

**EAST FLORIDA AS A BRITISH
PROVINCE, 1763-1784;
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
PUBLICATIONS IN HISTORY, VOL.
32**

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EDITORS

R. D. HUSSEY

D. K. BJORK

F. J. KLINGBERG

H. A. STEINER





JOHN MOULTRIE
Lieutenant Governor of East Florida

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*California University
Library of California
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PREFACE

What then did England gain by the honesty, the vigilance and wisdom of Mr. Pitt; Canada, an almost barren province; Florida, a sandy desert.¹

THE VERDICT of a contemporary writer on the two principal acquisitions of Great Britain in the Peace of Paris in 1763 may seem strange, in the light of later events, in its reference to Canada, but has been justified by the long neglect of the history of the brief British regime in Florida. The history of East Florida, one of the two provinces created out of the territory ceded by Spain in 1763, is indeed the history of a small and insignificant colony whose growth was slow and whose return to Spain after twenty years was a confession of failure, albeit almost unnoticed in the passing, with the recognition of American independence, of the old colonial empire of Great Britain. Yet it deserves a little room in the history of that empire, and in the history of Florida perhaps a rather larger place. It is with this double interest in mind that this study has been written, though it has naturally been impossible to include many details of local and antiquarian importance which may perhaps receive attention elsewhere.

In describing the life of East Florida it has seemed best to emphasize the distinction between its slow but normal growth as a British province in the years of peace preceding the outbreak of the American Revolution, and its somewhat hectic and abnormal state in the years of the Revolution, which singed but did not consume it. The account is based mainly on the governmental sources which are described in the Bibliography, and suffers from the lack of all but a few records of the private and intimate sort. But even state papers had much of the spice of life and the pungency of strong personal feelings in the days of the eighteenth century, and some of this is still preserved in the yellowing paper and the faded ink of dispatches penned many generations ago.

Since I was unable to revisit England before the present war began, I have necessarily relied on materials available in the United States, particularly the collection, wonderfully rich but far from complete, of transcripts and photostats of official British papers in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, for which all American historians must be eternally grateful. To the Library of Congress, therefore, and particularly to Dr. St. George L. Sioussat, Miss Grace Griffin, and other members of the staff of the Manuscripts Division, I give my warm thanks,

¹ [John Almon], *A Review of Mr. Pitt's Administration* (London, 1763), p. 5, quoted in Clarence W. Alvord, *Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, I, 84 n. 133.

as also to other libraries in which I have worked and to their ever-helpful staffs. These include the Library of the University of California, Los Angeles, the Henry E. Huntington Library of San Marino, California, the Los Angeles Public Library, the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan and its curator, Dr. Randolph G. Adams, the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and its librarian, Dr. Lawrence C. Wroth, the Harvard University Library, the New York Public Library, the Charleston Library Society, the State Library and the archives of the Department of Agriculture at Tallahassee, and Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Lawson of the St. Augustine Historical Society's Library. I am also very grateful to the officials and coöperating libraries of the inter-library loan system, without whose help this work could never have been carried out.

My indebtedness to my colleagues in the department of History of the University of California, Los Angeles, is equally great. Professor Clinton N. Howard, from his interest in the history of British West Florida, first suggested to me the history of the sister colony as a subject for investigation, and has helped me throughout with his advice. Professor Joseph B. Lockey, distinguished son of Florida, who has made the second Spanish period of Florida's history his own province, has been most generous to me with his encouragement and advice, has permitted me to use his collection of Spanish materials, and above all has opened for me the door to the friendship and hospitality of present-day Floridians, for all of which I cannot be too grateful. I am also happily indebted to my other colleagues, and particularly to Professors Roland D. Hussey, Frank J. Klingberg, Louis K. Koontz, and the late John C. Parish. Finally, for the valuable assistance provided by research grants I give my warm thanks to President Sproul and the Regents of the University of California.

The association with people in Florida who are interested in the history of the state has been one of the most pleasant products of this enterprise. I have been helped particularly by the criticism and advice of Mr. Julien C. Yonge of Pensacola, veteran editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, who has deserved so well of his state; Dr. Mark F. Boyd of Tallahassee; the staff of the Fort Marion (Castillo de San Marcos) National Monument of the National Park Service at St. Augustine; Dr. Verne E. Chatelain of the St. Augustine Historical Program; Mrs. Sue A. Mahorner and the staff of the Florida Historical Records Survey, a part of the Work Projects Administration; and Dr. Carita Doggett Corse of Jacksonville. To Professor Cecil Johnson of the University of North Carolina I am indebted for his kindness in letting me read the manuscript of his study of British West Florida, which was published while