of Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia and their native American allies. What the Crown did not anticipate was the fact that the type of colonist attracted to the rich farmlands of the Ohio River differed from the one who might be attracted to what they viewed as frontier life in East and West Florida. Single men and fortune hunters tended to gravitate towards the opportunities offered by East and West Florida, while the families settled in the backcountry viewed the Ohio River Valley as better land to claim for farming. Ultimately, colonists flooded the land forbidden to them by the Proclamation of 1763, and while settlers immigrated to Florida, the largest demographic groups were not the large number of families as the Crown would have ultimately preferred.

The conflict that emerged when the reality of implementing and maintaining the Board of Trade's scheme differed significantly from how the ideas had been originally designed on paper an additional reason the Crown's colonization scheme ultimately failed emerged. As time passed, competing factions developed among various social groups that emerged out of the groups of colonists who immigrated to Florida. Competition to promote private and individual family interests over those of the state brought the very officials the Crown had designed their plan to rely upon into conflict with one another and with the king. While the Crown tried to recruit the



most loyal and talented officials it could to take over leadership duties in East and West Florida, they faced a hard reality when only about half of the appointees actually took up residence in the new territories and actively fulfilled their assigned duties. The Crown had thought that by soliciting appointees from well-connected families in nearby colonies that a network might grow between East and West Florida and her older siblings. Establishing new branches of old families in new territories was a well-known colonization tactic. However, all too often, appointees would accept office without ever maintaining new established residencies in Florida if they even travelled there at all. The absenteeism of office holders eventually caused a shortage in manpower. The governors of both colonies constantly faced a struggle to fulfill all the duties of the offices held by absentee officials. The only practical solution resulted in several officials who were actually present in the colony to simultaneously hold more than one office. This pluralism had two significant consequences. First, it served to inflame political factions that had already developed within East and West Florida. Second, and of even greater concern, additional conflicts emerged among different portions of the colonial leadership. The timing of such squabbles manifesting in the late 1760s and early 1770s could not have been worse. During a time when the Crown desperately needed its officials to put aside personal quarrels for the good of maintaining royal authority in the turbulent times of impending revolution, they ultimately fractured.<sup>238</sup>

A final reason the Board of Trade's colonization scheme failed stemmed from certain liberties the governors took with the implementation of certain aspects of the plan. In the final years of his administration, Governor Grant started to ease certain restrictions placed on landowners. Theoretically, Grant should have confiscated land not improved by owners within

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<sup>238</sup> Cecil Johnson, "A Note on Absenteeism and Pluralism in British West Florida," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1936), 196.

the requisite time period. Instead, absentee landowners prevailed upon their personal friendship with Grant to hold on to the huge chunks of unimproved and unoccupied land. Grant's eventual successor, Patrick Tonyn, continued this policy until just shortly before the end of the American Revolution. Similar land speculation never emerged on such a wide scale in West Florida. Governor Johnstone, and his permanent successor Peter Chester, unlike Grant, followed the Crown's dictates regarding attempts to limit and eventually root out any type of large land speculation in West Florida. The actions of royal officials like Johnstone and Chester, men who followed their instructions as specified by the king, proves the Crown's scheme could work. However, it only worked when the Crown's officials followed it as they should.<sup>239</sup> While the governors in West Florida followed their instructions regarding land speculation, they too chose to deviate from the original instructions on other issues. These deviations ultimately helped contribute to the failure of the colonization scheme.

Aside from issues stemming from land speculation, the other major violation of the terms of the colonization scheme emerged when landowners and their agents recruited colonists to their new land holdings in East and West Florida. Some of the most powerful land holders in the new colonies, including Dr. Andrew Turnbull and Denys Rolle in East Florida and Montfort

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<sup>239</sup> Since the royal council in West Florida, under the watchful eyes of Governor Peter Chester from 1770 until 1781, employed tight oversight in approval of land applications, massive scale speculation was not as significant a problem in West Florida as it was in East Florida. Moreover, a land boom in what is now upper Louisiana around Baton Rouge saw increasing interest attract new families who wished to immigrate to West Florida just as the Crown's original colonization plan had been designed to do. For a detailed description of some of the applications, such as the efforts by Colonel John Clark to secure property for more than 200 families from southwestern Virginia in the fall of 1771; Captain Amos Ogden who gained titled to land for immigrants from New Jersey; Colonel Israel Putnam, Lieutenant Rufus Putnam, Captain Roger Enos, and Thaddeus Lyman who negotiated for land in March 1773 on behalf of the New England based Company of Military Adventurers; Minister Samuel Sweesy made application in April 1773 for settlers from New Jersey; Jacques and Garrett Rapalje applied at the same time to bring families from New York; and in June 1773, Thomas Hutchins applied for land for families who wished to immigrate from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, see Cecil Johnson, "Expansion in West Florida, 1770-1779," *the Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20, no. 4 (March 1934), 487-488.

Browne in West Florida, intended to honor the Crown's colonization plan.<sup>240</sup> However, for one reason or another, as they recruited immigrants to their settlements, not a single attempt met the Crown's requirements. Other planters did not even bother to make good faith attempts as they settled their lands. For example, a few planters recruited more slave labor to their properties than white Protestant families. More planters violated the official colonization scheme in East Florida where absenteeism remained so high among land holders when compared to their counterparts in West Florida. Investors such as John Moultrie and Richard Oswald represented a group of East Florida planters, which eventually came to include Governor Grant himself, who believed the model of colonization employed in South Carolina to be more suited to settling East Florida than the one so meticulously developed by the Crown.<sup>241</sup> The divergence from Crown's scheme, supported by Grant in his role of governor, merely served as another cause in a long list of reasons as to why the Crown's colonization scheme eventually failed.

While the king and the Board of Trade had worked long and hard to develop their colonization scheme, as the years passed, feedback from the colonies eventually persuaded them that changes needed to be made in light of the realities faced on the ground in the colonies. The

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<sup>240</sup> In July 1765, the Lieutenant Governor of West Florida, Montfort Browne, began arranging the immigration of a group of sixty French Protestants to the twenty-thousand-acre land grant he had received the previous year. To help defray the cost of their travel to and settlement in West Florida, Browne suggested that Parliament grant a small stipend to the colonists particularly because it appeared "many of them were well skilled in the culture of silk and vines." The Board approved Browne's request specifically granting them "some arms, tools and implements of husbandry and for the building of these settlers, and also bedding and such other articles as shall appear to be necessary in their passage" as long as the total cost was not more than three pounds sterling per head. Upon arrival and settlement in West Florida, the colonists would then receive a small allowance for a total of nine months after their arrival. See K. H. Ledward, ed., "Journal, July 1765: Volume 72," *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume 12: January 1764 - December 1767, British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77633&strquery=Florida>.

<sup>241</sup> The colonization model utilized in South Carolina resulted in a very small number of white settlers and a substantial population of African slaves. The population of enslaved men and women eventually came to outnumber white planters and their families by approximately 10:1 by the early eighteenth century. See Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 146-147. Also Charles L. Mowat, "St. Augustine under the British Flag, 1763-1775," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 20, no.2 (Oct. 1941), 132 and John Paul Nuno, "Making Indians and Africans: Colonialism, Identity, Racialization, and the Rise of the Nation-State in the Florida Borderlands, 1754-1842," P.h.,D Dissertation, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas).

Crown realized early warning signs that its plan might fail and began to rethink the details of the approved colonization scheme for East and West Florida as early as April 1773. For starters, in an attempt to curb problems with land speculators and absentee landowners who sat on choice land holdings without making any improvements, the Privy Council ordered the governors of each province to discontinue the overtly easy land application policies on April 7, 1773. Within a month, on May 30, 1773, the royal officials in East and West Florida received new orders. The Crown had revised its colonization scheme regarding land distribution, making several noticeable changes. First, it dealt with current applicants that were in the process of obtaining the land. The Privy Council ordered that any applicants who had not completed the requisite paperwork to receive their land grants within six months would have to begin the process all over under the new system. This new system stipulated that land grants could only be obtained after the completion of a new survey, subdivision of the lots, and final sale of the land at auction.<sup>242</sup> Ultimately, this new system too would fail largely because it relied on the limited number of surveyors who could successfully carry out the required land surveys that needed to be completed before the land could be sold.<sup>243</sup> By the time the Crown realized why the acquisition of land parcels by colonists had become backlogged, a new force would cause all types of Loyalist refugees to flood the provinces of East and West Florida. These refugees, eager for a safe haven, brought families with them and wanted to acquire land on which to establish new homes. Their arrival, en masse between 1780 and 1782, further complicated life in East and West

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<sup>242</sup> Mowat, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," 76.

<sup>243</sup> Mowat, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," 77.

Florida as the American Revolution dragged on until the British ceded both colonies back to the Spanish in 1783.<sup>244</sup>

In his later life, Governor James Grant often referenced the developmental process of East Florida, recognizing in the early years of his residence in St. Augustine that he had lived at a time when “the colony only begins to have an existence.”<sup>245</sup> Grant further often referred to matters of East Florida as having transpired “...in this infant colony” throughout his correspondence.<sup>246</sup> Wanting to protect East Florida as any parent would their child, Grant had always acted in what he believed to be the colony’s best interests. Governor George Johnstone had acted in much the same way for West Florida. A well thought out and comprehensive colonization plan, determined before a single colonist set foot in either of the new territories, acted as the key to getting each metaphorical child off to its best start. However, when the governors tried to implement this process in East and West Florida, they were perplexed by a number of factors that caused them to have to deviate from the Board of Trade’s directives. This precedent would be followed many other times by both Grant, Johnstone, and their successors. However, one thing became clearer. To guarantee the success of the colonies, the role that prominent families had played in the colonization process could not be ignored. The success or failure of East and West Florida ultimately boiled down to one thing: its families...its people.

What role would families play in the success or failure of the new British colonies? The Crown had bet their entire colonization efforts in the Floridas on how much they believed in the

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<sup>244</sup> For a closer look at some of the earliest Loyalist applications for land in East and West Florida, see Cecil M. Johnson, "Expansion in West Florida, 1770-1779," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20, no. 4 (Mar. 1934), 485-489.

<sup>245</sup> Letter, James Grant to Secretary of State, February 15, 1765, in possession of CO5/548, p. 85, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>246</sup> Letter, James Grant to Secretary of State, February 23, 1765, in possession of CO5/548, p.57, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain and Letter, James Grant to Secretary of State, January 30, 1765, in possession of CO5/548, p. 72, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

viability of the colonization scheme. Royal officials, seeing East and West Florida as an experiment, desperately wanted to find a way to answer the question that had plagued European powers for more than three hundred years – how should the state create and shape a colony to ensure its long-term political, economic, and social success? At the end of the eighteenth century, the British Crown had a keen eye towards the future. They planned to expand until, as they eventually accomplished by the end of the nineteenth century, to have an empire so large that ‘the sun would never set on the Union Jack.’<sup>247</sup> East and West Florida would provide the perfect opportunity to experiment. If the British failed in Florida, it would not be an insurmountable loss. However, if they succeeded, it would benefit the empire for generations to come.

In all of this, the Crown built their plan on a foundation that relied upon families. For the Crown, the families became the most important aspect of their colonization scheme. Families would be the social unit around which they would build their new colonies from the ground up. However, not just any type of family unit would do. The British wanted to incorporate family units comprised of households bound by ties of marriage whose spouses had a first loyalty to the British Crown. Families would become one of the British Empire greatest tools to build the largest empire the world had ever seen. Unfortunately for the Crown, they either did not think to consider or did not care about how families would react to their usage as a “tool of empire.” It was to be the Crown’s single greatest mistake in the British Floridas.

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<sup>247</sup> The Union Jack is the name of the British flag.

**Chapter 2**  
**“In a Strange Place”:**  
**The Response of Families Used as a Tool of Empire**  
**on an Anglo-Iberian Borderland**

Sometime between late 1764 and early 1766, a young woman named Miss Row immigrated to East Florida, and, within a few months of her arrival, embarked on an illicit love affair. That affair ended in an abrupt and very public repudiation that almost shattered her personal reputation and did break her heart. Many particulars of Miss Row’s life, including that of her first name, seemingly have been lost to history, although a few scattered details do survive. Her first name and even an approximate date of birth remain unknown. She was born in Edinburgh, the daughter of John Row (alternatively spelled “Rowe”). Her father was a mathematician and surveyor before he moved the family to Maryland, where he served as a sheriff in Prince George County. She had at least one brother who accompanied the family to East Florida in 1766. Miss Row often accompanied her father to various social engagements held in the provincial capital of St. Augustine after her family moved there in the mid-1760s from Maryland.<sup>248</sup> General James Grant, a fellow Scot and former military officer appointed by the British crown as the first royal governor of East Florida in 1764, hosted the colony’s most prominent social functions at his residence, the Government House. Frequently accompanying her father to such gatherings, Miss Row became so well-known to the socially exuberant

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<sup>248</sup> "Abridgement of Governor Grant's Depoartment Against the Surveyor General William Gerard." Dartmouth Manuscript, Folder I, 1766- March, 25, 1773, Papers, 1766-1782, John Gerar William, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, Smathers Library Special Collections, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

governor that he developed a very high opinion of the young woman, whom he believed to be “a good girl.”<sup>249</sup>

On a cool and rainy night in January 1766, shortly after the New Year’s celebrations, Miss Row attended one of Grant’s dinner parties, and her actions at the party divulged to the governor the extent of Miss Row’s “poor” state.<sup>250</sup> While at the party, Miss Row drank so much alcohol that Grant later described her in his diary as having “got half-drunk.”<sup>251</sup> On the surface, Miss Row’s unseemly public display of semi-drunkenness seems, perhaps, to be a mere embarrassing example of over indulgence. However, the impetus for Miss Row’s behavior resulted not from a case of social merriment accidentally overreached, but mostly like owed its providence to the fact that Miss Row, at the time of the dinner party held by Grant on January 5th, was deep in the throes of a torrid love affair about to go bad. At some point after her arrival in St. Augustine, Miss Row began to secretly tryst with Dr. Robert Catherwood.<sup>252</sup> In the first week of February 1766, Catherwood told Miss Row that “they must part forever.”<sup>253</sup> He further made it clear to Miss Row that he desired an end to their affair, not because he wished to marry her as his repeated vows to do so had promised. Instead, he wished to end the affair so that he could immediately wed, upon her arrival, his fiancée, Jane Shades, a woman presently expected in St. Augustine.<sup>254</sup> Perhaps overwhelmed at Catherwood’s blatant rejection of both her and

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<sup>249</sup> Letter, James Grant to Andrew Turnbull, April 26, 1767, The Macpherson-Grant Papers, Microfilm Edition, Roll 2, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 2001.

<sup>250</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James Grant Recorded in His Own Hand at the Governor’s House in St. Augustine, Florida, from January 1, 1767 to March 6, 1767,” *El Escribano* 41 (2004), 73.

<sup>251</sup> Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James,” 73.

<sup>252</sup> A surgeon assigned to the military garrison at Fort St. Marks, Catherwood’s poor character was well-known to all but apparently Miss Row. Governor Grant described Catherwood as “a mean dog, worthless beyond belief or conception... he is a sot, a lyer, and a coward.” Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James,” 82.

<sup>253</sup> Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James,” 82.

<sup>254</sup> Jane Shades arrived in St. Augustine and married Robert Catherwood by February 22, 1766. Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James,” 83, 90. The duplicitous nature of Catherwood’s insincere proposal thus clear, Miss Row despairingly confessed her indiscretion to her father and brothers in the hopes that they could exert enough pressure on Catherwood to compel him to honor his promise of marriage to her. Infuriated, John Row confronted



their romance, combined with the fact that her social and moral reputations lay in tatters, Miss Row turned to her family for help. After confessing her imprudent and ill-advised attachment to Catherwood to her father, the family then set about to finding a solution as to how to solve the problem of Miss Row's ruined social status.

In the very small social circles of the upper society in British Florida, Miss Row's affair with Catherwood was well-known, thus limiting her chances of making a respectable marriage. If not for the intervention of her father, and their friend Governor Grant, Miss Row's rumored indiscretions might have forfeited her place in the polite society of colonial British Florida.<sup>255</sup> The newly established social order of British East Florida might tolerate personal impropriety as long as polite society at least attempted to maintain some veneer of social and moral propriety in public. Grant, a shrewd opportunist, viewed Miss Row's social gaffe as the potential solution to a larger political conundrum he faced. He hoped to use Miss Row's immediate need of a groom to bind her family to that of William Gerard De Brahm, a prestigious royal official, recently himself arrived in St. Augustine, whom Grant wanted to keep tied to East Florida.<sup>256</sup> Grant

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Catherwood after complaining to Governor Grant of his daughter's debauchment. The surgeon initially claimed that Miss Row had lied to her father because Catherwood "denied he had ever made [such] proposals" before their affair commenced. Further enraged at the aspersions cast on his daughter's character, John Row sufficiently intimidated Catherwood finally to confess that even if he had proposed to Miss Row, he did not intend to repudiate his engagement to Jane Shades. In order to uphold some semblance of his daughter's sullied honor, Row challenged Catherwood to a duel, a prospect that apparently scared the surgeon so badly that he went on a drunken binge, drinking huge quantities of rum in order to avoid the duel. Apparently, Catherwood preferred dishonor and public humiliation to the possibility of death at the hands of an enraged father. Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James," 82-83.

<sup>255</sup> Governor Grant saw Miss Row's situation as an opportunity that could solve one of his larger problems – how to keep William Gerard De Brahm in St. Augustine after the death of his first wife, Wilhelmina, who had died in February 1765. Obituary, *Georgia Gazette*, February 21, 1765. De Brahm, a Dutchman with German connections who had arrived in St. Augustine the previous year from Georgia, lived with his only child, a teenage daughter named Wilhelmina Inoxina De Brahm. De Brahm's daughter had been baptized on November 11, 1752, making her age approximately thirteen at the time of her arrival in East Florida. Mrs. R. W. Hutson, ed., "Register Kept by the Rev. Wm. Hutson, of Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church and (Circular) Congregational Church in Charles Town S. C. 1743-1760," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 38, no. 1 (January 1937), 30.

<sup>256</sup> For the most recent treatment on De Brahm's life see, Robert E. Paulett, "The Bewildering World of William De Brahm: An Eighteenth-Century Map Maker Surveys the End of Time," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 43,

wanted De Brahm, a Dutchman who had once sought to serve the Holy Roman Emperor of Germany, had recently been appointed as Surveyor General of the Southern Colonies. He became a part of East Florida's fledgling social order with the idea that a person of his rank would help attract other influential immigrants to the colony. Grant made the following proposal to De Brahm and Row. If De Brahm would consent to wed Miss Row, Grant would personally negotiate the marriage contract and give both men his own "sacred promises of... friendship and assistance."<sup>257</sup> Grant further sweetened the deal with the promise of other colonial appointments for both Row, his son, and De Brahm. Both De Brahm and Row, eager to accept Grant's offer of power, influence, and social prestige, agreed to the bargain. Miss Row's marriage to De Brahm would act as a final confirmation of everything to which the men had agreed, but none thought during the negotiations to consult the would-be bride, who emphatically rejected De Brahm's proposal several times before she accepted, after more than a year of De Brahm's tenacious wooing.<sup>258</sup> The couple wed in April 1767.<sup>259</sup> Their union demonstrates the role that marriage

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no. 4 (Summer 2009), 481-499. For the most comprehensive treatment of De Brahm's tenure in East Florida, see Louis De Vorse, Jr., "A Colorful Resident of British Saint Augustine: William Gerard De Brahm," *El Escribano* 12 (January 1975), 1-24; Mowat, "That Odd Being De Brahm," 323-345, and Charles S. Coomes, "The De Brahm Medals: An Eccentric Geographer Remembers his Grandchildren," *El Escribano* 16 (1979), 77-90.

<sup>257</sup> Abridgement of Governor Grant's Department Against the Surveyor General William Gerard."

<sup>258</sup> The reasons why Miss Row rejected De Brahm's initial proposal are unknown. Perhaps she did not envision herself marrying a man more than twice her age. De Brahm was born on August 12, 1718, making surveyor forty-seven at the time of his courtship of Miss Row. Louis de Vorse, Jr., "East Florida on the Eve of the Revolution," in *Eighteenth-Century Florida and Its Borderlands*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1975), 82. Maybe she did not feel comfortable accepting so sudden an offer of marriage from a man she hardly knew to satisfy the politically expedient purposes of others. De Brahm made his first formal proposal of marriage to Miss Row the same week that he began to court her. Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James," 85-86. Possibly she was so still upset over Catherwood's rejection of her that Miss Row was in no mood to receive De Brahm's public courtship of her when he came to call on February 12, 1766, a mere week after Catherwood's embarrassment at the hands of Miss Row's father. Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James," 85-86, 90.

<sup>259</sup> Letter, James Grant to Andrew Turnbull, April 26, 1767, Daniel L. Schafer, ed., "The Letters of Dr. Andrew Turnbull," *Florida History Online*, <http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Turnbull/letters/2.htm>. The historical record is unclear, but Miss Row may have had children by De Brahm, possibly several daughters who did not survive childhood. She died of fever on the morning of September 8, 1775 in Charleston Harbor aboard H.M.S. *Cherokee*, two days after its arrival in South Carolina. She was buried in Charleston on September 10, 1775. A.J. Morrison, "John G. De Brahm," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (July 1922), 254 and Mabel L. Webber, ed., "Death Notices from the South Carolina and American General Gazette, and Its Continuation The Royal Gazette,

played in how colonists responded to their use by the Crown as a “tool of empire” and how that usage eventually undermined the Crown’s entire colonization scheme.

Colonists sought to create complex kinship networks that would allow them to stockpile money, power, political influence, and social prestige. Each kinship network worked to bolster the standing of its individual members. Colonists determined that they could gain more prominence not as separate individuals but as united family units. Like the Crown, the colonists recognized the importance of families as significant social units. However, unlike the Crown who hoped to use those social units to establish, stabilize, and purpurate loyal colonies, the individual colonists themselves had a different goal. They wished to accumulate as much personal wealth and power as they could. Kinship networks allowed them to ally with other likeminded individuals to spin a web of influence that would grow over time. The colonists responded to their use by the Crown as a "tool of empire" by appropriating the usage of the family social unit for their own purposes. For without the family unit, they would not be able to perpetuate the kinship networks so crucial to achieving their goals. The proposed De Brahm/Rowe match reveals an interesting look at the attempt of two families who wished to begin building their own kinship network. Interestingly, the Crown's appointed source of royal authority in the colony negotiated the marriage when Grant tried to broker the deal. However, it appears that Grant's primary motivation stemmed not from his guise as the royal governor. He

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May 1766-June 1782," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 17, no. 2 (April 1916), 93 and Charles L. Mowat, "That Odd Being De Brahm," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (April 1942), 336. De Brahm mourned the loss of his second wife noting his "loss" in correspondence that fall to the Earl of Dartmouth. *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth, Volume II: American Papers* (London: Printed for Her Majesty's Stationary Office by Kyre and Spottiswoode, 1895), 182. De Brahm eventually remarried in 1776, taking as his third wife Mary Drayton Fenwick, the sister of his friend and fellow East Florida colonist, William Drayton. His third and most famous wife played a crucial role in De Brahm's decision to move to Pennsylvania at the end of the American Revolution and his conversion to Quakerism. Morrison, "John G. De Brahm," 255.

appeared to be working to build his own powerbase of loyal supporters who would remain allied to him as an individual.<sup>260</sup>

Ironically, De Brahm obtained more success than Grant in growing his own kinship network. His daughter, Wilhelmina, married Frederick George Mulcaster, an army engineer and later Assistant Deputy Surveyor, in the summer of 1769.<sup>261</sup> Mulcaster was "reputedly the natural brother of George III."<sup>262</sup> Initially, De Brahm had been against the match and tried to prevent it, perhaps because of her young age, the age difference between the prospective bride and groom, or because she was his only living child.<sup>263</sup> Apparently a love match, De Brahm's daughter insisted on going forward with the wedding. The insistence of De Brahm's daughter on her choice of a groom soon brought De Brahm into a larger sphere of influence than he had been before his marriage to Miss Rowe. For example, he became friends with the colony's attorney

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<sup>260</sup> Ironically, Grant's efforts to pull De Brahm into his kinship network failed. The governor and the surveyor came to odds many times. Grant argued that De Brahm worked too slowly to complete surveys of land grants that were crucial to the process of finalizing an applicant's selection of land. Grant also believed that De Brahm showed favoritism to certain individuals depending on his personal measure of that person. The governor also believed that De Brahm was overcharging people the fees which they paid him to finish conducting the land surveys. Grant ultimately suspended De Brahm on October 4, 1770 and appointed the surveyor's son-in-law, Frederick George Mulcaster, to replace him. De Brahm was eventually reinstated, but this pattern of conflict with the governor continued for many years. See Mowat, "The Odd Being De Brahm," 331-334.

<sup>261</sup> *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, July 10, 1769. Frederick George Mulcaster was born on February 27, 1739 in St. James in London, England. The official details of his parents' identity are not known. However, unofficially, he was thought to be the son of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, the son of British King George II. The Prince of Wales was known to have several mistresses during the 1730s and 1740s. He acknowledged at least three illegitimate children (one son and two daughters) by two of those mistresses. Mulcaster was thought to be the offspring of another lady whose identity remains unknown although her name may have been Jane. The lady's husband, William Mulcaster, gave his name to her children even though he was not likely the biological father. Thus, Mulcaster was the natural half-brother to King George III of Great Britain. Mulcaster attended the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and entered the Royal Engineers. He arrived in East Florida by 1769 with the rank of Lieutenant. His marriage to Wilhelmina De Brahm in the fall of 1769 quickly produced two children. His wife died unexpectedly sometime prior to 1775. He later married Mary Juliana Auchmuty. His second marriage produced two more sons (William Howe and Edmund Robert) and two more daughters (Ann and Mary Lucy). Mulcaster eventually obtained the rank of Major General. He returned to England and died in the summer of 1797. See "Will of Frederick George Mulcaster, Major General in His Majesty's Service," August 28, 1797, Prob. 11/1295/260, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain and Bert Collier, "Early Florida's Man of Mystery," *Lakeland Ledger*, September 15, 1974.

<sup>262</sup> Mowat, "That Odd Being De Brahm," 330.

<sup>263</sup> It is possible the reason De Brahm did not want his daughter to marry Mulcaster was because of her age. She was approximately 17 years old at the time of her marriage. John William Gerar De Brahm, *The Atlantic Pilot*, ed. Louis de Vorse, Jr. (1772; reprint, Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1974), xxiv.

general, William Drayton. After the death of his second wife on October 7, 1775 from fever in Charleston, South Carolina, De Brahm found himself widowed again. Initially, his son-in-law did not think that De Brahm would marry again, as his marriage with his second wife had been very tumultuous.<sup>264</sup> In a letter that Frederick Mulcaster wrote to James Grant on September 29, 1775, he told the former governor, "Mrs' De Brahm being dead, he will hardly think of marrying, and Frederick [Frederick William Mulcaster] and Fanny are the only real connections he has left, for I never heard him talk much of his German connections."<sup>265</sup>

However, after his second wife's death, De Brahm lingered in Charleston. He frequented the company of his friend from East Florida, William Drayton. The former chief justice soon introduced De Brahm to his younger sister, Mary. De Brahm's son-in-law must have been surprised when the old surveyor took a third wife less than five months after the death of the second. De Brahm married Mary Drayton Culeheth Fenwick on February 18, 1776 in Charleston.<sup>266</sup> His marital alliance with the Drayton family hints at how the East Florida colonists continue to build upon and expand their kinship networks even after their departure from the colonies.

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<sup>264</sup> Before she died, De Brahm and his second wife had at least one huge argument about his will. At some point prior to the fall of 1775, the couple had travelled to London, England. While in London, his wife had obtained a sealed copy of De Brahm's will. Cracking it open, she soon discovered that De Brahm had purposely excluded several family members from any inheritance, including her. Instead of providing for his wife, any surviving children, or his two grandchildren, he left all his property to his brother in Germany. His granddaughter was named Fanny and his grandson, Frederick William, was born on June 25, 1772 in St. Augustine. The former Miss Rowe accused him of trying to impoverish her and attempted to get him to change the will to include her. He refused. She died a short time later. Mowat, "The Odd Being De Brahm," 331-334.

<sup>265</sup> Frederick George Mulcaster to James Grant, September 29, 1775.  
<https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A78619>

<sup>266</sup> Mary Drayton was born on December 21, 1734. Her younger brother William followed on March 21, 1732. De Brahm was 58 at the time of his marriage to the 42-year old Mary. Drayton's sister, like De Brahm, was twice widowed and had four young sons and three young daughters whom she needed to provide care. The forty-two-year-old widow was closer in age to him than his second wife had been at the time of their arranged marriage. Although the marriage produced no children, it seemed to be a happy union. The couple eventually moved to Philadelphia, and Mary was instrumental in De Brahm's conversion to Quakerism later in life. Mowat, "The Odd Being De Brahm," 340-341.

The colonists of East Florida were not the only individuals who responded to the Crown's attempted usage of them in the same way. Their West Florida counterparts had similar responses. For example, a closer look at the land grants for an area near the Iberville River reveal an interesting kinship network that colonists attempted to develop based on the pursuit of economic gain. Thompson's Creek is an area right across the river from the Spanish settlement of Point Coupee. On July 28, 1772, Governor Peter Chester approved the applications of seven women who had submitted requests to His Majesty's Council for land grants of 1000 acres each at Thomas Creek in British West Florida. The seven women who had applied for such large land grants included Rebecca Blackwell, Isabella Bruce, Elizabeth Chadwick, Jane Chester, Rebecca Durnford, Anne Raincock, and Margaret Thomas.<sup>267</sup> All seven women shared many commonalties such as the fact that they were all close friends and were married to some of the most politically influential and affluent men in British West Florida.<sup>268</sup> In effect, what began as an attempt to become rich from a large and elaborately designed land speculation venture reveals an attempt to create a new kinship network in its natal stage.

Husbands and wives dabbling in land speculation was nothing new in West Florida. Prominent officials often attempted to cull choice land purchase for themselves with the hopes of financial gain. For example, during their years in West Florida, both Elias and Rebecca Durnford were to accumulate large tracts of land. What remains interesting is an act passed by the West Florida colonial assembly at Pensacola on May 19, 1770. The act made it possible for married women, known as *feme covert*s under English common law, a limited amount of freedom

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<sup>267</sup> Robin F.A. Fabel, "Boom in the Bayous: Land Speculation and Town Planning in the Florida Parishes under British Rule," chap. in *A Fierce and Fractious Frontier: The Curious Development of Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1666-2000*, edited by Samuel Hyde Junior (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University, 2004), 55.

<sup>268</sup> Kathleen Duval chronicles the relationship of James and Isabella Bruce in a chapter of her book about individuals affected by the end of the American Revolution. See Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2015), 44-56.

regarding property.<sup>269</sup> Given the geographic isolation of West Florida, and the frequent absences of husbands from their wives who remained in the province, the West Florida General Assembly recognized that "...the method of barring any *feme covert* of her right and inheritance or of her dower and thirds in any lands or tenements by fine not being practicable in America."<sup>270</sup> Instead, as long women who wished to conduct business transactions did so with the "acknowledgement" of the Chief Justice, or in his absence, the colony's "senior Assistant Justice of the General Court of Pleas" women could convey certain types of property.<sup>271</sup> The West Florida General Assembly, during its entire existence, only passed this one law that dealt with any topic remotely related to women and their individual rights. It is likely the reason the Assembly passed the law because their male relatives realized how women could help their families build kinship networks with a small tweak to the law.

In early 1772, Rebecca had applied for a tract of land in the western region of the colony. Located on the farthest edges of West Florida's frontier at a place called Thompson's Creek, located just across the river from the Spanish-controlled French settlement at Point Coupeé, Dunford and five other women were granted 1000 acres in their own names on July 28, 1772.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> "An Act for Preventing Fraudulent Mortgages and Conveyances, For Enabling *Feme Coverts* to Pass Away Their Estates, and For Making Valid Deeds of Bargain and Sale," May 19, 1770. Robert R. Rea and Milo B. Howard, Jr., *The Minutes, Journals, and Acts of the General Assembly of British West Florida* (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1979), 377-379.

<sup>270</sup> Rea and Howard, *The Minutes, Journals, and Acts*, 377-379. For more on the legal pedigree of women's property rights under English common law in both Great Britain and the colonies, see Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 3-20 and Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

<sup>271</sup> Rea and Howard, *The Minutes, Journals, and Acts*, 377-379.

<sup>272</sup> Mary A. Petersen, "British West Florida: Abstracts of Land Petitions," *Louisiana Genealogical Register* 18, no. 4 (Dec. 1971), 37 and Gordon M. Wells, ed. "British Land Grants – William Wilton Map, 1774," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 28 (1966), 156. Also see Robin F.A. Fabel, "Boom in the Bayous: Land Speculation and Town Planning in the Florida Parishes Under British Rule," chap. in *A Fierce and Fractious Frontier: The Curious Development of Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1699-2000*, ed. Samuel C. Hyde, Jr., 44-59 (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 2004) and Cecil Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1933), 539-553.

By the early 1780s, the Durnfords were substantial landholders in the colony.<sup>273</sup> However, the fortunes of the Durnfords and other families in British Florida would be changed drastically by the shifting winds of the imperial crisis in the years immediately before the outbreak of the American Revolution.

Kinship networks were the way in which colonists most successfully and most predominantly reacted against the Crown's attempts to use them as a "tool of empire." Kinship networks could not be built en masse without the institution of marriage to create the necessary familial social units. However, traditional forms of marriage remained rare in East and West Florida. This rarity resulted in settlers adapting the institution of marriage because of the importance of the family as a social unit in colonial society. Families in the British Floridas adapted the institution of marriage as the primary tool they used when employing social strategies to further their own individual ambitions. Competing kinship networks emerged out of these marriage alliances. As families competed with one another for power and to privilege themselves over one another, eventually such competition brought them into conflict with the state. The importance of the institution of marriage in maintaining a colonization process implemented by the British Crown in East and West Florida in 1763 eventually caused citizens to adapt marriage when traditional forms of the institution could not be practiced. The traditional definition of marriage changed as the colonists experienced and responded to the harsh realities of life on the Imperial Anglo-Iberian frontier.

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<sup>273</sup> For more on the issue of land speculation in British Florida, see Charles L. Mowat, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," *Agricultural History* 14, no. 2 (Apr. 1940), 75-77, Cecil Johnson, "The Distribution of Land in British West Florida," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1933), 539-553 and Cecil Johnson, "A Note on Absenteeism and Pluralism in British West Florida," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1936), 196-198.



The Anglo-Iberian frontier was a borderlands area that allowed a certain cultural exchange between the English and Spanish populations living there. Religious and legal definitions of marriage remained in flux as the two different cultural traditions intermixed with one another. Curiously, the state in both kingdoms attempted to regulate marriage by secular legal action for the first time in their culture's history within the same generation. Shifting religious and legal definitions of marriage in both the British and Spanish cultures, i.e., the passage of Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act of 1754 in Great Britain and the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage of 1776 in Spain, further complicated this process. The state's attempt to regulate marriage in both British and Spanish possessions seemed to have emerged because of individuals who openly flouted societal norms. Alternative family units, that differed from their counterparts in older colonies, Great Britain, and Spain, emerged in East and West Florida during this time. The equivalent of modern common law marriages became more prevalent in settlements where the daily performativity of married life by a couple had greater significance than any official legal status granted by a church or the state. Issues of race and ethnicity also affected this process because of how families responded to long-term extramarital affairs, including interracial relationships, especially those that produced illegitimate offspring.

This process eventually resulted in the creation of distinct family units that eventually reacted against the state's use of their social unit as a tool of empire. These new types of families cultivated separate identities unique to their individual colonies. Additionally, these identities rarely fostered any significant individual loyalty to the mother country. The emergence of such distinct personal identities offers another significant reason as to why the predetermined colonization model implemented by the British Crown in 1763 had ultimately failed in East and West Florida by 1784. However, none of these changes would have occurred had East and West

Florida not existed in a geographic imperial borderland. The nature of the Anglo-Iberian borderland is what made it possible for in the colonists of East and West Florida to fight back against their usage by the Crown as a “tool of empire” by adapting the institution of marriage to create their own family units and develop kinship networks that ultimately undermined the Crown’s colonization plan.

### **Acknowledging the Existence of the Anglo-Iberian Borderlands Frontier**

Several months after his arrival in the former Spanish territory of La Florida, Lieutenant Colonel James Robertson wrote a thorough report to General Thomas Gage, commander of the British army in North America.<sup>274</sup> Robertson’s extensive report commented on the historic, geographic, economic, demographic, militaristic nature of La Florida, divided and renamed by the British as East and West Florida for administrative purposes, as the British attempted to make plans for the success of their new colonies. The British had gained La Florida from the Spanish when it had been ceded by Spain to Great Britain at the close of the French and Indian War in late 1762. Robertson's acknowledgement that "the Spaniards made themselves masters of this country [Florida] under the command of Don Pedro de Menendez in the year 1565... [and] the lands were granted by the King of Spain [Philip II] to the conquerors."<sup>275</sup> Spanish dominion over the territory of La Florida remained enforced solely for strategic reasons as no extensive native empire, rich in gold and silver, existed to be plundered by Spanish conquistadors during the age of Cortés and Pizarro.

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<sup>274</sup> "Report on the State of East and West Florida." James Robertson to Thomas Gage. March 8, 1764 CO5/83 p. 137, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>275</sup> "Report on the State of East and West Florida." James Robertson to Thomas Gage. March 8, 1764 CO5/83 p. 137, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

Robertson noted to Gage in 1764 that "the king of Spain had no revenue from Florida."<sup>276</sup>

The strategic importance of Florida ensured a continued Spanish military presence during the First Spanish Period of Florida history between its discovery in 1513 by Juan Ponce de León and the cession of Florida to Great Britain in 1763. The oldest city continually occupied by Spanish settlers in North America, St. Augustine, protected Spanish treasure galleons that used the Gulf Stream currents to travel from the warm waters of the Caribbean to their homeports in Spain. After the early years of the eighteenth century, Florida's northern frontier offered the Spanish a buffer zone against the expansionist policies of British colonists living in the Carolinas and Georgia. Despite Florida's claim as Spain's oldest settlement in North America and its strategic importance, historians have consistently failed to recognize the colony's greater ability to clarify Anglo-Iberian socio-cultural, political, economic, and military exchanges during the eighteenth century. Florida is the only true example of a colony owned first by the Spanish, then controlled by the British, before it returned to Spanish control at the end of the American Revolution in 1783.<sup>277</sup> The frontier nature of the borderlands of Florida offers the colonial historians of both Great Britain and Spain their only unified opportunity to study the evolution of prolonged imperial exchanges during the eighteenth century.<sup>278</sup> It has significant resonance for those wishing to study shifting social concerns as they affected families during the colonization of East

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<sup>276</sup> "Report on the State of East and West Florida."

<sup>277</sup> For more on the complex nature of Florida's ownership during the eighteenth century, see Robert L. Gold, *Borderland Empires in Transition: The Triple-Nation Transfer of Florida* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969); Joseph B. Lockey, *East Florida, 1783-1785: A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of Them Translated* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1949); and Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1963; reprint, Jacksonville, Fla.: University of North Florida Press, 1989).

<sup>278</sup> This notion of Florida as a child strongly influenced by the parental empires of Great Britain and Spain was inspired by the comparative work of James Lang, *Conquest and Commerce: Spain and England in the Americas* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

and West Florida because colonists adapted the institution of marriage in this unique geographic area in a way not possible in the more traditionally settled locales.

A common definition of the term 'frontier' is offered by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron. Adelman and Aron define 'frontier' as "a meeting place of peoples in that geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined." A common definition of 'borderlands' is also offered by Adelman and Aron who define that term as a place of "the contested boundaries between colonial domains."<sup>279</sup> Using these definitions, the complexity of Florida's unique position within the Spanish and British empires during the eighteenth century has perplexed historians throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The analytical framework of borderlands history has been acknowledged as a viable historiographic approach since the late 1980s. The importance of borderlands history as a new theoretical model owes a great debt of gratitude to students of the Atlantic world global approach to colonial history, its true lineage dates back more than a century. The significance of the 'frontier' within American history, as defined by Frederick Jackson Turner in the late 1800s, and the subsequent expansion and application of that theory to the history of the Spanish empire in the Americas by Herbert E. Bolton during the 1920s, offered a starting point for historians interested in understanding a new theoretical model.<sup>280</sup> Furthering the natural evolution of Turner and Bolton's theories, historians who wished to understand Florida's true historiographic significance, within the larger context of the dueling Anglo-Iberian empires during the 1700s, possessed the requisite tools needed to create and refine the necessary inclusive theoretical approach. However, the development and

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<sup>279</sup> Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999), 815-816.

<sup>280</sup> For more information on Turner and his work on the significance of the frontier in American history, see Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (1920; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1996). For more information on Bolton and his theories of the Spanish empire as a colonial borderlands, please see Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1921).

growth of such a new historiographical school remained infantile, as theoretical progress moved forward at a glacial pace due to a large conflict over the validity of the basic assessment of Florida as a unique microcosm of Anglo-Iberian imperial exchanges during the eighteenth century.<sup>281</sup>

Since 1921, despite Bolton's own failure to use the term in reference to eighteenth-century Florida, the term 'Spanish borderlands' has been applied to any portion of the Spanish frontier that found itself bordering either Indian or other European colonial territories. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron describe Bolton's motivations for extending and slightly correcting the highly Anglo-centric focus of Turner's thesis as:

a concept... [that] appreciated the extended cohabitation between natives and newcomers that prevailed on the perimeters of European colonial empires. Picking up on this insight, recent historians [of the 1990s] have substituted 'borderlands' for all of North America's 'frontiers' and, in so doing have enriched our understanding of the complexity and contingency of intercultural relations. Instead of straightforward conquests, the history of North American borderlands-frontiers has been rewritten to emphasize the accommodations between invaders and indigenes and the hybrid residuals of these encounters.<sup>282</sup>

Florida during the eighteenth century is the only geographic locale that offers the longest continuous exchange between the Spanish and British empires in North America. Due to the

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<sup>281</sup> Historian Herbert E. Bolton first coined the term 'Spanish borderlands' in 1921. Bolton, once a student of Turner's, worked against the Anglo-American focus of his primary academic advisor's frontier hypothesis. Bolton insisted that New Spain's American territories offered a glimpse into the conflict between the diverging interests and opposing forces of Spain's Old World administration and its New World settlements in the northern provinces of the lower Mississippi Valley and the southwestern lands of modern-day California and New Mexico. Florida's lack of importance within the Boltonian theoretical model is clearly demonstrated by the fact that it disappears from his narrative after Florida's governor, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, ordered the slaughter of French Huguenot settlers at the Fort Matanzas Massacre in 1565. See Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*, 1921.

<sup>282</sup> Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999), 815.

long shadow cast by Bolton's example, the historiographic examination of Florida as a borderlands where the Anglo-Spanish colonial rivalry took place in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is a trend that only dates from the 1960s.<sup>283</sup> The historiographical divergence of historians in the 1960s from Bolton's treatment of Florida as a significant microcosm of Anglo-Iberian imperial encounters only during the sixteenth century followed two distinct waves of publication. The first wave manifested itself in the early 1960s and continued until the mid-1970s. It was driven by a large movement among individual state historians to produce research that could commemorate the celebration of America's bicentennial in 1976.<sup>284</sup> The most notable historians of this first wave of research include the works of John Francis Bannon, John Anthony Caruso, and J. Leitch Wright. These scholars employed a historiographical approach that place a clear emphasis on Florida as a frontier where the Spanish and British interacted with each other during the late 1600s and early 1700s. Their treatment of the Anglo-Iberian imperial exchanges continued chronologically until the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776 to qualify their publications for inclusion in the bicentennial scholarly celebratory publications. In the works of Bannon, Caruso, and Wright, Florida serves as a piece of the larger geographic puzzle that comprises the southern colonial frontier. The

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<sup>283</sup> For a more complete analysis of the general historiography of Florida as a Spanish borderlands from Bolton in the 1920s until the 1960s, please see Amy Turner Bushnell, "Historiography of Spanish Florida (1565-1763) and Spanish East Florida (1784-1821)," chap. in *A Guide to the History of Florida*, ed. Paul George (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 29-36; Benjamin Keen, "Main Currents in United States' Writings on Colonial Spanish America, 1884-1984," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (Nov. 1985), 657-682; David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (Feb. 1986): 66-81; David J. Weber, "John Francis Bannon and the Historiography of the Spanish Borderlands: Retrospect and Prospect," chap. in *Myth and the History of the Hispanic Southwest: Essays by David J. Weber* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); David J. Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands of North America: A Historiography," *Organization of American Historians' Magazine of History* 14 (Summer 2000), 5-11; and, David J. Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands, Historiography Redux," *The History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (Nov. 2005), 43-56.

<sup>284</sup> Samuel J. Proctor edited a series of highly specialized collection of essays on eighteenth-century Florida as a part of the American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration in the 1970s. The most relevant volumes for those interested in Florida as a place of cultural encounters in the borders lands are Samuel Proctor, ed., *Eighteenth Century Florida and Its Borderlands* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1975) and Samuel Proctor, ed. *Eighteenth Century Florida: Life on the Frontier* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1976).

historiographical trail of Florida's role in the Anglo-Spanish colonial rivalry, in the first wave of research, is one that historians must piece together from larger, holistic overviews of the frontier.

In 1963, Anthony Caruso published *The Southern Frontier*.<sup>285</sup> *The Southern Frontier* is significant in the assessment of Florida's treatment by historians in the first wave of borderlands historiography from the 1960s through the mid-1970s. Caruso's work represents one of the first significant attempts to incorporate Florida into the larger narrative of Anglo-Iberian imperial exchanges from the late 1500s until the eighteenth century. His chronological, narrative treatment of Florida's history extends into the 1800s when the United States acquired the territory of Florida from Spain. Caruso did not set out to construct a theoretical monograph about the effects of frontier relationships between Spain and Great Britain. Instead, Caruso's research reads as a straight narrative that outlines the factual information surrounding the conflict between Spain and Great Britain. Despite the fact that *The Southern Frontier* is mostly a descriptive narrative, it was still the first book to identify Florida as a frontier and a borderlands in the modern sense of Turner and Bolton's utilization of the term. Caruso builds his argument using almost all secondary sources, mostly the books and articles of other historians who had written on the colonial history of Florida, but never from a frontier perspective. As a result, he inadvertently highlights the main sources of conflict between the Spanish and the British in the late seventeenth and early-to-mid eighteenth century -- the religious tensions between Catholic Spain and Protestant England, the fight for European hegemony that these two countries waged throughout the colonial period, and the competition for land along the eastern seaboard between the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine in Florida and the British settlements in the Carolinas. Caruso offers his narrative, perhaps as an unintentional homage to Turner's Anglo-centric

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<sup>285</sup> John Anthony Caruso, *The Southern Frontier* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963).

methodology, from a point-of-view sympathetic to the British perspective.<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, Caruso's work helped to attract later scholars interested in expanding the theories of Turner and Bolton in the southeastern territories of North America.

The first major work to build upon Caruso's identification of Florida as a frontier, and to expand that identification to include the borderlands label, is *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier* by John Francis Bannon.<sup>287</sup> His publication of *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier* in 1970 initially seems to be another chronological historical narrative of the Spanish borderlands and the role they played in the colonies of North America between 1513 and 1821. Unlike Caruso's work, Bannon's research actually uses the narrative approach to hide the fact that it actually is a scholarly monograph that applies Bolton's Spanish frontier thesis to his treatment of Spanish Florida. The scope of Bannon's work, unlike Caruso, is not geographically limited to the southeastern lands of North America. Instead, Bannon's research touches upon the entire northern frontier of the Spanish empire, spanning from Florida in the east to California in the west. Bannon's approach is also comparative as it uses the theoretical model of Turner's "Anglo-American frontier" thesis as a counterpoint to delineate his own research to break from the dominance of the Boltonian trend that treated the historiographical importance of Florida through only the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>288</sup> For the first time since the publication of Bolton's Spanish borderlands thesis in 1921, Bannon offers an example, no matter however brief such a mention might be, where eighteenth-century Florida is treated as a place of significant military and economic exchange between Spain and Great Britain during the years of the imperial crisis

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<sup>286</sup>As an example of Caruso's clearly Anglo-centric bias and sympathy towards the British empire, see his narrative treatment of James Oglethorpe's invasion of Spanish Florida in 1737 during the War of Jenkins' Ear. Caruso, *The Southern Frontier*, 210-227.

<sup>287</sup> John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1970).

<sup>288</sup>, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 5-6.



and the American Revolution.<sup>289</sup> Given Bannon's pro-Spanish perspective, it is no surprise that the majority of his sources originate from Spanish archives.<sup>290</sup> Bannon includes more primary sources in his work than Caruso does, particularly in the form of governmental correspondence; however, he also relies on a heavy amount of secondary books and articles. His overall conclusion of Florida as a Spanish borderlands is thus summarized, "Florida, from the beginning, was a defensive province."<sup>291</sup> Bannon's interpretation reinforces the idea that one of the primary ways that the Anglo-Spanish rivalry manifested itself in the colonial era was through military confrontations.

In 1971, J. Leitch Wright published *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*.<sup>292</sup> His book devotes its entire chronological focus on the period of 1513 to 1763 with the exception of a few short pages at the end of the book that detail the Second Spanish Period (1784-1821) and the United States' attempt to procure Florida as a new American territory. The main points of Wright's argument state that the British intruded into Spanish territories. As a result, the emergent Anglo-Spanish rivalry traced its roots back to "...Spain's response to English intrusions in North America."<sup>293</sup> Wright, just as Bannon before him, reasserts that the primary method of Anglo-British exchange in the borderlands possessed a militaristic nature. Wright's book can be described as a complete theoretical monograph. He works very hard to utilize a balance of both Spanish and British primary sources from collections at both the Archivo Histórico Nacional de Seville in Spain and the Public Record Office/National Archives at Kew in Great Britain.<sup>294</sup> As

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<sup>289</sup> Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 2-3 and 104-107.

<sup>290</sup> For a complete bibliography for the sources used by Bannon in conducting his research on Florida, see Bannon, *The Spanish Frontier Borderlands*, 263-265.

<sup>291</sup> Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 264.

<sup>292</sup> J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1971).

<sup>293</sup> Wright, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*, xi.

<sup>294</sup> Wright, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*, xii.

a result, Wright marks the most significant departure in the first wave of colonial Florida historiography.

Characterizing the evolution of the research approach and methodology used by the authors of the first wave of historiography is achieved by noting their shared commonalties. For example, most of the authors tend to use the term 'frontier' and 'borderlands' interchangeably. Almost all research in the first wave of historiography is influenced heavily by the theories of Bolton. Another shared characteristic in the first wave of historiography relates to the fact that almost all analysis is conducted over a long period between 1513 and 1821 throughout the broad expanse of northern frontier of the Spanish Empire in North America. All the first wave historiography agrees that Anglo-Spanish exchanges in the borderlands were first and foremost of a military nature. Except for Wright, all first wave historians seem to discount and downplay Florida's geographic importance in the analysis of Anglo-Spanish rivalry. Wright is the first to challenge this assertion, but even he fails to comment significantly on Florida's geographic importance. These trends would face a drastic shift between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s.<sup>295</sup> The emergence of Atlantic world history, and its comparative approach to research, reinvigorated the study of Florida and its larger role in the affairs of colonial history.

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<sup>295</sup> After the celebration of America's bicentennial ended, a major historiographical shift occurred regarding the treatment of Florida as a significant borderlands space after the sixteenth century. The focus on social history that dominated American history in the late 1960s and 1970s was replaced by a cultural emphasis on various social groups within a geographic region. The most popular social group historians who wrote about colonial Florida in the 1980s concentrated on was the various Native American tribes that populated the southeast region. Some historians who had treated Florida as a significant topic in the study of the Spanish empire in the Americas in the 1980s, most notably Wright, began to shift away from the use of social history as a historiographical approach and to focus on the anthropologically influenced indigenous peoples' study of colonial history. During the early 1980s, most historians no longer placed an emphasis on the larger Anglo-Spanish interactions in Florida, but instead concentrated on how the British and Spanish individually interacted with the natives tribes who lived in Florida. As a result, there is a significant gap in the historiography of Florida as an imperial borderlands between the early 1980s and early 1990s. It would take another historical commemoration in 1992, this time the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey to the New World, before the focus on research trends would change from cultural to a blended socio-cultural approach. For examples of socio-cultural historiographical approach used by historians writing about colonial Florida in the 1980s and early 1990s, see James Axtell, *The Indian's New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1997) and J. Leitch

In the mid-1990s, historians began to resurrect Bolton's ideas about imperial borderlands and their roles in colonial American history. Ultimately, most historians writing in the early 1990s deemed Bolton's theories, as he originally applied them to colonial America, to be too outdated to be of much practical use to modern historians unless they received a major theoretical update. The most significant source of the necessary theoretical update would come from the comparative and global approach used by historians interested in the study of the Atlantic world and its individual players between the late fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries. The use of a borderlands perspective tinged by the comparative and globally integrated Atlantic world history model brought new interest and fresh scholarship into the arena of colonial Florida history. Colonial historians, such as J.H. Elliott, Timothy P. Grady, Paul H. Hoffman, and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra have worked to highlight Florida's individual role as a geographic borderlands where the Anglo-Spanish rivalry continued to militarily and economically influence each empire within the geographic bounds of North America.

For the first time in the historiography of colonial North America, the authors of the second wave of colonial Florida historiography have recognized unique place within the larger Atlantic world and valued its uniqueness as a microcosm of Anglo-Iberian imperial exchanges in the eighteenth century. Aptly categorized as Atlantic World historians who study both individual locales and the place of those territories within the larger framework of the Atlantic world, these individuals have established Florida's historiographical significance as they demonstrated the usefulness of studying colonial Florida from a borderlands perspective. In order to understand how and why these individual authors broke from the first wave of Boltonian methodology in the 1960s and early 1970s, the importance of a new defined lexicon of historical terminology, with

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Wright, *The Only Land They Knew: American Indians in the Old South* (1981; reprint, Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

specific reference to the concepts of 'frontier' and 'borderlands' within colonial American history, offers the first point of departure for these historians.

Adelman and Aron's previously mentioned definition of frontier clarifies the relationship between Turner and Bolton's theoretical conceptualizations by linking their definition of 'frontier' to a modernized definition of "borderlands" as a place of "contested boundaries" between empires.<sup>296</sup> By using Adelman and Aron's broad definitions, historians can study eighteenth-century Florida as a microcosm where British and Spanish influences mixed. Depending on which portion of the eighteenth century that is being analyzed, the Anglo-Iberian influence can be seen as affecting the experiences of colonists who lived in Florida during the 1700s. The ownership of no other single piece of territory within the borders of North America remained as contested, or as often changed because of those contestations, as Florida.<sup>297</sup> As a result, Florida's historiographic significance is reinforced by the writings of the Atlantic world historians as they place its Anglo-Iberian imperial relations within the larger scope of the expansive Atlantic world of the eighteenth century.<sup>298</sup>

In 1992, Paul E. Hoffman published the first and only monograph on the significance of Florida as a geographic frontier and borderlands, appropriately entitled *Florida's Frontiers*.<sup>299</sup> Hoffman's monograph, in some ways, is a throwback to the chronological treatment utilized by

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<sup>296</sup>Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 816.

<sup>297</sup> For more on the general role of Florida and the role it played within the Spanish empire as one of the northernmost frontiers, see Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan, eds., *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire* (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1998) and Peter Stern, "The Spanish Colonial Floridas," chap. in *New Views of Borderlands History*, ed. Robert H. Jackson (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

<sup>298</sup> For more on the development of Atlantic history as a historiographical school, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2005); Wayne Bodle, "Atlantic History Is the New 'New Social History'," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Jan. 2007), 203-220; and, Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), 741-757.

<sup>299</sup> Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington, Ind. and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).

first wave historians such as Caruso and Bannon. The focus of his narrative dates from the establishment of St. Augustine in 1565 until the transition of Florida to a United States' territory in 1821. Hoffman, in many ways, complements Wright's *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*.<sup>300</sup> He differs only in his primary focus that shifts to an emphasis of colonial Florida and how the people who lived there were affected by the Anglo-Spanish rivalry, instead of how Florida affected the imperial politics of the Anglo-Spanish rivalry. Although Hoffman's training as a colonial Spanish historian might have prejudiced him in the way that Bannon had more sympathy for the British perspective, he manages to provide an objective argument regarding Florida's role in the Anglo-Spanish rivalry. For Hoffman, the macrocosm of the rivalry between Spain and Great Britain is deemed less important than the microcosm of regional interactions between individual groups living on the Florida frontier. It is also Hoffman who introduces the concept of Florida being more important than some of the other colonial borderlands due to its possession of multiple frontiers. In the foreword to the 1992 edition of *Florida's Frontiers*, Walter Nugent and Malcolm Rohrbough state that "...Hoffman's history of early Florida properly speaks of Florida's frontiers, in the plural, because in reality, the state had several frontiers."<sup>301</sup>

It is somewhat ironic that Hoffman's multiple frontier thesis has been all but forgotten in the most recent works on eighteenth-century Florida that treat it as an Anglo-Iberian imperial borderland. In 2006's *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*, John H. Elliott returns to the methodologies first used by Wright in 1971. Using a comparative approach, Elliott's focus on the larger ideas of empire dominates his study of the Anglo-Spanish rivalry in the borderlands of not just Florida, but the entire northern frontier of the Spanish empire in North America. Perhaps with the idea that Atlantic world history must embrace all

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<sup>300</sup> Wright, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*, 1971.

<sup>301</sup> Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers*, xiii.

sides of its research topic, Elliott's guiding focus is that "comparative history is -- or should be -- concerned with similarities as well as differences."<sup>302</sup> Once again, the historiographical prominence of Florida is relegated to the part it plays in the imperial politics of Great Britain and Spain in North America. Additionally, Elliott reintroduces the idea that Anglo-Spanish interactions were derived primarily from military encounters; although he does try to hint that the term 'military' can refer to both armed conflict and diplomatic overtures.<sup>303</sup>

A scholar of Elliott's seniority and prestige is hard to counter. However, a Ph.D. dissertation by Timothy Grady, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry and the Development of the Colonial Southeast, 1670-1720*, offers hope that Elliott's regressive methodology is an historiographical aberration. Grady's dissertation, supervised by James Axtell at the College of William and Mary, employs less of a focus on the Anglo-Spanish rivalry itself, and more of a concentration on how that rivalry influenced the geographic borderlands of the southeast. In some ways, Grady's geographic treatment of the southeastern territories in North America as the most important Anglo-Spanish frontier is reminiscent of Caruso, but he maintains a second-wave historiographical approach in his study of individual groups who lived in the borderlands and were most affected by Great Britain and Spain's rivalry.<sup>304</sup> Most recently, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra has edited a collection of essays written by various scholars who believe that the Atlantic World model is not just one dominated by Great Britain.<sup>305</sup> They believe that the Atlantic World is one where both the English and Spanish influences must be considered with equal weight. Sarah E. Owens and Jane E. Mangan have followed Cañizares-Esguerra's example

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<sup>302</sup> John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), xvi.

<sup>303</sup> Eliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 273-276.

<sup>304</sup> Timothy Paul Grady, "Anglo-Spanish Rivalry and the Development of the Colonial Southeast, 1670-1720" (Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 2006), 5-6.

<sup>305</sup> Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. *Entangled Empires: The Anglo-Iberian Atlantic, 1500-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

by applying the Iberian Atlantic concept to issues of sex, gender, and families in Colonial Latin America.<sup>306</sup> Cañizares-Esguerra and others' conception of an Anglo-Iberian Atlantic is what makes the construction of an Anglo-Iberian borderlands possible.

People who lived on the lands of the frontier in East and West Florida during the eighteenth century knew their lives differed from their counterparts in the more settled areas of the Eastern seaboard. The precise nature of those difference may have been hard for all the colonists to identify since issues of social status, ethnicity, race, gender, and political ideology mixed together as individuals formed their personal identities. The acknowledgement of the Gulf South and East Florida as an unusual imperial borderlands frontier remains paramount in understanding the evolution of colonist's identities during the British period. As historians have shown, the eighteenth century represented personal and private interests on a global scale. The world of the Atlantic grew, evolved, and eventually encompassed a significant number of distinct and hybrid cultural trends that resulted because of cross pollination of cultures, religious, and belief systems. One of the most important consequences of the cross pollination of influences that colonists conflated in shaping their own identities emerged in regard to the institution of marriage. Once a rather simplistic religious sacrament, by the mid-1700s, the institution of marriage hovered on the brink of major changes that had consequences for both individuals colonists, the British and Spanish crowns, and the world of the Anglo-Iberian Atlantic.

### **Adapting the Institution of Marriage**

In late March 1764, Elizabeth Digby Pilot, the wife of a lieutenant in the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot, received news that the British Crown had dispatched her husband and his fellow soldiers from their base in Huntingdonshire with orders to garrison the town of Pensacola in West

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<sup>306</sup> Sarah E. Owens and Jane E. Mangan, eds., *Women of the Iberian Atlantic*. (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2012).

Florida. The news devastated Pilot. She believed that “this indeed was a blow, to be so far removed from my father, my county!”<sup>307</sup> Still, she vowed not to abandon her husband. “I would not, could not, remain and allow my husband to go alone.”<sup>308</sup> In May 1765, she set sail with her husband, infant daughter, and the wives of six other officers who accompanied their husbands to America. The passage of a year had apparently given Pilot a chance to acclimate to the idea of living in West Florida. By the time of her nine-week voyage from Portsmouth to Pensacola, she viewed the journey with pleasure and excitement. She believed her tenure in West Florida would be one of “exploration.”<sup>309</sup> However, some of Pilot’s hopes soured upon her arrival in the capital of West Florida in July 1765. “What words can I find to describe to you the horror we felt on the appearance of Pensacola!” Pilot eventually lamented in her memoir.<sup>310</sup>

Poor living conditions, a ramshackle infrastructure, and an isolated settlement sparsely populated by ill soldiers of the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot greeted Pilot and the other British colonists who had arrived in Pensacola at explicit command of the British Crown. The conditions Pilot and the other families faced contrasted significantly with the picture that had been painted by the government throughout late 1763 and 1764. Their counterparts in St. Augustine fared little better, even several years after the British had been in control of the city. For example, Dorothy Murray Forbes (sometimes known as Dolly) had moved from Boston to East Florida with her husband within a few weeks of their marriage in February 1769 at the age of twenty-four. Like many British women who immigrated to British Florida between 1763 and 1775, Forbes found

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<sup>307</sup> Elizabeth Digby Pilot, ““The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot” (nee Digby) Born 1742 Died 1826 With a Concluding Memoir By Her Daughter Judith Henrietta Pilot and Notes on the Autobiography by P. L. Pielou,” Unpublished Manuscript, 18.

<sup>308</sup> Pilot, ““The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 19.

<sup>309</sup> Pilot, ““The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 19.

<sup>310</sup> Pilot, ““The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 19.



herself faced with a drastically different environment, despite the duties expected of her in East Florida differed little from those she had faced in Massachusetts.

The mentality that Dorothy Forbes possessed upon her arrival in St. Augustine in March 1769 mirrored the common state of mind that many women no doubt had when they immigrated to the Florida colonies. In a letter that Dorothy wrote to her aunt, dated six months after her arrival in St. Augustine, Forbes wrote that although she was “in a strange place,” her family should not worry about her.<sup>311</sup> Despite the fact that Forbes had spent the majority of her life in a northern colony like Massachusetts, and a southern colony, like North Carolina, East Florida seemed strange to her. Bernard Romans, a surveyor who travelled throughout East and West Florida in the late 1760s and early 1770s, noted that “the manners and way of life of the white people in Florida, differ vary greatly from those in other provinces of America.”<sup>312</sup> Romans particularly observed that in the common type of dresses worn by women “were [made of] light [fabrics] and are not very expensive.” He also applauded such women for their “happy frugality” in dress.<sup>313</sup> Forbes, who had the luxury of immigrating to East Florida after some women had been present in the colony for a time, faced a much easier transition process than her predecessors, but still must have need of a certain amount of time to adjust to her new home. She received assistance from other colonists who tried to help her acclimate to new surroundings and life in East Florida. In a letter written to her a few months after her arrival in East Florida, Dorothy mentioned that she was met “with great friendship” by and was particularly grateful to “the Chief Justice’s [William Drayton] Lady, Mrs. Drayton.”<sup>314</sup> The kind friend that Forbes

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<sup>311</sup> Letter, Dorothy Murray Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Smith, September 8, 1769, The Murray Papers, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

<sup>312</sup> Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 157.

<sup>313</sup> Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, 157.

<sup>314</sup> Letter, Dorothy Murray Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Smith, September 8, 1769, The Murray Papers, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

mentions in her letter to her aunt, Mary Motte Drayton, the wife of East Florida's Chief Justice, William Drayton, befriended Dorothy Forbes, no doubt due to the fact that Drayton had found herself in Forbes' very same situation not so long before and also wanted new companionship herself. Both Forbes and Drayton were women who, by virtue of their husband's positions, could claim membership in the elite status of the most powerful group of women who lived in the colony. In addition, they came from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds that no doubt made each more attractive to the other as a potential social companion. Forbes herself wrote to her aunt that she believed this to be one of the main reasons driving Mary Drayton's overtures of friendship as "our situation is alike, as she has left all her friends which makes her, I suppose, have a fellow feeling for me."<sup>315</sup> Individual companionship gave little comfort given the harsh conditions families faced. Claims individuals had significantly exaggerated the conditions families would face upon the arrival in British Florida meant little to the state as long as they managed to encourage the immigration of their target colonist profile as so precisely illustrated by the experience of Pilot and her family. Unfortunately for the state, the Pilots were not the only type of family attracted to East and West Florida.

In the mid-1760s, a young soldier known only as Ensign St. John was stationed at Pensacola, West Florida.<sup>316</sup> He caused great trouble when he seduced a fellow soldier's "wife." While the identity of the cuckolded soldier remains a mystery, his standing in the British army merited enough social and military distinction that the most powerful military officials in British North America became involved in resolving the outcome of the affair.<sup>317</sup> In late July 1767,

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<sup>315</sup> Letter, Dorothy Murray Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Smith, September 8, 1769, The Murray Papers, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

<sup>316</sup> The rank of ensign remained the lowest commissioned rank in the British Army until 1871 when it was later replaced with the rank of second lieutenant.

<sup>317</sup> It does not seem to be a coincidence that the names of the cuckolded soldier and his wife are purposely excluded from any official correspondence. It is likely the names were omitted out of respect for or to protect the reputation of the cuckold's family.

Lieutenant Colonel William Tayler of the 9th Regiment, wrote to General Frederick Haldimand, Brigadier General for the Southern District.<sup>318</sup> He reported to his commanding officer that certain precautions had to be taken to keep "Ensign St. John from illicit connection" with the married lady in question.<sup>319</sup> Tayler, who had previously held Haldimand's position in Pensacola, must have become acquainted with St. John during his time in West Florida's capital between late 1765 and early 1767.<sup>320</sup> After consulting with General Thomas Gage, Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in North America, Haldimand ordered that St. John should be transferred from his duty station in West Florida to a similar position in East Florida. Upon St. John's departure in the late summer or early fall of 1767, his married lover requested permission to accompany him to St. Augustine. Her desire to leave Pensacola and rejoin St. John signals the woman's desire to abandon her first husband and that marriage behind in Pensacola. Haldimand denied her request hoping the situation would subside once space distanced St. John from his lover. No doubt, Haldimand and the other officers believed the situation finished after St. John left for St. Augustine in August or September 1767. They soon found out how wrong their assumption had been.

Pregnant, allegedly by St. John, his married lover paid a guide to escort her overland from Pensacola to St. Augustine.<sup>321</sup> By early October 1767, the woman had left Pensacola and

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<sup>318</sup> Ironically, General Haldimand had some familiarity with how to keep the façade of proper behavior intact while keeping a long-term mistress. He met the wife of a trader named Henry Fairchild from the Manchac settlement during Haldimand's tenure in West Florida. After her husband's unexpected passing, Mrs. Fairchild became Haldimand's "housekeeper" to the public. In private, everyone knew her to be Haldimand's long-term mistress. They remained together for many years even after Haldimand left West Florida to take up a command in Canada. See Robert R. Rea, "Brigadier Frederick Haldimand: The Florida Years," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (1976), 512-31.

<sup>319</sup> *Sessional Papers, Volume 5, Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa: Printed by McLean, Roger, and Company, 1885), 113.

<sup>320</sup> Charles L. Mowat, "The Southern Brigade: A Sidelight on the British Military Establishment in America, 1763-1775," *Journal of Southern History* 10, no.1 (Feb. 1944), 63-64.

<sup>321</sup> Robert E. Rea, "Resources and Research Opportunities for British West Florida, 1763-1783," chap. in *In Search of Gulf Coast Colonial History*, eds. Ernest F. Dibble and Earle W. Newton (Pensacola, Fla.: Historical Pensacola Preservation Board, 1970), 27.

Haldimand became aware of her intent to follow St. John to St. Augustine, perhaps informed by her abandoned husband. Haldimand wrote to Tayler that efforts had to be made to keep St. John "out of the way of the woman who follows him."<sup>322</sup> Haldimand continued periodically to reference St. John's situation to his friend and superior, General Gage to update the supreme commander of the British military in North America and ask for occasional advice. Eventually, a woman calling herself "Mrs. St. John" arrived at the British outpost of St. Mark's in East Florida, much to the annoyance of the province's governor, James Grant, before continuing on to St. Augustine to reunite with her lover.

The story of Ensign St. John hints at how individuals had begun to adapt the institution of marriage to suit their personal situations with a complete disregard for what officials of the British Crown stated in their opinion to be the best course of action to serve the greater good. The world of an Englishman or Englishwoman living in the eighteenth-century stretched from Parliament and the polished mansions of Georgian London to the isolated frontier settlements of the Mississippi River valley. Those men and women who travelled to the British colonies in North America brought with them well-formed concepts of socially acceptable behavior and moral values. They possessed the knowledge of what polite society considered to be acceptable behavior when it came to marital relationships. This study argues that many colonists who came to East and West Florida began to reject those values during the British period. The institution of marriage itself remained substantially important for both the state and English colonists. However, marital norms began to shift in East and West Florida ultimately because colonists wanted to appropriate the important institution for their own reasons after the state tried to first appropriate the institution for its colonization scheme. Limited access to religious clergy and

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<sup>322</sup> *Sessional Papers*, 114.

civil officials who could conduct legally binding marriage ceremonies did have an impact on the availability men and women had when they wished to marry. But ultimately, many colonists began to base the marital aspect of their personal identity based on personal preference, individual behaviors in both public and private, and sentimental feelings. While some people may have perpetuated the appearance of marriage in order to maintain the appearance of propriety, as time passed, propriety became less important because colonists changed the definition of proper behavior in the communities which they called home.

Colonists who lived in East and West Florida responded to issues of religion, and subsequently morality, in various ways depending upon their religious denomination, upbringing, and the nature of personal relationships they established before their immigration to the Floridas. What would have caused this phenomenon, particularly regarding the prevalence of men and women who engaged in sexual relationships that were not officially sanctioned by any church in the borderlands of British Florida? This study suggests four reasons. First, social remoteness and isolation resulted in a periphery and liminal space where development of religiosity and sexuality differed from core spaces in other better-established colonies like Massachusetts, South Carolina, etc. Second, a lack of available religious clergy limited the ability of men and women on the frontier to have the opportunity to be married by a priest or reverend before they engaged in sexual relationships. Third, the passage of Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act in 1753 dictated a top down change in the way the state expected marriage to be practiced by individuals in Great Britain. Fourth, the influence of the passage of the Royal Pragmatic on Marriages in 1776 by Charles III of Spain may have spread to British settlements via an illicit trade between settlements and the movement of newly minted Spanish colonists who had formerly been of French or British allegiance as the American Revolution progressed. These

reasons represent a single sustained effort to reinforce families' rejection of governmental attempts to regulate marriage for the purposes of using said families as a "tool of empire" in the late eighteenth century.<sup>323</sup>

On March 24, 1754, a law known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act that had been passed by the British Parliament the previous year went into effect. Parliament designed the law to regulate the increasingly problematic practice of clandestine marriages in Great Britain. Prior to the passage of this legislation, marriage had been seen largely as an issue left to religious clerics in the Church of England. The new act required publication of bans or procurement of a license, parental consent for individuals under the age of 21 in the case of licenses, and he included an often-overlooked clause that the law did not apply to marriages conducted overseas. However, just because the law's fine print existed did not mean that the Crown paid attention to it. In fact, they appeared to blatantly ignore that aspect of the law as the state tried to control the legality of marriages in the colonies. By tightening the process by which the Crown recognized the legal validity of marriages, it attempted to reassert its control over its colonists. The British Empire offers evidence of one of the first secular attempts to try to exert control over the legality

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<sup>323</sup> On March 25, 1754, the Marriage Act of 1753 (also known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act) -- "An Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage" was passed by the British Parliament. The act stated that all official marriages under English common law required a formal ceremony to be considered legally-binding, thus abolishing and outlawing the centuries-old tradition of common law marriage. "An Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage", though it has since popularly been known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act (citation 26 Geo. II. c. 33), was the first statutory legislation in England and Wales to require a formal ceremony of marriage and came into force on 25 March 1754. It was repealed by the Marriage Act of 1823." See Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Marriage Act of 1753: 'A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex'," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 (Spring 1997), 233-254. Similarly, "The Royal Pragmatic on Marriages" was passed in 1776 in Spain and enacted in the colonies in 1778. The sweeping nature of the Bourbon Reforms effected many facets of social interaction within the colonies largely due to the crown and church's attempts to control racial mixing and illicit affairs that threatened to destabilize colonial order from the legal perspective as the social strata in the colonies remained too fluid for administrative liking. Secular and religious authorities chose to use marriage as a way to reign in the nebulous strata of mixed race offspring by tightening the conditions under which certain people could be married to certain other types of people under specific circumstances and requiring parental consent before a valid marriage could take place between two people who wished to be wed. See Ann Twinam, "Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America," in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, Asuncion Laurin, ed. (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

of their citizens ability to contract legal marriages for the so-called public good via Parliamentary legislation. However, they were not the last.

On March 23, 1776, King Charles III of Spain signed a piece of legislation entitled “the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage.”<sup>324</sup> The Spanish Crown designed the legislation to control the institution of marriage in its colonies in the New World. The Spanish Empire had faced an alarming and ever-increasing number of what well-established Spanish families considered unacceptable marriages that occurred between Columbus’s discovery of the New World and the growth of the Vice Royalties of New Spain, Granada, and Peru. Parents of Spanish sons and daughters became inflamed when a marriage occurred between partners of what might be unequal social status. Although less of a problem demographically, marriages between Spaniards and Native Americans or men and women of African descent also posed a substantial concern for the elite who lived in Spain. As a result, nobles impressed their concerns upon Charles III who agreed to act.

Previously viewed as a religious matter, because the dominant Roman Catholic Church regarded marriage as a sacrament, the Royal Pragmatic attempted to foster obedience among rebellious children. It required parental consent before contracting a marriage and allowed for disinheritance if a marriage proceeded without children obtaining that requisite consent. These changes in marital law were used by both the Spanish and the British Crowns to stabilize an increasingly independent and rebellious colonial populations during the Revolutionary Era of the 1760s and 1770s. As Patricia Seed argues, in 1776, Charles III sponsored the creation of the

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<sup>324</sup> The impact of the Royal Pragmatic of 1776 is examined on the Anglo-Iberian borderlands of Louisiana in Mary Williams, "Private Lives and Public Orders: Regulating Sex, Marriage, and Legitimacy in Spanish Colonial Louisiana," chap. in *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World*, ed. Cecilé Vidal (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 153-156.

Royal Pragmatic on marriage to extend State influence into the private familial matter of marriage choice.<sup>325</sup> Other scholars have expanded Seed's argument in an attempt to understand why the Spanish Crown attempted to regulate marriage when it had previously seemed content to leave the matter to the Church and families for centuries. Specifically writing about the motivations for, and implications of the Royal Pragmatic, Robert McCas suggests that an increasing number of marriages between members of different *castas* (castes) resulted in growing parental discontent at the end of the eighteenth century. When questions about their potential new family member's *calidad* (social quality) threatened family honor and status, parents turned to the State for help in controlling their rebellious children.<sup>326</sup> However, children who wished to marry against their parents' wishes, and escape "unjust interference" in the formation of their unions, used the Church's canonical definition of marriage to circumvent State law.<sup>327</sup> The Roman Catholic Church only required free individual consent given between two appropriate individuals who wished to marry in the eyes of God.

Men and women who lived on the Anglo-Iberian borderland of the southeastern Gulf Coast, particularly in East and West Florida, realized the importance of the family as a social unit in colonial society. Since these important family units could only be created by some form of marriage, men and women of various nationalities, ethnicities, and social classes began to reject traditional definitions of marriage. Common law marriages became more frequent in settlements where performativity of married life each day held a greater significance than an official legal

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<sup>325</sup> For one example of how the State used the Royal Pragmatic to control its soldiers by restricting marriage choice, see Gary M. Miller, "Bourbon Social Engineering: Women and Conditions of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela," *The Americas* 46, no. 3 (Jan. 1990), 261-290.

<sup>326</sup> Robert McCas, "*Calidad*, Clase, and Marriage in Colonial Mexico: The Case of *Parral*, 1788-1790," *The Hispanic American Review* 64, no. 3 (Aug. 1984), 478.

<sup>327</sup> Patricia Seed, "The Church and the Patriarchal Family: Marriage Conflicts in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century New Spain," *The Journal of Family History* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1985), 287.



status granted by a church or the state.<sup>328</sup> The potential ramifications of colonists' somewhat casual approach to marriage could have devastating effects on colonist's personal liberty in situations where violence, differences in imperial law between the Spanish and the British, and international politics during a time of war intersected. At least, that was what a free black woman named Mary Glass found out in 1778 in West Florida.

### **A Brutal Murder & the Consequences of Shifting Marital Norms**

On February 19, 1780, Natchez district planter William Dunbar made a short notation in his diary.<sup>329</sup> Amid details about how his slaves had been set to building fences and clearing fields for crop plantings later that spring, Dunbar briefly mentioned "on Thursday last we held a Court at the Fort for the Tryal of Molly Glass for the murder of a white Girl/ Emilia/ & brought her in guilty, sentencing her to have her hand cut off and afterwards hung until dead."<sup>330</sup> Dunbar then resumes the recording of the daily minutiae that peppers his diary. "Tomorrow I set out for Thompson's Creek to fetch corn."<sup>331</sup> The reference to the trial and execution of a woman named

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<sup>328</sup> Gender theorist Judith Butler first developed her theory of performativity in relation to gender and personal identity in 1990. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>329</sup> Like some many other businessmen who sought to make their fortunes in the British Floridas, William Dunbar was a Scot and a younger son of a baronet. Dunbar was born in 1750 to Sir Archibald Dunbar, 4th baronet of Northfield and Duffus and his second wife, Anne Bayne at Duffus House near Elgin in Scotland. Dunbar graduated with a Master of Arts degree in March 1767 from King's College, Aberdeen. He travelled to Philadelphia in 1771 to become a merchant, hoping to enter the Indian trade. He became friends with John Ross and traveled to West Florida. He obtained a land grant near Baton Rouge and established two farms, one on either side of the Mississippi River. His main plantation, located near Natchez, was called The Forest. His second plantation was called the Grange. He owned a significant number of slaves who worked fields planting mainly indigo and cotton. He married Dinah Clark, a woman from Whitehaven England, in 1785. The couple had nine children. Dunbar died on October 16, 1810. See Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *William Dunbar: Scientific Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Louisville, K.Y.: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007.)

<sup>330</sup> Mrs. Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar* (Jackson, Miss.: Press of the Mississippi Historical Society, 1930), 72.

<sup>331</sup> Rowland, ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 72 and Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *William Dunbar: Scientific Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Louisville, K.Y.: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 36.

Molly Glass so grossly oversimplifies what has been rightly referred to as "the most gruesome criminal case of the entire colonial period" of West Florida.<sup>332</sup>

The details of the horror story that served as the final years of a woman named Molly Glass's life are found in a rather unique court file deposited in the Spanish Judicial Records of Louisiana archive. The court case refers to the defendant by three different names: Molly (Mary) Glass, Maria Glase, and Marie Glasse. In a deposition she gave to the military commander, Captain Pedro Jose de Favrot, at Fort Baton Rouge, she herself described herself as a quadroon from Barliss County in North Carolina. She was born free of a negro father about 1743 and raised in Anglican faith. She considered herself English by birth. Around 1766, she stated that she travelled to West Florida "with Indians and planters" eventually arriving in Natchez.<sup>333</sup> Glass later accumulated a fair amount of wealth, both in money, land, and property. When asked how she accumulated such a fortune, she stated it was "by her work, efforts and industry."<sup>334</sup>

After her arrival in Natchez, Glass eventually purchased at least two plantations. She owned one on the Spanish side of the frontier at False River. She owned a second on the English side of the frontier at Brown's Cliffs. Over the years, Glass earned quite a dubious reputation for taking in less fortunate colonists under the auspices of hiring them as house workers or as indentured servants. She also had a nasty habit of getting into fights with members of the Natchez community. One particular fight turned violent when she verbally and physically assaulted a French trader named Sieur Odet Baronnier at Point Coupée. Glass accused Baronnier of trying to cheat her by using rigged weights in their exchange of trade goods on

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<sup>332</sup> "Glass, Mary," Dictionary of Louisiana Biography (n.d.), <https://www.lahistory.org/resources/dictionary-louisiana-biography/dictionary-louisiana-biography-g/>.

<sup>333</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 600.

<sup>334</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 600.

February 10, 1780.<sup>335</sup> He proclaimed his innocence, and Glass struck him in the face in response.

Baronniere immediately lodged a complaint with the local authorities about his assault at Glass's hands. He produced witnesses from the community that attested to her violent nature. In the course of witness testimony given by several individuals, Favrot uncovered reference to a girl who had allegedly gone missing in December 1779. Witnesses told Favrot that Glass had taken in a fifteen-year old English girl named Aemelia Davis in 1777. Davis had been a white servant indentured to an Englishman named William Walker, Esquire. Walker left West Florida for St. Vincent leaving Davis to fend for herself which is why she eventually agreed to Glass's offer of room and board for help at her plantations. Over the next two years, various settlers witnessed the brutality that Glass exercised against Davis. Glass subjected Davis to repeated violent beatings where she often restrained the girl and whipped her until her meagre clothing had been shredded. She flogged the girl repeatedly, often striking her back, stomach, and face. One witness even testified that he had seen evidence that Glass had pierced Davis's tongue with a red-hot fork as punishment for allegations the girl had been greedy and lied, possibly stealing and acting in a promiscuous way. Glass provided little food so that Davis was almost starving and had received no medical treatment by the time of her disappearance in late 1779. When asked by Favrot, Glass initially insisted that Davis had left Natchez of her own accord. She claimed that a family named Larkin passing through West Florida had stopped in Natchez on their way to Pensacola. With a wife and child, Larkins had offered to take Davis with them if she would help his wife with the baby. However, later evidence given by another man soon proved that not only

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<sup>335</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 596.

had Glass lied but that she had beat the girl to death and buried her on her own plantation to hide the body.<sup>336</sup>

The final testimony that resulted in Glass being tried for murder had been given by a man named John Glass. This man was the defendant's own husband. Threatened with his own charges for the role he allegedly played in the murder, namely moving the body from its initial burial spot on the plantation to another one so that the authorities would not find it, John Glass turned on his wife. He testified that Mary Glass had viciously attacked Davis on November 17, 1779. Giving her no aide, the girl died of her wounds within two weeks. The couple buried the body and contrived to explain Davis's disappearance so they would not face charges for her murder. John Glass made a full confession and testified against his wife in hopes his own life would be spared. Fortunately for his cooperation, John Glass did not face the same justice as his wife. The court found him guilty of murder, but recommended clemency and so he faced only five year's imprisonment. The court, led by British judge Harry Alexander, found Glass guilty on February 7, 1780.<sup>337</sup> They sentenced her on March 16, 1780 to have her hand cut off before she was hung. Somehow, Glass managed to delay her execution. She eventually ran out of stalling tactics. The Spanish authorities transferred her from Baton Rouge to New Orleans where they hung her in a public square on July 26, 1781 on the final order of Bernardo de Gálvez himself.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 612-629.

<sup>337</sup> Rose Meyers, *A History of Baton Rouge, 1699-1812* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Published for the Baton Rouge Bicentennial Corporation by the Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 50-51.

<sup>338</sup> The Davis Murder and the execution of Mary Glass is a fascinating example of Anglo-Iberian borderlands juris prudence. The court case was administered by a Spanish soldier, Favrot, on behalf of the Spanish governor, Bernardo de Gálvez. The Spanish authorities worked with British officials to include British magistrates and jurors to try Glass since she considered herself an Englishwoman. Witnesses included primarily citizens of French descent including testimony from several mulatto freeman and freewomen and slaves. Officials wrote depositions and court records in three duplicate languages -- Spanish, English, and French. Moreover, owing to the articles of the British capitulation to Gálvez when he invaded and successfully captured Baton Rouge in September 1779, Spanish law worked in tandem with British legal procedure. See Heloise H. Cruzat, Laura L. Porteous, and J.

While the horror story has weight just for the significance of legal precedence, it also reveals significant details about how the role adaptive marriage affected the lives of the less affluent and less elite members of colonial society. Mary Glass, a person of color, held a higher social status than Aemilia Davis, a white indentured servant. Glass married a man of a different ethnicity. While interracial relationships were more prevalent in Spanish colonies, the French and English frowned upon racial mixing. John Glass was a white man, a Roman Catholic immigrant from the French/German border of Strasbourg who joined the 34th Regiment of the British Army in 1766. He deserted soon after his arrival in North America, going to Pennsylvania where he married a woman in Philadelphia. John Glass remained with his first wife for some time, but he began to fear British authorities may close in upon him and arrest him for desertion. Deciding to flee to the frontier, he asked his wife to come with him to Illinois Country. She refused to go with him. The pair separated, apparently never legally divorcing. John Glass considered himself to be a free man when he arrived in Baton Rouge and met Mary. They managed to get a French priest to marry them in Natchez even though Mary was a mulatto and he a white man.<sup>339</sup>

What does the marriage of John and Mary Glass show about how colonists thought and felt about the institution of marriage? First, marriage could only exist between two people who chose to live together. Second, if one spouse abandoned the other for a different geographic locale, the household ceased to exist and the purpose for the existence of the marriage disappeared with it. Third, marriages could be easily dissolved by the couple themselves or at least they believed this to be so. Although some religious considerations made a ceremony a nice

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Franklin Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 6 (1923), 589-654 and Meyers, *A History of Baton Rouge, 1699-1812*, 50.

<sup>339</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 598.

touch, it appears John Glass would have lived with Mary as his wife whether the French priest blessed them in Natchez or not. Interestingly, Spanish officials doubted the validity of the marriage, referring to John as the “pretended husband” of Mary Glass in his court depositions.<sup>340</sup> This minor notation highlights the exact clash that existed between the state and colonists over the issue of marriage. John and Mary Glass represent the perfect example of colonists who came from English and Franco-German backgrounds, moved to an area largely populated by French colonists, and after 1779 administered by Spanish officials according to a blending of Anglo-Spanish law until the end of the American Revolution. Social, cultural, legal, and political traditions blended along the Anglo-Iberian borderlands creating a prototypical environment that was primed to create a newly synthesized personal identity for those who lived there. Whether this new identity and set of institutions would be accepted by the state, as evidenced by the question of the legality of the Glass marriage by Spanish officials, remains another issue altogether.

### **The Clash of Adaptive Marriage: The Elite, Clergy, & Mobility in the Atlantic World**

The stories of Ensign St. John’s affair and subsequent relationship with his lover and the horror story of Mary Glass’s life are not the only examples of adaptive marriage that took place. In fact, some of the most elite members of society in Pensacola and St. Augustine could also be counted as accepting that same shift in the definition of marriage and acting accordingly. For example, on January 10, 1767, one of the last acts approved by Commodore George Johnstone, first royal governor of British West Florida, at the final council meeting he attended before

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<sup>340</sup> Cruzat, Porteous, Jameson, trans., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," 597.

departing the colony was the application of one "Mrs. Martha Ford" for land.<sup>341</sup> Martha Ford is one of the few female names that appear in the land grants of British West Florida in her own right, despite the fact that she was not legally married to any of the colony's leading governmental or military leaders. How then could this seemingly unconnected woman obtain such attention from the highest official in the colony just days before his return to London? The explanation is simple. Governor Johnstone attended to Mrs. Ford's affairs because she was at least the woman he considered to be his mistress and possibly the woman he viewed in West Florida as his wife.

Little information is known about the romantic escapades of Commodore George Johnstone, RN, and Governor of West Florida. An apparent life-long bachelor, Johnstone surprised all of London society when he married Deborah Charlotte Dee, on January 31, 1782.<sup>342</sup> The marriage produced only one child, a son named John Lowther Johnstone, in 1783 and was known to be so acrimonious that Mrs. Johnstone was reported to have gone dancing in public on the evening of May 24, 1787 -- the same day that Johnstone died.<sup>343</sup> Why was Johnstone's marriage to Charlotte Dee so unhappy? Was it because he married her only to sire a legitimate son to ensure the survival of his family's baronet? Or, perhaps, was it because that prior, during, and after Johnstone's marriage to Charlotte Dee, the Commodore maintained two separate families, one of which had begun more than twenty years before as determined by what rules in West Florida defined a socially and culturally acceptable marriage?

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<sup>341</sup> Clinton Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1947), 104-105.

<sup>342</sup> Robin F.A. Fabel, *Bombast and Broad-sides: The Lives of George Johnstone* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 165-166.

<sup>343</sup> James Boswell, *Boswell: The English Experiment, 1785-1789*, eds. Irma S. Lustig and Frederick A. Pottle (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), 153.

Martha Ford met George Johnstone when she was a teenager, and the pair quickly became lovers.<sup>344</sup> Ford bore at least five children to Johnstone including, John (c. 1760/d. November 1780), George Lindsay (b. 1767/d. November 20, 1813), James Primrose (b. c. 1770/d. before 1799) Alexander Patrick (b. January 10, 1778/d. November 11, 1803), and Sophia (b. 1785/d. January 3, 1841). While Johnstone did marry Charlotte Dee in 1781, the marriage was not a love match. Johnstone’s biographer, Robin F.A. Fabel, surmises that Commodore Johnstone “possibly... married to have a son born in wedlock” to provide a legitimate heir to the Johnstone family’s baronet.<sup>345</sup> Despite his marital status, Commodore Johnstone continued his relationship with Martha Ford until his death on May 24, 1787. Upon his return from active duty in the British navy in 1782, Commodore Johnstone bought house, #20 Hanover Square in London, for £6000 in 1782; Martha Ford and her children later occupied the house for many years after Johnstone’s death.<sup>346</sup> Sometime between 1782 and the creation of his final will in the spring of 1786, Commodore Johnstone settled a lifetime annuity on Ford of at least £20000.<sup>347</sup> The couple’s youngest daughter, Sophia, was born in 1785. Sophia, and two of her older brothers, who were still minors at the time of their father’s death, was mentioned in Commodore Johnstone’s will in 1787. While Martha Ford is not referred to in his will, Commodore Johnstone included provisions that acknowledged and provided for the well-being of each of his

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<sup>344</sup> The relationship between Ford and Commodore Johnstone is extremely complex. Hickey notes that Martha Ford was “a very respectable, accomplished, and worthy woman whom he had debauched when quite a child, who had borne him... sons, and conducted herself in the most irreproachable manner, being also an exemplary mother.” See Alfred Spencer, ed. *Memoirs of William Hickey, Volume II (1775-1782)*, Fifth Edition (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1913-1925), 380. Other less reliable details of Ford and Commodore Johnstone’s lifelong relationship can be found in a gossip column that featured the pairs “romantic” history – without revealing their actual names in print. See “Tête-à-Tête: Memoirs of the Intrepid Commodore and Miss F\_\_\_,” *Town and Country Magazine* 13 (Oct. 1781), 513-515.

<sup>345</sup> Fabel, *Bombast and Broadsides*, 166.

<sup>346</sup> Penelope Hunting, *The History of the Royal Society of Medicine* (London: Royal Society of Medicine Press, 2002), 158, 175.

<sup>347</sup> “Obituary of Mrs. Martha Ford,” *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle from January to June 183, Volume CI* (London: Printed By J. B. Nichols and Son, 1831), 186.



surviving, illegitimate minor children by Ford – James Primrose, Alexander Patrick, and Sophia.<sup>348</sup>

The arrangements that Commodore Johnstone made for his children left them with the tools by which they would enter the height of polite society approximately fifteen years later. The eldest of the illegitimate Johnstone children, John, was born c. 1760, and he died in November 1780 while at sea aboard the *Yarmouth* when a hurricane struck, just off Gros Inlet Bay, St. Lucia, in the employ of the East India Company.<sup>349</sup> George Lindsay entered the service of the East India Company in the late 1780s, most likely after the death of his father.<sup>350</sup> He served in India until his resignation, due to “personal matters” on April 30, 1797.<sup>351</sup> After his resignation from the East India Company, George Lindsay Johnstone returned to Great Britain with plans to make his entrance into the world of the political and social elite of Regency society in the first decade of the 1800s. He prepared for his task by first accumulating large sums of money that would be used to finance his endeavors. On March 2, 1802, George Lindsay borrowed £10000 from Anne Frances Middleton.<sup>352</sup> The money that he borrowed from Middleton was most likely used to finance George Lindsay’s campaign to win a seat in Parliament, which he won on February 9, 1803. Like his father, Johnstone became a MP when he

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<sup>348</sup> “Last Will and Testament of George Johnstone,” Prob. 11/1154, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>349</sup> Godfrey Basil Mundy, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of the Late Admiral Lord Rodney, Volume 1* (London: John Murray, 1830), 447-448. It was most likely John Johnstone whom Anglican minister Charles Woodmason referenced when he visited British West Florida’s capital of Pensacola in 1766. Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 82.

<sup>350</sup> Commodore Johnstone’s second child by Martha Ford, George Lindsay, was most likely born in Pensacola in early 1767. Although colonial politics forced Commodore Johnstone to return to Great Britain without a very pregnant Martha Ford, he may have made provisions for her and their children at the last council meeting he attended in January 1767. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida*, 104-105.

<sup>351</sup> K.D. Bhargava, ed., *Fort William-India House Correspondence and Other Contemporary Papers, Volume 13* (Delhi: Published by the National Archives of India By the Manager of Publications, 1963), 301.

<sup>352</sup> *The English Reports, Volume 38, Chancery 18, Containing Russell, Volumes 1-5*, (Edinburgh: William Green & Sons, 1904 and London: Stevens & Sons, 1904), 852-854.

was elected as a MP from Hedon in York.<sup>353</sup> His political status secured, George Lindsay then spent the next few years increasing the size of his financial holdings by frequenting where he and friends spent time socializing at "a new library on the Marine Parade, between Charles Street and Manchester Street, where they gazed out to sea through telescopes, or sat and read the London newspapers... [later]... hurrying off to Raggett's on the Steine... in these rooms George Johnstone procured the means to give his grand parties [via gambling].<sup>354</sup> George Lindsay never married, although he did keep a mistress. Elizabeth Mills Wyld was most likely the mother of George's two illegitimate daughters, Sophia and Ann Hurst. The girls were still minors when their father died quite unexpectedly on November 20, 1813 at the age of 46. He was buried in the south cloister of Westminster Abbey on November 27, 1813, having died of a "fit of apoplexy."<sup>355</sup> The third illegitimate Johnstone son, James Primrose, also entered the service of the East India Company in 1790 until his "instant" death in Bengal on December 28, 1793.<sup>356</sup> The youngest of the Johnstone brothers, Alexander Patrick, likewise followed his older brother's example when he too joined the service of the East India Company in 1796.<sup>357</sup>

The fate of Commodore Johnstone's only daughter, Sophia, lies tied to the fortunes of her older, and only surviving brother, George Lindsay Johnstone. Whenever possible, George Lindsay's frequent companion on these social outings was his younger sister, Sophia. Born in

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<sup>353</sup> Peter Auber, *Rise and Progress of the British Power in India, Volume 2* (London: William H. Allen & Company, 1837), 309.

<sup>354</sup> " Sitwell and Barton, *Brighton*, 250.

<sup>355</sup> Joseph Lemuel Chester, *The Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers of the Collegiate Church or Abbey of St. Peter, Westminster* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1876), 486.

<sup>356</sup> Amales Tripathi, ed., *Fort William-India House Correspondence and Other Contemporary Papers, Volume 12* (Delhi: Published by the National Archives of India By the Manager of Publications, 1978), 331.

<sup>357</sup> Of the illegitimate children produced by Commodore Johnstone, Alexander was the only child to marry and produce legitimate children of his own. He wed Maria D'Aguilar in India c. 1800. The couple had three children, George Buller (c. 1801), Sophia Augusta (c. 1802), and Emily (c. 1803/ c. early 1804) before Alexander unexpectedly died on November 11, 1803. See M. Derozario, *The Complete Monumental Register, Containing all the Epitaphs, Inscriptions, Etc. in the Different Churches and Burial-Grounds in and about Calcutta* (Calcutta: Printed by P. Ferris, 1815), 71-72.

1785, she was only two years old at the time of her father's death. Although Sophia was not very pretty, nor very intelligent, she had a pleasant attitude and showed talent in music, both as a singer and as a performer. She also danced very well. Utterly devoted to her older brother, she only engaged in flirtatious behavior to ingratiate herself into the highest levels of social status in Regency London. Her mother, Martha Ford, who was described as a "celebrated actress," may have already been an intimate of the royal family as early as 1788.<sup>358</sup> After the death of George Johnstone, there were rumors that the Prince of Wales (later George IV) was determined to replace his favorite mistress, Maria Fitzherbert, with Martha Ford. In October 1788, Lord Abercorn noted that "Mrs. Fitzherbert's influence is rapidly on the wane, and the Prince [of Wales, the future George IV] is in full pursuit of a new beauty, Mrs. Johnstone, widow of the governor [of West Florida], who it is thought, will soon be what Mrs. Fitzherbert has been."<sup>359</sup> While there is no indication that Martha Ford ever did become mistress to the Prince of Wales, it is possible that she used her influence with the prince to ease the entry of her illegitimate children into polite society. The biographer of Giovanni Viotti noted that Sophia was an "intimate friend of the Prince of Wales" by 1812.<sup>360</sup>

Sophia Johnstone met Francis Platamone, the future Count St. Antonio and Duke of Canizarro, as early as August 1813 when he was present at a dinner party given by Sophia and

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<sup>358</sup> The details surrounding the fate and fortunes of Martha Ford and her Johnstone children between the death of Commodore Johnstone in May 1787, and the entrance of George Lindsay and Sophia Johnstone, onto the social scene of fashionable society c. 1805 are scattered. In late 1787, Lord Sylvester Glenbervie noted on a journal entry dated December 16th that at a dinner with Lord Loughborough, tales were shared "of the late Commodore Johnstone's early life" and he described Johnstone as "a restless, unpredictable character... malignant." He also noted that "yet by speculations of different sorts, bad purchases in America, etc., his children inherited very little of that [his] immense fortune." See Sylvester Douglas, *The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas (Lord Glenbervie), Volume 1*, ed. Francis Bickley (London: Constable, 1928), 12.

<sup>359</sup> See James Munson, *Maria Fitzherbert: The Secret Wife of George IV* (London: Constable & Robinson Publishing, 2001), 211-212.

<sup>360</sup> See Denise Yim, *Viotti and the Chinnerys: A Relationship Charted Through Letters* (London: Ashgate, 2004), 420-421.

George Lindsay at their house in Hanover Square.<sup>361</sup> Platamone's reasons for desiring marriage to Sophia may have stemmed from the fact that her brother's death made her very wealthy, and she stood to inherit even more upon the death of her mother, Martha Ford. On June 27, 1814, Lady Charlotte Bury, a lady-in-waiting, wrote to Charlotte, Princess of Wales that "I have opened my letter again, to announce to you that Miss Johnstone is going to be married to Count St. Antonio, on account of her £40000."<sup>362</sup> Aside from relying on Platamone in the month's after George Lindsay's death, Sophia may have also sensed that a marriage to Platamone might finally allow her to obtain a noble title that she and her brother had always sought as the final sign of the triumph rise from illegitimate children of a Tory naval officer and colonial governor to independent personalities who fashioned their own identities in post-Revolutionary Great Britain. Sophia married Platamone in early May 1814. The couple's marriage license notes that both Sophia and Platamone list the same residence, "South Molton Street, St. George's, Hanover Square, Middlesex."<sup>363</sup> About a year after their marriage, Sophia gave birth to their only child, a son named George Wellington Francis Balthasar Platamone, on September 30, 1815. Unfortunately, the child died on May 17, 1817; he was buried in the tomb of his uncle, George Lindsay Johnstone at Westminster Abbey on May 24, 1817.<sup>364</sup>

After Sophia's marriage, her place in the upper echelon on elite society in London became secured. She continued to entertain as she had during the days before her brother's death, giving parties, attending the theatre, opera, and dance recitals, as well as attending royal

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<sup>361</sup> Yim, *Viotti and the Chinnerys*, 195.

<sup>362</sup> Charlotte Bury, *The Diary of a Lady-in Waiting, Volume 1*, ed. A. Francis Stuart (London and New York: John Lane, 1908), 169.

<sup>363</sup> Chester, *The Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers of the Collegiate Church*, 493 and Joseph Lemuel Chester and George J. Armytage, eds. *Allegations for Marriage Licenses Issued from the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury at London, 1543 to 1869* (London, 1886), 261.

<sup>364</sup> Chester, *The Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers of the Collegiate Church*, 493.

social gatherings. Sophia remained an active participant in the social circles of the Prince of Wales and his intimates. In 1827, Sophia attendance at the theatre was noted in the public boxes where she was described as having "brilliant eyes" as "one of the Queens of Fashion."<sup>365</sup> Other accounts of Sophia at the opera included one where she was described as being seated near the Princes Victoria and the Duchess of Kent there "a ringing laugh" came from "the sparkling English lady with an Italian title, the Countess St. Antonio."<sup>366</sup> She was later said to be the "firm friend" of Madame Camporese despite the fact that she was "one of the most distinguished patronesses of the Italian Opera."<sup>367</sup> In 1828, Sophia attended a "grand fancy dress ball which Mrs. Fitzherbert gave... at which there was a brilliant gathering of more than 200 of the leading gentry in the town and neighborhood. Amongst the "more important fancy dresses were... the Countess St. Antonio (Goddess of Music)."<sup>368</sup> Sophia remained a life long patron of arts and the opera until her death on January 3, 1841. Her cause of death may be related to the fact that she refused to have an operation for a hernia and, according to Von Neumann's diary entry, he noted that "one of my old friends, with whom in the past I have spent many agreeable moments both in town and at her country house at Wimbledon" died "after an illness lasting only 36 hours."<sup>369</sup>

The Johnstone/Ford relationship, as evidenced by the fortunes of the children's lives, is the perfect example of a relationship that began because two people saw the importance of a marital relationship for their household. However, two separate sets of morality clashed with one

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<sup>365</sup> William Clarke, *Every Night Book; Or, Life After Dark* (London: T. Richardson, 1827), 119.

<sup>366</sup> John Doran, *In and About Drury Lane and Other Papers Reprinted from the Pages of the 'Temple Bar' Magazine, Volume 1* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1881), 141.

<sup>367</sup> Ellen Creathorne Clayton, *Queens of Song: Being Memoirs of Some of the Most Celebrated Female Vocalists Who Have Performed on the Lyric Stage from the Earliest Date of Opera to the Present Time* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1865), 234.

<sup>368</sup> John George Bishop, *"A Peep into the Past": Brighton in the Olden Time with Glances at the Present* (Brighton: J.G. Bishop, 1880), 154.

<sup>369</sup> Philipp Von Neumann, *The Diary of Philip Von Neumann, 1819 to 1850, Volume 2*, ed. and trans. E. Bereford Chancellor (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), 160.

another as Johnstone and Ford attempted to move back and forth between the similar but disparate cultures of the colonies and the motherland. An adaptive marriage might be accepted by colonists in West Florida. The question if such a marriage would be accepted in London was another matter altogether. It appeared, out of respect for Johnstone's family, Ford's beauty, and the personalities of the Commodore and his lady, polite society may have played along with what they viewed as the charade of a marriage when the couple lived together in London. However, they faced staunch critics for what some members of polite society considered as scandalous and immoral behavior. Those critics launched assaults against both Johnstone and Ford before either left Pensacola.

Some colonists rejected Johnstone's relationship with Ford prior to their return to England in the late 1760s. For example, in 1765, while on a visit throughout what he called the "backcountry" of the colonial south, Charles Woodmason, an itinerant Anglican minister, was shocked by the lack of religiosity and morality present in both St. Augustine and Pensacola. He was disgusted especially by a man who "calls himself a clergyman, patrols about this place [West Florida], and officiates occasionally."<sup>370</sup> Reverend Woodmason found this man, whose name goes unrecorded, and his attempts to minister to the British population of West Florida so distasteful that he even doubted the man's ordination. "He is such a disgrace to the character that even... [the colonists]... hold him in detestation," Woodmason claimed based on his observation of a few colonists whose opinion he solicited.<sup>371</sup> His acceptance by even a portion of the

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<sup>370</sup> Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 82.

<sup>371</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 82.

colony's population, Woodmason believed, was because of the fashion set by the colonies' governors.

Woodmason continued to observe the decline of morality in East and West Florida as represented by the behavior of George Johnstone in West Florida and James Grant in East Florida:

Greatly is it to be lamented (on the side of vertue and religion] that immoral and reprobate persons are sent out of Governours of Provinces, and more especially New, and to be cultivated Provinces. One Such person... does more damage to the nation, more mischief to mankind, more hurt to goodness than twenty succeeding him can repair. He spreads the contagion -- lays the principles of things in vice and evil, gives rottenness to the constitution and propagates disease where he should establish health, strength, and vigour.<sup>372</sup>

Johnstone's behavior most offended Woodmason. "The Governour [George Johnstone] is a single person, keeps a concubine [Martha Ford], has a child by her and the infection rages, and is copied."<sup>373</sup> Apparently, Grant had more discretion than his West Florida counterpart.

While no other residents of West Florida seemed to comment on Woodmason's individual charge, others did agree with his assessment of the lack of access to religious personnel and the stabilizing effect they believed it would have on the morality of families who lived in their congregations. In 1767, Pilot lamented the death of the clergyman that had died in the same illness that killed six other wives of officers in the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment assigned to Pensacola. Pilot observed that in Pensacola the "situation as to religious advantages was deplorable."<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 82-83.

<sup>373</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 82.

<sup>374</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot," 25.

After his death, the British government delayed in appointing a replacement, and Pilot claimed “there was no [other] clergyman in the province and no public worship. The Sabbath was not regarded, and alas! together with the forms, the reality of religion vanished.”<sup>375</sup> Such a weak presence of religiosity, as observed by Pilot, seemed to coincide with her perception that the morality of the province had significantly degenerated as compared with the standards upheld in other colonies and Great Britain. Greatly bothered, Pilot could only isolate herself against moral contamination. “Vice prevailed, there were few virtuous women in this place [Pensacola], and alas! too many of the officers chose to have others to preside at their tables.”<sup>376</sup>

Raised the daughter of a staunch Protestant minister in Ireland, the pious Pilot lamented such open displays of immorality as “it prevented my visiting them” in a socially isolated environment where female companionship was limited for those who sought to limit themselves to interacting with the ‘better sorts’ of people.<sup>377</sup> Pilot could only engage in any type of socialization when decorum forced her to host these women at her own house, and she had to “appear ignorant” lest any slights or insults be perceived.<sup>378</sup> Somewhat resigned to this phenomenon, more pious women like Elizabeth Pilot observed what they considered to be shameful behavior in silence, noting only that “...such are the trials to which a delicate woman is exposed in a military life.”<sup>379</sup> Unfortunately for the more families who wished to maintain a more conservative and more traditional form of marriage, change did not stay confined to the British side of the Anglo-Iberian border.

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<sup>375</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 25.

<sup>376</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 25.

<sup>377</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 25.

<sup>378</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 25-26.

<sup>379</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 26.



Conflicts within the Roman Catholic Church over the nature of marriage and its sacramental nature had begun in the New World almost as soon as the conquistadors followed Christopher Columbus in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. By the eighteenth century, French clergy had gained a significant notoriety for conducting marriages between French men and native women throughout Canada and the province of Louisiana.<sup>380</sup> Even before the French had lost Louisiana to the Spanish in 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War, fighting between different religious orders dominated the lives of parish priests in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>381</sup> Specifically, The Bishop of Quebec had appointed a member of the Jesuit order, Father Genoveaux, as his surrogate in Louisiana. Previously, the Capuchin order had dominated religious life in lower Louisiana, especially in the settlement of New Orleans. The Jesuits and Capuchins continued a staunch battle for clerical supremacy between 1755 and 1766. It only ceased during this period when the Jesuits and Father Genoveaux were expelled from the colony. The Capuchins eventually retained their superiority with the appointment of a priest named Dagobert as supreme authority in New Orleans.<sup>382</sup> Dagobert had "come very young in the colony, where he had christened and married almost everybody, so that he was looked upon as a sort of spiritual father and tutor to all."<sup>383</sup> Dagobert's easy going nature made him popular with the colonists despite the facts that he was apparently illiterate, often socialized with other settlers in their private homes, drank wine, smoked tobacco, and gambled. Dagobert also gained a

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<sup>380</sup> See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1993; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Jennifer Spear believes the French crown faced a substantial issue with interracial mixing between French citizens and Native Americans and African slaves, particularly in Louisiana during the eighteenth century. See Jennifer M. Spear, "Colonial Intimacies: Legislating Sex in French Louisiana," *the William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2003), 73-98.

<sup>381</sup> For the most recent consideration of Louisiana's role as a colonial area significantly shaped by the French, Spanish, and the British, see Cecilé Vidal, *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>382</sup> Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion* (New York: Redfield, 1854), 49-50.

<sup>383</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 50.

reputation for leniency when assigning penance in the confessional, particularly to female penitents.<sup>384</sup> However, the old conflict reasserted itself in 1772 with the shifting of ecclesiastical authority from the Bishop of Quebec to the Bishop of Cuba for the province of Louisiana.

In July 1772, Don Santiago Hechevarria, Bishop of Cuba, dispatched a group of Spanish Capuchin priests to New Orleans. Lead by Father Cirilo, they arrived in New Orleans on July 19, 1772. Cirilo wrote to Hechevarria an initial report that indicated that Dagobert seemed to have served the spiritual needs of the people of New Orleans as well as he could. He also advised Hechevarria that it would be prudent to let Dagobert remain in his position of authority until the Spanish priests had learned French. Over the ensuing weeks, Cirilo's opinions of Dagobert quickly changed. He became aware of Dagobert's vices, including the drinking, smoking, and gambling. However, the way in which Dagobert dealt with the sacrament of marriage seemed to bother Cirilo the most. For example, Cirilo noted that "slaves live and die in a state of concubinage; and what is worse, this is to the knowledge and with the consent of their masters, who tolerate their living together like man and wife."<sup>385</sup> Cirilo was so incensed, he exclaimed to Hechevarria that "this evil must be immediately remedied."<sup>386</sup> Cirilo claimed that the reason the slaves explained they never received the sacrament of matrimony was because their owners planned to sell them and would not be able to do so if they were bound in holy matrimony to another slave in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. While such a practical reason may have played a significant role in the lack of proper marriages among the French slaves, there is also the consideration that Dagobert may have accepted the slaves and their owners shifting beliefs

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<sup>384</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 52.

<sup>385</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 63.

<sup>386</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 63.

that the sacrament was not the primary way in which a couple could consider themselves married.

By mid-September 1772, Father Cirilo's honeymoon period with Father Dagobert's way of conducting religious affairs in the colony had apparently come to an end. Cirilo wrote to Hechevarria a long list of issues that he had with the way in which Dagobert administered almost all the sacraments. So great is the detestable negligence of these men [Dagobert and his fellow French Capuchins], that I think they are the disciples of either [Martin] Luther or [John] Calvin," Cirilo lamented to Hechevarria.<sup>387</sup> He further went on to write of what he considered the greatest affront, specifically how Dagobert chose to conduct marriage ceremonies.

With regard to the holy sacrament of marriage, it is in its administration that the greatest abuses are committed. In the first place, we have grounds to suppose that they observe none of the ceremonies of the ritual...our Superior [Dagobert] goes about, either in the town or out of it, marrying people in their own houses, where he says [the nuptial] mass and remains with them to participate in all the festivities of the occasion.<sup>388</sup>

Further, Cirilo reported, Dagobert disposed with the required publication banns before conducting the marriages. Most offensively, Cirilo found, Dagobert seemed to delight in the financial fees the Frenchman collected from those whom he married. He remained uncertain how much Dagobert charged for the marriage ceremony, but he guessed it to be somewhere between \$30 and \$150 as those were the charges he maintained for other sacraments.<sup>389</sup> The conflict between Dagobert and Cirilo continued for almost another year. It eventually drew in the Spanish governor of Louisiana, Luis de Unzaga y Amézaga. The final outcome found that

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<sup>387</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 74-75.

<sup>388</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 77.

<sup>389</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 77-78.

Dagobert and the French Capuchins served the French population of New Orleans well and retained their authority.<sup>390</sup>

The conflict between the French and Spanish Capuchins reveals a unique indication that the clergy of Louisiana had begun to adapt the institution of marriage themselves just as other settlers had in the same geographic area. Like the colonists they served, the French Capuchins realized that life on the borderlands-frontier differed from more settled colonial capitals like Havana or Mexico City to say nothing of Europe itself. The institution of marriage and the family as a social unit remained significant, but the way in which marriage was conducted and how families formed had begun to change. The clash between traditional and the newer definitions of what constituted a marriage were about to have significant repercussions for the fate of the colonies' success or failure in East and West Florida.

### **Kinship Networks: Strategies of Power Lead to the Crown's Downfall in Florida**

The development of dueling kinship networks, as solidified by strategic marriages, resulted as a response that individual colonists and their families had to the Crown's attempt to use them as their primary "tool of empire." The entire colonization scheme of the Crown relied upon a foundation comprised of a very specific familial unit. Beyond granting families title to lands in the new colonies, the Crown rarely stopped to think about how the families themselves would respond to being used to guarantee the success of East and West Florida. Initially, it is possible that some families did not even realize they were being used by the Crown in any substantial way in colonizing the new colonies. If such families did realize how they were being used by the Crown, it is also possible that few cared out of loyalty to their king and country.

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<sup>390</sup> Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: the Spanish Dominion*, 83-97.

However, as time progressed, families began to fight back against the Crown's demands. The desire to achieve personal goals and the competing interests that emerged out of such pursuits led colonists to attempt to form their own blocks of power and influence by establishing and growing kinship networks. These kinship networks dueled not only with each other, but with the Crown as well. The overall outcome was disaster.

The first kinship network to develop in British East Florida predated the arrival of many of the Crown's royal officials including Governor James Grant himself. Between mid-1763 and early 1764, the Spanish estimated the population of East Florida to be made up of approximately 3,046 individuals.<sup>391</sup> All but a few men out of more than 3000 evacuated from East Florida to other Spanish holdings during this period. The two men who ultimately remained throughout the entire transition and stayed in East Florida during the British period were named Jesse Fish and Luciano de Herrera. The personal relationship between Fish and Herrera had been well established by 1764. Fish was born a British subject in New York, probably near Long Island, around 1724.<sup>392</sup> He arrived in East Florida in 1736 at about the age of ten or twelve, accompanying representatives of the William Walton Company of New York City. He had been sent to East Florida during the final years of the First Spanish Period to help further his family's trading interests. Fish learned to speak Spanish quickly and made friends among the local population. Later in his life, Spanish Governor of Florida Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes observed that Fish "acquainted himself with our language, laws, and customs with such success that he seemed more Spanish than foreign."<sup>393</sup> Part of the reason Fish attained such successful cultural

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<sup>391</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 8-9.

<sup>392</sup> Fish's birthdate remains uncertain. Robert L. Gold theorizes 1724 as his birthdate, but he also says that Fish could have been born in 1726. See Robert L. Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (July 1973), 1.

<sup>393</sup> Robert L. Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (July 1973), 2.

assimilation was because upon his arrival in St. Augustine, he a prominent Spanish family -- the Herraras, took him in to their home. They chose to raise the young boy with their son, Luciano. This is the same Luciano de Herrera that was the only native-born Spaniard who remained in East Florida for the whole of the British Period.<sup>394</sup>

Fish likely hailed from the village of Newton in New York. In this town, the most prominent families established, guarded, and perpetuated kinship networks they had spent centuries building to further their economic interests. "These people [the families of Newton] did business together, they intermarried, and as their circles widened, they continued to move together."<sup>395</sup> In 1764, a trader from Newton, James Warner, moved his family from New York to St. Augustine. One of Warner's daughters, Sarah, married Jesse Fish in 1767. Despite the fact that about a twenty-five-year age gap existed between Fish and Sarah Warner when they married, their marriage followed a pattern of maintaining a kinship network that had been transplanted from New York to East Florida. By 1767, the older Fish had made a substantial amount of money through real estate transactions and agricultural pursuits. He owned more than ten thousand acres, including some of the most famous orange groves that had been planted in the entire colony. Fish had built a palatial plantation house on his land grant, not far from Anastasia Island, and he named it El Vergel or the Grove.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> British correspondence indicated that they believed the Spanish had at least one spy living in St. Augustine for the entirety of the British period. Historians such as Patricia C. Griffin believed that spy to be one of the Minoracans who lived at Dr. Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna settlement. The British deported Father Casanovas, one of the Minorcans Roman Catholic priests, in 1774 on this very charge. Patricia C. Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1991), 90-91. However, the Spanish seemed to continue gaining information. Robert L. Gold believes that Luciano de Herrera was, in fact, the spy who provided these reports to the Spanish Crown. Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," 2.

<sup>395</sup> Clara Talley Kingston, "Sarah Warner Fish," *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History* 24 (1987), 63.

<sup>396</sup> Kingston, "Sarah Warner Fish," 64.

Fish and his wife Sarah eventually had two children, Fabiana Furman (known as Phoebe or Phebe) and Jesse Fish Jr.<sup>397</sup> Unlike his father, Jesse Fish, Jr., chose a wife for love and not for business purposes. Espousing the form of adaptive marriage that had become so popular in East Florida during the British period, Fish, Jr., kept a mulatto woman named Clarissa as his common law wife. However, Fish, Jr.'s sister, Phoebe, maintained the family tradition. She married a prominent Minorcan trader named Gabriel William Perpall on August 4, 1797, carrying the family's kinship network forward another generation.<sup>398</sup>

Other kinship networks quickly developed in both East and West Florida beyond those based on Fish's trading pursuits as more colonists arrived in St. Augustine and Pensacola. In West Florida, colonists of French and English descent moved freely back and forth across the border. English planter William Dunbar owned a number of slaves, most bought at the trading post at Manchac. How were the male and female slaves impacted by the importance of marriage? Dunbar noted that his slaves moved freely between his two plantations on either side of the river.<sup>399</sup> Mobility likely exposed them to examples of different types of morality and behavior. They likely observed both the traditional forms of marriage, as evidenced by the marriage of planters like Dunbar and his wife Dinah and traders like John Fitzpatrick.<sup>400</sup> The slaves would

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<sup>397</sup> Kingston, "Sarah Warner Fish," 64-66.

<sup>398</sup> Kingston, "Sarah Warner Fish," 75. In the twenty-first century, the land upon which Fish's plantation house stood is known as Fish Island. It became the center of a land battle between developers who wished to build expensive homes on it between 2018 and 2019. The state of Florida eventually bought the land and plans to dedicate it as a nature preserve/park. See Jessica Clark, "Man Claims to Be Plantation Owner's Relative; His Take on Developing the Land," *First Coast News*, July 31, 2018, <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/man-claims-to-be-plantation-owners-relative-his-take-on-developing-the-land/77-579138357>.

<sup>399</sup> Rowland, ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 64-65.

<sup>400</sup> John Fitzpatrick, colloquially a well-known merchant based in the British settlement of Manchac in West Florida, was an Irish Catholic settler in the late eighteenth century. He was born at Waterford in Ireland about 1737 to a Roman Catholic family. He served with famed colonial ranger Major Robert Roberts for three years during the French and Indian War. Indians captured Fitzpatrick and held him prisoner before he could escape in 1763. Fitzpatrick owned a store at Manchac and a large house and warehouse he used in his trading endeavors. He also owned a plantation just upriver from Manchac that grew primarily indigo and tobacco. Margaret Fisher, ed., *The Merchant of Manchac: The Letterbooks of John Fitzpatrick, 1768-1790* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 3-4 and Mary Ann Sternberg, *Winding through Time: The Forgotten History and Present-*

have also seen what happened when families failed to have two spouses as the heads of house as was the case in one of Fitzpatrick's most acrimonious trading exchanges. Beginning in 1774, Fitzpatrick encountered a free mulatto woman named Eleanor (Nelly) Price.<sup>401</sup> She was a widow that Fitzpatrick felt sorry for and so he agreed to help her by extending credit at his trading post. She accrued large debts over the years that she slowly paid back, if at all. In June 1780, the years old conflict came to a head. Price accused Fitzpatrick of cheating her and attempting to ruin her household. Fitzpatrick, incensed at the aspersion cast on his impeccable reputation, rallied against the woman whom he described as "an infernal Yellow Bitch."<sup>402</sup> He spent weeks collecting evidence to challenge her claims and wrote many letters to people in Manchac, Pensacola, and New Orleans to assure them that Price's accusations had no base.<sup>403</sup> Isolated by her race, legal status, and widowhood, there is no doubt that Price's argument with Fitzpatrick might have gone differently had she been a part of a more traditional family unit. Fitzpatrick knew that her allegations could have series ramifications for his business pursuits and worked to contradict her to safeguard his reputation, his finances, and his own kinship network.

In East Florida, the largest and most complicated kinship network had direct connections to the governor himself. Governor Grant was famous for the dinner parties he hosted between his arrival in St. Augustine in 1764 and his departure from the colony in 1771. Only those individuals, including women, who did not challenge the status quo within the settlement were accepted as a welcome addition to the colony where they interacted with the most powerful and elite families in the colony. In January 1767, Grant described the details of one such gathering

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*Day Peril of Bayou Manchac* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 48-49. For an overview of his trading business, see John D. Born, Jr., "John Fitzpatrick of Manchac: A Scottish Merchant in the Lower Mississippi [and British West Florida] Prior to the Revolution," *Journal of Mississippi* (May 1970), 117-134.

<sup>401</sup> Fisher, ed., *The Merchant of Manchac*, 180.

<sup>402</sup> Fisher, ed., *The Merchant of Manchac*, 347.

<sup>403</sup> Fisher, ed., *The Merchant of Manchac*, 345-346.



when he noted “an assembly was held for the second time at the Sergeant Majors, cards played, a dance was thought of... three bottles of claret and half a bottle of Tenerife [Spanish red wine] was drunk.”<sup>404</sup> Grant wanted his table to be the best in the entire colony. He ensured that through good food, better drink, and a wonderful time.

Grant’s attempts to build his kinship network can be seen by taking a closer look at the further fate of Dorothy Forbes. Newly arrived colonists only received an invitation to dine at the Governor’s table if Grant deemed them acceptable to join the colonial elite and the group of families he considered to be the foundation of his own established kinship network. Grant remained a life-long bachelor. He attempted to build his own kinship network, not based on bonds of matrimony but of sentimentality, affection, and personal loyalty to himself. When she arrived in St. Augustine in March 1769, Dorothy Forbes immediately found herself invited to the governor’s house where James Grant constantly entertained close friends at dinner parties attended by the most prominent members of the colony.<sup>405</sup> Forbes, newly wed to a leading church and governmental official in East Florida, came from a prominent Scottish family who owned homes in both Wilmington, North Carolina and Boston, Massachusetts and had staunch Loyalist political inclinations.<sup>406</sup> Grant obviously approved of the Reverend Forbes’ new wife. He viewed the marriage as that of a kinsman as John Forbes’s mother had distant ties to Grant’s

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<sup>404</sup> Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James Grant,” 73.

<sup>405</sup> Letter, Dorothy Murray Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Smith, September 8th, 1769, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York; for more on Governor Grant’s famous habit of holding lively social gatherings at the Governor’s house, see Daniel L. Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James Grant Recorded in His Own Hand at the Governor’s House in St. Augustine, Florida, from January 1, 1767 to March 6, 1767,” *El Escribano* 41 (2004), 69-96.

<sup>406</sup> Dorothy Murray was born on February 2, 1745 to James and Barbara Bennet Murray in D’alton House, Tower Hill, London, England. Dorothy died at Brush Hill, Massachusetts on June 11, 1811. She was buried in the tomb of her Aunt Elizabeth in the Old King's Chapel Burial Ground in downtown Boston. A brief treatment of Dorothy’s life is interwoven with the details of her father’s biography, James Murray. See Nina Moore Tiffany and Susan Inches Lesley, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, ed. Nina Moore Tiffany (Boston: Published by the Author, 1901; reprint, Boston: Gregg Press, 1972).

own family.<sup>407</sup> The growing Forbes Family came to be one of Grant's closest and most staunch allies. When Dorothy became pregnant soon after her marriage, she eventually gave birth to a baby boy on November 22, 1769. The new parents decided to name their first-born son after the governor giving him the moniker James Grant Forbes. The governor also agreed to stand as godfather to the child at his baptism a few weeks later. While it is unknown how many children the governor acted as godfather to, what is clear is how he used alternative personal, pseudo-familial ties to bind his fortunes to other prominent colonists. It can hardly be a coincidence that in addition to Reverend Forbes's own positions in the colony, he had significant business relations in the trading world of the Atlantic. The fact that Thomas Forbes – a well-known and well-connected trader later of the famous Forbes, Panton, and Leslie Trading Company in East and West Florida -- was a family relation is documented in a letter to Dorothy by her father in 1771.<sup>408</sup>

One such woman Grant rarely invited to his parties was named Susannah Woolridge. Married to Thomas Woolridge, a government official who held the offices of provost marshal, fort adjutant, and barrack master of St. Augustine, Susannah Woolridge arrived in East Florida in January 1767.<sup>409</sup> Theoretically, she was of the right social class and background that Grant should have welcomed her with open arms. However, the exact opposite occurred. In a letter to Andrew Turnbull, Governor James Grant wrote that when Woolridge dined with another colonial

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<sup>408</sup> Tiffany, *Letters of James Murray*, 140. Several Scottish traders formed the The Panton, Leslie, & Company in St. Augustine in 1783. The company dominated the Indian trade in both East and West Florida, gaining a monopoly on the trade, because of a lack of Spanish trading companies in the area during the Second Spanish Period. One of the founders, Thomas Forbes, is a familial relation of the Reverend John Forbes. For an overview of the history of this significant trading enterprise, see William S. Coker, "The Papers and History of Panton, Leslie and Company, and John Forbes and Company," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (1995), 353-358 and William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola, F.L.: University of West Florida Press, 1986).

<sup>409</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 20.

official, she revealed that “she was of the Whitfield [Methodist] sect” and wanted to convert others to the new church that had been founded during the Great Awakening.<sup>410</sup> After a month of Woolridge’s continued “Puritan” conversion efforts, Grant became so frustrated that he described her in his personal diary with a passionate vitriol. “Mrs. Woolridge abuses the country and will continue to do so. She is an inconsistent bitch and will go home, the sooner, the better to get rid of her.”<sup>411</sup> The goals of the Woolridge family, to proselytize and convert, brought them into conflict with the Crown in the form of the governor and represented significant trouble for them. Grant’s snub of Woolridge and her husband at his parties was significant, as such festivities were of vital importance to establishing and maintaining one’s status in the societal order of the British Floridas. It also begins to reveal the ways in which kinship networks had begun to develop in East and West Florida and how these kinship networks, established by families who had been created by marriage, ultimately would put the final nail in the Crown’s attempt to use their colonization scheme to ensure successful establishment and growth of new colonies.

The castigation of Susannah Woolridge by Governor James Grant, perhaps because of her attempts in Florida to gain converts to the Methodist church, hints at perilous fate suffered by some women when their families’ fortunes challenged those held by the colonial officials in East and West Florida. If colonial officials, particularly the royal governor or lieutenant governor, desired to make things difficult for any individual and their family within the colony, that person’s ability to make positive progress could be severely derailed. For example, despite the good will of Governor James Grant that began Miss Row’s marriage to William De Brahm in

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<sup>410</sup> Letter, James Grant to Andrew Turnbull, January 24, 1767. Daniel L. Schafer, ed., “The Letters of Dr. Andrew Turnbull,” *Florida History Online*, <http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Turnbull/letters/2.htm>.

<sup>411</sup> Schafer, “The Diary of Governor James Grant,” 89.

1767, his pledge of “ever-lasting friendship” did not long survive the newlyweds’ honeymoon. In the years after the marriage, De Brahm and Grant clashed over a number of issues related to De Brahm’s position as surveyor of the province to the extent that Grant eventually unceremoniously suspended De Brahm from his position October 4, 1770. Conflict between the state and her husband forced Miss Row to leave East Florida in order to accompany her husband to London where De Brahm defended himself in front of the Board of Trade against Grant’s charges in hopes of being returned to his position.<sup>412</sup>

De Brahm’s feud with Grant was not the only conflict that developed between a governor of East Florida and some of his most prominent citizens. On March 9, 1774, John Moultrie was named acting governor when it became clear that Grant would not be able to return to his former position as he had once hoped. During his brief time in office, Moultrie clashed with both Dr. Andrew Turnbull and Chief Justice William Drayton over several issues. Officially, the most significant of these issues was the question of if and when a legislative assembly should be created.<sup>413</sup> Unofficially, it appears as if a number of personal conflicts had soured the interactions between fellow colonists. Like Drayton, John Moultrie hailed from South Carolina. Their families were well known to one another and had long competed with one another for power and prestige. Additionally, it appears that both Drayton and his friend, Dr. Andrew Turnbull, had hoped to be appointed to the position of interim governor which Moultrie had attained.<sup>414</sup> The conflict became so heated that Drayton resigned his post on the governor’s council on October

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<sup>412</sup> Louis de Vorse, Jr., ed. *De Brahm’s Report of the General Survey in the Southern District of North America* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 36-44.

<sup>413</sup> West Florida did not face this problem. Unlike James Grant who forestalled the creation of a General Assembly in East Florida, George Johnstone convened a General Assembly in West Florida on November 3, 1766. Robert R. Rea and Milo B. Howard Jr. eds., *The Minutes, Journals, and Acts of the General Assembly of British West Florida* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1979), x-xi.

<sup>414</sup> Charles L. Mowat, “The Enigma of William Drayton,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (July 1943), 8-9.

19, 1771 so that Moultrie would not have a quorum, and he would not be able to conduct any business. The Crown did not accept Drayton's resignation, and he resumed his seat on December 15, 1772.<sup>415</sup> Other arguments soon followed. For example, in December 1773, one of Drayton's friends, Attorney General Arthur Gordon, fined several citizens for keeping taverns without the proper license. One of the men produced a license signed by John Moultrie. Gordon reluctantly accepted it, at Drayton's eventually urging, but the entire situation again showed how mired the competing social webs of influence had become in St. Augustine among various family networks.<sup>416</sup> A generation later, the eldest son of East Florida's primary Anglican clergyman, the Reverend John Forbes, reflected on what was likely one of the most publicly tumultuous periods of his childhood. In a book he wrote about Florida in 1821, James Grant Forbes wrote of the Moultrie/Drayton squabbles that it created "dissensions among the heads of families, as repugnant to harmony and the true interests of small communities."<sup>417</sup> It appeared that fortune had smiled on Drayton and his friends when the Crown passed Moultrie over as a permanent replacement for the interim position he held. In early 1774, the Crown appointed Colonel Patrick Tonyn as Grant's official replacement.<sup>418</sup> Moultrie returned to his former position of Lieutenant Governor upon Tonyn's arrival in St. Augustine on March 1, 1774. Drayton likely thought he had become the victor in his feud with Moultrie with Tonyn's appointment. Drayton's hopes soon turned to anger as his assumption proved incorrect.

If William Drayton and his friends had a contentious relationship with John Moultrie's powerbase in the colony, the arrival of Patrick Tonyn made the days of their fights with Moultrie

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<sup>415</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 10.

<sup>416</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 12.

<sup>417</sup> James Grant Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas: More Particularly of East Florida* (1821; reprint, Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1964), 21.

<sup>418</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 13.

seem amiable. Patrick Tonyn had ties to East Florida going back to 1767 when he received a 20,000-acre land grant.<sup>419</sup> Unlike Grant and several other East Florida officials, Tonyn was not Scottish but English by birth. He was born in 1725 in Berwick-upon-Tweed in Northumberland to Charles Tonyn, himself an English soldier. Tonyn had a substantial military career, fighting in Germany during the early years of the French and Indian War. At some point, he made the acquaintance of the well-known Levett family of Georgia. They owned a famous plantation in McIntosh County, Georgia called Julianton. It was located approximately half-way between Savannah and New Brunswick. Francis Levett was a well-known trader who had business ties to Italy and the Ottoman Empire among other locales. His son, another Francis known as Francis Levett, Sr. became one of Tonyn's staunchest supporters in East Florida. It is possible that Tonyn had another significant connection to the Levett family. Although her name is not recorded, and no official marriage record has ever been found, Tonyn arrived in East Florida with a woman he referred to as his wife. She may have been one of Levett's daughters and went by the name of Judith.<sup>420</sup> They had several children of their own, including at least two born in St. Augustine, that are named in Tonyn's will.<sup>421</sup> Tonyn's arrival catapulted the Levetts to the most prominent position in colonial society. William De Brahm's son-in-law, Frederick George Mulcaster, had a

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<sup>419</sup> For an overview of Tonyn's life, see Jim Piecuch, "Patrick Tonyn: Britain's Most Effective Revolutionary-Era Royal Governor," *Journal of the American Revolution* (March 22, 2018).

<https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/03/patrick-tonyn-britains-most-effective-revolutionary-era-royal-governor/>

<sup>420</sup> A clue to the identity of Tonyn's lady was given in the writings of Dr. Andrew Turnbull. He told Drayton he had known the lady as an old acquaintance from Scotland and "concluded not to permit the usual courtesies between the governor's lady and his family" based on that prior interaction. Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 85.

<sup>421</sup> A footnote in the Henry Laurens papers notes Tonyn's familial connection to Levett. David R. Chesnut, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume 6, August 1, 1768 - July 31, 1769* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), 577. In Tonyn's will, there are six family members with the last name 'Tonyn' to which he makes requests. These individuals are as follows: Caroline Maria Tonyn, Amelia Augusta Garritt, the Reverend John Frederick Tonyn, George Augustus Tonyn, Patrick Tonyn, and Charles William Tonyn. In his will, Tonyn noted that two of his daughters had predeceased him, and he wished to be buried with them at Grosvenor Chapel. Tonyn also notes that Caroline is the sister of Amelia. However, there is no clear indication if the individuals with the name Tonyn are his children or other relatives. "Last Will and Testament of Patrick Tonyn," Prob. 11, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

low opinion of Tonyn's 'wife'. Not long after their arrival in St. Augustine, Mulcaster observed "The whore he has brought is handsome enough, she has three children with her and is big with a fourth."<sup>422</sup> The hostility with which Mulcaster described Tonyn's lady foreshadowed the trouble that would soon erupt among the dueling kinship networks in St. Augustine.

Patrick Tonyn seemed to immediately come into conflict with Drayton and his support base. Whether it was because Tonyn had taken Moultrie's part in the prior conflict, the new governor was aware of the hostile opinions that Drayton, Turnbull, De Brahm, and Mulcaster among others seemed to have for his lady and their children, or perhaps because the two men did not like one another, who can say? What is known is that Tonyn and Drayton continued a highly contentious interaction. They argued over various fractious political conflicts stemming from a complex mire of intertwined issues involving allegations of corruption on both sides, mismanagement of colonial funds, land speculation, Drayton's displeasure at Tonyn's appointment as governor in 1774, and the deteriorating conditions at Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna plantation.<sup>423</sup> Tonyn also seemed to suspect Drayton of harboring sympathy for family members in South Carolina who supported the Patriot cause.<sup>424</sup> This conflict continued for the

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<sup>422</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, "'...not so gay a Town in America as this...' 1763-1784," in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Sage of Survival*, ed. by Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine, Fla.: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 110.

<sup>423</sup> William Drayton was a known associate and close friend of Dr. Andrew Turnbull. Nor surprisingly, Turnbull would get into his own highly contested series of arguments with Governor Tonyn for several similar reasons as compared to those of Drayton. According to Charles Mowat, "For Tonyn it was really enough that Turnbull sympathized with Drayton and with the American [Patriot] cause." Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 97. Like Drayton, Turnbull was eventually suspended from his position in East Florida by Tonyn. Also like Drayton, he appealed the suspension to the Board of Trade literally having traveled on the same ship at the same time as Drayton, and he was eventually vindicated. For a summary of the conflict, see Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 97-99 and Daniel L. Schafer, "'A Sensible and Clever Man': The Rise and Fall of Andrew Turnbull," *El Escribano: The Journal of the St. Augustine Historical Society* (2001), 118-151.

<sup>424</sup> Tonyn and others likely had a right to be suspicious of Drayton having sympathy for the Patriot cause. In South Carolina, Drayton's cousin William Henry Drayton was an ardent supporter of the movement for independence. William Henry Drayton opposed the Crown as early as 1774 when he published a pamphlet called the American Claim of Rights which advocated colonial support for the second Continental Congress. Drayton remained in regular correspondence with his Patriot cousin in the years leading up to the American Revolution and

next four years. For example, after the formal declaration of war in July 1776 signaled the beginning of the American Revolution, a refugee from Georgia had been detained in St. Augustine. Tonyn argued the man had no right to legal protections under English law because the colony of Georgia had declared its independence. Drayton fought what he viewed as a completely illegal and despotic act by Tonyn to hold an English citizen without any access to legal counsel.<sup>425</sup> Their fights continued until Tonyn convinced the governor's council to suspend Drayton from his office as Chief Justice. Drayton appealed his suspension directly to royal authorities in London. The Board of Trade eventually vindicated Drayton and returned to his position in late 1776.<sup>426</sup> However, his reinstatement only seemed to be forestalling the inevitable and at great personal cost to Drayton's family.

Unlike William De Braham's wife, the former Miss Row who lived to return from London to North America with her husband in 1775, the heightened political tensions that her husband faced in East Florida weighed heavily on William Drayton's wife, Mary.<sup>427</sup> Between

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during its first phase. See Keith Krawczynski, *William Henry Drayton: South Carolina Revolutionary Patriot* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

<sup>425</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 16.

<sup>426</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 26-27.

<sup>427</sup> Mary Motte was born to Jacob Motte and Elizabeth Martin Motte on January 8, 1740 in South Carolina. Her father was of Irish descent, having been born in Dublin, while her mother was born on the Caribbean island of Antigua. Mary Motte married William Drayton of Magnolia Hall in Charleston, South Carolina on October 4, 1759. William and Mary spent the early years of the marriage in South Carolina before William received a colonial appointment in East Florida. William Drayton arrived with his family in St. Augustine, East Florida in 1767. Mary Drayton lived with her husband on property he had bought which was several miles outside of St. Augustine. Mary remained with her husband in East Florida until Drayton's feud with Patrick Tonyn, James Grant's eventual replacement as governor in East Florida, forced the family to leave for England in March 1778. According to her daughter Sarah's diary, Mary was already dying when the family left Florida and only survived their arrival in England by two weeks, dying on May 19, 1778. She was buried at a cemetery in Ramsgate, England. Throughout her life, Mary gave birth to nine children: William (born July 6, 1760 in South Carolina and died May 9, 1764); Elizabeth (born August 16, 1761 and died young); Jacob (born November 20, 1762 and died August 11, 1806 in Philadelphia); Hannah (born March 18, 1764); Mary Charlotte (born August 19, 1766); William Percival (born September 30, 1768 and died May 23, 1769); Sarah Motte (born May 29, 1773 and died July 9, 1843 in Philadelphia); Thomas (born 1775 and died July 1, 1794); and William (born October 20, 1776 in St. Augustine and died January 17, 1846 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Mary Motte Drayton was survived by her husband (who would later go on to remarry Mary Gates in 1780 in England) and several of her children. See Sarah M. Drayton, *The Diary of Sarah M. Drayton, 1785-1836*, Unpublished Manuscript, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina, Dorothy G. Griffin, "The Eighteenth Century Draytons of Drayton Hall," PhD. diss,



mid-1774 and early 1776, Mary Drayton's already fragile health rapidly began to deteriorate. Having given birth to a baby boy named William on December 30, 1776, the political conflict between her husband and Governor Tonyn added much stress to her situation and slowed her recovery. Eventually, Mary's Drayton's failing health, combined with the mounting pressures of the Drayton/Tonyn feud, caused the Draytons to leave the colony. As his youngest son was still a very small infant when his parents departed for England in March 1778, William Drayton decided to leave the baby in St. Augustine under the care of one of his close friends, Dr. Andrew Turnbull. His wife, Maria Gracia Turnbull, a Greek woman, had befriended Mary Drayton during the years they lived in St. Augustine. Turnbull and his wife cared for William Drayton during his early childhood, reinforcing the bonds of friendship that Maria Gracia Turnbull and Mary Drayton had once shared. Ultimately, Mary Drayton died shortly after royal officials who heard her husband plead his case in London.<sup>428</sup> Perhaps it was because of his wife's sudden death, but Drayton did not wait to find out if he would once more be vindicated from Tonyn's attempts to besmirch his reputation and the power of his position. In June 1778, Drayton tendered his official resignation as East Florida's Chief Justice to the Board of Trade thus ending his conflict with Tonyn.<sup>429</sup> Drayton eventually retired to family lands in South Carolina and remained there for the rest of his life.

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Emory University, 1985, George McDaniel, "Director's Notes: The Draytons of Philadelphia," *Interiors: The Friends of Drayton Hall* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2003), 2-3, and Emily Heyword Drayton Taylor, "The Draytons of South Carolina and Philadelphia," *Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania* 8, no. 1 (March 1921), 1-27.

<sup>428</sup> For more information on the infamous Drayton-Tonyn squabble, see William Drayton, "An Inquiry into the Present State, and Administration of Affairs in the Province of East-Florida; with Some Observations on the Case of the late Chief Justice there," Entry 37, *The Peter Force Papers*, Series 8D, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. It is a document that Drayton wrote explaining his issues with Tonyn and his administration. It was revised in 1781, but it was never formally published./

<sup>429</sup> Mowat, "The Enigma of William Drayton," 31.

While women such as Mary Drayton shared both the rewards and punishments of their husbands' political careers in the British Floridas, ultimately this fractious infighting showed that families were no longer loyal to the Crown first and foremost. It was loyalty to family first and Crown second only if it did not conflict with the families' goals. This occurrence became further complicated when royal officials, such as the governor, ceased to act as the Crown had instructed them but took their own initiative. The Crown's colonization scheme lay all but abandoned as royal officials and leading citizens jockeyed with one another for more land, money, power, and prestige. Sometimes the royal officials won. Sometimes the private families won. But one thing remains consistent: the Crown always lost regarding its goal to safeguard the success of its colonies in East and West Florida.

**Conclusion: The Consequences of using Families as "Tools of Empire"**

Much as the British Crown had hoped when they designed their ideal colonization scheme in 1763 for test implementation in East and West Florida, families remained a critical part of the process both before and after the plan's development. The Crown had designed and tried to implement their ideal colonization scheme with little thought to how colonists and their families would react to such usage. The Crown thought that colonists owed their duty to the king and to the empire. It was an obligation owed from subject to the Crown. Or the Crown believed that even if the colonists did not owe them such allegiance, the colonists and their families were being rewarded with substantial tracts of land. The awarding of such major grants allowed certain families to enter the landed gentry of the colonies which would automatically increase their position and standing relative to other social hierarchies in colonies like Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. It is also possible the Crown simply did not care about how the colonists

may have felt about their families being used as a tool of empire. It was to be a catastrophic era in an otherwise so detailed and well thought out plan.

In the Anglo-Iberian borderlands of East and West Florida, colonists instantly recognized the importance of the role that the institution of marriage would play in their colonial fortunes. Marriage acted as the gateway to forming the desired familial unit so prized by the Crown. Once individuals formed their family unit via marriage, they automatically received substantial benefits not available to other groups who affiliated without the legal bonds of matrimony. Married families received first choice of land lots in new townships, paid lower property taxes than their single counterparts, and were treated with more consideration and importance by the colonial leadership. Households cobbled together by personal relationships became less important than having a single male head of household bolstered by a wife, children, and indentured servants or slaves.

However, changes in the laws regarding the nature of marriage began to change in the mid-eighteenth century. These changes occurred on both sides of the borderlands in both British and Spanish domains. For the first time, the British and the Spanish attempted to downgrade the role of a religious authority administering and recognizing the validity of marriages. Anglican reverends and Catholic priests still remained the preferred way in which marriages would be solemnified. By with the passage of Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act in 1753 and the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage in 1776, Parliament and the Spanish King opened a Pandora's Box. By attempting to change the way in which the secular governments viewed marriage, British and Spanish colonists responded by only caring that the once inalienable institution of marriage could now be altered. If the state could adapt the institution of marriage for their purposes and try to force changes from a top-down perspective, colonists began to wonder why they likewise

could not do so as well and force change from the bottom up. These changes resulted in a new form of marriage that more accurately represents a modern common-law type of marriage than the traditional forms that had existed for centuries.

In East and West Florida, Anglo-Iberian borderland exchanges created a new form of marriage. To consider themselves married, sacred religious rituals and the normal accompanying legal documentation vanished. A priest or reverend was no longer necessary for two people to declare themselves married. Instead, colonists defined the institution of marriage by behavior. First, a man and woman lived together in the same household. Second, they publicly acknowledged one another as their husband and as their wife. Polite society often saw women refer to themselves as “Mrs.” when referencing their relationship with the man whom they viewed as their husband. Most men and women engaged in a sexual relationship. Children were often borne to such couples and were given the father’s names. Most importantly, the man and woman perpetuated a common economic and political interest for the family’s goals. The man and woman conducted household business as a single social unit. They would buy, sell, and rent property as a single unit. At the time of death, wills provided for the woman as if she were a legally recognized widow while also distributing land and goods to natural children.

From the perspective of the Crown, the single greatest issue that developed out of the colonists’ performative marital behavior were the ways in which newly constructed family units interacted with one another and with traditionally constructed family units.<sup>430</sup> Continuous

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<sup>430</sup> Judith Butler argues that gender and an individual's identity are socially constructed through an individual's actions. An individual makes a conscious choice on how he or she wishes to have their gender perceived in society. Once they have made this decision, they carry out certain acts that reinforce the ways in which they wish to be seen. This study expands Butler's notion to include the notion that marriage performativity is a subset of Butler's gender performativity theory. Society's notions of how married individuals should act has already determined signals which married people should exhibit. By mimicking these cues, or publicly performing the circumstances by which people in the eighteenth century considered themselves to be married, individuals conveyed

exposure to and mixture with family units formed by the two forms of the marital institution quickly muddied the social circles of East and West Florida. Which colonists could consider themselves to be *really* married? Who should be accepted into polite social circles and who should be shunned? The confusion resulted in colonists talking about the Crown, the nature of marriage, and how to define a family unit. As time passed, a person's individual actions and/or the acceptance of other people's public behaviors seems to have gained more significance. Once two people created a family by marrying, they entered the social fishbowl of colonial society in East and West Florida. Families built and maintained social relationships with other families so long as they considered themselves a family unit. Issues of ethnicity and race seemed to have less weight than they once might have possessed.<sup>431</sup> These relationships grew over time eventually forming competing kinship networks that dueled for power and supremacy.

The fractious nature of dueling kinship networks seems to have possessed a single significant consequence when colonists chose to respond to the Crown by appropriate the institution of marriage in reaction to their usage as a tool of empire. Detrimental factions developed in the colonies as the number of families grew in West Florida between 1765 and

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the marital identity they wished to convey to other people. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>431</sup> A significant number of what would be considered interracial relationships occurred in East and West Florida, usually between men of European descent and women of African heritage. Within the sources, these relationships seemed to have caused little blow back. Improper personal behavior was more a problem than the color of one's skin. For example, a naval officer in West Florida, John Lindsay, engaged in a familial relationship with a mulatto woman named Maria Belle in Pensacola. Maria gave birth to a daughter, Dido Elizabeth Belle, who Lindsay sent back to England to be raised by his aristocratic English relatives at a palatial Georgian estate called Kenwood. During his brief time in West Florida, Lindsay was an intimate of some of the most powerful and influential men in the colony. He was particularly close to Governor George Johnstone, so much so that Johnstone named his second son, George Lindsay, after him. Dido's mother, Maria, remained in Pensacola long after John Lindsay's departure. She maintained major land holdings and was a fixture of Pensacola's society. For more information see, J.K. Laughton, "Sir John Lindsay (1737-1788)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Nisha Lilia Diu, "Dido Belle: Britain's First Black Aristocrat," *The Telegraph* (July 6, 2016). Accessed <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/07/06/dido-belle-britains-first-black-aristocrat/>; Gene Adams, "Dido Elizabeth Belle: A Black Girl at Kenwood," *Camden History Review* 12 (1984), 10-14; and Sandra Averhart, "Real Story of 'Belle' Has Pensacola Connections," <https://www.wuof.org/post/real-story-belle-has-pensacola-connections>.

1775 and in East Florida from 1765 to 1782. These kinship networks continued to grow and mature continuing to wreak havoc in colonial social affairs. Such conflicts eventually drew royal officials, such as the governor and royal council, into their web. Eventually family faction versus family faction waged a type of war against one another with little consideration as to the detrimental effects their battles would have on colonial success. Throughout this entire process, the Crown lost the most. Subsumed into personal conflicts, the royal governors failed to maintain objectivity and loyalty to the Crown. After a decade or more of this type of behavior, the growth of competition between the state and private interests led to ever increasing social unrest during the years of the American Revolution. When combined with arguments over conflicting political ideologies, the colonies of East and West Florida became tinder boxes ready to explode. Would they remain loyal or would they revolt once and for all against king and country? It hardly mattered for the damage to the Crown's prized colonization scheme suffered from all sides. The Crown's colonization fell as a major casualty during the years of the war and the destabilization of the colonies eventually led both East and West Florida into abject failure.

**Chapter 3**  
**A Successful Failure from the Best Laid Plans:**  
**The Settlements at Rollestown, Campbell Town, and New Smyrna**

In July 1765, Elizabeth Digby Pilot, wife of an officer in the Thirty-First Regiment assigned to Pensacola, arrived in the new capital of West Florida. Pilot and her fellow travelers had come to Pensacola from London. Dismayed at the poor condition of the settlement upon her arrival, she wrote her opinions of the dismal conditions of her new home when she disembarked from her ship with six other women, wives of other regimental officers.<sup>432</sup> With the exception of the Governor's house, and perhaps three others in modest disrepair, the remaining dwellings were "miserable huts covered with palmettos."<sup>433</sup> Pilot and the other newcomers "suffered much from the heat, and other causes. Vermin etc. infested the place. A constant smell proceeded from a disagreeable weed which overran the ground. The reflection of the sun on the white sand was painful to the eyes... the soil was barren and not a blade of grass was to be seen."<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Elizabeth Digby was born in 1742 in Geashill, County Laois, Ireland to the Reverend Benjamin and Mary Jones Digby. Elizabeth Digby married Henry Pilot at Kilmalogue House, Portarlington, Ireland on February 4, 1762. Henry and Elizabeth's children were: Catherine Mary (born in 1764 at Fareham, England, died at Pensacola, 1765), Jane (born March/April 1766 at Pensacola), Elizabeth (born December 3, 1768 at Pensacola), Judith Henrietta (born July 1770 at Pensacola), Mary (born and died in 1774 in Portarlington, Ireland at the age of two months), Frances Oughton (born March 1775 in Manchester, England), and Henry Digby (born January 5, 1780 in Bideford, England and died December 28, 1804). Elizabeth died in 1826 in Bath and was buried in Weston. See Elizabeth Digby Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot" (nee Digby) Born 1742 Died 1826 With a Concluding Memoir By Her Daughter Judith Henrietta Pilot and Notes on the Autobiography by P. L. Pielou," Unpublished Manuscript.

<sup>433</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot," 19-21. For more on the details of common architecture of British houses in Florida between 1763 and 1784, see Elsbeth K. Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 2002), 147-214.

<sup>434</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot," 19-21.

The bleak desolation described by Pilot represents a fair assessment of the conditions faced by families upon their arrival in the British Floridas. Not much had changed in the two years since British officials had first arrived in the settlements at Pensacola and St. Augustine. England's Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Charles Wyndham, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Ergemont, arranged for the Secretary at War, Welbore Ellis, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Mendip, to dispatch military regiments to East and West Florida. Captain John Hedges arrived in St. Augustine with the First Regiment on July 21, 1763 while Colonel Augustin Prévost reached Pensacola with the Sixtieth Regiment a few weeks later in August.<sup>435</sup> Colonel James Robertson arrived in St. Augustine with orders from General Thomas Gage, commander of the British forces in North America, to assess St. Augustine's conditions. He sent Gage a detailed report of almost three dozen pages dated March 8, 1764. Robertson's findings echoed some of the same observations Pilot would have a few months later when the Thirty-First Regiment would reach Pensacola. Although he tried to frame the reality of the situation in a more optimistic tone, Robertson's could only gloss over the true state of the infrastructure of the settlement wherever possible. He blamed the Spaniards for the lack of pleasing results in what he considered a native land full of many endless possibilities for achievement. He wrote to Gage that "the indolence of the Spaniards afford but few instances of what the soil and climate are capable of producing."<sup>436</sup> Robertson then avoided talking about the specifics of the settlements' physical attributes beyond noting "the houses, churches & convents in St. Augustine are all excepting the Governor's House claim'd as private property."<sup>437</sup> Those who lived in St. Augustine faced slightly better conditions

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<sup>435</sup> Robert L. Gold, *Borderland Empires in Transition: The Triple-Nation Transfer of Florida* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 87.

<sup>436</sup> James Robertson, "Report of Colonel James Robertson to General Gage," James Robertson to Thomas Gage, March 8, 1764, CO5/540 p. 101.

<sup>437</sup> James Robertson, "Report of Colonel James Robertson to General Gage," James Robertson to Thomas Gage, March 8, 1764, CO5/540 p. 109.



than their counterparts in Pensacola given the physical state of the older settlement. However, the challenge to remold East and West Florida in the image of the perfect British colony remained significant for the men and women who had arrived on the borderland frontier of the British Empire faced with what should have been magnificent capital cities as embarrassing camps built on grass and sand.

With the proverbial card deck seemingly stacked against the colonists, was the failure of the Crown's ideal colonization scheme a foregone conclusion in East and West Florida? The slow progress of growth in St. Augustine and Pensacola seem to support such an inevitability. However, these were not the only settlements in the colonies. Newly minted landowners sought to establish new townships throughout the two colonies which the Crown believed would blossom as bastions of loyal British citizens. Surveyors, such as William Gerard de Braham in East Florida and Elias Durnford in West Florida, became some of the hardest working royal officials. They faced the tedious task of laying out the plots for new townships. However, they could only do so once they had rectified the Crown's specifications with the landowners' individual desires. While many of these townships remained unrealized dreams that never escaped from the confines of the paper where the surveyors detailed their plans, three significant exceptions exist. Colonists established successfully three major new townships in areas previously unsettled by the Spanish and French. Sir Denys Rolle founded the settlement at Rollestown approximately thirty miles southeast of St. Augustine in 1765. Lieutenant Governor Montfort Browne established Campbell Town about ten miles northeast of Pensacola. Lastly, Dr. Andrew Turnbull founded the settlement of New Smyrna about seventy miles south of St. Augustine in 1767. These three townships offer important evidence about whether the Crown's colonization scheme truly failed in British Florida.

The colonists who lived in these three settlements all faced the same challenge. Could they establish and maintain a new township, according to the rules laid out by the Crown, and become self-sufficient entities capable of making a monetary profit? Most historians would argue no because they ceased to exist as British settlements when the colonies reverted to the Spanish at the end of the American Revolution if they had not failed long before the end of the British Period in 1784. According to Bernard Bailyn, within a decade of being founded, the settlements of British Florida had failed. "No one could claim that the colony, whose total population in 1776 was certainly no more and probably less than it had been under the Spanish in 1763, had been a success."<sup>438</sup> Bailyn based his claim on his assessment that the settlements never maintained their initial populations and that the continuously dwindling populations withered away until only ghost towns remained. He summed up his overall assessment of Xanadu, his nickname for East Florida, in a single thought. Not only had Xanadu failed, and it had failed spectacularly.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 469.

<sup>439</sup> Bailyn notoriously castigated the failure of East Florida in his landmark work *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*. He is slightly more kind in his assessment of West Florida. While he never expressly lambasts West Florida as the tremendous failure of its counterpart in the east, he does note the colony failed if for no other reason than the successful invasion of Spanish troops under the command of General Bernardo de Gálvez in March 1780. For more on Gálvez's campaign in the final years of the American Revolution, see Overton G. Canong, "Spain's Role in the American Revolution," *El Escribano: The Journal of the St. Augustine Historical Society* 13, no. 2 (1976), 51-56, John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Gretna, L.A.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972), Bernardo de Gálvez, *Yo Solo: The Battle Journal of Bernardo de Gálvez during the American Revolution*, ed. and trans. E.A. Montemayor (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1978), Virginia Parks, ed. *Siege! - Spain and Britain: Battle of Pensacola, March 9 - May 8, 1781* (Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Historical Society, 1981), James W. Raab, *Spain, Britain, and the American Revolution in Florida, 1763-1783* (Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Company, 2008), N. Orwin. Rush, *Battle of Pensacola: Spain's Final Triumph Over Great Britain in the Gulf of Mexico* (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 1966; reprint, Port Salerno, FL: Florida Classics Library, 1981), James A. Servies, ed., *The Siege of Pensacola, 1781: A Bibliography* (Pensacola, FL: John C. Pace Library, 1981), and Maria Fernandez Snitzer, *Bernardo de Gálvez and His Role in the American Revolution* (Violet, LA: Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society, 1996).

Are there alternative explanations to Bailyn's stunning and emphatically inflexible pronouncement? Historians such as Daniel L. Schafer certainly think so.<sup>440</sup> This study seeks to separate itself from both Bailyn's 'failure' thesis and Schafer's 'so what if it failed' thesis. It offers a third possibility. This study believes that East and West Florida offer evidence of a 'successful failure' thesis in the assessment of their value as colonies of the British Crown in the eighteenth century.

Bailyn's failure thesis has haunted the historiography of British Florida since its publication in 1986. However, can the actual success or failure of East and West Florida be determined if scholars reject the standards upon which Bailyn's failure thesis is built? Simply put, no. Like Schafer's research, this study accepts Bailyn's pronouncement that by 1784 the colonies of East and West Florida possessed minute populations and cost the Crown substantially more money than it had ever made. However, similar to Schafer's belief that there is more to be learned about the British Empire's colonization tactics in the eighteenth century than merely deeming the Florida's a failure, this study seeks to go beyond the failure question. The reasons behind the colonies' failure have significant importance beyond the historiographical lens of colonial British East and West Florida. Did the colonies fail because of a flawed colonization scheme? Did they fail because of inappropriate geographic land attributes or poor leadership? Did they fail because of famine or disease or other acts of divine intervention? Or did they even fail because of just plain bad luck? Ultimately, the main reason the colonies failed stemmed from an inability of government officials and colonists to follow the Crown's colonization scheme.

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<sup>440</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, "'A Swamp of an Investment'? Richard Oswald's British East Florida Plantation Experiment," chap. in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. by Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000), 12.

This failure placed East and West Florida on a downward spiral that merely accelerated with the outbreak of the American Revolution.

Colonization has never been a quick process. The success or failure of any colony not wiped out in a single act of God can often take several generations. East and West Florida existed for merely one generation before war permanently uprooted their carefully planted series of townships and people. It can be argued that the inability of royal officials to implement precisely the colonization scheme designed by the Crown was certainly underway in the late 1760s and early 1770s. Every deviation led to a substantial increase the colony would ultimately fail. What neither Bailyn nor other historians have previously acknowledged is that the Crown realized its officials had deviated from their orders shortly after news of the deviations reached London. More importantly, they sought to correct these potentially catastrophic errors in judgement. Each correction brought the colonies another step backward from the brink of oblivion. However, the American Revolution took away the one thing the colonies desperately needed to prove their ultimate success or failure: time.

Before a single British colonist set foot in East and West Florida, the Crown worked hard to create a detailed colonization scheme that would ensure the establishment and growth of successful colonies. This colonization scheme implied several goals the Crown expected the colonies to achieve. Population growth and retention was certainly one of them. The Crown expected a monetary profit from its investment. But these were not the only goals the new colonies needed to achieve. More than anything, the Crown wanted to create a bastion of a population with unquestioned loyalty to the mother country and her king. Demographic numbers that demonstrated growth, at least in the beginning, remained less important than the percentage of that population that held unquestionable Loyalist leanings. Second, the colonies mere

continued existence served the secondary purpose the Crown had: the government wished to give naysayers who challenged the validity of the royal colonization scheme concrete evidence of its effectiveness. Consequently, does Bailyn's failure thesis hold up in the light of the state's own benchmarks? A cursory assessment must admit that ultimately, yes, it does. A failed colony that ceases to exist must be labelled as a failure no matter the extenuating circumstances surrounding it. However, there is more to be learned from looking at this issue than merely calling the British Florida a success or failure.

The more important take away can be found in the lessons the British Crown learned about how to design, implement, maintain, and expand its colonies. This study believes Bailyn's failure thesis ultimately would have been proven wrong if the fate of East and West Florida had had more time to allow colonization efforts to mature. The Crown, eventually aware of how their officials and colonists undermined royal goals, would have replaced the disloyal individuals. Their replacement would have given time for the colonies to flourish according to the Crown's colonization scheme. Unfortunately, the British Crown simply ran out of time.

The American Revolution saw the reversion of East and West Florida to Spain in 1784. Outside forces violently interrupted the internal processes of growth established by the Crown in 1763. The stroke of a pen wiped out less than one generation's growth at the peace talks in Paris where negotiators sought a formal end to the hostilities of the American Revolution. However, what would have happened if East and West Florida had survived the end of the war as intact British possessions? Success in East and West Florida depended on two things. First, the Crown needed to reject the deviations from its colonization scheme, as represented by the settlement of the townships at Rollestown and Campbell Town. Second, it needed to replicate the establishment and maintenance of townships that demonstrated success, when measured against

the Crown's own benchmarks, as represented by New Smyrna. Rollestown and Campbell Town stood as a shining example of why deviations from the Crown's colonization scheme would result in total failure and why New Smyrna represented success.

Rollestown was one of the first major townships plotted and settled in either East or West Florida. Sir Denys Rolle established the settlement near the St. John's River in East Florida in 1765. Lieutenant Governor Montfort Browne founded Campbell Town a few miles northeast of Pensacola in 1766. Dr. Andrew Turnbull founded New Smyrna, located approximately seventy miles south of St. Augustine, in 1767. This chapter argues that the most successful of the newly established (but ultimately failed) townships was New Smyrna because it alone made any semblance to follow the Crown's proscribed colonization scheme. From the first moment colonists arrived in New Smyrna, they arrived in the township as a part of a significant number of family units. In comparison, Rollestown and Campbell Town ultimately failed because their colonists could be described in many ways. But the one term that could not be applied to any of the settlers was that of a familiar unit.

Interestingly enough, while New Smyrna represents British Florida's most 'successful failure', it also offers evidence of why colonies would fail when they deviated from the authorized colonization scheme. The material culture of the settlements reveals the early signs of trouble that emerged when local leadership deviated from their authorization granted by the King and his officials. For example, the families that Turnbull helped to immigrate to East Florida were not considered 'white' or Protestant. Second, they failed to assimilate into the culture of British Florida. Finally, they ultimately revolted against British authority because of a lack of any substantial loyalty to the state. The lack of personal loyalty to the British Crown ultimately stemmed from the inability of colonists to embrace a personal identity where they viewed

themselves as valued members of the British Empires. These issues, like the failure to recruit the requisite family units to British Florida, all stemmed from the same root fact: the townships failed to adhere to the Crown's colonization scheme and the Crown had no time to act to correct the issues which resulted in the failure. This chapter gives the greatest evidence that the ideological aspects of the British Crown's colonization plans may have eventually succeeded, and the colonies with them, *if* they had been implemented as outlined by the Board of Trade to royal officials who lived on the ground in East and West Florida. Instead, Rollestown, Campbell Town, and New Smyrna can only serve as 'what if' examples that further complicate the 'success or failure' question asked by scholars in the historiographical debates surrounding British Florida.

### **Applying Settlement Archaeology to East and West Florida**

As is the case with all townships outside of the colonial capitals of St. Augustine and Pensacola, little primary source documentation survives from people who lived in the townships of Rollestown, Campbelltown, and New Smyrna. A handful of letters and memorials, sometimes written decades after the collapse of the colonies, offer brief glimpses into the lives of the people who lived in the townships. In order to supplement this lack of primary source material, this study suggests evidence of material culture, specifically related to structures, households, and infrastructure improvements, unearthed during modern archaeological investigations further supports the thesis of ultimate failure at the townships of Rollestown and Campbell Town and success at New Smyrna. An anthropological theory, known as settlement archaeology, further supports this approach.

First developed in the late nineteenth century, Settlement Archaeology re-emerged after World War II as a useful theoretical approach as anthropologists grappled with the difficulties of

understanding Native American cultures that left behind little written source material. In the 1940s, archaeologist Gordon Willey pioneered the use of the Settlement Archaeology at the Viru Valley site in Peru. Willey wanted to understand what sites could tell scholars about personal relationships between individuals and within their larger communities. It also favors a collective approach to analyzing several sites in a single region as they relate to one another as opposed to isolated individual sites. By the 1970s, Settlement Archaeology had largely evolved into the subdiscipline of Landscape Archaeology which, in turn, birthed the Household Archaeology approach by the 1990s.<sup>441</sup>

Settlement Archaeology offers a useful theoretical approach beyond traditional historical approaches. It justifies the inclusion of material culture findings and their analyses from previous excavations at Rollestown, Campbell Town, and New Smyrna in consideration of the success or failure question. Additionally, the geographic location of each of these townships, in relation to their respective capitals, indicate a closer proximity to the royal officials whom chose to deviate from the approved royal colonization scheme seemed to taint the townships nearest to St. Augustine and Pensacola. Only New Smyrna, located on the southern frontier and being located at a significant distance from any of the capitals, remained somewhat untainted by local royal officials who allowed deviation from the Crown's commands in how colonies should be settled. The theoretical framework offered by Settlement Archaeology argues the geographic proximity of settlements to one another is not random nor insignificant. Communities of people who lived in the townships interacted with one another to some extent. The extent to which they established relationships with other people in the capitals of St. Augustine and Pensacola can be traced in the

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<sup>441</sup> G.M. Feinman, "Settlement and Landscape Archaeology," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, 13937-13941 (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001).



material culture of the people. It offers further evidence as to why Rollestown and Campbell Town ultimately failed, but New Smyrna might have proven to be a success if the American Revolution had not intervened.

By employing the Settlement Archaeology theoretical framework, a new source of evidence emerges which can be used to justify a new assessment of the success or failure question not considered by past historians like Bernard Bailyn and Daniel Schafer. The material culture of the settlements, particularly the structures, provide clear indications as to if the colonies were dying or growing at the time British officials transferred control of East and West Florida to the Spanish in 1783. It opens up a new avenue of analysis to help complicate the success or failure question with a goal of moving beyond it.

### **Rollestown: The Failure of North America's First 'Magdalene House'?**

Sir Denys Rolle established the first major township settled outside of St. Augustine and Pensacola in either East or West Florida at what became known as Rollestown in 1765.<sup>442</sup> Denys Rolle was born in 1725 at Stevenstone in Devonshire, Great Britain.<sup>443</sup> He was born as the fourth son of John and Isabelle Charlotte Walter Rolle. His older brothers included Henry, John, and William. These brothers all died childless. By 1747, Rolle had inherited the substantial land holdings of both his father and brothers making him a significant landholder in both Devonshire and Oxfordshire. A member of the Anglican Church, he married the daughter of a neighbor in Devon in a religious ceremony. He wed Anne Chichester on Mary 22, 1750 at East Down in

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<sup>442</sup> Gene M. Burnett offers almost no new information on Rollestown but provides a concise summary of the settlement in his chapter "Bedlam Reigns in an 'Ideal' Town." See Gene M. Burnett, *Florida's Past: People and Events that Shaped the State, Volume 3* (Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, Inc., 1991), 69-71.

<sup>443</sup> Written by a Rolle family descendent, the most recent biography published on Rolle is somewhat kind to his image as a benevolent and charitable Christian. The biography largely focuses on Rolle's life in England and offers little new evidence on his life in East Florida beyond what was presented by Rolle himself in his petition. See Robert Legg, *A Pioneer in Xanadu* (Whitechurch: Furrow, 1997).

Devon. The couple had eight children, including John, Denys, Samuel, Isabella, Anne, Lucilla, Christiana, and Florence. Rolle attended New College at Oxford University. By 1761, Rolle had been elected as the Member of Parliament from Barnstaple as a member of the Tory Party.<sup>444</sup> Despite being elected to Parliament, Rolle continued to look for other opportunities of investment and personal advancement. The greatest opportunity of his life came in 1764 when he applied for and received a land grant of 20,000 acres in East Florida.<sup>445</sup>

Denys Rolle's plantation centered on what is now the property of the Florida Power and Light Company on the right bank of the St. Johns a mile or so above Palatka, immediately across from Devil's Elbow. It has been referred to as, among other names: Charlottenburg, Charlota (after Queen Charlotte, wife to George the Third); Mt. Pleasant; and Rollestown, spelled with several variations such as Rollstown and Rawlstown.<sup>446</sup>

According to William Siebert's analysis of Loyalists' claims submitted in 1783, Denys Rolle first approached the Board of Trade with a plan of settlement of his own. As early as the autumn of 1763, before the final terms of the Treaty of Paris had even been formally published, Rolle organized a group of men who would share the risk of a colonization scheme in East Florida. Rolle and the four other men submitted a petition "for an immense grant of land

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<sup>444</sup> Rolle was re-elected to Parliament in 1768, but he was defeated in 1774. He died while taking a walk from angina on June 26, 1797. He was buried in St. Giles Church on July 1, 1797. At the time of his death, he was survived by his son, John, and two unmarried daughters. See Lewis Namier and John Brooke, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1964), *the History of Parliament*, [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/rolle-denys-1725-97](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/rolle-denys-1725-97); "Obituary of Denys Rolle," *Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1797), 617; and "Obituary of Denys Rolle," *Gentleman's Magazine Supplement* (1797), 1125.

<sup>445</sup> For an overview of the founding and decline of the settlement of Rollestown, see Carl Bohnenberger, "The Settlement of Charlota (Rollestown), 1765," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (July 1925), 43-49; Carita Doggett Corse, "Denys Rolle and Rollestown: A Pioneer for Utopia," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (Oct. 1928), 115-134; Charles L. Mowat, "The Tribulations of Denys Rolle," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (July 1944), 1-14; and "Rollestown," Unpublished Manuscript, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, Smathers Library Special Collections, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1952.

<sup>446</sup> Allan A. Swanson, *Pilo-Taikita: A History of Palatka, Florida*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1967, Putnam County Historical Society. <http://www.putnam-fl-historical-society.org/Historic/Historical%20Documents/Swanson%20Book-All.pdf>, 13.

extending from the southern boundary of Georgia to a point two miles below the forks of Apalachicola and thence eastward to the Altamaha in Georgia."<sup>447</sup> Rolle and his partners envisioned this grant not just as a small settlement that would be a part of a larger plan to settle East Florida. Instead, Rolle wanted to carve a new colony for himself and his investors out of the lands acquired from the Spanish at the end of the French and Indian War. They would establish a new capital city on the banks of the Apalachicola River and a smaller settlement along the Altamaha River "and settle them with industrious people of various countries and employments."<sup>448</sup> Finally, the investors asked the Board of Trade to appoint a new governor for the Crown or, perhaps more preferably, see to it that "Mr. Rolle be vested with executive authority."<sup>449</sup> The primary aim of the colony would be to produce a number of cash crops and luxury goods including indigo, wine, oil, and silk.<sup>450</sup>

Rolle must have been informed the Crown would not approve such a proposal given how carefully it had worked to develop and implement its own colonization schemes in East and West Florida. Rolle, who perhaps viewed himself as a would-be William Bradford or William Penn, found himself disappointed. Not deterred, Rolle submitted a new application for another land grant in January 1764. The main goal of settlement on this land grant would be to develop a trade network with the natives who lived in the interior of western Georgia and eastern Alabama. Trade would be supplemented with a large skill lumber production operation. Before the grant could be approved, Rolle's partners backed out. Rolle responded by submitting new petitions in his own name. He decided he would go it alone, if necessary, in order to see his dream of establishing a colony in East Florida realized. His name joined that of ten other men, including

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<sup>447</sup> William H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* (DeLand, Fla.: The Florida Historical Society, 1929), 367.

<sup>448</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East*, 367.

<sup>449</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East*, 367.

<sup>450</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East*, 368.

West Florida's first Lieutenant Governor Montfort Browne, who individually applied for substantial land grants in East and West Florida. These eleven men agreed to follow the Crown's meticulous colonization scheme if the Crown awarded them the land grants.<sup>451</sup> Consequently, the Board of Trade finally approved Rolle's petition in late May 1764.<sup>452</sup>

Rolle had initially intended to settle on Cumberland Island off the coast of Georgia. He had to alter his plans when that land was granted to someone else. He next accepted a grant of 20,000 acres in East Florida. He set sail from London for the colonies on June 10, 1764. He arrived in Charleston, South Carolina with fourteen white colonists after fourteen weeks at sea. Six of his recruits decided to stay in Charleston when they disembarked from their ship. One of his colonists married a woman from Charleston. Rolle and his group of nine settlers left Charleston shortly after his arrival. The group arrived in St. Augustine on September 13, 1764.<sup>453</sup>

Ironically, Rolle and his party initially received a warm welcome from Governor James Grant. His opinion of Rolle would soon change. The governor encouraged Rolle to select his land grant as soon as possible. At first, Rolle contemplated selecting land near St. Marks. The sight of an old Spanish fort, it would become somewhat of a half-way stop for those travelers who went by land on infrequently traveled paths between St. Augustine in East Florida and Pensacola in West Florida. However, the government and colonists viewed the interior of the colony as an isolated land largely under the control of the natives who lived there. Eventually, fear of the native presence encouraged Rolle to settle in a location located closer to the military garrison at St. Augustine. Governor Grant reacted poorly to Rolle's news. He threatened to report

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<sup>451</sup> J. Barton Starr, "French Huguenots in British West Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (April 1976), 532-533.

<sup>452</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East*, 368.

<sup>453</sup> Denys Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq., Setting Forth the Hardships, Inconveniences, and Grievances Which Have Attended Him in His Attempts to Make a Settlement in East Florida, Humbly Praying Such Relief, As In Their Lordships Wisdom Shall Be Met* (London, 1765); facsimile reprint, Claude C. Sturgill, ed. (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1977), xvi-xvii.

Rolle to the Board of Trade for altering his initial decision. Rolle countered that the terms of his grant specified that he could settle on any piece of unclaimed land in the colony. Following Rolle's logic, Grant, eventually, agreed. Within two years, Grant's negative opinion of Rolle crystalized. He admitted this much to a friend and fellow business partner, Richard Oswald, in a letter he wrote sometime later.<sup>454</sup> Grant told Oswald that Rolle "is the most miserable wretch I ever saw. He...will be a detriment to the Province by taking lands on the St. John's River which could have been occupied by more useful inhabitants."<sup>455</sup> This argument represents the time that the new land proprietor and governor would come into conflict. But it certainly would not be their last.<sup>456</sup>

Attempting to compromise, Grant suggested a piece of land located at Fort Picolata located several miles to the west of St. Augustine. The location satisfied Rolle's desires for a location on the St. John's River and to be close to St. Augustine for protection. For some reason, Rolle rejected Grant's suggestion and began to look elsewhere. Rolle eventually selected a piece of land "some twenty-five miles beyond Picolata, selecting finally a tract on the river near present-day Palatka and Mount Royal, not far from the head of the ferry on the east bank of the St. Johns."<sup>457</sup> In September 1766, Denys Rolle recorded his observations of the progress of the settlement process at what would become Rollestown. "Everything in nature seems to correspond to the cultivation of the production of the whole world, in some part or other of this happy province, the most precious jewel of His Majesty's American dominions."<sup>458</sup> Rolle described his

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<sup>454</sup> For details on Oswald's own difficulties with settling his land grants in East Florida, see Daniel L. Schafer, "A Swamp of an Investment"? Richard Oswald's British East Florida Plantation Experiment," chap. in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. by Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000), 11-38.

<sup>455</sup> Schafer, *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida*, 83.

<sup>456</sup> Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq.*, xviii.

<sup>457</sup> Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq.*, xviii.

<sup>458</sup> Denys Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," in *An Extract from the Account of East Florida Published by Dr. Stork* (London: 1766), 19.

recruitment process he began to use at Rollestown in 1764.<sup>459</sup> In the beginning, he at least attempted to follow the Crown's plan for colonization. He recruited some settlers from other colonies, like South Carolina and Georgia. However, he seemed to have some difficulty in attracting large numbers of the required familial units. In May 1765, "he received the addition of a small ship load of settlers from the West of England."<sup>460</sup> These settlers likely came from his family's lands in Devonshire or from neighboring areas. His comments to these early settlers included an unusual preemptive defense of the conditions his countrymen might face once they arrived in East Florida. "My own experience having furnished me with the best instructions for others," Rolle began, made him somewhat of an expert on the colonization scheme.<sup>461</sup> Forewarned was forearmed. He addressed such issues as "the heat of the climate" as well as the thirst that people developed that was often only quenched by "drinking much strong liquor or run unmixed."<sup>462</sup> Then, quite curiously, Rolle admitted that settlers in Florida could suffer from what he described as increasingly in "the temperature of the mind."<sup>463</sup> The mental condition is vague, but Rolle describes it as one where relaxation causes individuals to think back on previous times in their life when they had regrets and such memories "produces the despair that enervates the man."<sup>464</sup> Finally, Rolle rounded out his list of troublesome wildlife that lurked in Florida including reference to all manners of insects, reptiles, wolves, bears, tigers, and panthers.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> Nathan Hill accurately points out that, "unlike the other colonists, [Denys] Rolle rarely discussed his settlement scheme." Hill, "Colonizing Schemes in an Integrated Atlantic Economy: Labor and Settlement in British East Florida, 1763-1773," 48. However, this may be because Rolle's private correspondence and diaries disappeared sometime during the nineteenth century and have never been found. It is likely he limited his comments in public correspondence and publications that have survived.

<sup>460</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 24.

<sup>461</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 25.

<sup>462</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 25, 28.

<sup>463</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 29.

<sup>464</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 29.

<sup>465</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 30.

However, once these troublesome issues were acknowledged, Rolle argued that the hardships people would face in East Florida would not be as terrible as others might have said. Moreover, the terms of indenture he offered to entice settlers to come to Rollestown he thought more than compensated for the hardships. He promised settlers the following: a town-lot that was big enough for both a house and a garden and a lot just outside the town of five acres that would be rented for a token sum. In return, Rolle asked the settlers bring with them a sum of 50 pounds sterling, a minimum of which 21 pounds sterling would be required for people to obtain passage from England to East Florida and to purchase bedding, kitchen and household furniture, carpentry and husbandry tools, implements for hunting and fishing, food provisions for six months, and livestock and seeds to start their own agricultural enterprises.<sup>466</sup> Individuals who did not have this amount of cash, Rolle offered them an indenture for a term of four years. Rolle believed their first year of service would be dedicated to sustainable farming of basic food stuffs on their town and five-acre lots. However, in the last three years, he anticipated cash crops would be the primary focus of their labor. He offered to divide the profits of these cash crops between he and the farmers. The amount of money the settlers would make would be enough, he believed, not only to satisfy their indenture to Rolle but to also procure either slaves or indentured servants for their own use.<sup>467</sup>

Rolle then made an interesting stipulation about the role that religion would play in his colony. "To establish and render more perfect this happy settlement, I would with every settler to let these be standing maxims in his own breast, that liberty be to all people to worship the divine Being according to their truth and persuasion, so as it tends to the honour where 'tis all due, not

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<sup>466</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 33-34.

<sup>467</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 35-36.

to the detriment of civil society."<sup>468</sup> Native Americans and African slaves would "be esteemed in all respects human."<sup>469</sup> And, above all else, the colonists would hold "that marriage be esteemed honourable, and not only a civil but a religious compact; that thought not to be deferred by the civil magistrate at any time, yet never to be omitted by the clergyman of the church of England, if present, or confirmed by him when the first opportunity offers."<sup>470</sup> Why would Denys Rolle go to the trouble of making specific reference about the role of marriage in his settlement? Perhaps it was because he understood and acknowledged the Crown's plans and realized the role families played in that scheme. Or, maybe, it was something more. Did Rolle already know, as early as within the first two years of the establishment at Rollestown that the women he had solicited to settle there were former 'fallen women' who might be at risk for relapse into sinful behavior lest they have a husband to cure their wanton lust?

Denys Rolle considered himself to be a devout Christian and was determined that his settlement in East Florida would be a Christian one dedicated towards God and the betterment of society. As one who was born with significant wealth, an amount that grew as his life progressed, Rolle felt a duty to help those less fortunate than he. As his obituary noted, in *the Gentleman's Magazine* noted in 1797, Rolle was "hospitable in his house, generous to his tenantry, indulgent to his servants, and, above all, extensively benevolent to the poor."<sup>471</sup> For Rolle, "His benevolence, at the same time, was extended to the poor and indigent, for whose distressed he had a heart to feel, and a hand very ready to afford them a speedy and liberal relief."<sup>472</sup> Given that Rolle's biggest focus was his settlement of the land grant he obtained in

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<sup>468</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 37.

<sup>469</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 38.

<sup>470</sup> Rolle, "Observations of Denys Rolle," 38.

<sup>471</sup> "Obituary of Denys Rolle," *Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1797), 617.

<sup>472</sup> "Obituary of Denys Rolle," *Gentleman's Magazine Supplement* (1797), 1125



East Florida in his early years, it is not surprising he combined his interests in colonization with his charity work.

At some point, perhaps influenced by the growing Enlightenment ideals of bettering one's self and the community in which they lived, Rolle would have become aware of the Magdalen House movement that gained traction in London in the late 1750s and early 1760s.<sup>473</sup> According to the manual that established the rules and regulations that formed and governed the London Magdalen House, "There cannot be greater Objects of Compassion, than poor, young, females, plunged into ruin by those Temptations, to which their very youth, and personal advantages expose them, no less than those passions implanted by Nature, for wife, good, and great ends."<sup>474</sup> The original committee of the London Magdalen House was formally elected on July 4, 1759 and included Francis Seymour-Conway, Earl of Hertford, who served as president and Robert Marsham, 2nd Baron Romney, who served as one of the committee's vice presidents.<sup>475</sup> Like Rolle, these two noblemen were a part of major landowning families in southern England. Of a similar social status, wealth, and geographic proximity, Seymour-Conway and Marsham likely shared their ideas of the Magdalen House movement with their neighbor Rolle.

Rolle had a substantial need for a large number of white, Protestant settlers to colonize the 20,000 acres that he'd been granted in East Florida. The Magdalen House would serve both his aims. It could provide a ready source of ladies he needed to entice to settle in Florida. And if

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<sup>473</sup> For an overview of the founding of the founding and evolution of the Magdalen House Movement, see Stanley Nash, "Prostitution and Charity: The Magdalen Hospital, a Case Study," *Journal of Social History* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1984), 617-628; Laura J. Rosenthal, *Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 111-112; and Jennie Batchelor, "Mothers and Others: Sexuality and Maternity in the Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House (1760)," chapter in *Prostitution and Eighteenth Century Culture: Sex, Commerce, and Morality*, edited by Ann Lewis and Markman Ellis, 157-170 (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>474</sup> *The Rules, Orders, and Regulations of the Magdalen House, for the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes. By Order of the Governors* (London: Printed by W. Faden, in Wine-Office Court, Fleet-Street, 1760), 2.

<sup>475</sup> *The Rules, Orders, and Regulations of the Magdalen House*, 24.

he could entice women to settle in the colony, Rolle likely believed that men in search of wives would follow. The family units that the British Crown had used as the foundation upon which they designed their colonization scheme would then be created. Additionally, by offering opportunities for the reformed women from the Magdalen House to colonize his lands, he would be fulfilling further charitable aims.

The first major Magdalen House opened in London on August 10, 1758.<sup>476</sup> Jonas Hanway founded it based upon a core principal: "prostitutes were victims of their situation and were reformable."<sup>477</sup> When the doors of the London Magdalen Hospital for Penitent Prostitutes, it followed in the tradition of a Catholic tradition that had begun on the continent. Prostitutes who decided to enter the Magdalen House first had to formally petition for admittance. Once completed, their application would be submitted to a committee of men who met once a month to assess the applications. While at the Magdalen House, prostitutes underwent a variety of experiences. Prostitutes who had become ill, usually with a sexually transmitted disease, or those who had become pregnant would often apply for entrance to the Magdalen House. However, their applications were rejected as ill health or pregnancy automatically disqualified the women from consideration. Instead, such women would be referred to local hospitals to receive treatment. Once they had been cured or given birth, they would often be offered admission to the Magdalen House after the fact.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> For an overview of the history of London's first Magdalen House, see Sarah Lloyd, "'Pleasure's Golden Bait': Prostitution, Poverty, and the Magdalen Hospital in Eighteenth-Century London," *History Workshop Journal* 41 (Spring 1996), 50-70.

<sup>477</sup> Mary Peace, "Figuring the London Magdalen House: Mercantilist Hospital, Sentimental Asylum, or Proto-Evangelical Penitentiary," chapter in *Prostitution and Eighteenth-Century Culture: Sex, Commerce, and Morality*, edited by Ann Lewis and Markman Ellis, 141-156 (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 141.

<sup>478</sup> Stanley Nash, "Prostitution and Charity: The Magdalen Hospital, a Case Study," *Journal of Social History* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1984), 618-619.

Potential penitents had to voluntarily submit their applications. They were not supposed to be compelled to enter the Magdalen House. Once the applicants gained entrance to the house, such 'fallen women' received food, clothing, shelter, and religious instruction. In return, they were expected to be completely obedient and submissive. While a penitent in the house, the women's lives were strictly controlled. The matron in charge of the house would determine what time they woke up in the morning, what time they ate their meals, and what time they would go to bed. They were given no choices about their diet, what they would wear, or how they were expected to behave. They would complete work to help raise funds for the house. The most common vocation the penitents engaged in was to complete laundry. Usually the penitents and the house split the wages. However, it was common for a portion of the wages to be saved until the penitent would be discharged, so she would have some money with which she could begin her new life. The women would not be discharged from the Magdalen House until they had seen the error of their ways, repented, and vowed never to return to their former lives of sin. Once deemed to have been 'reformed', the house released the women with the understanding they could not and would not be readmitted at a later date. Within twenty-five years of the London Magdalen House opening its doors, most of its penitents were not former prostitutes. Instead, most women who took refuge there had been admitted to the house were labeled as "seduced women" or women who had entered into sexual relationships with men based on the assumption they had a promise of marriage that was later broken. The average age span of penitents spanned from 15 to 25 with the most common age being 17 or 18. There was no set time for being discharged. If the house dismissed the penitent for breaking the rules or leaving voluntarily,

usually the women would be sent back to their parents or other friends within a three-year period.<sup>479</sup>

Why would women from the Magdalen House be attractive as potential colonists to a man like Denys Rolle? Surely it went beyond his charitable inclinations to help those less fortunate than himself. Perhaps the fact the Magdalen House was the latest reform movement in a slew of charities that emerged in the sweep of Enlightenment ideals that seized British society in the mid-to-late eighteenth century. But there may have been an even more compelling reason. The Magdalen House system based itself on complete obedience and subservience to authority. Theoretically, women who completed the Magdalen House system of reform were individuals who were supposed to be able to follow instructions, would not challenge the status quo of their social environment, and had found God in the struggle of their sufferings. There should not be, people like Rolle might have imagined, a more devout and thankful individual than a reformed sinner who had seen the error of their ways. Such material would likely seem to be the perfect clay from which to mold indentured servants to serve as the building blocks of Rollestown's population. However, as is often the case when an optimist is confronted with the harsh truths of reality, in his assessment Rolle found himself significantly mistaken.

From the late 1760s, Rolle had a very difficult time ensuring that his female indentured servants would stay on their assigned plantations and actually complete their work. He became extremely frustrated, for example, in 1768 due to the behavior of one female indenture and asked Governor James Grant to intercede with the woman on his behalf. Annoyed, Grant complained to the Earl of Hillsborough, the British Secretary of State, that Rolle "thinks that it is in my

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<sup>479</sup> Nash, "Prostitution and Charity: The Magdalen Hospital, a Case Study," 621-622.

power to make his [indentured] servants [at Rollestown] work.”<sup>480</sup> Rolle exhausted Grant’s limited amount of patience when he asked the governor to take “charge as chancellor a young girl of sixteen or seventeen, who he brought out from England for the second time, because they quarreled, and she was going to leave [Rollestown].”<sup>481</sup>

It is impossible to tell if Rolle recruited the unnamed female from the Magdalen House in London. But it would seem to fit with his belief that he was owed obedience and moral behavior from the women who lived at Rollestown. Begrudgingly, Grant intervened and convinced the young woman to stay at the settlement.<sup>482</sup> However, she later made good on her threat to abandon her post at Rollestown and violate the terms of her indenture when she and Rolle again quarreled over how she spent her wages. She insisted that Rolle owed her “a few guineas,” and she had a right to spend the money “for a gown.”<sup>483</sup> The young woman’s fate remains unrecorded, but her disappearance, for whatever reason, so upset Rolle that he retaliated against one of her other family members who also lived at Rollestown. Almost immediately after her disappearance, Rolle had a warrant immediately sworn out against her brother “under suspicion of stealing or carrying away a blanket from the village of Rolle.”<sup>484</sup> From this perspective, Rolle’s behavior and actions begin to take on a less virtuous aspect and seem to be those of a

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<sup>480</sup> Letter, James Grant to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1768, CO5/549 p. 268-269, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain. For more on the settlement of Rollestown, see Carl Bohnenberger, "The Settlement of Charlotta (Rollestown), 1765," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (July 1925), 43-49, Denys Rolle and Rollestown: A Pioneer for Utopia," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (Oct. 1928), 155-134, and "Rollestown," Unpublished Manuscript, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, Smathers Library Special Collections, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1952.

<sup>481</sup> Letter, James Grant to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1768, CO5/549 p. 268-269, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

Letter, James Grant to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1768, CO5/549 p. 268-269, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>483</sup> Letter, James Grant to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1768, CO5/549 p. 268-269, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

<sup>484</sup> Letter, James Grant to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1768, CO5/549 p. 268-269, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

man tainted with the need for revenge against someone who had betrayed his generosity and authority.

Rolle's tumultuous relationship with Grant continued throughout the late 1760s and early 1770s. On February 15, 1767, Grant noted that a group of "Rolle's settlers had deserted" the settlement at Rollestown. They came to St. Augustine and were directed to the Governor's House by a man named MacDonald, requested an audience with the Governor. Grant, whether not wanting to exacerbate his tense relationship with Rolle, or more likely not wanting to get involved in the complex situation, denied the request for the settlers to meet with him.<sup>485</sup> Four days later, three men returned from Rollestown. The men left their wives and children at Rollestown and came to St. Augustine "to complain to the magistrate that they were starved." The magistrate suggested they "kill & eat alligators & Rattle Snakes."<sup>486</sup> On February 18, 1767, Grant recorded a report made to him by one Mr. Haley of a summary of Rolle's current population at Rollestown. "They are divided into three classes[:] [adults and][those from age] seven to twelve...[& those] from two to seven." Grant observed that Rolle had personnel problems on several fronts. He received an offer from a carpenter who had settled in St. Augustine to move to Rollestown if he would pay him the same amount he had promised the man when he had travelled with Rolle on board a ship to East Florida and could show proof that provisions would be provided. However, Grant did not think Rolle would be successful since provisions were already running short at Rollestown and had required rationing. Further, Rolle had refused to pay his overseer, Perry, and the man had promised he would shortly leave Rolle's employ. Finally, one of the girls that Rolle had recruited stated that she had no desire to stay at

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<sup>485</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James Grant Recorded in His Own Hand at the Governor's House in St. Augustine, Florida, from January 1, 1767 to March 6, 1767," *El Escribano* 41 (2004), 86.

<sup>486</sup> Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James Grant," 89.

Rollestown. She had apparently formed a relationship with a sailor named Joe Gray. She had left Rollestown to visit the man. Rolle's clerk forgot to record the girl's trip in his ledger. "The girl has spirit," Grant remarked. She "went on board [and] stay'd two Days." She only returned to Rollestown "after great entreaties" but promised that she would be leaving Rollestown for good shortly. "She does not like so much Religion" as was practiced at Rollestown, likely at Rolle's insistence. "He prays three times a day and four times on Sundays" which was, apparently, too much religiosity for the girl.<sup>487</sup>

Historian Claude C. Sturgill believed that the propaganda surrounding Rolle and his efforts at Rollestown were less than accurate. Sturgill noted that as early as 1765, Rolle had written a lengthy petition to the members of the House of Commons describing his plight with the inhospitable and challenging conditions he faced at settling Rollestown less than two years after his arrival in East Florida. *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle* was printed privately and in limited number by the author himself in 1765. According to Sturgill, "the text is filled with bombastic, vitriolic phraseology and half-truths" which were quickly countered by "the colonial administration in St. Augustine" under the auspices of Governor Grant.<sup>488</sup>

Grant recorded his own response to Denys Rolle's attempts to go over the governor's head to the Crown about their conflict. On January 29, 1767, Grant wrote in his diary that Rolle arrived in St. Augustine and met with Grant. During this meeting, Rolle told Grant that he had taken letters the two men had exchanged about Rolle's attempts to choose a specific location for his 20,000-acre land grant. Rolle then told Grant that when the letters were received by the "King

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<sup>487</sup> Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James Grant," 88.

<sup>488</sup> Denys Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq., Setting Forth the Hardships, Inconveniences, and Grievances Which Have Attended Him in His Attempts to Make a Settlement in East Florida, Humbly Praying Such Relief, As In Their Lordships Wisdom Shall Be Met* (London, 1765); facsimile reprint, Claude C. Sturgill, ed. (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1977), xiv.

and his Ministers and Council" that the complaint would be taken to "be of great importance." Grant's apparent response to the threat was one of not being impressed. His only observation was that when Rolle was in the presence of his private clerk, the man was required to call him "governor." The clerk, in Grant's estimation, was "a great fool." A day later Grant recorded an encounter he had with Rolle's overseer, a man named Perry. He was, in Grant's opinion, "a dirty rascal" the Governor used to threaten Rolle. Grant threatened "to dispose of the [St. John's] Bluff [site] if he [Rolle] did not take the proper steps to locate his tract before he went to England." The governor then finished the conversation with Perry by making a final request. He asked the man to let Rolle's settlers know that "Rolle was not minded at home [England] more than an old oyster woman." And since he would not be taken seriously in London, they should be careful to put too much stock in his words.<sup>489</sup>

Dr. William Stork wrote to Grant about the outcome of Rolle's eventual efforts in London to defame Grant and defend himself:

Mr. Rolles who came over full of grievances against Your Excellency [Governor Grant], but never had the courage to speak either to a Ministor or to the Board of Trade, goes back in a few weeks, & all his grievances with him, unheard & unnoticed. He brings with him a valuable colony of sixty people consisting of shoe blacks, cheminy sweepers, sink boys, tinkers and taylors, bunters, cinder wenches, whores and pickpockets. What a Joyful sight it will be for Your Excellency to see this brittiflo Senator arrive with such a valuable acquisition for your government. He carries also over with him presents for the Indians to the amount of fifty shillings. He has such a disadvantageous opinion of St. Augustine, that he won't bring his people to it, for fear of their morals being debauched.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Schafer, "The Diary of Governor James Grant," 80.

<sup>490</sup> Letter, Dr. William Stork to James Grant, June 8, 1766, Daniel L. Schafer, ed., "New World in a State of Nature: British Plantations and Farms on the St. Johns River, East Florida, 1763-1784," *Florida History Online*, [http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Plantations/plantations/Denys\\_Rolle\\_and\\_Rollestown.htm](http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Plantations/plantations/Denys_Rolle_and_Rollestown.htm)



Rolle returned to England after spending a little over a year in East Florida. Parliament ultimately rejected his petition. He appeared before the Privy Council in London on October 30, 1766. At that meeting, Rolle warned the Crown that he believed it unlikely the state could maintain its current form of civil and military government. He argued that the current government, spearheaded by Grant's administration, was opulent and offered little benefit to the colonists who settled there.<sup>491</sup> The Privy Council immediately dismissed the warning. Rolle's warnings likely came because of his frustration at failing to establish Rollestown as a successful settlement. He expected greater assistance from the royal governor than he received. When combined with the personality conflicts Rolle faced when dealing with Grant, it is no wonder he was so displeased. However, Rolle's warning does hint at a key issue that would determine the success or failure of the colonies in Florida. So long as the royal governor maintained the Crown's plan and protected the royal prerogative, the colonies would flourish. When the royal governor chose to act in his personal interests, so too would the colonies fail as they drifted away from the master plan of colonization the Crown had worked so hard to develop.

Grant's assessment of Rolle, his behavior, and his motives likely hint at the reason as to why Rolle felt the need to proactively write an eighty-five-page tome defending himself if he was only about God's work at Rollestown. It is likely that Rolle knew that Rollestown was failing almost as soon as his recruits stepped off the boat and set foot in East Florida because of his own actions. Not only had Rolle purposefully deviated from the plan that the Crown wished to use to populate its colony successfully, but he had also failed to emulate the rules the Magdalen House System had established for itself in England. Combined with his arrogant

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<sup>491</sup> Denys Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq., Setting Forth the Hardships, Inconveniences, and Grievances Which Have Attended Him in His Attempts to Make a Settlement in East Florida, Humbly Praying Such Relief, As In Their Lordships Wisdom Shall Be Met* (London, 1765); facsimile reprint, Claude C. Sturgill, ed. (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1977), xxiv.

attitude and inflexible behavior, his presence on the ground as one of the few ‘hands-on’ landowners in British Florida did more harm than good at his settlement.

The Magdalen House System had a very complicated structure. A general committee of twenty-five individuals that included a president, vice-president, and chairman oversaw the Magdalen House. It required that the house maintain a number of officers, including a chaplain, physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, secretary, steward, porter, messenger, and a matron to act as a house-mother to the girls.<sup>492</sup> According to these strictures, Rolle never founded a formal Magdalen House on the London model. No documentation exists to demonstrate his recruitment of a committee and support staff at Rollestown. However, there may have been a very good reason for Rolle's more informal adoption of the spirit of the Magdalen House movement if not its precise practice. Specifically, the model set for the London Magdalen House stated that "no member of this committee shall be interested in a pecuniary way, directly or indirectly, in any business matter, or thing in the department of the said committee."<sup>493</sup> Rolle's business investment in Rollestown contradicts one of the primary strictures of the Magdalen House guiding strictures.

Ultimately, Rolle's attempt to colonize his land grant in East Florida failed.<sup>494</sup> Allan A. Swanson summarized Rollestown aptly when he said "Rollestown was an experiment in commercialism and humanitarianism during the brief English occupancy of Florida undertaken by an adventurer who was also an expert agriculturalist. He had one shortcoming, however,

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<sup>492</sup> *The Rules, Orders, and Regulations of the Magdalen House, for the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes. By Order of the Governors* (London: Printed by W. Faden, in Wine-Office Court, Fleet-Street, 1760), 11-17.

<sup>493</sup> *The Rules, Orders, and Regulations of the Magdalen House*, 11.

<sup>494</sup> Unlike other colonists who would try their hand at settling lands in Florida, fail, go home, and never return, Rolle decided to make a second attempt. In 1778, thirteen years after his first attempt, Rolle returned to East Florida. This time, he faced the administration of a new royal governor. James Grant had left East Florida in 1771 and returned to England. The Board of Trade eventually replaced him with Patrick Tonyn in 1774. Tonyn's personality differed from Grant's, but he still had difficulty in dealing with Rolle as Grant had.

failing to understand that all people were simply not of his caliber of men [and women]."<sup>495</sup> In his claims to the Crown, submitted to the East Florida Commission as a part of an attempt to recoup his financial losses after the end of the American Revolution, Rolle gave a number of reasons as to why his colony at Rollestown ultimately failed.<sup>496</sup>

He insisted that for many years he had experienced the opposition of Governor Grant that his cattle, numbering more than a thousand in 1771, had been sold in his absence by a dishonest agent in 1772; that this agent had dispersed his white people, treated his negroes cruelly, and had been protected by Chief Justice William Drayton that after his return from England, in 1778, he had imported eighty-nine whites, who had been seduced from him by subordinate civil officers, thus completing the ruin of his colony which had been increased to two hundred whites.<sup>497</sup>

At the time the Crown transferred East Florida back to the Spanish as a part of the peace negotiations in Paris, Rolle argued, the colony at Rollestown "was in a flourishing condition."<sup>498</sup> Rolle's claim directly relates to the various buildings, structures, and land improvements he had made between 1765 and 1783.

By 1782, the infrastructure of the settlement was described as follows. First, the largest structure in the village was a two-story house which featured "five sash type windows." A church and a rectory for the parson had been built. Ten-acre plots of land had been divided with an office building and workmen's quarters nearby it. There was no mention of any Indian village

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<sup>495</sup> Allan A. Swanson, *Pilo-Taikita: A History of Palatka, Florida*, Unpublished Manuscript (Putnam County Historical Society, 1967), 13. . <http://www.putnam-fl-historical-society.org/Historic/Historical%20Documents/Swanson%20Book-All.pdf>, 13.

<sup>496</sup> In September 1783, Rolle submitted claims for the losses he had suffered at Rollestown. He estimated losses that included 140 slaves valued at 7000 pounds sterling, 167 head cattle valued at 504 pounds sterling, and a mixture of horses, hog, sheep, poultry, and other provisions including tools, furniture, and boats valued at approximately 900 pounds sterling. His total for claims submitted was 28488 pounds sterling. See William H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* (DeLand, Fla.: The Florida Historical Society, 1929), 287-288.

<sup>497</sup> William H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* (DeLand, Fla.: The Florida Historical Society, 1929), 370.

<sup>498</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida*, 370.

nearby. But it was observed that Rolle built over the site. Allan Swanson estimated that the Indian Village they had found had been abandoned in the First Spanish Period but had likely survived in the spot upon which Rollestown had been built from 400 BCE to 1500 CE.<sup>499</sup> According to the claims submitted by Denys Rolle to the Crown for reimbursement of losses suffered because of the transfer of East Florida to Spain, by 1783, Rollestown had a significantly developed public infrastructure. In addition to the overseer's house and housing for the colonists, the settlement boasted a church, parsonage, offices, housing for slaves, and personal gardens.<sup>500</sup> Structures, buildings, and land improvements are not the only measures of success by which a colony must be judged. The land itself and the evolution of growth on the land must be measured to determine long-term viability. While Rolle may have used indentured and slave labor to build up his infrastructure, his inability to consider the land itself, and the people's relationship to the land, combined with the previously mentioned factors to doom Rollestown to oblivion.

Famed botanist, traveler, and writer William Bartram was confronted, in the words of Edward J. Cashin, with "a failed experiment much more elaborate than his own" when he arrived at the site of Rollestown in 1768. Bartram, an eyewitness to Rolle's failed colonization in action, laid the blame for the settlement at the feet of the type of people Rolle had recruited to live there. Rollestown demonstrated that "persons of low character and indifferent morals fared no better in the New World than in the old."<sup>501</sup> William Bartram had first visited the settlement in 1765 with his father, John. At that time, the elder Bartram observed that the settlement was the second in a chain of stops along the St. Johns River that began with a trading outpost with the Indians that

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<sup>499</sup> Allan A. Swanson, *Pilo-Taikita: A History of Palatka, Florida*, Unpublished Manuscript (Putnam County Historical Society, 1967), 13. <http://www.putnam-fl-historical-society.org/Historic/Historical%20Documents/Swanson%20Book-All.pdf>, 17-18, 21.

<sup>500</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida*, 370.

<sup>501</sup> Edward J. Cashin, *William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 95.

James Spaulding ran. Fifteen miles downriver "is Mr. Rolle's settlement; the whole distance from the lake [Lake George] to Mr. Rolle's s 45 miles, and the country in between is best discovered on the river." The senior Bartram speculated that by appearances the land was one where "tropical fruits and plants are found in great abundance and afford the strongest evidence that both the soil and the climate are fit for sugar, cotton, indigo, and other West-India productions." John Bartram's assumptions likely mirrored those of Denys Rolle who perhaps hoped that the native plants would be able to sustain his settlement during its establishment while proper crops were planted. John Bartram further went on to observe that "Mr. Rolle's plantation is well situated on the Eastern banks, and is the most considerable upon this river" being approximately 25 miles away from the fort at Picolata.<sup>502</sup> Other visitors echoed the Bartram's initial assessment of the geographic value the land itself possessed. A visitor to East Florida from South Carolina visited Rollestown in August 1765 and stayed the night there. He observed that "at Mr. Rolle's [settlement] the good land begins."<sup>503</sup> But consideration of the geographic location of the land was not enough to guarantee the success of the settlement. In fact, by placing this consideration so high in the priority list of the decision-making progress, Rolle failed to consider other potentially detrimental aspects of the land's geology.

Bartram described the town of Rollestown as such. "The [St. John's] river gradually narrowing, I came in sight of Charlota, where it is not above a half a mile wide, but deep; and as there was a considerable current against me, I came here to anchor. This town was founded by Denys Rolle, esq. and is situated on a high bluff, on the east coast, fifteen or twenty feet perpendicular from the river, and is in length half a mile, or more, upon its banks." He described

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<sup>502</sup> John Bartram, *A Description of East-Florida: With a Journal Kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia*, Third Edition (London: Sold by W. Nicols...and T. Jeffries, 1769), 6.

<sup>503</sup> John Bartram, *A Description of East-Florida*, 33.

the land as a mixture of sand, clay, and shells before gradually transitioning into a mixture of grass and trees, primarily pine trees intermixed with various bushes and shrubs.<sup>504</sup> One of the reasons, famed eighteenth-century naturalist Bernard Romans surmised that the settlement at Rollestown failed was because of the type of land that Rolle had selected for his people to live on. It was "an odd attempt towards settling and making an estate" because the ground was mostly sandy. It was located near the river, Romans observed, which gave it "a very romantic appearance."<sup>505</sup> But picturesque considerations aside, it was not the most well informed of choices as could have been made.

William Bartram expanded on his opinion about where Rolle's made a critical error in selecting the land that would be a part of the 20,000 acres that he had been granted the right to settle by the Crown. Before he left England, with approximately one hundred families, he had decided to settle near St. Marks because of its proximity to Apalachee Bay. However, strong winds and other weather blew him off course. He was forced to sail up the St. John's River. Taking along a scouting party of the settlers he had recruited, Rolle set off in a boat up the river. "Being struck with its majesty, the grand situations of its banks, and fertility of its lands, and at the same time considering the extensive navigation of the river, and its near vicinity to St. Augustine, the capital and seat of government, he altered his views on St. Mark's, and suddenly determined on this place, where he landed his first little colony."<sup>506</sup> Bartram was somewhat misinformed, perhaps regaled with this version of Rolle's decision to settle on the St. John's himself. In truth, of Rolle's initial recruits, little more than a dozen arrived with him in East

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<sup>504</sup> William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (Philadelphia: Printed by James and Johnson, 1791; reprint, London: Reprinted for J. Johnson in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1792), 91.

<sup>505</sup> Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (New York: Printed and Sold by R. Aitken, Bookseller, Opposite the London Coffee-House, Front Street, 1776), 35.

<sup>506</sup> Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, 91-93.

Florida. While Bartram may have been inclined to believe Rolle's romanticized tale of how he came to select the site that would become Rollestown, it appears the explorer still saw the failed settlement for what it was when he visited. "It seems, from an ill-concerted plan in its infant establishment, negligence, or extreme parsimony in sending proper recruits and other necessaries, together with a bad choice of citizens, the settlement grew weaker, and at length totally fell to the ground."<sup>507</sup>

Whose "ill-concerted plan" was Bartram referencing in his critique of the settlement of Rollestown? It most certainly could not have been the Crown's plan of settlement. Bartram began his assessment of Rollestown by pointing out that Rolle had already deviated from the Crown's approved plan for his settlement before he even landed in East Florida. He further observed that there a direct connection existed between the failure of the settlement and the type of people who had been involved with its colonization. The Crown had spent a tremendous amount of time, effort, and money to establish its colonization plans for East and West Florida. Within five years of the first time the plan was implemented, the details of its scheme were well known to simple explorers like Bartram, and it was clear what would happen if people deviated from the plan. The Crown's colonization plan was not the reason why settlements failed in East and West Florida. If anything, Bartram's observations about Rollestown prove that failure came when men on the ground in the colonies deviated from the plan because of their own personal inclinations.

The rumors about the type of men and women whom Rolle had chosen to populate his colony continued to linger on long after the settlement itself had been abandoned. In 1819, John Miller visited the site as he traveled down the St. John's River. Less than thirty-five years after

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<sup>507</sup> Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, 91-93.

Rolle abandoned the site, Miller observed that "a few vestiges of the town" survived.<sup>508</sup> A few years after Miller's visit, another traveler named Charles Vignoles gave a more precise description. "Of Rollestown, once an equally important settlement, not a vestige is left except a few pits which once were the foundations of large buildings, and a long avenue yet distinctly to be traced through the forests, [and] the commencement of a grand highway to St. Augustine." Vignoles seemed to mirror Miller's assessment of Rolle's colonization plans. Miller commented that Rolle's "singular and romantic purpose" in founding Rollestown was to create "an asylum to the penitent prostitutes of our country."<sup>509</sup> Perhaps merely echoing Miller's, Vignoles added in his brief notation on Rollestown, "the object of the founder was singular, in one respect, which contemplated the practicability of reforming the morals of a certain class of unhappy females, by transplanting them from the purlieus of Drury-lane to the solitudes of Florida."<sup>510</sup> No mention is made of Rolle's desire to found a new colony for the goal of satisfying his king or even for economic motive. Indeed, Rollestown had been reduced to a failed attempt by Rolle to create a place for fallen women to redeem themselves, perhaps in the guise of the Magdalen House system. Was Rollestown merely East Florida's first Magdalen House asylum? Miller certainly might have agreed it was. Still, it was a failed experiment like so many other things in British Florida. "But whether the zeal of the founder subsided, or the penitence of his magdalens ceased, I know not, but certain it is they have left no other remembrance than the story of their settlement."<sup>511</sup> Within seventy-five years of Rollestown's founding, John Lee Williams visited the

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<sup>508</sup> John Miller, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Spanish Main, in the Ship 'Two Friends': the Occupation of Amelia Island by M'Gregor, Etc.--Sketches of the Province of East Florida and Anecdotes Illustrative of the Habits and Manners of the Seminole Indians with an Appendix Containing a Detail of the Seminole War and the Execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister* (London: Printed for John Miller, 1817),153.

<sup>509</sup> Charles Blacker Vignoles, *Observations upon the Floridas* (New York: Published by E. Bliss & E. White, 1823), 73.

<sup>510</sup> Vignoles, *Observations upon the Floridas*, 73.

<sup>511</sup> John Miller, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Spanish Main, in the Ship 'Two Friends': the Occupation of Amelia Island by M'Gregor, Etc.--Sketches of the Province of East Florida and Anecdotes Illustrative of the*



remnants of Rolle's settlement. When remarking on the history of the settlement, Williams observed that Rolle had "transported nearly three hundred miserable females, who were picked up about the purlieu of London. His object was to reform them and make them good members of society."<sup>512</sup> Unfortunately, according to Williams, "they all died in a few years."<sup>513</sup>

What was Rollestown's final legacy?<sup>514</sup> Was it to be a testament to Denys Rolle's idealistic optimism in his goals to meld religious and moral reform with the desire to populate a colony in the New World for profit? Or was it to be a failure of the first attempt to establish a quasi-Magdalen House in British North America long before the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia opened its famed doors in 1800? Reality seems to indicate the latter. However, the outcome remains the same. The failure of the settlement at Rollestown and the failure of the pseudo-Magdalen House established there can be traced to one foundational cause: Denys Rolle's inability to follow the carefully outlined plan established by others who had a greater knowledge about how to succeed in colonization and the reform of potential colonists than he possessed. Rolle, however, was not the only British landowner who suffered from such failings, particularly when he is compared to the one-time Lieutenant Governor of West Florida, Montfort Browne.

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*Habits and Manners of the Seminole Indians with an Appendix Containing a Detail of the Seminole War and the Execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister* (London: Printed for John Miller, 1817), 153.

<sup>512</sup> John Lee Williams, *The Territory of Florida: Or Sketches of the Topography, Civil and Natural History, of the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes, from the First Discovery to Present Times* (New York: A.T. Goodrich, 1837), 188.

<sup>513</sup> Williams, *The Territory of Florida*, 153.

<sup>514</sup> A historical marker was placed near the site off of State Road 17 just south of Palatka in the late twentieth century. The site is currently owned by Florida Power and Light. "Rollestown Florida Historical Markers on Waymarking.com," Waymarking.com accessed on February 20, 2017, [http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMJ2W\\_Rollestown](http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMJ2W_Rollestown).

## **Campbelltown: West Florida's Most Famous Rotten Borough**

Montfort Browne was born around 1730 in Port Eliot, St. Germans, Cornwall as a younger son to a family of Irish descent. Browne entered the British Army sometime in the late 1750s, eventually serving in the 35th (Royal Sussex) Regiment of Foot under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel George Monro and late General James Wolfe during the French and Indian War. He fought in a variety of famous battles including the siege of Havana in 1762. During battle, Browne sustained two significant wounds. However, any glory from those wounds was tainted in 1763 when an enlisted man lodged a complaint against him. He did not accompany the 35th Regiment when the Crown dispatched it from Havana to Pensacola in West Florida later that year. Instead, using family connections, he obtained an appointment as Governor George Johnstone's Lieutenant Governor in West Florida from the Crown on November 22, 1764.<sup>515</sup>

Browne fit the mold of other men the Crown had selected to help guide their carefully developed colonization scheme. Like Johnson in West Florida and James Grant in East Florida, Browne was a career soldier of non-English descent with personal connections to powerful politicians. "He was related through his wife [Charlotte Inglis] to the Earl of Dartmouth, who was stepbrother to the Prime Minister, Lord North, in whose cabinet Dartmouth served as Lord Privy Seal throughout the [American] revolution. Browne also enjoyed the favor of Lord George Germain, the Secretary of State for the colonies until 1782."<sup>516</sup> Browne's connections ensured that like Grant in East Florida, he became a major land owner in West Florida in 1764 when he obtained a grant of 20,000 acres from the Board of Trade. Also, like Governors Johnstone and

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<sup>515</sup> Robin F.A. Fabel, "An Eighteenth Colony: Dreams for Mississippi on the Eve of the Revolution," *the Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 4 (Nov. 1993), 648-649.

<sup>516</sup> R.F.A. Fabel, "Montfort Browne's Corps: The Prince of Wales American Volunteers," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 70, no.283 (Autumn 1992), 157.

Grant, Browne believed that he could improve upon the colonization scheme so painstakingly developed by the Crown for which he had been specifically appointed so that he could act as the Crown's guardian of that important colonization scheme. When Johnstone left West Florida in January 1767, Browne rose to the position of acting governor. He continued to promote his version of the Crown's colonization scheme at two major places that he had been personally overseeing since his arrival in the province in January 1766. One was a settlement of 2621 acres at a place named Dauphin Island, where he recruited Irish colonists to settle.<sup>517</sup> The other settlement was several miles northwest of Pensacola. Its name was Campbell Town.

Between 1766 and 1771, Campbell Town became one of three major areas the West Florida government concentrated on developing as centers of colonization along with Pensacola proper and Mobile. Its creation stemmed from an application the Board of Trade received in late June 1765 from a group of French Huguenots living in London. The French Huguenots had applied to the Board of Trade for a plot of land in West Florida that they could settle as refugees fleeing religious persecution in the predominantly Catholic lands of Louis XVI's France. They promised they would establish a strong economy at their settlement by concentrating on the agricultural endeavors of cultivating vines with the hopes of producing wine and raising silkworms to institute a center for silk development in the region. By early June 1765, the French Huguenots had received a patron in the form of West Florida's Lieutenant Governor, Montfort Browne. In London at the time, Browne agreed to sponsor the settlement which the French Huguenots hoped to settle. The Board of Trade approved their request. According to the Board of Trade's records, they agreed to provide funding to Browne to transport approximately sixty men, women, and children from London to West Florida. They also agreed to engage Reverend

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<sup>517</sup> Fabel, "An Eighteenth Colony," 649-650.

Peter Levrier to accompany the settlers if he would act as their pastor and possibly schoolmaster. In return, he would receive an annual salary of between 100 and 200 pounds sterling. The band of settlers, their reverend, Browne, and a substantial amount of supplies scheduled to depart from London aboard a ship called the *Red Head* in late 1765.<sup>518</sup>

Problems between Browne and his would-be colonists arose even before they departed from London. Browne had several clashes with Levrier over seemingly mundane issues from which cabin each should occupy during the sea voyage to the true religious affiliation of the colonists that Levrier had delivered to Browne as a part of the would-be refugee group. As soon as the ship departed from London, Browne became concerned about rumors that Roman Catholics had secretly slipped in among his group of colonists. It bothered Browne enough that he forced the colonists to take an oath of allegiance when the ship put in for supplies at the port of Cork in Ireland. While there, Browne acted on additional instructions he had received from the Board of Trade regarding the rumor of closeted Roman Catholics among the soon-to-be Campbell Town settlers. The Board of Trade ordered Browne to dismiss any settlers he suspected to be Roman Catholic and ordered him to replace them with other appropriate Protestant settlers which he could recruit while the *Red Head* docked at Cork. The ship finally departed in either September or October 1765 and arrived in Pensacola by mid-January 1766.<sup>519</sup>

Upon their arrival in Pensacola, the Campbell Town settlers introduced themselves to the colony's governor, Commodore George Johnstone. Johnstone and Browne clashed over which land should be selected for the site of Campbell Town as a part of the 20,000 acres the Board of Trade had awarded to the group for them to establish their township. After examining several

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<sup>518</sup> J. Barton Starr, "Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida," *the Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (April 1976), 534.

<sup>519</sup> Starr, "Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida," 536-537.

potential sites, a final choice was selected northwest of Pensacola near the Escambia River. By water, the trip from Pensacola to the new township site was approximately twenty miles. By land, it was a distance of approximately ten miles. The site chosen for the new township was not a good one. Its distance from Pensacola left it extremely isolated, it was located in the heart of Indian territory, and the low-lying nature of some of the land made it flood prone and marshy in spaces. However, as soon as the site was chosen, Johnstone dispatched Elias Durnford, an officer in the British Army who also acted as an engineer and royal surveyor during his tenure in West Florida. Durnford surveyed the land and plotted a township plan just as he had done for Pensacola and Mobile.<sup>520</sup> Married colonists received first choice of town lots. A lottery was then established for the remaining lots to be distributed to unmarried colonists.<sup>521</sup> At least twelve families attempted to begin improving their lots, but progress was difficult and slow.

Hardships quickly shifted into substantial conflicts over the topic of Campbell Town. Supplies remained in short supply. When Johnstone inquired as to why there were rumors of hungry settlers unprotected at Campbell Town, Browne informed him that the supplies that had been purchased and that were supposed to have been loaded into the cargo holds of the *Red Head* in London never occurred. The ship had sailed, apparently, before the supplies had been loaded. Additionally, Browne refused to return the funds the Board of Trade had provided to him to purchase the supplies so the governor could use that funding to find an alternative source of goods for the colonists. Johnstone and Browne continued to argue with one another. Eventually, Johnstone had to threaten to arrest him if Browne did not produce some of the weaponry and gunpowder needed for the colonists' defense. The threat appears to have worked to some extent

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<sup>520</sup> Clinton M. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), 33.

<sup>521</sup> Starr, "Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida," 542.

as Browne did eventually procure some muskets and had them delivered to Johnstone, even if the governor complained of their inferior nature. To compensate, Johnstone dispatched twelve men and a sergeant from the 31st Regiment who stayed with the colonists for the first two months of the settlement's existence. Unfortunately, difficulties persisted.

Initially, it appeared that Campbell Town might gain an identity as a bucolic countryside paradise counterweight to the growing urban center at Pensacola. Some colonists liked to visit the settlement as it offered them a pleasure jaunt by water. For example, Elizabeth Digby Pilot recorded her experience during one such visit to the Huguenot settlement at Campbell Town in early 1767.<sup>522</sup> “We made a party in summer to see it and were pleased with the situation...” having travelled there via barge. Her close friend, Rebecca Blackwell, accompanied Pilot. While there, they “...enjoyed a pleasant week” during which they visited nearby Indian settlements during an apparent pause in hostilities, put on impromptu musical concerts where Pilot played her guitar, and ate fresh game caught by their husbands.<sup>523</sup>

However, such visits remained few and far in between. They also seemed to have reflected a disconnect on the true nature of long-term living conditions for the residents of Campbell Town from what the Pensacola visitors observed. Bernard Romans observed that disease, particularly the spread of fevers, was a problem with which the British settlements in the southeast constantly had to deal. “Savannah in Georgia, Rolles-Town, and most of the settlements on the St. John's, in East Florida, at Campbelltown, near the mouth of the Escambe and at Mobile in West-Florida; this disease [fever] attacks the people in much the same form as

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<sup>522</sup> Campbell Town was a small settlement built on the Escambia River by French Huguenot settlers in 1765. Located approximately 10 miles from Pensacola by overland travel, or twenty miles travelling by river. See J. Barton Starr, “Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976), 532-547.

<sup>523</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 28-29.

the continued fever." Romans warned people that even if they thought themselves to be recovered that it might be possible to relapse. Instead, he advised them to:

...use the cold bath often, wear garlic and camphire in their pockets, not expose themselves to rain, and above all keep warm and dry feet, and if got wet by rain not to change their close too suddenly; never go out of a morning fasting, but before you go to work, business, & such eat a piece of bread and drink a glass of the bitter infusion, avoid the night air, and keep some fire in the house, particularly in the mornings and evenings."<sup>524</sup>

The poor state of affairs at Campbell Town obviously prevented the settlers from following Roman's advice.

By June 1767, the few colonists who remained at Campbell Town were starving to death. Their minister, Reverend Levrier, had abandoned the settlement six months after his arrival there. Browne himself had to intervene when confronted by the colonists' pitiful state of affairs. After George Johnstone departed Pensacola for England in January 1767, Browne took over as acting governor. That summer, he called a meeting of the West Florida Assembly. When the council met, "His Honor [Browne] then mentioned the great distress of the French Inhabitants of Campbell-Town and proposed to the Council whether they should allow them provisions for six months longer. Who were unanimously of opinion that the French Inhabitants of Campbell-Town should be allowed provisions for six months longer."<sup>525</sup> But it was too little, too late. Eventually, the sole legacy of Campbell Town could be found active in West Florida politics.

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<sup>524</sup> Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (New York: Printed and Sold by R. Aitken, Bookseller, Opposite the London Coffee-House, Front Street, 1776), 239-240.

<sup>525</sup> Browne to the Earl of Shelbourne, June 29, 1767 CO5/584/427.

West Florida formed a colonial legislature in 1766 when the General Assembly met for the first time on November 24, 1766. "It was made up of two bodies, the Council and the House of Assembly, and legislation required the consent of the governor."<sup>526</sup> It continued to meet regularly until interrupted by military activity around and in Pensacola in 1778. When the General Assembly was created, it awarded Campbell Town two representatives in recognition of its status as a voting precinct or electoral borough. Settlers selected John Satterthwaite and David Williams as their inaugural representatives. Dr. John Lorimer challenged the election of Williams, stating he had received more votes than his opponent. Lorimer insisted he had received 16 votes while Williams had gotten only 12. The contested election was investigated by a committee of representatives from the other district. Eventually, they upheld Lorimer's claims of voter fraud and awarded him Williams's seat. The taint of impropriety never left Campbell Town. It continued to elect representatives to the West Florida Assembly over the next five years even though its population had dwindled to no more than a couple of residents. As Robin Fabel observed, "By 1770, Campbell Town had become a 'rotten borough' with representatives in the legislature but no voters."<sup>527</sup> By 1771, Johnstone's permanent replacement, Peter Chester, had arrived and replaced Browne.<sup>528</sup> He could no longer turn a blind eye to the political corruption

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<sup>526</sup> Peter J. Hamilton, "Acts of the Assembly of British West Florida (1766-1778)," *The Gulf States Historical Magazine* (n.d.), 273-279.

<sup>527</sup> Robin F.A. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>528</sup> Like Johnstone, Browne's hot-tempered personality got the better of him when he engaged in a duel with a man in Pensacola in 1769. The man, a trader, lived. But the case added to a substantial number of complaints colonists had lodged against him with the Crown. He was recalled by the Board of Trade in December 1769 when they appointed Elias Durnford as acting governor to replace him. He returned to London to defend himself and was somewhat successful. Thanks to his political connections, largely gained by his marriage in 1774 to Charlotte Inglis, he obtained another political appointment. In March 1774, the Crown granted him the governorship of the Bahamas. He arrived in Nassau on September 22, 1774. His wife gave birth later that year. Taken as a prisoner of war when the Patriots attacked Nassau on March 3, 1776, he spent several months as a prisoner of war during the American Revolution. British officials arranged a prisoner exchange for General William Alexander. Browne returned to the Bahamas to resume his post in July 1778. He remained in that office until the Crown replaced him with John Robert Maxwell in 1780. He died sometime after 1783 having achieved the rank of Brigadier General in the British Army.



Campbell Town represented.<sup>529</sup> They had only had one uncontested election in five years. In 1771, Chester refused to authorize election of representatives from "Campbell Town because it was almost deserted."<sup>530</sup>

Why did Campbell Town fail? Historians have argued over the reasons.<sup>531</sup> Usually, disease is the most commonly cited reason. However, what if the answer is more complicated than that? What if the failure of the colony lay not in acts of nature but in the failure of man? Specifically, what if the failure of the settlement lay in the failure of a single man? Namely, what if Montfort Browne was the primary reason why Campbell Town failed?

According to Robin Fabel, "private venturers did not totally neglect West Florida. There were two significant schemes, one hatched by Montfort Browne."<sup>532</sup> Why is West Florida's first lieutenant governor and first acting governor, one of the most trusted representatives of the Crown in the entire province, so aptly described by Browne as a "private venturer"? Simply put, Browne is described as a "private venturer" because he had little desire to establish, protect, and perpetuate the Crown's colonization scheme for the good of the empire. He was a single individual working to further his own interests and personal fortune. He demonstrated this time

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Robin F.A. Fabel, "An Eighteenth Colony: Dreams for Mississippi on the Eve of the Revolution," *the Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 4 (Nov. 1993), 659.

<sup>529</sup> Starr, "Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida," 546.

<sup>530</sup> Peter J. Hamilton, "British West Florida," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* 7 (1903), 415.

<sup>531</sup> The various types of diseases and illnesses that were prevalent in East and West Florida are discussed in-depth by Bernard Romans who he mentions no less than a dozen types of fevers that were quite commonly diagnosed in the colonies. See Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, 222-241. For more information on the most common opinions held by British men and women about their fear of their health deteriorating due to living in the warm climates of Florida and the West Indies, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Fear of Hot Climates in the Anglo-American Colonial Experience," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 41, no. 2 (Apr. 1984), 213-240, Laura D.S. Harrell, "Colonial Medical Practice in British West Florida, 1763-1781," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 41, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1967), 539-558, Robert R. Rea, "'Graveyard for Britons,' West Florida, 1763-1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 2, (Apr. 1969), 345-364, and Robert R. Rea, "Life, Death, and Little Glory: The British Soldier on the Gulf Coast, 1763-1781," chap. in *The Military Presence on the Gulf Coast*, ed. William S. Coker, 21-35 (Pensacola, Fla.: Gulf Coast History Humanities Conference, 1978).

<sup>532</sup> Fabel, "An Eighteenth Colony," 648.

and time again by the way he intentionally and recklessly disregarded instructions he received from the Crown and its representatives because he thought he knew better.

First and foremost, Browne failed to ensure the French Protestant families the Crown had authorized him to supervise in London actually reached West Florida. It appears that many decided to abandon the venture in Cork when the *Red Head* made port not long after their departure from London. Browne scrambled to find replacement colonists wherever and however he could. It appears he welcomed aboard any warm bodies he could find regardless of marital status, skill level, or devotion to the Crown. Second, once the *Red Head* had departed from Cork, Browne forced all the colonists to sign contracts binding them to him as indentured servants. When they arrived in Pensacola, and Browne could find few if any people to purchase the indentures, he dissolved the bonds and allowed the colonists freedom to go where they would. When some of them eventually made their way to Campbell Town, word of Browne's actions began to circulate in the capital. Browne gained a reputation in Pensacola that ranged from being described as a kidnapper to the more extreme label of human trafficker.<sup>533</sup> This is supported by the way in which Browne continued to treat the scattered but remaining residents of Campbell Town as his own personal indentured servants. He restricted their movements, demanded tribute labor to construct defensive fortifications of the town, and threatened anyone who failed to comply with the loss of their lots of land.<sup>534</sup>

The Crown's original plan specifically relied on the willingness of its primary foundation of colonists to settle in East and West Florida. By forcing the few colonists he retained on the lots at Campbell Town, Browne undermined a scheme he had begun to damage almost as soon as

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<sup>533</sup> Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 14.

<sup>534</sup> Starr, "Campbell Town: French Huguenots in British West Florida," 544.

the *Red Head* had left the dock in London. It appears that Campbell Town never developed into the mature township that Elias Durnford had laid out in 1766.<sup>535</sup> Additionally, the French refugees never had a chance to assimilate. Death at the hands of Indian attacks and because of the disease that ravaged the colony may have been merely a merciful end to what was already a doomed endeavor because of Browne's privately motivated and poorly executed actions.

### **New Smyrna: British Florida's Successful Failure**

Dr. Andrew Turnbull was forty-eight years old when the metaphorical colonization bug that brought him to East Florida bit him. It appears he became enthralled with the idea of colonizing land in British Florida, perhaps as a result of the frenzy that seized London's elite society in the wake of the Crown's furious public relations campaign that had launched in 1764. Turnbull was born in Scotland in 1718. In 1751, he travelled to Turkey. While there, he met the daughter of a prominent trader of Greek descent. Her name was Maria Gracia Dura Bin Rubini. Known as Gracia, she married Turnbull soon after his proposal because the couple had fallen in love. The pair married in her native town of Smyrnea in 1751. During the course of their marriage, the couple had twelve children. Convinced that the workers of his wife's birthplace would make an excellent source of skilled laborer, Turnbull abandoned his lucrative medical practice in London and began to recruit business partners.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> There are very few references in historical documentation that mention any building improvements, structures, and infrastructure that were actually developed at Campbell Town. It appears, beyond a few residential houses, colonists never constructed any substantial projects. However, archaeological evidence cannot be used to support or refute this assumption. The site of the Campbell Town settlement is currently unknown. Archaeologists at the University of West Florida began to search for the site in 2016. However, their efforts have not yet positively identified the site. For more information, see Richard Conn, "Search Continued for Pensacola's Lost Colonial-Era Settlement," *The Pensacola Post* (May 12, 2016). Accessed on May 18, 2019. <https://thepulsepensacola.com/2016/05/search-continues-pensacolas-lost-colonial-era-settlement/>

<sup>536</sup> Kenneth Henry Beeson, *Fromajadas and Indigo: The Minorcan Colony in Florida* (Charleston: The History Press, 2006), 29-30.

By 1765, Turnbull had found an aristocratic patron in the form of Sir William Duncan, a baronet. Duncan, like Turnbull, was Scottish, had graduated with a medical degree from the University of St. Andrews, and established a very well-known medical practice in London during the 1760s. Turnbull recruited a second investor named Dr. George Maculey to join his group. Richard Grenville, Earl of Temple, later replaced Maculey, and the new trio applied for a land grant in East Florida on June 17, 1776. The Board of Trade recommended all three men receive large land grants. The Crown agreed and conferred upon each man a grant of 20,000 acres each.<sup>537</sup>

Land grant in hand, Turnbull departed from London for St. Augustine as quickly as he could. He arrived in St. Augustine in November 1766 with his wife and nine children. Interestingly enough, out of all the men who acted in major colonization attempts in East and West Florida, Turnbull was the only one who moved his entire family to the province. After introducing himself to East Florida's governor James Grant, Turnbull worked to select a site for his new township. Once he had consulted the province's surveyor, William Gerard de Braham and his assistant Frederick George Mulcaster, they conducted a second survey of the territory in 1767. Eventually, Turnbull selected a site about seventy-five miles south of St. Augustine near Mosquito Inlet and the Halifax River. He would name the colony Smyrnea after his wife's birthplace. Colloquially, the settlement eventually became known as New Smyrna.<sup>538</sup> Once Turnbull had chosen his site, he returned to Europe to finalize his administrative and logistical issues. A brief stop in London resulted in Turnbull obtaining liquid capital from Duncan and

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<sup>537</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, *St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784*, Volume 28 (St. Augustine, F.L.: El Escribano, The St. Augustine Historical Society, 2001), 125-126.

<sup>538</sup> Beeson, *Fromajadas and Indigo*, 29-30.

Grenville to finance his attempt to import new colonists. He then departed for the Mediterranean to recruit the settlers for his new township.

Meanwhile, in East Florida, James Grant's modifications to the Board of Trade's original scheme, that had been developed to guide the colonization of East Florida, had significant results. Perhaps because of his frustration in dealing with landowners like Denys Rolle, Grant handled subsequent land requests differently as early as 1766. Coincidentally, this was the same year as Turnbull's arrival in the colony. First, Grant worked to attract a large number of aristocratic but absentee landowners. Perhaps he envisioned recreating an idealized version of the Tidewater gentry that helped a wealthy social elite emerge in places like Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia. Regardless of his motivations, Grant obviously desired to keep the population of colonial elite small so that they could be easily controlled. The few planters who might actually choose to reside in East Florida would be lured with the promise of government appointments within the colony's administrative bureaucracy. In order to bolster the colony's demographics, Grant encouraged the use of indentured servants who would be managed by their masters. Even more preferable to the use of white indentured servants, Grant heavily advocated the widespread use of enslaved African labor. The African slaves would be managed by overseers. Grant's choices demonstrate the fact that he was the first royal official in East Florida to deviate from the Crown's approved colonization scheme. Deviating less significantly from the approved plan, George Johnstone's population within the colony of West Florida was composed of small farmers and other members of the middling class who actually resided there. In contrast, Grant likely hoped that New Smyrna could be his first test case to see if his personal modifications to the approved colonization scheme would be successful. What Grant did not count upon was the fact that Turnbull would make his own adjustment to the Crown's

colonization scheme. Thus, from its very inception, the settlement at New Smyrna would be unlike anything envisioned by the Board of Trade back in London when plans to colonize Florida first emerged in the early 1760s.

Once Turnbull achieved his land grants, he began to implement further modifications to the Board of Trade's original colonization plan. First, he sought to recruit Mediterranean peoples from places like Gibraltar, Italy, and Greece. Most of these people spoke very little if any English. Second, these people hailed predominantly from communities in Europe where Roman Catholicism or its Eastern Orthodox counterpart was the dominant religion. Last, because Turnbull transported many of these colonists to East Florida via indentures, almost none of them would own the land upon which they would live and work in their own right. While some of these decisions violated the will of the Board of Trade, most of them were not illegal. However, the importation of a significant number of Roman Catholics into what was planned to be a royal colony of a loyal Anglican majority flouted both rule and the king's law itself. It is worth noting that Turnbull did retain the critical component of the Crown's colonization scheme -- recruiting families to settle his lands.

The importance of the family unit in the colonization process was something that Turnbull had identified and seemed determine to utilize in colonizing New Smyrna. In a letter to one of his major investors, Sir William Duncan, dated July 17, 1768, Turnbull wrote:

I came here lately from our Plantation to settle accounts with the captains who brought our People from Europe, and also to provide many things wanted for our colony. I have begun to fix the families on the banks of the Hillsborough where we have eight miles in front. This will be all settled in farms in a few days. Each family to have about seventy yards in front on the River and to run back to as many acres as the family can cultivate. By this disposition every family or farm house will be about two hundred feet one from another and as lands on river are not only good but fit for vines, cotton plants, and mulberry trees for making silk, I flatter myself

that it will not only be very advantageous settlement to the proprietors, but it will also form a fine Nilotic prospect. The Increase of families from these now imported will soon admit of furnishing a second range on the sides of the meadow nigh the swamp, about two miles back from River line. A ridge of Pine Lands may be left as a common between both. The sides of the back swamp about five miles from the river will be a proper place for a third line of farms, and a fourth may be formed on the edges of the rich marshes on St. Johns River. I mean that part of it behind and contiguous to our tracts.<sup>539</sup>

Turnbull assembled a rag tag assortment of Mediterranean peoples. The largest group were villagers from Leghorn (Livorno) in Italy. The second largest group were Greeks who came from Mani. He recruited other colonists from stops at Crete, Smyrna, Melos, Santorini, Corsica, and Minorca. The final total of recruits reached 1403. The group shared the following characteristics: men, women, and children chose to emigrate in preestablished family units, many of the families were of the Roman Catholic or the Greek Orthodox faith, very few if any could speak any English, and almost all of them considered themselves refugees.<sup>540</sup> Turnbull's final counts reflect that he recruited 1403 colonists that sailed on eight ships for East Florida from Gibraltar in the spring of 1768.<sup>541</sup> As Carita Doggett Corse observed, the settlement at New Smyrna represented "the largest colony at its start that had ever come to the New World."<sup>542</sup> It was even larger than the colonization efforts that led to the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 as that trip started with no more than five hundred people.

Upon their arrival in East Florida, the colonists destined to settle New Smyrna faced harrowing conditions. Turnbull had recruited almost two and a half times more colonists than he

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<sup>539</sup> Letter, David Yeats to James Grant, January 5, 1783, Daniel L. Schafer, ed., "The Letters of Dr. Andrew Turnbull," *Florida History Online*. <http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Turnbull/letters/9.htm>.

<sup>540</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 454-455.

<sup>541</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 72.

<sup>542</sup> Carita Doggett Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida* (Jacksonville, Fla.: The Drew Press, 1967), 38.

had prepared for at the site. Supplies were short and conditions harsh. The colonists also became annoyed when Turnbull and his overseer explained what the colonists must do when it came to building expectations. "Unfortunately, the spatial organization common to Mediterranean agriculturalists was not considered by Turnbull when the colony housing was planned and built. With its linear orientation along the river, the central village concept from which farmers could walk out to their fields by day and return to the close comfort of family and friends for the night was missing in New Smyrna. The disruption of socialization must have caused a great deal of dissatisfaction with the majority of the colonists who immigrated from Mediterranean countries."<sup>543</sup> Still, the colonists and Turnbull persisted. While death rates remained high, some progress began to be made. "By the spring of 1769, an approximate eight-mile long strip along today's Indian River had been cleared and crops were being grown, including vegetables for use by the colonists as well as commercial crops."<sup>544</sup> Unfortunately, nature intervened when a devastating hurricane hit the coast later that fall.

In September 1769, during Elizabeth Digby Pilot's tenure in St. Augustine, a severe hurricane ravaged the coast near St. Augustine and New Smyrna.<sup>545</sup> The experience clearly terrified Pilot, who described the storm as "...a violent tempest... attended with heavy rain."<sup>546</sup> During the hurricane, Pilot and the whole settlement feared for their lives. "The whole camp was

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<sup>543</sup> Dorothy L. Moore and Dana Ste. Claire. 1999. "Dreams and Promises Unfulfilled: Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony," *Florida Anthropologist* 52, no. 1-2, 39.

<sup>544</sup> Moore and Ste. Claire, "Dreams and Promises Unfulfilled," 36.

<sup>545</sup> The hurricane season of 1769 was a particularly active one, as noted by Bernard Romans who wrote that "if a hurricane was ever known in this peninsula, it was on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1769." See Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, 90. For more information on the historical record of hurricanes that affected East and West Florida during the British period, see David Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes, 1492-1870* (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1963), 48-51, 62-73. Matthew Mulchaly, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 198 and Jay Barnes, *Florida's Hurricane History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 39-44.

<sup>546</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot", 43-44.



in an uproar. The soldiers' huts were mostly blown down, the women and children were running out screaming with consternation. The men were all in confusion, and a scene of sad devastation presented itself."<sup>547</sup> When the storm ended, Elizabeth found her home to have been badly damaged by strong winds, forcing her to rebuild her house in the aftermath of the hurricane.<sup>548</sup>

After surviving the damage inflicted by the 1769 hurricane, the colony showed some signs of improvement. "The good years, 1771-1773, were characterized by a fall in the death rate, an increase in agricultural crop yields, and a somewhat stabilized life for the indentured colonists. The bad years began again with severe droughts in 1773 and 1775."<sup>549</sup> Colonists abandoned the settlement at New Smyrna in 1777. Several issues contributed to its decline and eventual abandonment. First, while it recovered from the substantial hurricane of September 1769, such a disaster likely took its toll on both the settlers and colonists. Second, a serious drought that began in 1773 lasted for the next three years, and it crippled the agricultural production at the site. The colonists were unable to feed themselves let alone produce the requisite indigo and sugar cash crops that Turnbull so desperately needed the settlement to produce to turn a profit. Third, poor management with abusive overseers inflamed the colonists in Turnbull's absences from the site. When Sir William Duncan died in 1774, his daughter, Lady Mary Duncan inherited his share in the settlement investment scheme. She was not as generous as her father and refused to provide Turnbull additional funding to buy extra supplies to help the colonists. Last, Turnbull's political aspirations brought him into conflict with other leading men and their families in St. Augustine. A failed attempt to replace departing Governor James Grant in 1771 resulted in a bruised ego and tense relations with the East Florida royal administration.

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<sup>547</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot", 43-44.

<sup>548</sup> Pilot, "The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot", 43-44.

<sup>549</sup> Moore and Ste. Claire, "Dreams and Promises Unfulfilled," 36-37.

Additionally, Turnbull's personality continually clashed with Grant's eventual replacement, Patrick Tonyn. The Turnbull/Tonyn squabble was the final nail in the coffin. When the colonists at New Smyrna appealed to Tonyn over the wretched conditions they faced, he absolved them of their indentures and invited them to move to St. Augustine in 1777. Approximately six hundred colonists left New Smyrna in June of that year, never to return.<sup>550</sup> Turnbull tried to salvage what he could.<sup>551</sup> However, he too eventually left the colony for greener pastures.<sup>552</sup>

With the abandonment of New Smyrna, like Rollestown and Campbelltown before it, the settlement can only be deemed a failure. However, New Smyrna was East and West Florida's most successful failure. Out of all the major settlement attempts, New Smyrna was the colonization attempt that most closely resembled the scheme developed by the Crown. It relied on large scale importation of family units, kept the family households together, and attempted to foster loyalty to the Crown and the colony among the new population. Prior to the 1773-1775 drought, New Smyrna showed all signs that it had begun to grow just as Turnbull and the Crown had hoped. Between 1771 and 1773, the death rate dropped dramatically. The population appeared to be stabilizing. Crop yields were high in these years, and there appears to have been

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<sup>550</sup> Moore and Ste. Claire, "Dreams and Promises Unfulfilled," 41.

<sup>551</sup> Daniel L. Schafer's research on Dr. Andrew Turnbull continues to be the most recent scholarship on the Scottish doctor. He has a manuscript in progress about Turnbull tentatively entitled *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the Mediterranean Community at New Smyrna, Florida, 1766-1777*. In a 2014 interview he gave, Schafer described his project as "My current research topic is a historical biography of Dr. Andrew Turnbull (1720-1792), a Scot physician employed by the Levant Company at Smyrna, Turkey who partnered with two wealthy and influential British men to found a huge settlement in British East Florida. In 1767 and 1768, Turnbull traveled to East Florida to select land for the settlement, then sailed throughout the Mediterranean recruiting 1403 Italians, Greeks, and Minorcans as indentured laborers. Hundreds of Mediterranean families were transported to adjoining 20,000-acre wilderness tracts at Mosquito Inlet on Florida's Atlantic Coast (today at New Smyrna Beach and Edgewater, Florida). A staggering death rate, a rebellion, hurricanes, droughts, food shortages, and severe financial shortfalls followed, yet there were heroic accomplishments by the laborers. The American Revolution and a bitter and vindictive conflict between Turnbull and the British governor, Colonel Patrick Tonyn, led to the demise of the Smyrnea settlement." See "The Intriguing, Paradoxical Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr.: Q&A with Daniel Schafer." *The Florida Bookshelf*. February 12, 2014, <https://floridapress.blog/2014/02/12/daniel-schafer-on-zephaniah-kingsley-jr-and-the-atlantic-world-slave-trader-plantation-owner-emancipator/>

<sup>552</sup> After the Turnbells left East Florida, they eventually settled in Charleston, South Carolina. He died on March 13, 1792. His wife, Gracia, died six years later at the age of 58 on August 2, 1798. They are both buried in St. Philip's Churchyard in Charleston. See Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony*, 194.

little unrest among the settlers. Substantial infrastructure and land improvements occurred with the building of roads, canals, a wharf, warehouse, two churches, and multiple residential dwellings of significant building materials.<sup>553</sup> All signs indicate the settlement seemed to be on the upswing. This changed when drought and warfare interrupted the colonization process. The drought of 1773-1775, coupled with the destabilization of social, political, and economic standards in the colonies because of the outbreak of hostilities that lead to the American Revolution in 1775 simply proved to be too much for the settlement to bear. It was possible that, with more time, the settlement would have rebounded from the drought. Unfortunately, there was just not enough time to allow that to happen. Still, New Smyrna is the best proof that exists to demonstrate that the tenants of the Crown's colonization scheme were stable when followed by royal officials and would-be British proprietors.

There can be no doubt, from the perspective of judging if East and West Florida were successful colonization attempts by the British Crown, the answer must be a resounding no. However, whether the three sample settlements organized by the venturers individually can be called downright failures or potential success is complicated: disease, hurricanes, drought, famine, and war played a substantial role in affecting the fate of each town. Even more than these external forces working against the potential success of the settlements, internal issues

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<sup>553</sup> As testament to the cloaked success of Turnbull's settlement can be found in an examination of the colony's remains. The improvements that the settlers at New Smyrna had made were so substantial that they were still largely intact more than a decade later when a visitor to the site in November 1783 observed at least 100 structures had served. Corse, Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony, 189. At the New Smyrna Colony site, material remains reveal a glimpse of the settlement's infrastructure. In addition to the grand plantation houses of the Turnbull family, dozens of smaller tabby houses were built to house the indentured workers. In addition, the sites contain remnants of significant chimney stacks, various remnants of sugar works, wells, and at least three stone wharfs. Commercial buildings, including what was perhaps a substantial subterranean storehouse, and canals built to irrigate the agricultural fields also survive. The canals were hand dug by the colonists and "served several purposes for the colony, such as irrigation, drainage of swampy lands, and inland transportation routes within the colony via small flat-bottomed boats or canoes." Additional features discovered by archaeologists include two rice dikes as well as a coquina spring cap and ditch to further aid in the development and upkeep of the canal system as it was designed to aid agricultural production. See Moore and Ste. Claire, "Dreams and Promises Unfulfilled," 25-30.

doomed the ventures from the beginning. Denys Rolle, Montfort Browne, and Andrew Turnbull each made distinct choices to deviate from the Crown's approved colonization scheme in different ways. While Rolle's religious crusading and Browne's attempt to build his own fiefdom resulted in the most drastic departures from the colonization scheme, Turnbull's alterations also had a large effect on the viability of New Smyrna. Turnbull deviated from the approved scheme less substantially than Rolle and Browne. However, by ignoring the demographic profile sought by the Crown, New Smyrna's population never stood a chance to integrate into British culture successfully. Religion, language, and ethnicity proved to be complications too great for the Minorcans to overcome. Even after they eventually abandoned New Smyrna and moved to St. Augustine in the late 1770s, the community remained isolated in a small part of the city that became known as the Minorcan Quarter.<sup>554</sup> Given enough time, there are also some indications failures like New Smyrna may have achieved some success because Turnbull, unlike Rolle and Browne, used families as a tool with which he crafted his settlement. Unfortunately, for East and West Florida, time was something they had too little of when it came to their ultimate fates and their future fortunes.

### **Conclusion: Moving Past the Success or Failure Florida Question**

To understand why East and West failed, a root cause must be identified. At its core, the success and failure of each major British settlement in the Floridas can be traced to a single foundational cause – failure to adhere to the approved colonization scheme designed and sponsored by the British Crown. Royal officials and land grantees amended, adopted, and adapted the plan to fit their personal goals, desires, and individual situations. Each settlement, in

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<sup>554</sup> Sandie A. Stratton and Stacey A. Cannington, "From the River to the Sea: Upwardly Mobile Minorcans and Florida's First Beachside Development," *Florida History Online*, <https://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/FHO/Minorcans/NorthBeach.html>.

turn, faced slightly different issues because of these adjustments. For example, the colonization scheme at New Smyrna indicates that the key to the successful growth of settlements was not the demographic profile of families, but that the non-enslaved family units themselves that played such a crucial role in the settlement's success. Ultimately, the failure of the international community at New Smyrna failed to assimilate into British culture, felt little loyalty to the British Crown, or the land upon which they lived. These factors doomed the settlement, but easily could have been avoided. The mixed nature of Andrew Turnbull's personal household proves this. A Scottish doctor married a Greek woman and raised British children in Florida. The Turnbull family became prominent members of South Carolina's society in the late 1700s and early 1800s. They are proof that assimilation and acculturation was possible. Thus, if the Crown had been able to maintain tighter control over their settlement efforts, a more stable uniformity in settlement and universality of experience would have occurred. Perhaps the uniformity and universality might still have led to failure, but it seems unlikely.<sup>555</sup>

According to Bernard Romans, Joseph Purcell was one of the Minorcans who came over with his family as a part of Dr. Andrew Turnbull's experiment at New Smyrna. Purcell told Turnbull that he could not speak of his experience of colonizing Florida "without tears; he had been eye witness to this distress [of colonizing Florida]...[and] he knew many among the unhappy sufferers who were comfortably established in Europe, but by great promises deluded away." Romans further observed that it might be possible to "draw a veil over the scenes of horror" at New Smyrna if it was the "only instance of similar barbarity which...[he had] seen."

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<sup>555</sup> Even after the failure of the settlement at Rollestown, Denys Rolle attempt to colonize two other distinct times in 1779 and in 1780 at a plantation he bought from James Penman called Jericho. He eventually moved his settlement efforts to an estate on Great Exuma in the Bahama Island in 1784. See Daniel L. Schafer, *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010), 84-86.

However, too many failures made this impossible. "But Rolles Town, Mount Royal, and three or four others of less note have seen too many wretches fall victims to hunger and ill usage, and that at a period of life when health and strength generally maintain the human frame in its greatest vigour, and seem to insure longevity. Rolles Town in particular has been the sepulcher of above four hundred such victims."<sup>556</sup> Rollestown, Campbell Town, and New Smyrna serve as specific warnings as to the mistakes their founders made in pursuit of individual advancement and personal greed.

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<sup>556</sup> Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* , 270.

**Chapter 4**  
**Loyalists, the American Revolution, & the Crown's Final Failure**  
**in the Bermuda Triangle of Empire**

On January 5, 1783, one-time East Florida governor James Grant received a letter from David Yeats, Deputy Clerk to the Governor's Council in East Florida.<sup>557</sup> Grant had left his post as governor in 1771 on a temporary leave of absence, returning to England to receive medical treatment for ill health. Over the next several years, Grant remained interested in the events that transpired in East Florida where he remained a substantial landowner. However, when Grant finally returned to North America, it was not to Florida as he and others had hoped. Instead, in the summer of 1775, Grant returned to active service in the British Army at the rank of colonel. Grant held many posts throughout the war including duty stations in Boston, Halifax, Nova Scotia, New York, Philadelphia, and Saint Lucia in the Caribbean. By 1783, he had attained the rank of Lieutenant General but still maintained correspondence with East Florida officials who were old friends like Yeats. In his letter, Yates wrote to Grant, "this town and the country is at present full of Refugees and Negroes from Carolina and Georgia so that both provinces are now completely evacuated and the Rebels in full and quiet possession of them, what a change!.... Should this province remain a British colony which I pray yet it may, and [the border established at the] St. Marys River, it must soon become a flourishing colony with the number of inhabitants that are now in it."<sup>558</sup> Yates hinted at the uncertain fate that both East and West Florida faced

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<sup>557</sup> Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province*, 15.

<sup>558</sup> Letter, David Yeats to James Grant, January 5, 1783, Daniel L. Schafer, ed., "The Letters of Dr. Andrew Turnbull," *Florida History Online*. <http://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/Turnbull/letters/9.htm>.

because of their wartime fortunes. It was not the first time either colony had not known how war might affect its future and the fortunes of its colonists. In fact, both colonies had quickly shifted from environments where hopeful settlers embraced colonization opportunities to scared potential prisoners of war or poor refugees who had lost everything as early as the spring of 1775.

By 1775, East and West Florida lay at a perilous crossroads. Both colonies had begun in the same manner, at the same time, and the Crown had hoped would develop in exactly the same way. The Crown, as was the case with so much else when it came to the Floridas, was to be significantly disappointed. Almost from the moment newly appointed Governors James Grant and George Johnstone left the Board of Trade meeting where they received their official instructions on the evening of December 15, 1763, the fates of the two colonies began to diverge. As Bernard Bailyn observed, “East Florida from the beginning had a peculiar fascination for writers, speculators, and adventurers alike, but the western province had no such exotic attractiveness, and its population history in this crucial decade of expansion was more businesslike, less dramatic, and for many involved more successful.”<sup>559</sup> Daniel L. Schafer even more succinctly summarized the fates of the two colonies when he wrote, “Grant headed a government similar in form to that of Governor George Johnstone in neighboring West Florida. Although the two new colonies shared a common boundary and faced similar problems, there was little interaction or even correspondence between the two governments.”<sup>560</sup> That changed

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<sup>559</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 475.

<sup>560</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, “...not so gay a Town in America as this...’ 1763-1784,” in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Sage of Survival*, ed. by Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine, Fla.: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 96.



when the fates of East and West Florida crystallized as the American Revolution unofficially began in April 1775.

### **Revolution Causes the Crown to Reset in East and West Florida**

On the eve of the outbreak of the American Revolution, warfare and the threat of violence was nothing new to the colonists who lived along the Anglo-Iberian borderlands. East and West Florida, the former north-easternmost portion of the Spanish empire, was a crossroads in the international Atlantic world.<sup>561</sup> As a result, inhabitants of East and West Florida, also had to deal with the fear of border skirmishes with the French and Spanish. The British relationship with their French and Spanish neighbors was extremely complex and inconsistent. Elizabeth Digby Pilot, while living in Pensacola, and thus in close proximity to the majority French population in Spanish-controlled New Orleans, noted that she “was made uneasy by some apprehension of war with Spain” while the French inhabitants in the city welcomed some of Pilot’s friends, like Rebecca Blackwell, to join them in celebrating carnival in the city in 1766.<sup>562</sup> Threat of instability on the borderlands because of violence with native tribes was a constant presence in the lives of the colonists.

Hostile relations between British colonists and native tribes were not completely unthinkable for the colonial administration and its settlers. Usually a healthy trade-based economy ensured that at least cordial, if not friendly relations were maintained between the British and the local natives. Governor James Grant had personally negotiated a peace with the

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<sup>561</sup> For more information on the complex relationship shared by the British and Spanish empires from a diplomatic and militaristic perspective -- from both the perspective of Florida and other North American settlements -- see, J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>562</sup> Pilot, “The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot,” 30-31. For more on this common colonial frontier/borderlands phenomena, see Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press. 1992).

Lower Creeks (not yet known as the Seminole Nation) at Picolata on November 15, 1765.<sup>563</sup> Grant was copying a similar congress that had been held by George Johnstone in Pensacola almost six months earlier. In May 1765, Johnstone worked with Superintendent of Indian Affairs, John Stuart, to entice representatives of the Upper Creeks to attend the peace congress.<sup>564</sup> The congress at Pensacola allowed trade to flow in relative peace in West Florida. Trade between the British and the Creeks and the Choctaws was especially significant to the inhabitants of Pensacola.

Fearing that they might be contaminated by the savage barbarity of the Native Indians, some meeker British women who lived in East and West Florida would usually have sought to isolate themselves from native women.<sup>565</sup> Elizabeth Digby Pilot, while never interacting directly with the natives themselves, often observed them from a distance when they came to the settlement to trade wild game, such as venison and wild fowl, for rum and money. Pilot observed that sometimes the native women accompanied the men on their trade excursions to Pensacola, especially when the natives would receive rum as payment because they considered it “a horrid sight to see an Indian drunk, for they howl and tumble about, and would be very mischievous, but their wives on these occasions steal from them all their weapons whereby they might injure themselves or others.” Pilot then added, in a seemingly resigned type of admiration for these native women, that “...all laborious work they [the native men] leave to the women, as is ever the case in uncivilized society.”<sup>566</sup> The initial phase of colonial growth and development in the British Floridas would be drastically interrupted in 1775, when shots were exchanged

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<sup>563</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, “‘...not so gay a Town in America as this...’ 1763-1784,” in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Sage of Survival*, ed. by Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine, Fla.: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 98.

<sup>564</sup> Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 52-53.

<sup>565</sup> Daniel S. Murphee, *Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2006), 102-107.

<sup>566</sup> Pilot, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Elizabeth Pilot*, 29.

between the Massachusetts militia and British regulars in far-off Lexington and Concord.

Almost overnight, Florida's first phase of social development, one colored by an emphasis on colonization and the establishment of British society within East and West Florida, ended and the second phase began.

Between 1775 and 1783, East and West Florida underwent the second phase of their social development process, i.e., a process that saw Great Britain's fourteenth and fifteenth colonies become a haven for displaced Loyalists from other southern colonies as the American Revolution continued to drag on into the 1780s.<sup>567</sup> As the southern campaign of Cornwallis' post-Saratoga war strategy made travel to and from East and West Florida perilous, British women only travelled to the colonies for one of two specific reasons. The most common reason women immigrated to Florida during the later years of the British period was to seek a safe haven. Those women fled with their Loyalist families to East or West Florida to escape persecution for their loyalist beliefs from Patriot-dominated colonies like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.<sup>568</sup> Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, wife of Dr. Lewis Johnston, Jr., fled from her home in Georgia; she arrived in St. Augustine in the fall of 1782. "We arrived there

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<sup>567</sup> For more on the role of East and West Florida in the American Revolution, see J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1976), William H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* (DeLand, Fla.: The Florida Historical Society, 1929), and J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1976).

<sup>568</sup> For an overview of loyalism in East Florida, see Carole Waterson Troxler, "Allegiance without Community: East Florida as the Symbol of a Loyalist Contract in the South," chap. in *Loyalists and Community in North America*, eds. Robert Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 121-133. For an overview of loyalism in West Florida, see Robin F.A. Fabel, "Loyalist West Florida: An Ambitious Community," chap. in *Loyalists and Community in North America*, eds. Robert Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 135-146. For a broad treatment of loyalism in both colonies, see Robert M. Calhoun, "The Floridas, the Western Frontier, and Vermont: Thoughts on the Hinterland Loyalists," chap. in *Tory Insurgents: The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays*, eds. Robert Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (1989; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 218-228.

safely [from Charleston] with many more Loyalists,” Johnston wrote in her memoir during the final years of her life.<sup>569</sup>

The Loyalists were a self-identified group of individuals who lived in the colonies of British North America between 1763 and 1784.<sup>570</sup> Also known as Tories, Royalists, or the King’s Men, men and women who referred to themselves as Loyalists did so because of the opinion they held on the topic of the American struggle for independence. These individuals identified themselves based on a political and social affiliation they felt towards King George III of Great Britain and the British Empire itself. Loyalists emerged as a group in the British colonies as Patriot sentiment grew during the years of the Imperial Crisis. Patriots believed in and supported complete independence for the thirteen colonies of North America. They favored the creation of a new and separate nation. When fighting broke out in Massachusetts at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, approximately one-quarter of the colonial population supported a push for independence. About one-quarter of the population steadfastly rejected the independence movement. The majority of the colonists remained undecided on the topic. Many felt conflicted over the matter. The harsh response of General Thomas Gage, the British military commander in Boston, resulted in excessive violence and deaths among the colonists. Many of those colonists who had remained conflicted over the prospect of independence began to support the Patriot cause, particularly after word spread of the atrocities committed by the British forces at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775. As the Patriot cause gained new supporters, the individuals who remained Loyalists faced many challenges. These challenges ranged from

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<sup>569</sup> Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, ed. Arthur Wentworth Eaton (London: The De La More Press, 1901; reprint Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972), 72-73.

<sup>570</sup> For the most recent scholarship on loyalism in North America during the American Revolution, see Rebecca Brannon and Joseph S. Moore, eds., *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Calhoun* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2019).

increasing threats of personal violence against themselves to legal prosecution by the Patriot governments of former colonies that had declared themselves independent states in July 1776.

Loyalists began to self-identify as a group because of changing political beliefs that emerged after the end of the French and Indian War. Faced with a tremendous financial debt it had accrued during the French and Indian War, the British Crown sought to reduce it through in a number of different ways. In the 1760s and early 1770s, the Crown tried to implement a series of taxes and import duties that proved highly unpopular among colonies. The British Parliament passed a series of legislative acts beginning with the Sugar Act in 1764 and followed by the infamous Stamp Act in 1765. These acts differed from previous pieces of legislation because Parliament had designed them with the sole purpose of raising revenue to pay off the war debt. Many of the colonists reacted negatively to these new taxes, inciting widespread protests and boycotts. Parliament eventually relented and repealed each act only to turn around and create a new one. The tipping point came with the creation and passage of the Townshend Acts in 1767. The acts took their name from Charles Townshend. George III had appointed him as Chancellor of the Exchequer in August 1766. Townshend designed the new taxes with several purposes in mind. The chief purpose was to demonstrate that Parliament had the right to tax the colonists in any way they deemed appropriate.<sup>571</sup>

Protests over the Townshend Acts erupted into violence throughout the colonies. Patriots throughout all thirteen colonies formed secret organizations, such as the Sons of Liberty, to further resist British authority. The Sons of Liberty took their most famous stand in Boston after five colonists died as the result of a skirmish with British Regulars in front of the Customs House

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<sup>571</sup> Deborah L. Bauer, "Loyalists," in *Shaping the New World: A Social, Political, and Cultural Encyclopedia and Document Collection*, ed. James Seelye (New York: ABC-CLIO, 2019).

on March 5, 1770. The Sons of Liberty and other Patriots argued that Parliament had unfairly imposed taxes like the Townshend Acts because the colonists had never directly elected any members to represent their interests in London where the legislation that created the taxes had been passed. The British Prime Minister, Frederick North, 2nd Earl of Guilford, known more famously as Lord North, countered this critique. He argued that the colonists and their interests were virtually represented by all members of Parliament since Englishness was a universal identity and status. Supporters of the Patriot cause rejected this explanation and pressed for independence.<sup>572</sup>

Many colonists initially distrusted the Patriot cause. A great number of colonists wanted to remain neutral in the difficulties between the Patriots and the king. Patriots criticized these individuals for not only choosing to support independence but also for failing to choose a side. Subsequently, they deepened the distrust many people had of the Patriot cause when they began to refer to Loyalists as Tories. The Tories were a conservative political party that had dominated British politics in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. However, by 1760, the Tories faced a stiff decline in power and influence as the Whig Party gained broad support. The party had all but disbanded in Great Britain by 1776. Prior to their decline, Tories had been identified as a political party that tended to favor the policies and opinions of the reigning monarch. Tories who supported royal aims subsequently gained the nickname ‘the King’s friends’. Subsequently, liberal Patriots applied both labels to men and women who felt that support of the independence movement was both illegal and immoral.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Bauer, "Loyalists."

<sup>573</sup> Bauer, "Loyalists."

After the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, Loyalists who lived in all the colonies faced many challenges. Patriots immediately took control of local governments in colonies such as Massachusetts and North Carolina. The new governments passed laws that made it a crime if citizens failed to sign an oath of loyalty to the United States. Individuals who failed to sign such loyalty oaths faced stiff penalties from the imposition of stiff fines to confiscation of their property. In certain cases, Loyalists could face restriction of movement. Many people were placed under house arrest or they faced outright imprisonment. Additionally, many Patriots acted as vigilantes in punishing Loyalists who tried to remain on their property. They harassed Loyalists in many ways, particularly those who openly proclaimed their allegiance to the Crown. Loyalists faced verbal and physical assaults. In extreme cases, some Loyalists were even tarred and feathered by Patriot mobs that had already burned their likenesses in effigy.<sup>574</sup>

As the war progressed, many Loyalists chose to leave rather than face violence at the hands of the growing Patriot majority. In the first phase of the war, many Loyalists fled to Long Island and New York City for refuge. As the war progressed, thousands of Loyalist families travelled south. East Florida and West Florida, sparsely populated colonies before the war, became a haven for those who had suffered at the hands of Patriots.<sup>575</sup> Both colonies saw their pre-war populations, which had never been more than a few thousand settlers, swell to as many

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<sup>574</sup> Bauer, "Loyalists."

<sup>575</sup> Carole Waterson Troxler argues the majority of fleeing colonists who arrived in East Florida formed a community based on their refugee experience as they sought a secure place where they need not fear attack. Carole Waterson Troxler, "Allegiance without Community: East Florida as the Symbol of a Loyalist Contract in the South," chap. *Loyalists and Community in North America*, eds. Robert Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 124. Robin Fabel argues that refugees in West Florida took a more opportunistic approach as most were willing to pledge loyalty to whomever would ensure the safety and security of their property regardless of political ideology. One example of this can be seen in the reaction of many families who lived in Natchez during James Willing's Raid in 1778. Robin F.A. Fabel, "Loyalist West Florida: An Ambitious Community," chap. *Loyalists and Community in North America*, eds. Robert Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 137-138.

as five or six times their previous levels. During her sixteen-month tenure as a Loyalist refugee in Florida, Johnston also noted that she found life in St. Augustine to be very pleasant as "...I never was in better health and indeed never was so fleshy as during my sixteen months' residence there."<sup>576</sup> Johnston arrived with a flood of other Loyalists who had helped to swell the relatively small population of East Florida from about 3000 to over 20000 during the final years of the Revolution.<sup>577</sup> Unfortunately, the Loyalists who had settled in West Florida faced another upheaval in 1781.

During the American Revolution, Elizabeth Pilot's fears finally were realized when the Spanish launched a massive assault against the British and their holdings along the Gulf Coast. When word reached the Spanish royal court at Madrid in late 1776 that thirteen colonies in British North America had declared their independence from Great Britain in July, King Charles III and his government watched with great interest. Like many European nations, Spain wanted to see how serious the colonial revolt in North America was before risking war with Great Britain themselves. In October 1777, Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold led Washington's Continental Army to victory over the British. Gates and Arnold's forces smashed through the troops of General John Burgoyne. The French viewed the patriot victory at Saratoga as a definitive sign that the Americans were capable of defeating George III of Great Britain and the British army and navy. King Louis XVI of France agreed to an alliance with the Americans as negotiated by Benjamin Franklin in late 1777 and early 1778. On February 5, 1778, the French recognized the independence of the United States and declared war against Great Britain.

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<sup>576</sup> Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 74-75.

<sup>577</sup> Johnson, *British West Florida*, 148-149.



Spain remained hesitant to follow the French into a new war against Great Britain. The Spanish Prime Minister José Moñino y Redondo, Count of Floridablanca, worried that the American colonists, despite their win at Saratoga over the British, had still not proved they could win the war. In addition, Floridablanca feared that if Great Britain were able to reconcile with the colonies, a renewed joint-force effort by both Great Britain and her colonies could target Spanish interests in Louisiana. Finally, Floridablanca also feared that by joining the war against Great Britain, Spain would send unintentional encouragement to its own American colonies to seek a similar course of rebellion. However, the Spanish king ordered his officers in the Caribbean, particularly those based at Havana, Cuba, to "observe" the course of the war. The "observations" of these de facto Spanish informants provided invaluable news and strategic information to both the French and the American forces throughout the course of the war. Spain further eased restrictions on the rampant smuggling that had increased exponentially along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast in support of the American cause when the British instituted a naval blockade of the colonies in 1777. Spain also extended lines of credit to French and American interests in order to make cash available for troop payments and supply purchases. The Spanish also donated shipments of clothing, shoes, blankets, food, medicine, gunpowder, rifles, bayonets, and other ammunitions to the American cause. However, Spain remained steadfast in its official declaration of neutrality for the next year, limiting their assistance to gathering intelligence, sending supplies, and providing financial support to the French and their American allies.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Deborah L. Bauer, "The American Revolution: 1776-1783," chap. in *The Multicultural America Series: A Social and Cultural History, Volume I - The Hispanic Americans*, ed Rodney P. Carlisle (New York: Facts on File, 2011).

While Spain had maintained its official neutrality between 1776 and late 1778, the British obviously anticipated some attempt by the Spanish to waylay the British use of rivers in the Mississippi River system in wartime maneuvers. Gálvez chafed to be able openly to attack the growing British presence on the borders of Spanish Louisiana. By early 1778, the British crown had ordered its forts on the Mississippi frontier to arm them for war. On April 12, 1779, King Charles III of Spain signed the Treaty of Aranjuez with King Louis XVI of France. The treaty stipulated that Spain would join France as an ally in a war against Great Britain with the goals of reclaiming former territories that both countries had lost to Great Britain at the end of the French and Indian War. Between late 1778 and early 1779, Floridablanca watched the situation in North America with a keen eye, but maintained an official diplomatic policy of Spanish neutrality, much to the chagrin of the American colonists and the French. It was only when France invoked the Bourbon Family Compact, a treaty of alliance signed in 1713 by the monarchs of France and Spain who descended from the Bourbon family, that Spain finally capitulated and declared war. On June 21, 1779, Spain officially declared war on Great Britain. However, it is of interest to note that Spain never officially formalized an alliance with the American colonists, nor did Spain formally recognize the independence of the United States until after the war ended in 1783. Gálvez, greatly pleased Spain's former declaration of neutrality no longer restrained him, called a war council meeting on July 13, 1779 in order to plan his strategy for waging war against the British along the Gulf Coast.<sup>579</sup>

The governor of Spanish Louisiana, General Bernardo de Gálvez, plotted a campaign to undermine British interests along the Gulf Coasts.<sup>580</sup> He began a systemic attack of British

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<sup>579</sup> Bauer, "The American Revolution: 1776-1783."

<sup>580</sup> Bernardo de Gálvez was born on July 25, 1746 at Macharavialla, Spain to Matias de Gálvez and Maria Josefa de Madrid Gallardo. Choosing a military career from a young age, Gálvez trained as a cadet at the military

settlements beginning with Manchac in late 1779. Gálvez subsequently attacked and forced the surrender of British settlements at Baton Rouge in September 1779 and Mobile in March 1780. In March 1780, Spanish forces laid siege to the settlement of Mobile. Elias Durnford, West Florida's lieutenant governor, held command of the British outpost at Fort Charlotte. Durnford's wife, Rebecca, who was living with Elias at Mobile, was pregnant at the time of the battle and had to give birth on the floor of a hut within the fort. During her delivery, Durnford was "placed in a hut with two other ladies, one of who (afterward the clever and accomplished wife of Governor Johnstone) rendered her humane attention."<sup>581</sup> Her son, Philip, was born shortly thereafter on March 31st.<sup>582</sup> The experience of Rebecca Durnford during the birth of her son Philip illustrates how the challenges of childbirth and frontier warfare could simultaneously

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academy at Avila. In 1765, he travelled to New Spain under the command of his uncle, General Don Juan de Villalba. Gaining further military experience in Mexico, Gálvez wrote an account of his Mexican expeditions entitled "Notes and Reflexions of the War Fought in America by the Spanish Troops against the Apaches and Other Barbarian Nations." In 1771, Gálvez took a leave of absence from active duty to receive further training at a military academy in France. Returning to active duty in 1775, Gálvez briefly returned to the military academy at Avila to teach military tactics. In early 1777, Gálvez was appointed by King Charles III of Spain as governor of Spanish Louisiana. On December 2, 1777, Gálvez married Maria Feliciana de Saint-Maxent, a creole – someone born to Spanish parents in New Spain – in her hometown of New Orleans. An extremely popular governor in the former French territory where he spoke both Spanish and French, Gálvez's political career was interrupted by Spain's decision to enter the American Revolution as an ally of the United States in 1779. Gálvez was appointed Field Marshall of the Royal Armies in Spain, and he immediately set about to attacking British possessions on the Mississippi frontier including settlements at Baton Rouge, Manchac, Natchez, and Mobile. His greatest triumph came on May 8, 1781 when a three-month siege against the capital of British West Florida at Pensacola ended with the surrender of the city to Gálvez. After the war ended in 1783, King Charles III named Gálvez as Viceroy of New Spain, after the death of his father Matias had left the post vacant, and granted him the aristocratic title Count of Gálvez. Returning to Mexico City to take up his new duties as viceroy, Gálvez died from a sudden illness on November 30, 1786 at the age of forty. His wife and three children, including a son named Miguel, and a posthumous daughter named Guadalupe, survived Gálvez. See John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Gretna, L.A.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972).

<sup>581</sup> There is some confusion as to the identity of the woman mentioned as having attended upon Rebecca Durnford during her delivery in 1780. While Mary Durnford links the woman to George Johnstone, such a connection is either a blatant mistake or extreme exaggeration. Governor George Johnstone left Pensacola in January 1767 and did not return. He married his only wife, Deborah Charlotte Dee, on January 31, 1782 in Lisbon, Portugal. It is highly unlikely that Dee was present in Pensacola over two years prior to her marriage to Johnstone. It is more possible, but not probable, that Martha Ford, a woman kept by Johnstone as his longtime mistress, was the woman who assisted in Rebecca Durnford's delivery in 1780. Johnstone and Martha Ford had at least five illegitimate children whom he acknowledged, including John, George Lindsay, James Primrose, Alexander Patrick, and Sophia Johnstone. See Robin F.A. Fabel, *Bombast and Broad sides: The Lives of George Johnstone* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 165.

<sup>582</sup> Durnford, *Family Recollections*, 22.

affect a woman, unlike her male counterparts. The result for families within the province was the overall fear that the enemy would take control of the colony. If they were lucky, they might have to evacuate and leave behind everything they had worked so hard to preserve. If they were not as lucky, they might be taken as prisoners of war and face Spanish military justice.

In March 1781, Gálvez and his forces arrived at Pensacola. They laid siege to the city. Gálvez, began a three-month siege of Pensacola in March 1781.<sup>583</sup> The British Governor of West Florida, Peter Chester, wrote to Gálvez on March 21<sup>st</sup>, inquiring as to “the protection and security of women and children against the calamities of war,” noting that such a goal had always been viewed “by cultured nations [like Spain and Great Britain] as the primary object.”<sup>584</sup> Gálvez’s response to Chester’s plea was a gallant reaffirmation of Spain’s desire to protect non-combatants. Gálvez promised Chester that he would “give the most rigorous orders to the troops and sailors in the expedition under my command, that should not cause them the least extortion.”<sup>585</sup>

On May 8, 1781, the British governor of West Florida, Peter Chester, authorized General John Campbell, the commander of the British infantry and Royal Artillery, to begin negotiations

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<sup>583</sup> For more on Gálvez's campaign in the final years of the American Revolution, see Overton G. Canong, "Spain's Role in the American Revolution," *El Escribano: The Journal of the St. Augustine Historical Society* 13, no. 2 (1976), 51-56, John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Gretna, L.A.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972), Bernardo de Gálvez, *Yo Solo: The Battle Journal of Bernardo de Gálvez during the American Revolution*, ed. and trans. E.A. Montemayor (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1978), Virginia Parks, ed. *Siege! - Spain and Britain: Battle of Pensacola, March 9 - May 8, 1781* (Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Historical Society, 1981), James W. Raab, *Spain, Britain, and the American Revolution in Florida, 1763-1783* (Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Company, 2008), N. Orwin. Rush, *Battle of Pensacola: Spain's Final Triumph Over Great Britain in the Gulf of Mexico* (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 1966; reprint, Port Salerno, FL: Florida Classics Library, 1981), James A. Servies, ed., *The Siege of Pensacola, 1781: A Bibliography* (Pensacola, FL: John C. Pace Library, 1981), Maria Fernandez Snitzer, *Bernardo de Gálvez and His Role in the American Revolution* (Violet, LA: Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society, 1996), and Gonzalo M. Quintero Saravia, *Bernardo de Gálvez: Spanish Hero of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

<sup>584</sup> Gaspar Cusachs, ed. and trans., “Bernardo de Gálvez Diary of the Operations Against Pensacola,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1917), 55.

<sup>585</sup> Cusachs, “Bernardo de Gálvez Diary of the Operations Against Pensacola,” 56.

with Gálvez for surrender of Pensacola. The British settlement had withstood a three-month infantry and naval siege that began in March 1781 when Gálvez's troops landed on Santa Rosa Island.<sup>586</sup> Campbell's troops at Pensacola had numbered approximately 1500 as compared to the 7800 soldiers commanded by Gálvez. The primary British fortification at Pensacola, Fort George, surrendered after the British suffered approximately 100 casualties when a Spanish artillery shell exploded near the fort's powder magazine. Campbell's force, depleted to approximately 600 soldiers after the explosion, could no longer hold the fort against the Spanish.

Major Robert Farmer was present during the final hours of the siege of Pensacola as well as Campbell's negotiations with Gálvez after the British surrendered. His journal records the events from the British perspective as follows:

Tuesday 8th May. About 9 o'clock a.m. a shell from the enemy's front battery was thrown in at the door of the magazine of the advanced redoubt (as the men were receiving powder) which blew it up and killed forty seamen belonging to H.M. ships the Mentor & Port Royal & forty-five men of the Pennsylvania Loyalists were killed by the same explosion -- there were a number of men wounded besides. Capt. Byrd with seventy men of the 60th regiment immediately went up to the advanced redoubt & brought off 2 field pieces & one howitzer & a number of the wounded me, but was obliged to retire as a great quantity of shell was laying about filled.<sup>587</sup>

By ten o'clock, the Spanish had pushed forward and taken possession of some of Pensacola's redoubts. Almost three dozen men died. By two o'clock in the early afternoon, the British raised the white flag of truce as each side sent a hostage so the British surrender could be negotiation.

Those negotiations lasted for the rest of May 8<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday, May 10, Major Robert

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<sup>586</sup> The most recent archaeological summary of work done at sites related the the Battle of Pensacola can be found in Gregory A. Mikell, "From Beneath the Urban Landscape: 1781 Spanish Siege of Pensacola Archaeological Sites," *the Florida Anthropologist* 72, no. 3 (Sept. 2019), 135-158.

<sup>587</sup> James A. Padget, ed., "Bernardo de Gálvez's Siege of Pensacola in 1781 (As Related in Robert Farmer's Journal)," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (April 1943), 311-312.

Farmer recorded at five o'clock "we surrendered to the arms of Spain. The Spanish grenadiers under the command of Don Bernard de Gálvez took possession of Fort George & the lines & sixty French chasseurs of the centre redoubt."<sup>588</sup>

The negotiations for the surrender of Pensacola between the Spanish forces of General Bernardo de Gálvez and the British forces of General John Campbell concluded on May 10, 1781. A formal capitulation ceremony was arranged for Campbell, his troops, and the capital's political leaders officially to transfer the settlement from British to Spanish control. Gálvez recorded his recollections of the surrender in his battle diary as follows:

At 2:30 P.M. a white flag was seen over Fort George. This was a surprise. At this time an officer on horseback appeared accompanied by a servant carrying a white flag. He advanced to be met on the left of the fort by the Major General and Major Decois, Officer of the French Navy, assistant to the artillery [commander], and from the right by the Quarter Master with his aide Don Franco del Rey, who were in the works just described. Upon meeting our men, the English officer presented an open letter that General Cambel had sent. Because it was written in English, the General ordered that it be translated to French. The letter asked for 24 hours suspension of hostilities to deal with the capitulation, but the General answered Senor Cambel that only three hours would be considered in which to arrange the suspension of hostilities. The English officer returned to the fort with the assurance that all hostility and work would cease. A group of our men formed and advanced to the tree that the English had indicated as the boundary. The General waited there for the results of the first letter, [which was] followed by three [more] letters written by each general. Our general remained at this spot, sending to the Plaza as hostage the Lieutenant of Iberia Don Cornalio, bringing another English officer to camp.

The reciprocal exchange of letters continues in order to agree on articles. Some things were found unacceptable about the capitulation. But nevertheless, our general accepted the offer of Senor Cambel to go the Town of Pensacola: accompanying him

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<sup>588</sup> Padget, ed., "Bernardo de Gálvez's Siege of Pensacola," 311-329.

were the Field Marshal Don Juan Manuel Cagigal and two companies of the King's Grenadiers for his guard....

At 5:45 the ceremony took place as planned. General Cambel left Fort George at the head of his troops accompanied by five aides-de-camp, and one person dressed in black.... concluding the ceremony, the English Major ordered his troops to lay down their arms and giving a half turn to the right passed by a Cordon of Sentinels of our troops which took over the guard in the forts and raised the colors of Spain. At dawn the English troops withdrew from the fort and the naval forces fired a general salute with their cannons.<sup>589</sup>

With West Florida's surrender and subsequent loss to the Spanish, East Florida remained the only place left that had once been such a shining hope for the British Crown's desire to implement its ideal colonization scheme. How long it would stay a loyalist stronghold remained to be seen.

During the mid-eighteenth century, the main practical reason families often remained loyal to the Crown stemmed from the best search for security from the main threats to their existence and to their property. The fundamental instinct of self-preservation had to be served before all else. On the Anglo-Iberian frontier, natives, no matter how they might have once been appeased, could turn hostile at any time. Similarly, the Spanish invaders posed another permanent threat to British colonists. The best means to thwart those threats were the redcoats garrisons of the British Crown. In order to obtain the protection of British Army, colonists needed to maintain at least the veneer of loyalty. In the early years of peace following the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, colonists in East and West Florida had the luxury of needing the protection of the British military as much as they once might have. By the mid-1770s, with the growing threat of another war, colonists no longer could indulge themselves. They needed to

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<sup>589</sup> Maury Baker, and Margaret Bissler Haas, eds. "Bernardo De Gálvez's Combat Diary for the Battle of Pensacola, 1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (Oct. 1977), 176-199.

remain loyal to the Crown and display no sign that could cause anyone to question their allegiance. When East Florida's population swelled with thousands of loyalist refugees flooding into the province after 1780, a split in affinity occurred among the population. The old guard of colonists who had lived in the territory since the mid-1760s had a different mindset than the newly arrived refugees. The question of East Florida's loyalty became a contest between who would dominate the social hierarchy of the colony. Eventually, pure numbers shifted the win to the side of loyalists who came as refugees from other North American colonies. East Florida would remain loyal for the duration of the American Revolution.

### **The Fate of Loyalist Refugees in the British Floridas**

By 1782, East Florida hosted a population of almost 20,000 settlers. Unfortunately, within two years, the Loyalists who had tried to build a new life for themselves in East Florida faced upheaval once more. After the Spanish triumphed at the Battle of Pensacola, Gálvez continued to attack British interests in the Caribbean. The Spanish captured the Bahamas a few months later. Gálvez only halted his invasion of Jamaica when the British sued for peace. During the peace negotiations in Paris, the British faced a difficult choice. The Spanish agreed to return the Bahamas to the British, but only in exchange for East Florida. Perhaps because of the inability of the British Crown to identify a significant number of productive and loyal settlements in Florida that had maintained the approved colonization scheme, Great Britain ultimately abandoned Florida. Ultimately considering the Bahamas to be a more valuable possession, the lead British negotiator agreed to the Spanish demands.<sup>590</sup> It appeared that by 1782, Great Britain had determined its colonization scheme had failed. The Crown no longer valued East Florida as

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<sup>590</sup> Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (New York : D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935).



it once had been in as a test ground for the Crown's experimental colonization scheme. It could and would be sacrificed for more important holdings.

By the time substantial losses forced the British to the negotiating table at the end of the American Revolution, the memory of the peace negotiations held twenty-one years earlier lingered in the minds of many. Determined not to make the same mistakes that had shaped the Treaty of Paris when it was signed in 1763, American, French, and Spanish negotiators framed a more balanced set of terms for the defeated British. The United States gained its independence. While Great Britain lost a tremendous amount of territory, most of it was comprised of the former thirteen colonies that had banded together to form the new United States. The British did agree to return East and West Florida to the Spanish, essentially undoing one of the key points of the Treaty of Paris (1763). However, unlike the French in 1763, the British Crown retained much of its holdings in both Canada and the Caribbean.

When the details of the final version of the peace treaty were released to the public, thousands of British colonists were horrified. For the third time in less than a decade, many families faced a difficult decision. They could either leave their new homes and evacuate to another location or they could choose to remain in East Florida. However, if they chose to remain, they faced the daunting prospect of living under the Catholic rule of the Spanish Crown. While a few hundred settlers chose to remain, many Loyalists preferred beginning again and departed during an eighteen-month evacuation period that lasted until late 1784. Dorothy Forbes, the wife of East Florida's Reverend John Forbes, decided to take advantage of the eighteen-month period of evacuation that lasted from early-1783 until mid-1785 in East Florida

in order to minimize her family's economic and property losses.<sup>591</sup> When Dorothy wrote to her uncle, Dr. John Murray, who also lived in England, for advice on what to do concerning the compensation due to her as John Forbes' widow, the answer she received was not very encouraging.<sup>592</sup> "It is evident that when Mr. Forbes left St. Augustine his property was confiscated. There was not much more of personal effects than would pay his debts, for tho' he had a considerable landed property which in common with all the other inhabitants is now surrendered to the Spaniards by the government."<sup>593</sup>

Demonstrating her personal agency in the name of safeguarding her children's economic legacy, Dorothy decided to take matters into her own hands. Against her sons' wishes, Dorothy traveled with her youngest son, Ralph Bennet Forbes, to view the Florida holdings in the late spring of 1784. The American Revolution had drastically affected the fortunes of Dorothy's husband and son, James, in East Florida. The British ceded East Florida to Spain in the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of January 1783.<sup>594</sup> After departing from St. Augustine in June 1783, John Forbes decided to travel to England. While en route, the ship he traveled upon with his son was

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<sup>591</sup> Dorothy had left her husband and eldest son in East Florida and returned to her family home in Boston shortly before the birth of her third child in 1773. Occasionally, reference was made of Dorothy and her two youngest sons' return to St. Augustine. Her father casually alluded to the potentiality of her return to St. Augustine in a letter in September 1780. Murray mentioned to his daughter that he had recently received news of Dorothy's husband and son. Murray admitted that it was possible that a more regular correspondence could have been maintained from his location in Halifax to his son-in-law in East Florida "had we been desirous of keeping up a correspondence." Murray took the majority of the blame for the lack in communication between the two men, excusing Forbes as he was "perplexed with much business and much company." Murray also indicated that whatever his opinion on Dorothy's return to Forbes was irrelevant as "her feelings and of course her view of men and things must necessarily be different from those of an old man." Forbes also indicated that he believed that Forbes was "altogether a stranger to the embarrassments and difficulties of her present circumstances, and for that reason also an improper judge for her line of conduct." Murray indicated that Forbes believed a peace would soon be reached, and the war would end. Murray told his daughter that should peace return to the colonies, he would arrange safe passage for her and her two sons via Georgia if she desired it. Tiffany, *Letters of James Murray*, 280-281.

<sup>592</sup> John Forbes was a leading Anglican clergyman and government official in East Florida. He served on the governor's council and as a judge for the vice-admiralty court.

<sup>593</sup> John Murray Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, January 27, 1784, The James Murray Robbins Papers, 1638-1899, Box 5, Folder 1769, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>594</sup> James Wright Leitch, Jr., *British St. Augustine* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1975), 44.

detained in New York for fresh supplies. Forbes wrote a letter to Dorothy from aboard the *Duke of Cumberland* Packet.

Forbes mentioned that he wanted to visit Dorothy in Boston before the ship departed “at least to have given you a fair opportunity of rejoining your family.”<sup>595</sup> Her husband’s unhappy tone expressed his dislike at the couple’s long separation, if for no other reason than he was concerned at the harm being without a constant father figure might do to Dorothy’s children. Forbes explained to Dorothy why he had not complied with her father’s wishes to make some sort of settlement for her and the children when it became clear that theirs was not a short-term estrangement in the early 1770s. Murray had been encouraged to accept his separation from Dorothy and to do so quietly “without inquiring at this distant day who was to blame.”<sup>596</sup> While Forbes was thankful to Dorothy’s father and aunt for supporting Dorothy and her two younger sons, he wished her to know that “I must for your sake and credit be averse to what is commonly called a separation.”<sup>597</sup> Forbes expressed to Dorothy his hopes that the pair might be reconciled in England, while he pursued redress from the government for his losses upon East Florida’s evacuation. He hoped their sons might be educated in England under his close supervision. The boys’ education primarily concerned Forbes so that their sons would become men who could think and act for themselves. He left the decision to Dorothy, and urged her to write back quickly so that she might inform him of her intentions with hopes that her decision would not be “prejudicial to the interests of my family.”<sup>598</sup> A short note from Dorothy’s eldest son

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<sup>595</sup> John Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, May 1783, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>596</sup> John Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, Summer 1783, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>597</sup> John Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, Summer 1783, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>598</sup> John Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, Summer 1783, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

accompanied Forbes' letter. James Grant Forbes, now thirteen, wrote his mother about his education and his desire to receive more frequent correspondence from his two younger brothers. The letter also made it clear how significant John Forbes' influence had been on the boy, and how James Grant Forbes feared that his younger brothers, particularly their schooling, were suffering from this same lack of guidance.<sup>599</sup>

Whether the idea of traveling to cosmopolitan London as opposed to provincial St. Augustine appealed to Dorothy, or she wished for her family to finally be reunited, her husband and eldest son's pleas did not go ignored. Dorothy immediately made plans to join her exiled family in London. However, her travel plans were interrupted by the arrival of a letter from her son, Jamie, that winter.<sup>600</sup> While in Norwich in England, John Forbes died on September 17, 1783.<sup>601</sup> Left a widow with three young sons to support, Dorothy decided to take matters into her own hands. Against her older sons' wishes, Dorothy traveled with Ralph Bennet Forbes in 1784 to view the Florida holdings.<sup>602</sup> Departing from Massachusetts in April 1784, Dorothy travelled by ship to East Florida.<sup>603</sup> While en route to St. Augustine, Dorothy stopped in Charleston. While there, she visited several friends who had already evacuated from East Florida. They warned her that the evacuation had left business transactions in limbo.<sup>604</sup> However, Dorothy did not allow such news to discourage her from arriving at her destination in late April or early May 1784. She was present in the summer of 1784 when the Spanish

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<sup>599</sup> James Grant Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, John Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, Summer 1783, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>600</sup> James Grant Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, January 5, 1784, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>601</sup> Frances Blackwell Forbes, "The Reverend John Forbes in East Florida, 1764-1783."

<sup>602</sup> John Murray Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, January 27, 1784, *The James Murray Robbins Papers*, 1638-1899, Box 5, Folder 1769, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>603</sup> Dorothy Murray Forbes to Mrs. Champlin, April 1784, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

<sup>604</sup> Dorothy Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Robbins, April 19, 1784, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York. To view a complete transcription of this letter, please click here.

government conducted a preliminary census of St. Augustine and the surrounding areas. The census describes her as, “Forbes, Doña Dorothea, [a] widow [who] wishes to leave the country; she has a son and a female slave with her.”<sup>605</sup> Unfortunately, Dorothy achieved little in Florida. “Here I have been better than two months, to very little purpose,” Dorothy wrote to sister Elizabeth.<sup>606</sup> Aside from revisiting some of the places she had frequented during her time in St. Augustine, catching up with friends, and observing the first-hand details of the British evacuation of the province, Dorothy could not salvage any of Forbes’ estate. Eventually, Dorothy gave up and left Florida in August 1784.<sup>607</sup>

On her return trip to Massachusetts, Dorothy stopped in North Carolina to seek compensation for her father’s estate which was comprised primarily of the lands of the Point Repose plantation. She ultimately failed and was “unkindly (by her account) received and

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<sup>605</sup> Spanish Census of St. Augustine of 1783, *East Florida Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>606</sup> Dorothy Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Robbins, July 8, 1784, *James Murray Robbins Papers*, 1638-1899, Box 5, Folder 1784, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>607</sup> Dorothy Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Robbins, August 26, 1784, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York. In her later years, Dorothy Murray Forbes suffered from rheumatic gout, and it eventually rendered her an invalid. John Murray Forbes, *The Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes, Volume I*, ed. Sarah Forbes Hughes (Cambridge: The University Press; reprint, Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1899), 4. She spent her time divided between Boston and Brush Hill. In 1804, Dorothy returned to Brush Hill to live with her sister when she "became too infirm to live by herself any longer." Lesley, *Memoirs of My Mother*, 39. In her later years, she became crippled by rheumatic gout. She remained in her room, and she only left it during the warm weather of the spring and summer months. Her family members, specifically her nieces, "were glad to sit with her, and help entertain her, and hear her Old-World stories, for she was a very bright and cheerful person, who did not lose her spirits through all these many years of suffering." Lesley, *Memoirs of My Mother*, 39. Dorothy was always happy to see visitors, "except under severe attacks, which occurred two or three times a year." Lesley, *Memoirs of My Mother*, 39. Until the day she died, Dorothy maintained a keen interest "in everything that went on in the family." Lesley, *Memoirs of My Mother*, 39. Additionally, Dorothy took a great pleasure in her books "from which she culled passages to read to them, and from which all three gathered much instruction, and discussed either with serious zest or with merriment." Tiffany, *Letters of James Murray*, 306. She died on June 11, 1811. Upon her death, Brush Hill passed to Dorothy’s sister, Elizabeth as her husband had bought interest in the estate. Edward Pierce Hamilton, *A History of Milton* (Milton, M.A.: Milton Historical Society, 1957), 206. It was still standing in 1895. Revere, “Mrs. Revere’s Account of Brush Hill, Milton.” When Dorothy died, she was laid to rest in the tomb of James Smith. Dorothy was buried with her aunt, Elizabeth Murray Campbell Smith Inman and Elizabeth’s favorite second husband, James. The tomb, located in the prestigious Old King’s Chapel Burial Ground in Boston, later contained the remains of Dorothy’s younger sister, Elizabeth. Dorothy’s epithet stated, "Also [in memory] of Mrs. Dorothy Forbes who died June 11th, 1811 aged 66 years." Thomas Bridgeman, *Memorials of the Dead in Boston: Containing Exact Transcripts of Inscriptions on the Sepulchral Monuments in the King’s Chapel Burial Ground, in the City of Boston. With Copious Historical and Biographical Notices of the Early Settlers of the Metrop* (Boston, B.B. Mussey, 1853), 82.

treated by this ungrateful cousin [Thomas Clarke]" who had petitioned the American government for redress concerning the Point Repose lands and was successful in having the plantation signed back over to his name.<sup>608</sup> Forewarned of her cousin's duplicitous dealings by a neighbor, Dorothy did not expect to fare any better in recovering anything from her patrimony than she did from her husband's estate in Florida.<sup>609</sup> However, she did not anticipate being treated so inhospitably by her cousin. During the visit to Wilmington, Thomas Clarke did not even make the effort to meet personally with Dorothy.<sup>610</sup> He stated "[that] floods prevented his leaving his estate to visit her in Wilmington, but that if she could come to him he would be happy to see her, and did not doubt of being able to convince her that he had acted for the best in what he had done."<sup>611</sup>

Dorothy received no inheritance from her father's former holdings in North Carolina. She fared better in the continued pursuit of compensation for Forbes' lost holdings in East Florida from the British government via the East Florida Claims Commission. Dorothy's brother-in-law, Thomas Forbes, made a claim to the British government for losses John Forbes suffered upon the evacuation of East Florida in 1783 on behalf of James Grant Forbes. Thomas Forbes, John Forbes' younger brother, claimed that Forbes lost a total of over approximately 5745 acres of rural property and three lots and houses in St. Augustine, including his primary

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<sup>608</sup>James Murray had settled in Boston in 1765, he but maintained his plantation in Wilmington and other extensive land holdings. The plantation at Point Repose was valued at over £3000 sterling. Murray's lands in North Carolina also were comprised of mill lands, lots in Wilmington, and other lots on Northeast River and Amen County. Murray's nephew, Thomas Clark, was charged with overseeing the plantation in Murray's absence. With the outbreak of the American Revolution, Point Repose was confiscated by the American government due to Murray's loyalist leanings. See *The Forbes Papers*. Reel 37. Part VI. Folder 4 (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1969).

<sup>609</sup> Dorothy Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Robbins, August 26, 1784, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

<sup>610</sup> Dorothy Forbes to Elizabeth Murray Robbins, September 19, 1784, *The Murray Papers*, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

<sup>611</sup> Thomas Clarke to Dorothy Murray Forbes, 1784, in Tiffany, *Letters of James Murray*, 156.

dwelling.<sup>612</sup> The claim was valued in excess of £5495 sterling. The government awarded Dorothy £817 sterling while James Grant Forbes received £1634 sterling.<sup>613</sup> Given the large debt that John Forbes had accumulated during his tenure in East Florida, combined with the small amount the family was reimbursed by the British government, Dorothy and her sons inherited a massive debt that was not eliminated until 1801.<sup>614</sup>

Unlike other women who stayed for as long as possible to sell their families land and holdings during the evacuation period, some women left immediately. Mary Port was born in Southampton, England on August 6, 1751 to Richard and Mary Port. She had one sister named Sarah. She married John Macklin on November 25, 1770 on the Isle of Guernsey. The pair eventually traveled to South Carolina in the hopes of making a fortune. The pair stayed in Charleston for some time and ran a restaurant quite successfully. However, with the outbreak of the American Revolution, fighting forced the pair to leave Charleston. Along with many other British citizens who considered themselves Loyalists to the British crown, the Macklins evacuated to the safe haven of East Florida. The husband of Mary Port Macklin, John Macklin, became involved with several privateer expeditions at the behest of Governor Patrick Tonyn.<sup>615</sup> Tonyn, who had replaced Colonel James Grant as governor of East Florida in 1775, encouraged John Macklin to raid American ships once Macklin took command of the privateer *Nemed* in the early years of the American Revolution. However, such risk was not without its danger as John Macklin, and subsequently Mary found out, when John's ship disappeared during one of these

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<sup>612</sup> Little is known about the immediate family of John Forbes. The fact that Thomas Forbes – not likely the same Thomas Forbes of the famous Forbes, Panton, and Leslie Trading Company in East and West Florida -- was his brother is documented in a letter to Dorothy by her father in 1771. See Dorothy Murray Forbes to James Murray, 1771, in Tiffany, *Letters of James Murray*, 140.

<sup>613</sup> Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* Volume 2, 360.

<sup>614</sup> John Murray Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, December 23, 1801, *The Forbes Collection*, Microfilm Edition, Roll 42, Part VI, #1, Folder 2, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>615</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, "The Memoir of Mary (Port) Macklin," *El Escribano* 41 (2004), 106-117.

raiding expeditions in the mid-1770s, and nobody ever heard from him again.<sup>616</sup> The disappearance of John Macklin during a raiding expedition had quite a negative impact on Mary's life. Already in a poor state of affairs due to her illness, her husband's disappearance resulted in Mary's reliance on the kindness of her neighbors in St. Augustine in order to survive. When the British evacuated East Florida in 1784, Mary left St. Augustine with the Lindsay Family. She settled in the Bahamas. In the later years of her life, Mary wrote her memoirs, entitled *The Life of Mary Port Macklin, 1751-1823*.<sup>617</sup> Shortly thereafter, Mary died in 1823.

The final British ship sailed from St. Augustine in June 1785, completing an eighteen-month evacuation that had begun when the Treaty of Paris was signed after the American triumph at Yorktown.<sup>618</sup> While the majority of British inhabitants, including Mary Port Macklin, chose to leave East and West Florida for various destinations such as Nova Scotia, the Bahamas, and Great Britain, some men and women chose to remain in Florida and live under Spanish dominion.<sup>619</sup> For example, Mary Evans remained in St. Augustine. Evans had been among the earliest arrivals in East Florida.<sup>620</sup> Evans, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, had accompanied her first husband, a British soldier named Fenwick, when his regiment was

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<sup>616</sup> Schafer, "The Memoir of Mary (Port) Macklin," 111-114.

<sup>617</sup> The memoir remains one of two first-hand narratives written by women who lived in East and West Florida during the British period. Elizabeth Pilot is the author of the other one.

<sup>618</sup> For more information on the transition of East and West Florida from British to Spanish control, please see Robert L. Gold, *Borderland Empires in Transition: The Triple-Nation Transfer of Florida* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), Carole Watterson Troxler, "Loyalist Refugees and the British Evacuation of East Florida, 1783-1785," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (July 1981), 1-28, Joseph B. Lockey, *East Florida, 1783-1785: A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of Them Translated* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1949), Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Coral Gables, Fla: University of Miami Press, 1963; reprint, Jacksonville, Fla.: University of North Florida Press, 1989), Sherry Johnson, "The Spanish St. Augustine Community, 1784-1795: A Reevaluation," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (July 1989), 27-54, and Susan R. Parker, "Men Without God or King: Rural Settlers of East Florida, 1784-1790," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (Oct. 1990), 135-155.

<sup>619</sup> Schafer, "The Memoir of Mary (Port) Macklin," 116.

<sup>620</sup> "Deposition of Manuel Solana, August 8, 1808," *East Florida Papers*, Bundle 302, No. 8, 173-175. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



transferred from Havana, Cuba, in late 1764.<sup>621</sup> She continued to work as a midwife in St. Augustine during the British years and into the Second Spanish Period. She died in St. Augustine on September 30, 1792.<sup>622</sup> While the era of the American Revolution and British dominion in the Floridas would end in 1784, their effects would continue to be felt by the families who had lived in East and West Florida for years to come.

### **Spanish & British No Longer: A New *Floridano* Identity Emerges**

After the American victory ended British political dominance in North America in 1783, the Americans looked to the Spanish colonies with hopes of acquiring new land during the age of western expansion in the nineteenth century. Twenty-one years after the British had forced the Spanish to abandon their colonists and territories in Florida and along the Gulf Coast at the end of the French and Indian War; the Spanish reciprocated and forced the British to cede back to them the colonies of East and West Florida. While the British continued to cling to the northern provinces of Canada to maintain some type of substantial presence in North America, after 1783, the two major powers on the continent were the United States and Spain. The legacy of the socio-cultural heritage of the Spanish and their actions during the American Revolution can be

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<sup>621</sup> Mary (Maria) Evans was born in South Carolina in 1730. She was married to a British soldier whose last name was Fenwick; she accompanied him to Havana, Cuba during the final years of the French and Indian War. When Fenwick's regiment was ordered to travel from Havana to St. Augustine, East Florida, Mary followed Evans to the capital of the newest British colony. Sometime during the first few years after her arrival in St. Augustine, Mary became a widow. She married a second time to Joseph Peavett, a Roman Catholic, and former British soldier himself. During their marriage, Mary and Joseph accumulated several large pieces of property in East Florida, but Evans is most famous for having lived in the González-Alvarez House -- more famously known as the Oldest House -- on St. Francis Street. Mary was well-known to other English women who lived in St. Augustine as she often served as a midwife to various ladies during their pregnancies. After Peavett's death on April 24, 1786, Mary was widowed a second time. When the British were forced to evacuate from East Florida in 1784, Mary was one of the few British citizens who chose to remain behind in the province and Mary converted to Roman Catholicism in 1786 per Spanish colonial policy. Evans married a third time to John Hudson, an Irishman who was 28 years Mary's junior, on November 28, 1786. The marriage was not a happy one, as Hudson was known to be a drunk and an incurable debtor. Mary died childless at her plantation New Waterford, located approximately twenty miles outside of St. Augustine, on September 30, 1792. See Patricia C. Griffin, "Mary Evans: A Woman of Substance," *El Escribano* 14 (1977), 2-22, 106-117 and Eugenia Price, *Maria* (1978; reprint, New York: Bantam Books, 1978).

<sup>622</sup> Griffin, "Mary Evans: A Woman of Substance," 59-62.

seen most clearly in the fate of Florida. What became known as the Second Spanish Period in Florida history lasted from 1784 until 1821. During this period, the true legacy of Spanish and British colonial families emerged – the birth of the *floridano*.

Traditionally, the term *floridano* has been used by historians to refer to the descendants of the first Spanish families that settled in La Florida between 1513 and 1763. For example, Jane Landers uses this descriptor when exploring the life of a planter who lived in East Florida during the Second Spanish Period named Francisco Xavier Sánchez.<sup>623</sup> However, this study believes that as the families of East and West Florida adapted to changes in social, cultural, and political norms in order to both survive and thrive during the British period, they too deserve to be described as *floridanos*. This study suggests that the term *floridano* should be applied to any native-born Floridian whose family lived in East or West Florida between 1513 and 1784. These men and women often went on to live in Florida during the Second Spanish and American territorial periods. They became some of the most important citizens who contributed to the distinct personal identity many Floridians would embrace prior to becoming Americans in 1821. Born in St. Augustine on November 22, 1769 to the Reverend John Forbes and his wife Dorothy Murray, James Grant Forbes is one of the most famous examples of a British *floridano*. A closer examination of his childhood explains why he should be considered a *floridano* and may offer an explanation as to why he returned to Florida as an adult to play a crucial role in its transfer from Spanish to American control in 1819.

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<sup>623</sup> Jane G. Landers, “Francisco Xavier Sánchez, *Floridano* Planter and Merchant,” chap. in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000), 83-97.

Forbes' father, John Forbes, served as an Anglican minister in St. Augustine in East Florida. Forbes hailed from Deskrie, Scotland.<sup>624</sup> He was the eldest son of Archibald Forbes (1713-1793) and his second wife Agnes Lumsden.<sup>625</sup> Family tradition states that he was born in 1740.<sup>626</sup> Forbes received his education at King's College in Aberdeen. The University of Aberdeen conferred upon him a Master of Arts in Divinity in the spring of 1763. On May 16, 1763, he was recommended for ordination to minister in the Church of England.<sup>627</sup> He received his appointment in St. Augustine probably due to the influence of second cousin, Captain Forbes of Newe. The "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" officially recommended him for the post on April 17, 1761.<sup>628</sup> On May 5, 1764, Forbes became the first English clergyman licensed to officiate in East Florida.<sup>629</sup> A prestigious member of St. Augustine society, Forbes served as a member of the governing council in St. Augustine and as sole judge surrogate of the vice-admiralty court, often working as an assistant judge of the court of common law, sometimes as chief justice.<sup>630</sup> An ambitious man, Dorothy caught his attention instantly. After an initial visit, he proposed. Mr. Murray consented to the marriage on the condition he would wait one year and then return to marriage.

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<sup>624</sup> The biographical details of James Grant Forbes's father and mother offer insight into the formation of his own personal identity. In this context, these biographical details are perhaps even more important for understanding the significance of the son than his parents in the context of the ultimate fate of the British Floridas.

<sup>625</sup> Alistair and Henrietta Tayler, eds., *The House of Forbes* (Aberdeen: Printed for the Third Spaulding Club, 1937), 384.

<sup>626</sup> Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, Dumas, *Dictionary of American Biography*, Volume VI: Echols -- Fraser (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 505.

<sup>627</sup> Edgar Legare Pennington, "Reverend John Forbes," *Florida Historical Quarterly* VIII, no. 3 (Jan. 1930), 164.

<sup>628</sup> Frances Blackwell Forbes, "The Reverend John Forbes in East Florida, 1764-1783." London: Unpublished Manuscript, 1885, *The Forbes Papers*, Roll 37, Part IV, Number 20, Folder 2.

<sup>629</sup> Pennington, "Reverend John Forbes," 165.

<sup>630</sup> James Leitch Wright, Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville, F.L.: University Press of Florida, 1975), 101.

Governor James Grant, Forbes' direct superior, noted the reverend's intentions to marry in a letter to General Thomas Gage dated December 1, 1768. "I was obliged last year to give Mr. Forbes leave to go to the northward for the recovery of his health, as he was dangerously ill. He has again applied to me for permission to go to Boston to be married to a young lady of some Fortune."<sup>631</sup> The marriage took place at Brush Hill on February 2nd, 1769.<sup>632</sup> Dorothy was a week shy of her twenty-fifth birthday. In March, the couple began the return journey to St. Augustine. Dorothy most likely lived in a house built in one of two lots which had been allocated to Forbes upon his appointment to St. Augustine in 1764 "in what became known as the Forbes Quarter... located south of the Parade, bounded east by Charlotte Street and west by Hospital Street (Aviles Street today); north by Edmunstone Lane (Bravo Lane) and south by Grog Lane (today's Cadiz Street)."<sup>633</sup>

While Dorothy seemed pleased with her recent move to East Florida, her aunt was quite unhappy with Dorothy's absence. "Words cannot express nor pen write what I have suffered and am like to suffer by parting with you." She feared for Dorothy's health, and only the promise made by John Forbes that the pair would soon return to Boston to visit placated Dorothy's aunt. Other family members shared the concern for Dorothy's well-being, particularly her mother's sister. "...they are afraid that you will share the same fate your mother did."<sup>634</sup> James Murray echoed his sister's sentiments. A few months after the wedding, he wrote to Dorothy, "My next concern is to hear how the climate agrees with you, and Mr. Forbes and how the place and

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<sup>631</sup> Frances Blackwell Forbes, "The Reverend John Forbes in East Florida, 1764-1783."

<sup>632</sup> Among those guests in attendance was noted Boston merchant John Rowe. He noted in his diary on February 2, 1769 "The Reverend Mr. Forbes married to Miss Dolly Murray this day at Brush Hill." See Cunningham, *Letters and Diary of John Rowe*, 183.

<sup>633</sup> Daniel L. Schafer, *St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784*, Volume 28 (St. Augustine, F.L.: *El Escribano*, *The St. Augustine Historical Society*, 2001) 52-53.

<sup>634</sup> Letter, Elizabeth Smith to Dorothy Forbes, June 22, 1769, The Forbes Collection, Box 3 Folder, 38B.

people appear to you.”<sup>635</sup> Murray’s concern over Forbes’ health seems to have been merely a polite consideration.

In the months directly following his daughter’s marriage, Murray’s relationship with his new son-in-law quickly deteriorated over financial matters. Upon their last meeting, Murray admitted he treated Forbes with “diffidence and reserve.” Murray shared with him concerns that Murray had regarding the vast, expensive building projects in Florida that Forbes had undertaken shortly after his marriage. Murray believed that Forbes “economy appears to me radically wrong and I believe that nothing but severe experience will convince you of it.” Murray fervently believed that the sooner Forbes was cured of his “castle building the better it will be for you and your family.”<sup>636</sup>

Despite his father-in-law’s warnings, Forbes refused to curb his expenditures. Forbes’ actions prompted Murray to issue a second warning. Murray told his son-in-law that given his “present circumstances, he was “being in a state of living, beyond what you were entitled to or could support.” Murray also was not happy when Forbes seized a note Murray had given her payable at her father's death before the couple were even married.<sup>637</sup> Gossip and rumor further soured Murray and Forbes’ relationship. A conversation between Forbes and a mutual friend of Murray’s reached the ears of Dorothy’s father. When asked if Forbes believed Murray “to be an honest, friendly man,” Forbes responded that it was only his belief “until I had dealings with him.”<sup>638</sup> Later, Murray sought to placate Forbes when news reached him that his daughter had

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<sup>635</sup> James Murray to Dorothy Forbes, May 23, 1769, The Forbes Collection, Box 3 Folder, 38B.

<sup>636</sup> James Murray to John Forbes, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1769, The James Murray Robbins Papers, 1638-1899, Massachusetts Historical Society, Box 5, Folder 1796.

<sup>637</sup> James Murray to John Forbes, October 24, 1769, The Forbes Collection, Box 3 Folder, 38B.

<sup>638</sup> James Murray to John Forbes, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1769, The James Murray Robbins Papers, 1638-1899, Massachusetts Historical Society, Box 5, Folder 1796.

become pregnant as Murray believed it for the best if the two men could try to make peace before the birth of the child. It appeared they had reconciled by the time James Grant Forbes was baptized on January 15, 1770. Governor James Grant stood as his godfather.<sup>639</sup> As soon as word reached James Murray of his new grandson, he wrote to congratulate his daughter. “I congratulate you heartily in becoming at once a mother and nurse, since you are an anxious one, I shall be doubly sorry if you lose your son as I did mine.” It seems as if Dorothy was equally concerned for her new son’s health. Murray’s letter seemed to indicate that Dorothy might have asked if he were willing to look after the baby in North Carolina or Boston as her father replied, “I shall be very happy to have charge of him in a healthy climate provided you and Mr. Forbes will escort him hither and leave him with me. Other people have as just an opinion of my fondness for children as you have.”<sup>640</sup> James Grant Forbes, known as Jamie to his family, grew up in St. Augustine until the age of 14 when the end of the American Revolution caused his father and him to return to London as refugees.

Forbes stayed in England to finish his schooling despite his father’s untimely death in the fall of 1783. In a letter he wrote to his mother Dorothy on January 5, 1784, Forbes detailed his experiences as a Loyalist refugee in London:

I beg you will not concern yourself in the least about me as I am in Norwich with my Uncle [Dr. John Murray, Dorothy’s paternal uncle, and actually James Grant Forbes’ great uncle], Aunt [Mary Boyles Murray] and Cousins, where I find in them a Father, Mother, brothers, and sisters. I have since 4<sup>th</sup> September stayed at Mr. Alexander’s Academy Hampstead where my Father [John Forbes] placed me before his death and where my dear Uncle [Dr. John Murray] came to see me from Norwich which is 110 miles distant. I am to remain at N. Walsham about 14 miles from Norwich for my education until your arrival which I hope you will delay as little as possible, as we have been so long asunder and as Jack [John

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<sup>639</sup> The Forbes Papers, Reel 45, Number 7, Folder 2.

<sup>640</sup> James Murray to Dorothy Forbes, June 14, 1770, The Forbes Collection, Box 3, Folder 38B.

Murray Forbes] and Ralph [Ralph Bennet Forbes] have had the misfortune not to see their dear Father [John Forbes]. I hope not to lose the pleasure of seeing them and you. My Father's [John Forbes] affairs in Florida should not prevent your coming just now, as there is a Cousin John or James Murrays<sup>641</sup>, both well adapted for business who will be a leisure most likely one of them will go and settle your affairs in Florida – I suppose my Uncle [Dr. John Murray] will write about this to my Aunt Inman [Elizabeth Murray Inman] as I find he is inclined to do everything in his power for any of our family therefore I must reckon him a Father, as will you no doubt, I hope my dear Brothers are truly sensible of their loss, for I am and hope to improve myself deeply in those studies which my Uncle thinks proper for me to pursue and no doubt they will do the same as they must understand that our chief support must be acquired by application. I have heard from my Grand Father [Archibald Forbes of Deskrie, Scotland, father of John Forbes] in Scotland, who is quite inquisitive to see what I have got. But I think rather he would serve me if pecuniary affairs would admit, I have seen my Uncle, Captain Bennett of the Royals. I have also visited General Grant [James Grant of Ballinloch Castle], my God Father, but I am sorry I cannot say anything for his service at present.<sup>642</sup>

After his graduation, Forbes travelled to the West Indies where he dabbled in business as a merchant and later as a planter. The slave revolt in Haiti in 1791 caused James Grant Forbes to leave the Caribbean. He eventually travelled to New York. In his later life, Forbes founded the New York branch of the Forbes family. He wed Frances “Fanny” Elizabeth Blackwell, the daughter of wealthy New York socialites, Joseph and Mary Hazard Blackwell, on November 16, 1804. The couple had several children. Forbes later served in the War of 1812 under Andrew Jackson, and he was Colonel of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Infantry.<sup>643</sup> At the behest of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, James Grant Forbes acted as one of the main negotiators to secure the colonial archives for the United States from Spain when Florida became a US territory in 1821.

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<sup>641</sup>James Grant Forbes is most likely referring to sons of Dr. John Murray of Norwich.

<sup>642</sup> James Grant Forbes to Dorothy Murray Forbes, January 5, 1784, *The Forbes Collection*, Box 3, Folder 38C, The Baker Library, Harvard School of Business, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>643</sup> Teele, *A History of Milton*, 567.

His fluency in Spanish helped him in his task. He received his appointment from President James Monroe on March 10, 1821. He travelled to Cuba to attempt to retrieve the important documents. Forbes spent six weeks in Havana trying to obtain over seven hundred bundles of papers related to the colonial history of East and West Florida. However, he failed at his task and eventually returned to Pensacola to give his report to General Andrew Jackson. Monroe had appointed Jackson as Florida's first American governor. The archives remained in Cuba well into the twentieth century.<sup>644</sup>

Although Forbes had not been successful at his task, Jackson did not blame him personally. Instead, Forbes returned to St. Augustine later that year to serve as the first United States Marshal at the request of General Andrew Jackson.<sup>645</sup> While in St. Augustine, Forbes wrote to his daughter Josephine about the current state of the town:

St. Augustine is a tolerable large town with 3 or 4 streets running crossways quite narrow and sandy which you get use to, in the middle stands Father Crosby's Church where I go to mass on Sunday mornings and opposite that the Parade ground and on one side of this the old Government house [the Governor's House] where the Americans a few days ago gave a splendid ball, which is to be returned shortly by the Spaniards. At the back of the town is St. Sebastian's Creek which runs into the River and over the Creek my godfather's [Colonel James Grant, governor of East Florida] old place, opposite this town is Mrs. Fish's [Sarah Fish, wife of Jesse Fish]<sup>646</sup> Orange Groves, the light house and a stone quarry. There are some handsome orange groves in this town belonging to Mr. Peopall, Father Crosby, and some other people whose names I do not know, the climate is grand every day almost a sea breeze called here the Doctor, but plenty of Mosquitoes in the night so as to make

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<sup>644</sup> James Grant Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas: More Particularly of East Florida* (1821; reprint, Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1964), xvii-xviii.

<sup>645</sup> James Grant Forbes to Mary Josephine Forbes, August 7, 1821, *The Forbes Collection*, Microfilm Edition, Roll 44, Part VI, #4, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>646</sup> Jesse Fish was a land agent that lived in Florida beginning in the First Spanish Period, through the British Period, and continuing on through the Second Spanish Period. He acted as a sales agent for both the Spanish and the British during the respective evacuations of 1763 and 1784.



everyone sleep under a net...the houses here are generally 2 stories high made either of wood or a kind of shell's stone [coquina] from the quarry [on Anastasia Island] here almost always close together with good yards and fruit trees – There is an elegant fort [Castillo de San Marcos] where the American troops now stay and which has command over the Bar and City.<sup>647</sup>

While Forbes had lived in New York for many years, his return to Florida obviously stirred something in him. “You will find the Ladies here much more sociable than at N.Y. which is now no more my home as I have become as much attached to this place after coming to Pensacola (which is not half as good a place as this),” Forbes told his daughter.<sup>648</sup> Slightly the former capital of West Florida as he did, Forbes’ bias for his childhood home obviously showed through. He finished his letter to his daughter by describing the unique blending of cultures that he observed in St. Augustine’s social setting as represented by a ball that had been held. “This ball which I told you before was given by the Americans to the Spaniards – The room was beautifully decorated with laurels and flowers and the flags of both nations, the windows having no frames were handsomely fixed with branches of orange trees full of green oranges which made it appear quite handsome[.] There were 70 ladies and [a] number of gentlemen. They danced the whole night [until] six [the] next morning and had everything which as good and could be wished for, Forbes reported to Josephine.<sup>649</sup>

James Grant Forbes remained in St. Augustine for a few years after it became an American territory. Forbes was quickly elected as St. Augustine's first mayor.<sup>650</sup> That same year,

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<sup>647</sup> James Grant Forbes to Mary Josephine Forbes, August 7, 1821, *The Forbes Collection*, Microfilm Edition, Roll 44, Part VI, #4, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>648</sup> James Grant Forbes to Mary Josephine Forbes, August 7, 1821, *The Forbes Collection*, Microfilm Edition, Roll 44, Part VI, #4, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>649</sup> James Grant Forbes to Mary Josephine Forbes, August 7, 1821, *The Forbes Collection*, Microfilm Edition, Roll 44, Part VI, #4, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>650</sup> James Leitch Wright, Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution*, 146.

James Grant Forbes also became famous as a Florida historian when he published *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas: More Particularly of East Florida*.<sup>651</sup> He eventually returned to New York where he died on September 25, 1825. James Grant Forbes was buried at St. Mark's Episcopal Church-in- the-Bowery in the East Village.<sup>652</sup>

### **Conclusion: From a Floridano to American Identity**

After the end of the War of 1812, it appears that the one-time colonel felt a certain listlessness about who he was and where he belonged. It is clear from what he told his daughter Josephine that he no longer considered the location of his marital household in New York to be any home for him. Did Forbes's listlessness stem from the potential end of a lifetime of migration across the Atlantic that spanned the Anglo-Iberian borderlands of Florida, the established colonies of the eastern seaboard, the tumultuous islands of the Caribbean, and the isles of Great Britain itself? Or, perhaps more realistically, when he returned to St. Augustine did Forbes finally realize that his birthplace was his true home? As a *floridano*, Forbes would feel most at peace in a place with others like him. Perhaps he did not even know it, but Forbes's identity appears to have begun as the child of loyalist British colonists and ended as a self-made American. This journey, however, is one that represents the process by which English, Spanish, and other Atlantic influences combined to create a unique identity for Forbes. The reason Forbes likely felt at peace when he returned to St. Augustine was because many of the other people around him had under the same transformation. He had finally returned to a place where he belonged. It would be the only place in the entire world where people would understand his origins, his experiences, his thoughts and opinions, and how they had combined to place him on

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<sup>651</sup> James Grant Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas: More Particularly of East Florida* (1821; reprint, Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1964).

<sup>652</sup> Taylar, *The House of Forbes*, 385.

the edge of discovering what many people would view as a unique American identity as the nineteenth century progressed.

**Conclusion**  
**Final Score:**  
**Great Britain, 0 and Colonial Families in Florida, 1**

**By July 1821, Americans had taken control of the Castillo de San Marcos and St. Augustine signifying their acquisition of East and West Florida from the Spanish. An American army officer observed the following American opinion on the evolution of the state of affairs in the new American territory:**

East Florida was literally evacuated by the British, when delivered to Spanish authority in 1784. Perhaps no such other general emigration of the inhabitants of a country, amicably transferred to another government, ever occurred. Spain allowed it many extraordinary privileges, such as were not enjoyed by any other part of her dominions and continued augmenting them ever since. In 1792, Florida was open to a general emigration, without exception of country or creed, and it was rapidly progressing to importance, when the report of the Spanish minister I have mentioned closed the gates against American citizens, sometime about 1804, and virtually shut us in from the world to so large a population. The decline of the province must be dated from this period.<sup>653</sup>

That decline identified in Vignoles's travelogue is one perspective of the Second Spanish Period in Florida history. It follows a painful, chaotic, violent period where the colony that George

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<sup>653</sup> Charles Blacker Vignoles, *Observations upon the Floridas* (New York: Published by E. Bliss & E. White, 1823), 26-27.

Johnstone had viewed as being in its infancy in 1763 had finally reached its adolescence by the time Spain regained control of its old territory.<sup>654</sup>

When the Spanish regained control of East and West Florida in 1783, the Spanish Crown decided not to reunite them into one colony. They likely made this decision given the extremely complicated social and cultural hierarchies that had emerged as demographic numbers increased in both colonies during the years of British dominion and during the Revolution itself. Compared to the situation that the British had experienced when most of the Spanish colonists evacuated from Florida in 1763, a substantial number of British subjects chose to remain in Florida under Spanish rule. A veritable melting pot of English, Scottish, Irish, American, and Spanish settlers lived together in an uneasy peace complicated by relationships with Native Americans and African slaves in the 1780s and 1790s. The Spanish attempted to retain control of their colonists in the Floridas throughout the Second Spanish Period. It was a goal they ultimately failed at for several reasons. First, after the death of King Charles III in 1788, the House of Bourbon faced a series of inept rulers who quickly became the favorite pawn of more powerful European rulers like Napoleon Bonaparte and Queen Victoria. The rulers also saw the very lifeblood of the Spanish Empire threatened with a series of independence movements that dominated colonies such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico between 1810 and 1848. Second, American citizens who lived on the Florida-Georgia border and had a large desire to snap up large swathes of land still available in Florida placed a tremendous amount of pressure on their government to sue for purchase or annexation of the land. Third, the issue of

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<sup>654</sup> Letter, George Johnstone to John Pownall, July 27, 1763 CO5/574/1, National Archives/Public Record Office, London, Great Britain.

slavery under Spanish law continued to destabilize economic pursuits and social hierarchies in East and West Florida itself.

Under Spanish law, slaves had more autonomy and freedom than under the slave codes that dominated legal proceedings in many southern states. Seen as a haven for runaways, Florida became a major focal point for slaves who wanted to escape from their owners in border states, such as Georgia and South Carolina. As a result, when the United States' Secretary of State John Quincy Adams negotiated for and obtained from the Spanish crown the purchase of Florida under the terms of what became known as the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819.<sup>655</sup> The United States did what the Spanish had failed to do in 1784. US Secretary of State John Quincy Adams oversaw the reunification of East and West Florida. For the first few years of its newly reunified status, the capital alternated between Pensacola and St. Augustine before the territorial legislature established a permanent capital at Tallahassee. Florida's first American territorial governor, Andrew Jackson oversaw a civil population that included former Spanish, French, British, native tribes of Seminoles, and African slaves. These seemingly diverse colonists all shared certain commonalities. They had chosen to remain in Florida as they attempted to build plantations and towns with their families. Shaped by the desire to improve their individual wealth, power, and prestige, these families became the lifeblood of the new American territory. While the original British colonization scheme from the 1760s may have failed to achieve its

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<sup>655</sup> For an overview of Florida during the Second Spanish Period, see James G. Cuisick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2003); Stanley Clisby Arthur, *The Story of the West Florida Rebellion* (1935); Isaac Joslin Cox, *The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813* (1918); Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (1954); Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionist of 1812* (1925); Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (1977); T. Frederick Davis, *MacGregor's Invasion of Florida* (1928).

primary goal, it did enable families to rise to the forefront of Florida's social, political, economic, and cultural pursuits.

### **The Notion of Family: Romanticized Ideal versus Harsh Reality**

While the Crown's colonization scheme ultimately failed because of the actions of colonists which royal officials had either failed to consider or completely discounted, a secondary cause can be found in the Crown's flawed understanding of the nature of family in the eighteenth century. For the Crown, conceptions of family remained tied to traditional notions that had emerged in Great Britain over the centuries. British society viewed families as social groups bound by ties of affinity, households organized for common purposes, and individuals voluntarily associating themselves because of sentiment. The second crucial mistake the Crown made stemmed from its inability to see families made up of individuals who might work collectively to ensure the success of their family by ensuring the growth and prosperity of the kinship networks they joined. The idea of individual families joining loose alliances sealed by marriage is nothing new. The notion has likely existed as long as the idea of marriage itself. What was new in the eighteenth century, as historians like Jay Fliegelman have argued, was the evolution of the family itself.<sup>656</sup>

In the eighteenth century, as individuals began to create family units bound initially because of emotional or sentimental attachment, something else also changed. Families across a number of classes began to act both as individuals and as pieces of larger kinship networks. The simultaneous activities of family hint at their evolution as units of social organization that acted both on local and larger scales. The Crown in no way could have understood this fundamental

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<sup>656</sup> Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1.

change that was evolving over the course of the eighteenth century. It is likely this inability to understand the nature of the very social unit they hoped to use as their primary tool of empire which contributed to them developing an ideal colonization scheme based upon a romanticized notion that no longer had any basis in reality, if it ever did.

How did the Crown view families? That is a difficult question to answer. It appears, however, from their later surprise at how families acted in the British Floridas, a few assumptions can be made. First, the Crown viewed families as individuals whose primary importance was their identity as citizens of the British Empire. By placing nationality at the forefront of individual colonial identity, the Crown also seemed to assume they would be able to separate families based on political allegiance. The Crown's second mistaken assumption was to believe the idea that if given enough incentive, such as land and power in colonies like East and West Florida, colonists would feel so grateful to the Crown that such gratitude would ensure their long-term loyalty. Third, the Crown never seems to have considered the idea that when pushed into the task of assuring a colony's long-term success by serving as the social unit upon which a new hierarchy would be based, families might not act as the Crown had wished. These mistaken perceptions clash severely with the hard realities of the truth of how families considered themselves and acted in the British Floridas.

How did families view themselves in East and West Florida? First, it seems that families shared the Crown's opinion that families would be the most important social unit in the new colonies. However, their importance from the families' perspective would not derive from the need for them to provide loyalty to the Crown to bolster colonial success. Instead, the families would be the ways by which individual colonists would construct large kinship networks. The kinship networks would become a new type of elite in each colony. The most powerful kinship



networks would retain control over the best land, the most powerful political offices, the most profitable business ventures, and the most influential social positions.

The disparate opinions as to the function the Crown and the colonists themselves felt families should serve in East and West Florida clashed to the point that the territories destabilized. Once colonists realized the Crown's intentions, they began to react against its attempted use to further imperial aims with families serving as the primary tool by which those goals would be fulfilled. For example, colonists immediately began political feuds and infighting with royal officials like the governors. George Johnstone faced a tumultuous tenure in West Florida from his arrival in 1764 and his departure in 1767 with many factions of Pensacola's colonial population. James Grant faced similar challenges, although his smooth personality seemed to diffuse most of these conflicts with the exception of that with Denys Rolle. Most famously, Patrick Tonyn's all-out war against William Drayton and Andrew Turnbull caused instability in East Florida during a time of external revolution when fighting was a luxury the colony could not afford. The continued political feuds resulted in lengthy attempts to remove colonial officials from their government positions and vacancies that remained long unfilled for much the same reason. Displaced officials and other colonists continued to appeal to the Board of Trade in London as a final arbiter for the colonial squabbles. This fighting began to reveal the weaknesses in the Crown's plan in the early years of East and West Florida's existence. By the end of the American Revolution in 1783, those small cracks could be seen by all as gaping fissures that merely signaled the weakness of the Crown's ability to retain control of its colonies and their people.

## **The Winners and Losers in the Florida Colonization Experiment**

In April 1782, the British met in Paris with its enemies to begin negotiations with the Americans, French, and Spanish delegations. The British negotiators went to France not quite knowing how heavy their losses would be. One of the less pressing questions that doubtlessly touched on the mind of the negotiators was surely what was to become of East and West Florida. The western colony had been under Spanish occupation for almost three years, much of the colony finally seized when Bernardo de Gálvez shelled the West Florida capital into submission in the early spring of 1781. East Florida remained a vibrant community, acting as a haven for refugee loyalists and spouting its greatest population explosion in the entirety of its existence. West Florida might be lost, but East Florida remained under British control. What would that mean at the negotiating tables? It turned out to be a crucial piece when the Spanish offered them a choice: East and West Florida or the Bahamas, also taken by Gálvez during the war.

Ultimately, the British decided that the Bahamas held more importance for them than the Floridas. Explanations for this choice include the Bahamas strategic importance in the Caribbean, the agricultural profitability of the sugar growing island, and the financial drain the Floridas had caused on the British imperial checkbook as the Spanish had warned them in 1762. This study suggests another explanation. By 1783, thousands of refugees had flooded into the province of East Florida. This influx of unchecked immigration effectively ruined any chance for the Crown to retain control of the colonial demographics. Like its older brothers before it, the British colonies of East and West Florida began their colonization scheme in one fashion but seemed destined to end it in another. The main reasons the British Crown had seemed eager to obtain the Floridas in 1763 no longer existed in 1782. The British no longer held a position as the sole political power east of the Mississippi River, the territories in Florida no longer could be

viewed as blank slates for colonization efforts, and the Crown no longer had any colonies where it could implement its ideal colonization scheme in a controlled environment. Combined with the fact that the British had no idea if the newly arrived loyalist refugee population would remain loyal in coming years, the Crown seemed to no longer have a need for the Floridas. The Crown's choice to retain the Bahamas and to cede both East and West Florida to Spain in the Peace of Paris in 1783 becomes easy to understand.

If the British Crown is the largest loser in the colonization experiment of the British Floridas, who is the greatest winner? The answer to that question is simple: the families and their kinship networks. Although some families from the British Floridas chose to evacuate to other British holdings in 1784, many remained in the colonies during the Second Spanish Period. Additionally, some of those families that had left the Floridas, like the Forbes family, eventually returned. A distinct *floridano* identity finalized itself as the end of the colonial era drew to a close during the Second Spanish Period between 1784 and 1821. By the time East and West Florida became unified once more as a single entity when the United States purchased it as a new American territory in 1821, the *floridano* identity became synonymous with an American identity. The evolution would not have occurred without the contributions made by families in the Floridas during the British Period.

### **Conclusion: Final Thoughts on Families in the British Floridas**

The importance of families as a social unit used as a foundation for imperial colonization schemes remains the most significant idea that emerged from British control of East and West Florida between 1763 and 1784. Both the state and its colonists never doubted or questioned the importance of the family as a way to ensure a colony's long-term growth and success.

The study of families in the British Floridas reveals key ideas about the significance of East and West Florida in relation to the colonies themselves and the larger Atlantic World. First, while East and West Florida certainly had their differences, the role which the Crown hoped they would play as testbeds for the Crown's ultimate colonization experiment demonstrates that the two territories possessed more commonalities than originally thought. East and West Florida had initial governments designed in the same manner, royal officials chosen in the same way, and a demographic population that had some uniformity in their early years. Both colonies perpetuated the role of families in colonial society. As a "tool of empire," the state and its citizens elevated families as the most important social unit. Second, the importance of families as a social unit had profound ramifications on the institution of marriage in the Anglo-Iberian borderlands of the late eighteenth century. Adaptive marriage adds another example of evidence as to how and why the institution of marriage changed substantially by the nineteenth century. Third, the colonization experiment offers historians a chance to go beyond the often touted "success or failure" question in the historiography of the British Floridas. Were the British Floridas a success? Were the British Floridas a failure? The question can no longer be answered as simply as historians like Bernard Bailyn and Daniel Schafer had once thought.

Perhaps what the study of East and West Florida offers more than anything is the idea that the success or failure question is not the one worth asking any more. Perhaps what the role of families in the colonization of East and West Florida shows is that the success or failure question is not as important as who learned what in the colonies between 1763 and 1784. The British Crown learned families were a crucial part to founding successful colonies, but they could not underestimate the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of their colonists as crucial members needed to populate the family units. Colonial families learned that frontier borderlands

conditions allowed them to adapt traditional institutions for their own purpose, but that adaptation of things like marriage would profoundly shape and change their individual identities. Both groups took this knowledge and applied it in future circumstances: the families of colonial Florida in the American territorial period and the British Crown in their attempts to colonize India in the nineteenth century. However, those are stories for another time as the trial and error process continued for both groups long after the era of the British Floridas had ended in 1784. The lessons learned in British Florida lived on in creating a legacy that remained significant for generations to come which is not too shabby an outcome for a once little-known chapter in the history of two often forgotten and overlooked British colonies in North America.

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Connie L. Lester, editor

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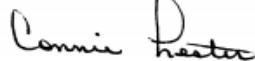
Deborah Bauer  
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Dear Ms. Bauer,

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With best regards,



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### **About the Author**

Deborah L. Bauer is a native Floridan. From the age of twelve, Deborah had a keen interest in history thanks to winning a writing contest that enabled her to purchase a copy of *Bulfinch's Mythology*. She graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree from Seminole Community College (now Seminole State College) & completed her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Tampa. She completed her first Masters of Arts in History at the University of North Florida. Her thesis was entitled "'Damn the English and Damn Dervogilla!': Dervogilla O'Neill and the Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland." She completed her second Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Central Florida. She also completed Graduate Certificates in Gender Studies and Community College Education at UCF. She entered the doctoral program as a member of the Department of History's inaugural cohort at the University of South Florida in 2009 where she declared a major field of Early American History to 1783 with minor fields in Nineteenth Century America and Colonial Latin America to 1810. Deborah has written articles in such publications as *The Florida Historical Quarterly & Florida Studies*. She has won several awards, including the 2009 Governor LeRoy Collins Award for Outstanding Graduate Essay or Research Paper in Florida History from the Florida Historical Society and the 2009 Pilar Séanz Annual Student Essay Prize from the Ibero-American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. She was named as a member of the Board of Directors of the Seminole County Historical Society in 2016. Deborah has also served as president of the Central Florida Anthropological Society since 2019. In the near future, Deborah plans to publish her dissertation manuscript as a book with an academic press. She lives in Orlando with her family.