

“AN UNINHABITED COUNTRY”: EMPIRE AND ECOLOGY IN BRITISH EAST

FLORIDA,

1763-1774

by

ANDREW JACKSON FORNEY

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Western Maryland College
Westminster, Maryland

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Preface

At first, I was surprised at how lonely research and writing seems. It is definitely a far cry from the intensely personal nature of my “other” job. I quickly learned, however, that accomplishing any task on your own is impossible, and you must collect ideas, guidance, and encouragement from others at every step of the way. If anything, my product is more a reflection of the people that have helped me than any individual effort. I have been humbled by the people I have had the opportunity to work with, discuss the vagaries of alligators and crocodiles with, and occasional vent to when I wondered how I was going to get this whole thing done.

First, I have to thank the United States Army, and particularly the Department of History at the United States Military Academy, for giving me the chance to pursue my dream of going back to school and, eventually, to teach. The Department of History at Texas Christian University had no idea what it was getting itself into when it accepted my application. I hope that I have made all of the extra work worthwhile. Dr. Todd Kerstetter smoothed my transition into the program and always had clear guidance when I was pondering my future “like a 12 year old girl.” My thesis committee was composed of some of the most intellectually stimulating individuals that I have ever had the chance of working with: Drs. Kerstetter, Susan Ramirez, and Kenneth Stevens. Their mentorship inside and outside of the classroom have served to make me a better scholar and person. The History Department’s amazing administrators, Dana Summers and Stacy Theisen, are two of the nicest, most helpful people I have ever met. The staff at the Mary Couets Burnett Library helped me to navigate the various databases that this “computer idiot” needed to search, while the hard-working inter-library loan staff always made sure that my books came in on time, and with a smile. Dr. Steve Sherwood was given the thankless job of trying to piece together the uneducated drivel that I wrote and then mold it into a potentially usable sentence. I am eternally thankful, and sorry.

Dr. Gene Smith provided me with the kernel of an idea for a potential research project, and never attempted to rein me back in as it steamrolled into something it was never meant to be. I don’t know how many “Hey Sir, you busy” conversations I put him through, but he always gave me sound guidance and proved to be an outstanding mentor as I learned the hard way that the scholarly world is not the army world. I look forward to his future advice, guidance, and friendship.

Reed and Wyatt, Wyatt and Reed. The best part of my day is always coming home and seeing your smiling faces. You never let me forget what is really important.

I would be nothing without my best friend and the love of my life, Heather. Her tough love has helped me to navigate the long days and longer nights. Her strength is bedrock, immovable and sturdy. My mercurial ways always come back to center with her common sense, pragmatism, and love. I will never be able to make up the huge debts I owe her, and I will never stop trying.

Everyday I was researching or writing, a young Trooper, Soldier, or Marine sat somewhere far from home and in harm’s way. Beyond the political, one always must remember that there are men and women who are cold and scared but doing everything they can for those lined up next to them. They come home and hope someday to re-enter the world they have left. Beyond the concepts of patriotism, nationalism, and policy is a reality

where young people do what they think is right for themselves, their families, and their communities. Thinking of them drove me to be better, and I hope that they are proud.

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I. Introduction – The Streets of St. Augustine

Everyone agreed that the streets of St. Augustine were too narrow. John Bartram, the King's Botanist for North America who was in St. Augustine fighting an "ague" and "fever" during the fall of 1765, stated that the town was "pleasantly sciutuated [situated] but without regularity." "The streets very narrow," he added, "about 15 foot...the principal street 22, many 12 (or) 8." The houses were "built of ouster [oyster] shell and mortar" with a "terraced chamber floor and palmatto thatched roof." Yet, "as most of these was built by the common soldiers and poor people at different times," Bartram noted, "the new and ould walls is apt to wind and crack so that the soldiers can easily pull them to pieces for thair wood to burn, which is scarce here." Along with the homes, British soldiers had torn down a "Dutch church" that sat outside St. Augustine proper, using the pillars and arches for wood to burn." Another church, one of two the Spanish had built during their time in St. Augustine, was being converted to Anglican services, while the other "going to wrack." An unfinished convent on the city's outskirts was converted to house the soldiers of the garrison.¹ The occupation of St. Augustine in 1765 appeared to be tearing the former Spanish capital of *La Florida* asunder for want of stove wood. St. Augustine situated "on a sandy plat of ground near and iseland [island]," Bartram continued with his observations, recounting "a fine salt creek" emptying 2 or 3 miles below the town. All the water immediately surrounding St.

Augustine was either the brackish water of the salt marshes or came from the sea. The soil, “if white sands and shells may be reconed a soil” Bartram quipped, grew almost nothing.² The scarcity of fresh water, food stuffs, and fire wood gave the colonial administration pause as did its narrow streets.

Bartram’s image of St. Augustine, the new capital and commercial entrepôt for British East Florida, hewed towards the bleak. For the last half-century, St. Augustine had managed to survive in Florida only by maintaining a tenacious grip. Relying previously on mission Indians and small settlements on the nearby St. Johns River for food and supplies, St. Augustine witnessed the collapse of their frontier and loss of their crop lands during the early-eighteenth century due to the expansion of Creek hunting ranges, imperial warfare, and indigenous slave raiding. Spanish St. Augustine, by the time of Florida’s cession to Britain in 1763, depended on regular shipments of food and supplies from Havana. The capital of *La Florida* had become little more than a North American outpost of a faltering Spanish Empire.³

British imperial thinkers saw potential in Florida, perceiving Spain’s lack of improvement and cultivation as a judgment on their practice of faith, habits of work, and ineptitude in bureaucracy. Observer Alexander Cluny posited in 1769 that “with proper cultivation it (Florida) will produce Rice, Indigo, Silk, Wines, and Cochineal.” This served only to benefit the empire as a whole. These goods “will be one of the most advantageous additions, which can be made to our commercial stock,” Cluny intoned, “as it enters deeply into the manufacturing of some of the most valuable commodities, for which purpose we are now obliged to purchase it from others, at which price they please to impose.”⁴ Dr. William Stork, whose first edition of *an Account of East Florida* appeared in 1766, described the

colony as tailor-made for sugar, rice, and indigo production on a large scale.⁵ The several editions of his pamphlet that followed helped give birth to a boom in Florida speculation that reached its climax during the late 1760s and the early 1770s.

A decade after Bartram's stay in St. Augustine, the town still had not changed very much. It definitely did not fit the picture of a bustling metropolis for a booming colony. John Huddlestone Wynne inventoried the town in 1776 and found "the number of houses in their (Spain's) time...was above nine hundred." The British, unfortunately, had done little with them, the majority of the wood and palmetto structures "now gone to decay." Wynne closed his assessment of East Florida's capital with little more optimism, freely stating that "the land about St. Augustine is the worst in the province."⁶ Writing earlier, the iconoclastic Bernard Romans, former deputy surveyor of the colony, posited, "there were not three hundred houses and at most a thousand inhabitants," in St. Augustine. The denizens of St. Augustine "I find to be a kind of outcast and scum of the earth," Romans railed. In fact, Romans quoted a letter from a friend who described St. Augustine as "a heap of ruin, a fit receptacle for the wretches of inhabitants." And, to complete the image, Romans made sure to include his own assessment of St. Augustine's streets, all except one "being crooked and narrow."⁷

British East Florida encompassed a new direction of colonial policy during the 1760s. Attempting to create new colonies for the expansion of middling farmers, the crown hoped to engender a renewed sense of mid-level prosperity in North America that they believed equated to an increased consumption of British manufactured goods. This would not only bind the colonies to the mother country economically, but also hopefully cement political bonds through material incorporation. At the same time, a new sense of the natural world,

what this project terms “imperial ecology,” viewed natural resources and staple crop production as integral portions of the empire. The mid-eighteenth century witnessed the informal assumption of this ideology into court practice, and government prerogative expanded over such items as Caribbean forest conservation and internal protection and encouragement of the indigo market. The colonial administrators also sought to institutionalize and standardize the Indian trade through a process of separation and licensing. Indian people on the frontier of Anglo settlement would also enter the new imperial market, their trade in animal skins another facet of the imperial ecology. Increased demand in skins changed normal hunting/gathering rhythms and fostered entry into regional markets for other goods, both of which changed settlement powers and redefined indigenous power.

Running against imperial projections, local patterns and contemporary accounts of East Florida described stagnation. Plantations were established instead of medium sized farms, and even these expansive economic systems existed on a razor’s edge between success and failure. The colony quickly rejected settlement of consumptive-middling farmers, and by 1774 the majority of East Florida’s inhabitants were bound laborers working on indigo plantations. Prior to the revolutionary war, the colony began to establish itself in the indigo market, but South Carolina still produced ten times the amount that flowed out of St. Augustine. Concurrently, fiercely independent Indians jockeyed for ascension on the peninsula, recognizing the tentativeness of British settlement. And, still, no one had done anything to widen the streets in St. Augustine.

This thesis argues that Britain’s new imperial ecology did not recognize the environmental reality of East Florida. The need to clear stubborn trees from the soil, drain

large swamps, and expand acreage to encapsulate the meager amount of arable land favored those with large amounts of ready capital and the ability to wait on investments. This, by definition, precluded small- and medium-sized farm settlement, a risky venture in the best of times and areas. East Florida devolved into a rich man's gambit, favoring capital accumulation through natural resource and staple crop exploitation more than goods consumption. These capitalist programs had to contend with an Indian population that recognized its new assertiveness on the peninsula and disregarded the boundary line that the colonial administration had hoped would secure the colony. Wynne and Roman's assessments indicate that East Florida found itself outside of the burgeoning imperial trade and flow of ideas in the pre-Revolutionary Atlantic World, an eddy in a surging stream.

British East Florida escaped most historical attention until the 1930s. Whether it was the short lifespan of the British project, its apparent stagnation and decline, or a dearth of primary sources, scholars shied away from giving the British East Florida colony a full treatment. Slowly, a stream of journal articles began to appear, retelling the story of the British colony. Charles Loch Mowalt and Wilbur H. Siebert took the lead in terms of scholarship, using *The Florida Historical Quarterly* as a pulpit to bring East Florida overdue attention. Siebert focused on slaves and indentured servants, the evacuation of Spanish personnel in 1764, and the nature of St. Augustine during its twenty-year British interlude.⁸ Generally following a narrative flow, his articles attempted to recreate the social milieu of the colony, describing the different elements within East Florida for the twenty-one years of Spanish rule. Siebert's later articles expanded on his 1929 work, the two-volume *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774-1785*. He recounted the last decade of the colony in the first volume, and

then filled the second with primary documents collected from the loyalists dispossessed after the colony's transfer to Spain at the conclusion of the Revolution in 1783.⁹

In contrast, Mowalt focused on land policy and acquisition. Starting with his 1940 article, "The Land Policy in British East Florida," Mowalt argued that colonial administrators diverged from the stated plan of medium settlement and began to grant ever increasing tracts of land to fewer and fewer people. The Board of Trade and East Florida's first governor, James Grant, bent a number of stated land policies to engender improvement and cultivation in the colony.¹⁰ Mowalt continued this theme into his monograph, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784*, examining how the accumulation of land led to the formation of a plantation oligarchy with ties to both Governor Grant and his South Carolinian plantation-owning friends. East Florida did not sit a colonial assembly until 1781, eighteen years after the colony had been formed and only after the evacuation of South Carolina and Georgia loyalists to East Florida during the Revolution. The influx of loyalists brought new ideas about representative assembly into the colony, and the lack of unclaimed land fomented discontent among the now-displaced rice and indigo planters.

These two foundational works created the "failure theory" in the historiography of British East Florida. According to this position, British settlers never exploited the potential of the colony. The unfair accumulation of land and undemocratic oligarchic rule precluded the flowering of a democratic spirit and served as the southern bulwark to the revolutionary fervor of the rebellious North American colonies. Plantation settlement seemed more akin to misguided follies than concerted efforts towards founding a profitable staple crop enterprise in East Florida. Contemporary accounts, mainly Romans and William Bartram's (John's son) from 1774, served as evidence for this theory.¹¹ Both decried the oppressive actions of

East Floridian plantation owners and delighted in describing failed plantations along the St. Johns River. The utopian programs of Denys Rolle and Andrew Turnbull both seemed farcical and many took the two settlements' failures as representative of the whole. The failure theory vigorously remains to the present day; Bernard Bailyn even titled the chapter on East Florida in his 1986 book on pre-Revolutionary migration, "Failure in Xanadu."¹²

Mowalt's *East Florida as a British Province* remains the primary work in the field. He succinctly captured the economic and political history of the colony in a readable manner that left many scholars scratching their heads on how to improve on it. Almost three generations from its publication, though, some flaws do appear. The Revolution hangs over Mowalt's account of East Florida like a guillotine blade. By not becoming the fourteenth rebellious colony, East Florida appears in American eyes as destined for failure. The return of the colony to Spain in 1783 only accentuated this failure, and the British haste to cede it back to Spain obviously resulted from the colony's inability to perform within the imperial system. Mowalt also neglected to incorporate East Florida into an inter-colonial network. South Carolina had a major impact on the development of East Florida, yet Mowalt does little to plumb this relationship. Finally, the work glosses over Anglo-Indian relations. Governor Grant spent considerable time perfecting his system of Anglo-Indian separation and trade, embodied in the 1765 Treaty of Piccolata. Yet, as William Bartram witnessed in 1774, the Seminoles viewed the boundary line as increasingly permeable, travelling back and forth to St. Augustine at their leisure, and fully expecting to receive food and gifts upon their arrival.

Modern scholars debate the "birth" of the Seminole people. The central issue involved in the argument is how Creek were the Seminoles? The traditional narrative traces

the expansion of the Creek Confederacy to the South during the early part of the eighteenth century. At some point, the enlargement of hunting ranges and increased slave raiding transformed into semi-permanent settlement on the savannas of central Florida. These Indians practiced a form of pastoralism that entailed cow and sheep grazing, seasonal hunting, and subsistence agriculture. By the 1810s, contemporary observers had labeled this group the Seminoles and viewed them separately from the Creek tribes. The preceding century of murkiness shrouds the ethnogenesis of the Seminole people. Historian Kathryn Holland Braund contends that the Seminoles represented the farthest extent of Creek hegemony during the era of British rule in East Florida. David Cockran labeled the group “outlaw Creeks,” and describes a clear division between the Lower Creek confederacy and the nascent Seminoles by 1764. Striking a middle ground, Paul Hoffman has labeled this group “Proto-Seminoles” in order to convey a sense of transformation and cultural growth.¹³ Here, this project adopts “proto-Seminoles” and “Alachua-Creek Splinter” to describe the group, focusing on their transformation during the English period.

By the 1990s, some scholars began to chip away at the failure theory. Foremost among them is Daniel Schafer, who has striven to recast the perspective of failure in East Florida. Schafer has shown that many successful plantations existed in the colony, challenging William Bartram’s 1774 account of empty tracts of uncultivated land populating the St. Johns River. Calling these ignored plantations “ghost plantations,” Schafer has reconstructed the St. Johns watershed and shown the placement and relative success of several large indigo plantations in East Florida. He also conducted thorough research concerning Richard Oswald and James Grant’s plantation, demonstrating how it practiced a policy of capital accumulation and land expansion to build a thriving venture.¹⁴ Patricia

Griffin accomplishes much of the same by analyzing Andrew Turnbull's Minorcan settlement at New Smyrna. Although colonial officials did eventually terminate Turnbull's project, he did witness wildly successful indigo production through 1776, with many contemporaries regarding his dye as some of the finest in the empire.¹⁵ The Revolution, according to these historians, should never be accepted as a pre-ordained fact. Failure in the East Florida resulted from the Revolution and the following collapse of Atlantic trade and the protected indigo market. Had the Revolution never occurred, or occurred later, East Florida may very well have prospered as a colony. By deconstructing the inevitability of failure, Schafer and Griffin recast East Florida's development on its own merits.

While accomplishing this, Schafer and Griffin unintentionally expose the irony of the socio-economic reality in British East Florida. The perseverance of large resource extractive plantations and their reliance on un-free labor did not match the imperial vision as espoused during 1763 and 1764. Slaves and indentured servants, 70% of the colonial population by 1771, did not consume British manufactured goods in large quantities. East Florida tied itself to the mother country on linkages of subsistence and dependence, not commercial incorporation. The colony's inability to readily access imperial market forces ascribed it to an economic program of resource extraction and staple crop cultivation. Also, the Indian trade had morphed into something barely recognizable from colonial policy in 1763. The key factor in the reworking of this imperial vision was the environment of the region. The inherent difficulties in promulgating profitable ventures in East Florida changed the settlement dynamic until it was far different from the plan as projected in 1763.

This study charts the progression of these ideas. Chapter one discusses the unique union of imperial and ecological thought during the mid-eighteenth century. This section

also introduces two key figures in the narrative of East Florida: John Bartram, a botanist, and Henry Laurens, a rice planter and slave trader. Rulers and diplomats may imagine empire in centers of thought and power, but unlikely actors construct it in places far removed from the imperial core. The next chapter grapples with the ethnogenesis of the Seminole people in the context of East Florida's attempt to regulate Anglo-Indian contact and trade. The proto-Seminoles increasingly asserted their separate status from the Creeks and their power in central Florida during the British reign in St. Augustine. Lastly, this project examines the promulgation of the slave plantation system in East Florida. This was by no means a foregone conclusion in 1765. Several ecological, social, and economic factors interacted in the colony to create a unique environment for staple crop cultivation. This study concludes with a recap of the distance between ideology and practice in East Florida. Along the way, perhaps we will discover why no one ever widened the streets of St. Augustine.

¹ John Bartram, "Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida: From July 1, 1765 to April 10, 1766," ed. by Ann Frances Harper, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, (Dec 1942), 52-53.

² *Ibid.*, 52.

³ Paul Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2002) and David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁴ Alexander Cluny, *The American Traveller, or Observations on the Present State, Culture and Commerce of the British Colonies in America*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=5&userGroup=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C15%29alexander+cluny%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3326275967&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3326275967&relevancePageBatch=CB126275964&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 July, 2011), 107.

⁵ William Stork, *An Account of East Florida. With Remarks on its Future Importance to Trade and Commerce*, 1st edition, Eighteenth Century Collections on Line, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R3&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=2&userGroup=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29william+stork%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3301960913&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3301960913&relevancePageBatch=CW101960913&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 04 August, 2011).

⁶ John Huddleston Wynne, *A General History of the British Empire in America*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R5&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=27&userGroup=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C22%29john+huddleston+wynne%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3328183353&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3328183353&relevancePageBatch=CB128183353&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 July 2011), 328-329.

⁷ Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 243-244.

⁸ Wilbur H. Siebert, "Slavery and White Servitude in East Florida, 1726-1776," in *The Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Jul. 1931), 3-23; "Slavery in East Florida, 1776-1785," in *The Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 3 (Jan. 1932), 139-161; "The Departure of the Spaniards and Other Groups

from East Florida, 1763-1764,” in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Oct. 1940), 145-154; “The Port of St. Augustine During the British Regime, Part I,” in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4 (Apr. 1946), 247-265; and “The Port of St. Augustine During the British Regime, Part II,” in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Jul. 1946), 76-93.

⁹ Wilbur H. Siebert, *Loyalist in East Florida, 1774-1785* (Boston: The Gregg Press, 1972).

¹⁰ Charles L. Mowalt, “The Land Policy in East Florida,” in *Agricultural History*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Apr. 1940), 75-77; “The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida,” in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 30, no. 3 (Dec. 1943), 359-376; and “The Tribulations of Denys Rolle,” in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Jul. 1944), 1-14.

¹¹ William Bartram, *Travels and Other Writings*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1996).

¹² Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 430-474.

¹³ Kathryn Holland Braund, *Deerskin and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1650-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); David H. Cockran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); and Paul Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Daniel L. Schafer, “Governor Grant’s Villa: A British East Florida Indigo Plantation,” in *El Scribnao*, vol. 37 (2000); “‘A Swamp of an Investment’? Richard Oswald’s British East Florida Plantation Experiment,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 11-38; and *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010).

¹⁵ Patricia Griffin, “Blue Gold: Andrew Turnbull’s New Smyrna Plantation,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2000) and *Mullets on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788* (Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida Press, 1991).

II. “An Uninhabited Country”: Empire and East Florida

George III informed Lord Bute that Charles Townsend had stormed into his dressing room on November 10, 1762, as soon as he heard that Florida had been selected over Puerto Rico at the close of the Peace of Paris. Very “coldly,” Townsend admonished the king for his decision, claiming that Florida was, “an uninhabited country” and “useless territory.” The King, regaining his composure, retorted that Florida, “from its fertility and goodness of climate was capable of great improvements.” Townsend changed course after his rebuff, accepting that the industriousness of the British people would succeed where the Spanish had failed.¹ The ministers had settled the Peace, parliamentary debate had ended in the administration’s favor, and opposition against Florida’s entry into the empire had lost its traction.

The exchange in the King’s dressing room illustrates the contending issues of imperial ideology that the incorporation of Florida into the British realm brought to the fore. The end of the Seven Year’s War in 1763 found England absorbing new regions into a North American continental empire. Debate concerning the course of empire began well before the war’s close, as politicians attempted to describe the future relationship between the home islands and the colonies. Florida became the focus of much of the imperial debate, initially concerning the question of whether or not royal ministers should negotiate for its entrance

into the empire, and later, what its position in the empire should be. The resolution of both of the questions marked the transition of imperial ideology from one of natural-resource extraction to commercial consumption.

Also, Townsend's condemnation of Florida as an "uninhabited country" displays the new pervasiveness of environmental thinking in imperial ideology. Environmental factors took center stage at the beginning of Florida's imperial career. The lack of significant Spanish cultivation and improvement in Florida created the impression among several British administrators that the country was a *tabula rosa*. Hard-working British settlers that recognized the importance of natural resources in the imperial economy would succeed where the Spanish had not. On this peninsula stretching south into the Caribbean, imperial policy and ecological theory would meet and interplay, with unintended consequences.

This new imperial ideology was not fully formed when, on December 9, 1762, William Pitt struggled to his feet before Parliament, determined to fight for his legacy. The Preliminary Articles of Peace had been signed by England, France, and Spain a month earlier, ending the global hostilities inaugurated during the Seven Year's War. British success loomed over the articles, with both France and Spain losing vast expanses of imperial territory in the Americas, and in the case of the Spanish also lands in the Pacific. The terms, at first glance, seemed little more than a return to the *status quo*, allowing the House of Bourbon to retain many of its overseas possessions. Pitt, enraged by the proceedings, left his semi-retirement and his death bed to speak upon the consideration of the treaty. Suffering from a debilitating recurrence of gout, Pitt faltered. Needing the support of two nearby peers, he continued decrying the treaty and the current administration until the Parliament "unanimously desired" that he continue his oration sitting.²

“The Great Commoner” faced political irrelevance at the end of 1762. Pitt had resigned from the prime minister’s position fourteen months earlier, accepting a pension for himself and a peerage for his wife. At the same time, he implied to King George III that he would quietly fade into retirement while holding seat in Parliament. News of and speculation about this deal spread quickly, and Pitt’s old political faction portrayed his fall from grace as another example of the autocratic power of the king and his mentor, the Earl of Bute. Pitt had descended from the position of sitting prime minister that embodied the opposition to the butt of front-page editorials on the streets of London in a period of less than six months.³ Battling ailments that kept him in bed for several months before and after his speech that December, Pitt fought back, attempting to reinsert himself into the thick of the political fight and regain the dignity he believed he deserved. Following speakers that lauded gratitude upon the king and his cabinet for ending a “long, bloody, and expensive war,”⁴ Pitt drew a sharp comparison between the current peace settlement and the terms that he had proposed and whose rejection led to his resignation. As the Parliamentary recorder noted, Pitt proclaimed that his proposal “had not been satisfactory to all persons; it was impossible to reconcile every interest; but he had not, for the mere attainment of peace, made a sacrifice of any conquest; he had neither broken the national faith....”⁵

Many believed that the victory in the Seven Year’s War belonged to Pitt. He had fashioned a war strategy that departed from the half-century norm that dominated British foreign policy. Rather than focusing on European fiefdoms and garbled lines of succession, Pitt realized that the war, which started in North America, had morphed into a war of global empires that reached far beyond the pedestrian issues of monarchical Europe. Early reverses allowed Pitt to wield a free hand and run the war and the government ostensibly by himself

and with little interference. By the time of his resignation, France had lost Canada and several Caribbean sugar islands. The entrance of Spain into the war and its speedy defeat, along with the seizure of several of their territories, represented logical extensions of Pitt's strategy even though he no longer directed the war effort.⁶

Pitt's government met with the French in 1761 hoping to end a war that was ruining the nation's economy and credit. Under Pitt's advisement, crown representatives constructed a peace proposal that allowed England to keep nearly all her gains. This sounded a far cry from the typical European peace proposals that served to amend small gains and losses but maintained a fairly well-demarcated *status quo*. Pitt viewed this diplomatic conservatism as a disregard of England's economic and military power and an adherence to an antiquated concept of European alliances. Pitt spoke of empires, of overseas trade, and sugar islands that provided granulated white gold for imperial coffers. Fighting over Germanic states reeked of sixteenth-century thought and wasted capital. Pitt believed that the key to the ascension of the British Empire into the role of global power player lay in preventing the growth of the French and Spanish navies. He further proposed that a lack of Caribbean colonies for either of the Bourbon states would forestall naval expansion in Paris and Seville. Pitt's presumptuous overtures in 1761 which sought to guarantee English dominance and prevent future conflict, instead led to Spain's entrance into the war and the global widening of the conflict.⁷

Twenty-five-year-old George III sought peace on economic terms. He, too, wanted a peace that would prevent the continuing cycle of imperial conflict. His view hewed more to the earlier conception of conflict resolution. By maintaining a *status quo*, and returning the majority of England's wartime gains, George and Bute hoped to prevent an eighteenth

century arms race to regain lost imperial holdings. At the same time, the war had drained Britain's treasury, and created an increased colonial responsibility that necessitated more soldiers, more ships, more administrators, and more pounds sterling. The Preliminary Articles of 1762, and the Peace of 1763 that they became, represented both fiscal practicality and a new imperial reckoning.⁸

Pitt spoke for more than three and half hours that December, and by the end, he could barely be heard, leaving before the close of the debate and, as the recorder noted, "in the greatest agony of pain."⁹ He had discussed the terms at length, providing reasons for each subject's rejection or refinement. Yet, within the long oratory, he mentioned the crux of the current debate in only one paragraph, stating that "Florida...was no compensation for the Havannah; the Havannah was an important conquest." As Pitt saw it, "From the moment the Havannah was taken, all the Spanish treasures and riches in America lay at our mercy." With the trading of Florida for Cuba, "Spain had purchased the security of all these [the Caribbean and South American colonies]." "It was no equivalent," Pitt proclaimed, there had been a bargain, but the terms were inadequate."¹⁰

For all the wrangling that revolved around the pending peace, the Florida cession seemed by far the most troubling and befuddling. The seizure of the thought-to-be impregnable port of Havana, the jewel of Spain's Caribbean possessions, opened the entire island of Cuba to speculation and the prospect of new sugar plantations. Capturing and holding Havana had also cost the Empire dearly in terms of capital and lives, and its release for a veritable backwater outpost left many gnashing their teeth and muttering imprecations at the king.¹¹

What evaded most thinkers, politicians, and strategists at the time was the changing perception of empire that the Peace of Paris and the Florida cession represented. By 1763, burgeoning views of empire and the environment were gaining traction within the public sphere. Florida, particularly East Florida, became a laboratory to test the efficacy of these new ideas. Evidence of these new sentiments began to appear as early as 1760, when the initial rumors of a proposed peace with France, prior to Spain's entrance in the war, led to the informal declaration of a Pamphlet War that rivaled the actual battles they had sought to conceptualize. In total, more than sixty-five pamphlets were published from 1760 to 1763 that addressed the composition of the coming peace. For each that espoused the moderate tack of the royal administration, another soon followed that supported Pitt and his followers. The end result equated to a fairly even number of pamphlets being published by or for both sides in the burgeoning imperial argument. In many ways, these pamphlets revealed the ideology of empire in Great Britain and illustrated the changes taking place during this critical period.

A Letter Addressed to Two Great Men on the Present Peace, published in 1760 as the Privy Council wrestled with assigning plenipotentiaries for negotiations with France, initiated the Pamphlet War debate. Written by crown supporter John Douglas, the pamphlet could easily pass as an official declaration of intent from George III. Douglas decried the ability of the French to abide by any of the treaties that they had signed during the last century. He saw no reason to expect anything different in relation to colonial America. More importantly, the war's resolution strategically shifted North America to the center of the debate. Douglas saw it as imperative that Britain maintain the entirety of Canada at the war's conclusion. The Seven Year's War started and ended in North America, and this was

where the focus of the peace should lie. “The possession of Canada (by Britain),” Douglas pointed out, “is the only security that the French can give us.”¹²

Douglas defined what the goal of the peace should be: security and thrift. The central issue in 1760 concerned the acquisition of either Canada or the very profitable French sugar island Guadeloupe. If the central issue in the war was the security of the Anglo-American Colonies, then the central tenet of the peace should guarantee their security. “In a word,” Douglas proclaimed, “you must keep Canada otherwise you lay the foundation of another war.”¹³ To return any portion of Canada allowed French designs on expansion to fester in the wilderness interior of the continent. A continued stand-off over North America would only serve to empty the imperial treasury. Douglas assumed correctly that the American colonists would willingly take no part of funding the large standing army needed for protecting the vast frontier. He held out even less hope that the increase in revenue created by the possession of Guadeloupe would meet the new fiscal demands. The pursuance of such a policy portended future national bankruptcy. Ultimately, the French in Canada, and the ramifications that this would have in the empire, only served to curtail British liberties. In the future, conditions could force the government into relying on foreign creditors to finance a standing army, always portrayed as the bane of freemen everywhere.¹⁴

As for Guadeloupe, “England possessed enough sugar islands.”¹⁵ The key for the empire involved the expansion of their growing export trade in manufactures. The North American colonies, and now Canada, weighed much more significantly in contrast to the Caribbean sugar islands in the balance of manufactured goods consumption.¹⁶ British manufacturing regions formed the new nucleus of capital. Rather than depend on the vagaries of the sugar market and fluctuating international prices, manufactured goods,

consumed at rates that were increasing exponentially in North America, served as a stable means for capital accumulation and held the potential for increased imperial revenue.

Douglas' 1760 treatise broke the levee, as a deluge of pamphlets followed the example that he had crafted. The best articulation of the opposition view appeared in the immediate response to *A Letter to Two Great Men...*, the creatively titled *Remarks on the Letter Addressed to Two Great Men*.¹⁷ Historian Jack Sosin contends that William Burke drafted this response, although he does attribute his brother Edmund and Charles Townshend as either co-authors or as providing assistance with vocalizing ideas.¹⁸ All three railed against the conceptions of the new peace vocalized in the pamphlet and formed a solid bloc that represented the strongest opposition to the king and his administration.

Burke spoke plainly in his pamphlet, declaring that it represented a direct criticism of the plan in the first letter. Claiming that a generalized Anglo-mindset of supremacy pervaded the current political dialogues, Burke informed Douglas (who was still at this time anonymous), "I am afraid, Sir, that your letter tends to increase and inflame this disposition," and contended that his argument was "guided by old prejudices and not the true nature of things."¹⁹ The English government never stated that the acquisition of Canada represented the central focus of the war effort. The seizure of Quebec attested to the superiority of English arms, not an imperial vision that placed any strategic value on Canada. Burke chuckled at the notion that possessing Canada guaranteed any imperial security. The French placed little value in Canada and instead focused more on their Caribbean colonies, particularly Guadeloupe, which the English saw fit to return with the signing of the peace treaty. This reestablished a *status quo* in the Caribbean, a region where England did not hold the same dominance as it did in North America. Imperial reality dictated that the English

negotiated from a position of power in North America, with or without Canada, but not within the Caribbean.

Calling Guadeloupe “another sugar island” missed the newly forming ecological reality of English sugar cultivation. As Burke argued, “You know that another island, ...Brbadoes [sic], formerly one of our best, is at present much exhausted...and that the rest, except perhaps Antigua, are quite inconsiderable.”²⁰ Extensive sugar expansion in the British Caribbean slowed in the face of soil exhaustion, deforestation, and erosion. While new conservation policies sought to reverse this trend, retaining Guadeloupe would have allowed the immediate injection of sugar and sugar-capital into the British market. As it stood presently, “our sugar islands produce little more than what serves the home consumption, and that at a very advanced price.”²¹ Burke imagined peace creating an English empire far better situated to capitalize on export markets, seeing security in the increase of tax revenue and the growth of sugar production within the mercantilist system.

The debate on the nature of the peace generally followed the parameters as sketched by these first two pamphlets.²² Both held that British success at arms allowed for a drastic revision of empire. Complete victory had eluded the British until the Seven Years’ War, and that fact, coupled with the ferocity and expense of the conflict, left both sides scrambling to define what the Empire would resemble after the peace. The administration’s viewpoint sought thrift and security. Its predilection for a continental empire (soon to add Florida after the defeat of the Spanish in 1762) over the assumption of further sugar islands demonstrated a proclivity towards protecting British citizens and allowing for the expansion of British markets as consumers. New Caribbean colonies did not have enough space for a large wave

of new colonists, and their mono-crop exports still depended on a world exchange that the crown could not manipulate as it could an inter-empire mercantilist commodities market.

The opposition saw the British Empire on a global scale, not simply a continental one. British success, despite all the ballyhoo surrounding land victories at Louisburg, Quebec, and Havana, still centered on the navy's ability to control the seas. Allowing the French to possess Caribbean islands provided them with the impetus to continue to expand their naval fleets in order to protect their trade. A global British Empire preferred to face a French army in Canada with no chance of naval assistance rather than an expanded French navy throughout the oceans of the world. Also, sugar had a long history of profits that made Guadeloupe hard to ignore. By regulating these profits, the government put itself in a position quickly to address their current revenue issues. Sparsely settled Canada, lacking in most natural resources beyond furs, did not portend the same monetary outcome.

Anglo-American Benjamin Franklin cunningly supplied his own viewpoint on this situation. He waded into the vociferous pamphlet battles and provided his own imperial conceptualization. Franklin's 1760 work, *The Interests of Great Britain Considered*, provided a new perspective on the peace treaty debate. While writing directly in response to the *Letter Addressed to Two Great Men* and the *Remarks* that followed, Franklin also sought to address an unwritten undertone apparently spreading among the proponents of diplomatic austerity, many of whom claimed that the war was pursued only to benefit the Atlantic seaboard colonies and they alone reaped reward from the conflict's end. Most of the earlier pamphlets disregarded the colonial perspective, viewing the colonies as little more than pawns on the chessboard of European empires.

For Franklin, the impending peace and the subsequent frontier readjustment revolved around two issues: security and trade. Security and attempts to forestall future hostilities required the removal of the French from Canada. Franklin despised any comparison between security in Europe and America, claiming that the acquisition of Canada would place an ocean between England's colonies and French ambition. In America, "a vast wilderness thinly or scarce at all peopled, conceals with ease the march of troops and workmen." Franklin recognized that "important passes may be seized within our limits, and forts built in a month, at a small expense, that may cost us an age, and a million to remove."²³ Imperial security included American security. Franklin argued for both prudence and practicality of the empire defending the American colonies, for they were the "frontier of the British empire." An attack on the colonists represented more than attack on the "people immediately affected, but properly '*the cause*' of the whole body." In a phrase that speaks volumes to the trajectory of colonial affairs, Franklin added, "where the frontier people owe and pay obedience, there they have a right to look for protection."²⁴

Smarting from the sting of the colonies' inability to unite at the Albany Congress in 1754, Franklin clothed his argument in terms of the new nationalism so prevalent in English culture following the sweeping successes in 1759. Philadelphia, for him, equated to Birmingham, erasing any line between "colony" and "metropolis." The American colonies strongly identified themselves with the mother country during the conduct of the war, each colony binding itself to the home island in a manner little imagined previously. Only the crown had prompted unity among the colonies. On their own, the colonies proved unable to provide a monolithic front against the French and Indian threat. That unity quickly faded

with the advent of peace. The colonies needed security and further inclusion in the imperial dynamic along with consideration as equal kinsmen within the glory of the English state.²⁵

Trade provided the quickest means with which to create this new imperial bond. Yet, this trade was not the typical colonial export of raw materials or agricultural products that had dominated earlier mercantilist ideology. The abundance of land provided a ready means for social mobility, preventing the growth of a landless lower-class that would toil in paid labor. Thus, the colonies would ultimately rely on the home country to provide manufactured goods for use in their homes and on their farms. And Franklin supplied fiscal totals of English exports into Pennsylvania as proof, showing an increase of more than 250,000 pounds from 1723 to 1757.²⁶ While admitting that some of this increase related to war needs, Franklin suggested a growing trend. The means to link the colony with mother country was through “manufactures,” Franklin noted, not a reliance on expanding the sugar trade, of which he said, “we have sugar-lands enough.”²⁷

In his normally witty and ebullient style, Franklin described an epochal transformation in mercantilist thought. Until the mid-eighteenth century, the common assumption persisted that British colonies existed: first, as a reservoir of raw materials and a commissary for agricultural goods; and second, as an outlet for the lower classes due to overpopulation. The sugar islands of the West Indies emerged as the jewel in the British imperial crown. They supplied a marketable commodity that brought England capital on the world market. The Atlantic colonies of North America provided some products, particularly tobacco, rice, and indigo, but most of the colonies followed a more settlement-minded path rather than the ideology of intense mono-crop exploitation that dominated the British Caribbean.

The first stirrings of the industrial revolution changed the dominant imperial image. Accrued capital led to investment and nascent industrialization. As both Douglas and Franklin discussed, the consumption of manufactured goods replaced sugar exportation as the new mercantilist objective. As historian George Louis Beer showed, consumption of English goods in North America had doubled during the five years from 1754 to 1758 and had far outstripped the import demands of the West Indies during the same period.²⁸ As the British economy changed from a pre-capitalist local economy to a global market-based export juggernaut, imperial ideology changed along with it. No longer did capital accumulation from raw materials suffice as the means to fire the engine of the British economic system. The measure of imperial success thereafter relied on self-contained and self-regulated markets that allowed for constant and stable sources of revenue flow. Imperial security became a necessity for this system, and the administration sought the means to engender settlement of consumption-minded colonists in a stable economic system.

The formation of a new environmental consciousness coincided with the changing foundation of imperial vision. While not directly tied to these new imperial machinations, it appears evident that this new ecological conception existed alongside, building off a common cultural prerogative of change that favored rationality and order. At the same time, this new ecological construction played into the hands of George III's administration, helping to craft a model for a workable and profitable colonial system.

Some historians cast colonial environmentalism in a *mélange* of Christian and Renaissance values. These two intellectual trends create a dual-sided image of nature in the colonial system. First, in the Christian tradition, uncultivated land is tantamount to sin. God enjoins his followers in Genesis to go forth and create a domination relationship with nature,

bringing forth resources, food, and goods that show the blessing of the Lord among those that toil. This vision of the natural world lends itself to exploitative colonialism, settlement, and land-use patterns that favor quick gain and risky investments.²⁹ Historian Roderick Nash defines this as a “Wilderness Condition,” the mentality that formed along the far edge of settlement. In this arena, colonists view nature unsympathetically, as a constant reminder of their own mortality and their struggle against the weather and the land. Decidedly adversarial, this ecological construction behooves expansion into perceived empty spaces and the growth of export markets in an early imperial light.³⁰

At a psychological level, the world appeared to exist in demarcated spheres of civilization and chaos. In the Christian mind, the establishment of a spiritual parallel between God and Satan appeared to be the obvious conclusion. The expansion of nature took on the role of a new, ecological Crusade against the forces of “Satan and his monsters.”³¹ The early conceptualization of the Puritan “mission” in New England serves as a telling example. As historian Peter Carroll describes, Puritanism confronted environmental realities in the New World by shifting from an Old World conception of practicing their religion for social betterment to a New World one that was markedly more messianic and metaphysically driven.³²

The Renaissance’s portrait of the natural world deviated only somewhat from the Christian one. Following the Middle Ages, many artists and scientists began to study the natural world in order to determine the essence behind elemental forces. These thinkers described natural laws as universal constants. Rationality seemed self-evident in the construction of nature. As opposed to the Christian tradition that seemed to create a binary opposition between man and nature, the new way of thinking removed nature of its vitality

and made it an object of study separate and subordinate to human reason. Environmental sociologist Neil Everden draws the analogy that this conception of man and nature is akin to a fish realizing he is in an ocean; where once the fish existed inside and amidst the ocean, his new realization sets him apart from the object and the notion of “ocean,” creating both a duality and an intellectual chasm between the two.³³

Ultimately, both trends speak to human dominance of nature, be it as an impassioned quest or a scientifically rational experience. Evernden describes these and other environmental theories as nothing more than social constructions. Each model or conceptualized system exists as an example of social and cultural needs, desires, and expectations.³⁴ The two above trends filled a social need to explain exploration, colonization, and drastic ecological changes to the New World. Colonists imposed their own cultural baggage on the New World, to include land-use policies, irrigation planning, and types and forms of agriculture.³⁵ Early European entrants into the New World remade the environment that they initially found and, by falling back on older means with which to view the natural world, found coherence amidst the chaotic and the reconstructed lands.

Some scholars hold no qualms with portraying these two trends existing throughout the colonial era, and some even placing it far beyond, even into present day.³⁶ What they disregard is a nascent conservationism that began forming during the seventeenth century and flowered in the mid-eighteenth. Burke spoke of this to an extent as he noted the “exhaustion” of British sugar islands. By no means equivalent to present day environmentalism, this conservationism based the human-nature relationship on potential and long-term investment, particularly on the global stage of imperial destinies. Still

exploitative, there grew a sense of passionate and rational awe to the natural bounty of the New World and the wealth that it held.³⁷

One of the earliest examples of this new wave in ecological thought in the English language appeared in 1664. John Evelyn's *Sylva* decried the destruction of the nation's forests, using the pulpit at the Royal Society of London to preach his views. Once having millions of acres, England by the mid-seventeenth century showed the scars of heightened timber demand. "Usurpers," Evelyn claimed, denuded the forests, throwing a national resource to the wind for a money-hungry desire to bring more land under cultivation. "For it has not been the late increase in shipping alone," Evelyn opined, but mainly" the multiplication of glass works, iron furnaces, and the like, from which this im-politick dimuntion of our timber has proceeded, but from the disproportionate spreading of tillage." The drive towards agricultural expansion on the home island to profit from demands in the nascent market economy spelled doom for thousands of acres of forests. But these agricultural capitalists did more than just cut down trees, they sought "to grub up, demolish and raze, as it were, all those many goodly woods and forests, which our more prudent ancestors left standing, for the ornament and service of the country."³⁸ Evelyn continued that the plow had done its damage well, leaving the only recourse for the crown a well-planned and well-executed policy of "sowing and planting."³⁹

Yet, only in the above passage where he notes the "ornament" value of trees does Evelyn place forests in a position of beauty and repose. He continually conveyed an image of imperial necessity and national defense. Forests occupy a position as "bulwarks of the nation," being needed for the "wooden walls" of the royal navy and to fuel the iron and smelting furnaces needed to create cannon and shot.⁴⁰ The majority of *Sylva* maps out a tree-

by-tree plan for cultivation, care, and utilization in regards to national programs. Evelyn even sought the creation of what today we would term a “forestry agency,” a portion of the government responsible for an imperial plan of land-use, irrigation control, and tree priority. He opined that, “cultivating our decaying woods contribute to our power, as to our greatest wealth and safety.”⁴¹

Stephen Hales expanded on Evelyn’s intense interest in trees, conducting experiments to determine the nature of fluid transmission from leaves to roots, mapping the capillary flow of water and air much as had been done with the human body a generation before. He stated in *Vegetable Staticks*, published in 1727, that vegetables and trees participated in *perspiration*. Yet Hales’ perspiration released purified moisture into the air around a plant. For instance, Hales claimed that dew manifested the release of moisture from plants that cooled when mixed with the outside air.⁴² Expansive acreage of plants, particularly forests, swamps, and jungles, Hales maintained, possessed the ability to create their own micro-climates.

Hales’ work fed into and represented a greater stream of inquiry into climate, cultures, and populations in Europe during the first half of the eighteenth century. Much work at this time focused on the effects of climate on culture, particularly how “temperate” climates created geniuses and races of men that used lower average temperatures to their benefit, forming societies and cultures that excelled at exploration and subjugating the other, less temperate races. Concurrently, climate and biology looked into the relationship between climate, soil, and aridity to determine the size of the human population able to populate a given space, or inevitably, the Earth.⁴³ Both theories demonstrate a *zeitgeist* in intellectual

trends that link climate and land-use with European exceptionalism and population densities, both imperial prerogatives.

Benjamin Franklin, commentator on all things scientific and imperial, offered *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* (1751) to examine population growth, specifically in England's North American colonies. North America provided vast tracts of empty lands, fertile, with a temperate climate that were ready-made for European "husbandmen" who found themselves running out of room in the Mother country. Franklin postulated that the environmental condition in North America allowed exponential growth within and from without: "But notwithstanding this increase, so vast is the territory in North America, that it will require many Ages to settle it fully."⁴⁴ Franklin linked this potential population explosion with imperial expansion, contending that each member of the new population would become imperial consumers and cravers of English commodities. Franklin saw land and climate as tools working together to better the English dominion.

The extrapolation of Hales' experiments on perspiration into climate theories began to cause concern, then dread, in certain portions of the empire. Deforestation in the Caribbean for sugar cane cultivation, many theorized, led to "desiccation," or a drying out of the land. Perspiration and the erasure of micro-climates left denuded spaces on the island that became increasingly arid over several tree-less generations. Declining yields, as Burke spoke of during the 1760s, led many to conclude that desiccation had expanded from a local issue to a region-wide concern. Today, we recognize that deforestation causes significant issues with run-off, leaching, and erosion, and is not tied directly to "perspiration." Modern environmental engineers prescribe soil improvement and tree cultivation to address this issue today. English scientists posited many of these same ideas, but by accessing contemporary

theories on desiccation and micro-climates. Beginning during the 1750s, English colonial administrators began pursuing a plan of imperial conservation in the Caribbean Sugar Islands. Large expanses of virgin forests fell under royal protection, both to maintain a timber reserve for Britain's Navy as well as to put a stop to unheeded sugar expansion. In many ways by the 1760s, population growth and an increase in cultivation appeared to be grinding to an ecological halt in the British Caribbean.⁴⁵

In 1769, Hugh Williamson, spoke before the American Philosophical Society about how to change the environment to improve the climate of a given area. Read in 1770, his *An Attempt to Account for the CHANGE of CLIMATE, which has been Observed in the Middle Colonies in North America*, pointedly proposed that land cultivation, by creating more perpendicular planes for the reflection of the sun's rays, had decreased the temperature and meteorological disturbances in the mid-Atlantic colonies. As he posited, "If the surface of this continent were so clear and smooth, that it would reflect so much heat as might warm the incumbent atmosphere, equal to a degree of heat produced by the neighboring Atlantic [sic], an equilibrium would be restored, and we should have no stated North-West Winds."⁴⁶ In the future, Williamson expected that "in a series of years, when the virtuous industry of posterity shall have cultivated the interior part of this country, we shall seldom be visited by frost or snows, but may enjoy such a temperature in the midst of winter, as hardly destroy the most tender plants."⁴⁷ It appeared self-evident that human's destiny entailed the modification and improvement of the environment, allowing the expansion of cash crops and the eradication of diseases tied to ill winds, swamp vapors, and the cold.

Much of these scientific pronouncements appear to modern observers as laughable. Yet, these myriad environmental ideas epitomized a growing movement in intellectual circles

that tied climate and environment with imperial fortunes. Benevolent biomes in North America appeared tailor-made for population growth and expansion that would inevitably fill the coffers of England from trade in manufactured products. The Atlantic colonies, with their abundant land and long growing seasons, seemed destined to provide a home for thousands of yeoman farmers on finely demarcated plots of land, each free of the constraints of class and, through English imports, wants. This scenario did not exist in the West Indies where, in fact, it appeared that wonton environmental practices crafted a dead-end system of exploitation. As each commentator decried the need for “another sugar island,” another nail was driven in the coffin of Pitt and Burke’s conception of export/exploitative empire.

These environmental concepts and national policies merged to form an “Imperial Ecology.”⁴⁸ A heady term, it is used to describe the intermingling of environmental and imperial ideas to form concrete royal policies that governed the dominion. The crown, as it redefined empire and how to administer it, saw land-use and expansion as integral parts of its imperial dynamic. The idea of expansion of mono-crop agriculture shifted in priority to make way for the growth of small or start-up farms that maximized growth in a consumer-base. Resources, particularly trees, but also exports like cotton and indigo, now fell under government purview, as all resources formed part of a new mercantilist vision of an interconnected Anglo-Atlantic Imperial System. All that was needed was an undisturbed location to test this new imperial theory.

The British public knew little of Florida, particularly the region on the eastern side of the peninsula. The establishment of St. Augustine in 1565 represented the first Spanish toe hold in North America, quickly followed by the establishment of Santa Fe some twenty-five years later. Spain’s intent in founding St. Augustine concerned the need to protect its

treasure fleets once they left the Spanish Main. English privateers waited on the edge of the Gulf Stream to capture the bullion that filled Spanish coffers. Imprecise navigation equipment and training made it far easier for Spanish sailors to follow the Atlantic coast until they reached a latitude that would allow for a due easterly course back to Iberia. Imperial Spain saw St. Augustine as a location from which to launch small fast ships that would provide close protection against the British until the treasure galleys could reach open water.⁴⁹

The Spanish settlement in Florida can be categorized as resilient at best. St. Augustine hung on, amidst foreign raiding and Indian warfare, until the British cession. Little else did. Attempts by the Spanish to expand the frontier past the beach met frustration in dense pine stands, meandering streams, and stagnant swamps. Expansion, be it either by military outposts or the establishment of missions among the Indians, always coupled with eventual retraction and retrenchment. A series of imperial wars and Indian revolts throughout the first half of the eighteenth century left Spain in possession of Florida, which consisted of St. Augustine, Pensacola, and two small “blockhouse” style forts ostensibly over watching the Florida/Georgia border. The total Spanish population for the entire peninsula hovered between three and four thousand, the majority in the garrison, the colonial administration, or the clergy. Florida precariously existed as an imperial trip wire.⁵⁰

A new enterprise in writing descriptions of the Atlantic colonies originated after 1763, with numerous accounts appearing before the British public describing the continental empire in its new, contiguous form. Writers and travelers published new accounts of Britain’s empire, describing Florida, although the portrayals were slim due to the lack of knowledge of the region and the dearth of infrastructure in the new possession that would

allow easy travel and writing for the imperial documenter on the move. Most authors painted a conflicting image of this new East Florida, established by the King's Proclamation of October 1763, with Alexander Cluny drawing a stark divide between the opinions of those, "who have obtained Grants of Land in Florida, and want to settle or sell them, (who) represent the whole country as a Canaan, 'flowing with milk and honey'" and the army that referred to it as a "Field of Blood."⁵¹ Cluny variously used such emotive words as "barren," "unhealthy," and "desert" alongside such words as "highest perfection" and "most profitable." East Florida for Cluny represented potential, the ability of Englishmen to cultivate the fertile locations, survive amidst the infertile ones, and then use Florida as a pry-bar to the commerce of the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. The proximity of Cuba, Hispaniola, and several other Iberian possessions almost guaranteed that they would eventually gravitate to the British imperial orbit, falling under the sway of a far superior hegemony.⁵²

Robert Rogers, in his *A Concise Account of North America*, makes excuses for the low level of development of East Florida, contending that up until recently, "the country was...almost entirely uncultivated."⁵³ John Huddleston wrote in the same vein, linking East Florida with cultivable potential that hadn't been exploited in the region. "In the interior parts the trees are larger, the grass higher, and the cattle bigger" than by the sea, he claimed, with the lands by the rivers rich and having the darkest soil. Indigo cultivation had been practiced by the Spanish half-heartedly, and the potential for large indigo and rice plantations appeared evident.⁵⁴ These myriad descriptions varied in many ways, but all agreed that Florida was ripe for cultivation and English ingenuity, making the creation of a successful colony in East Florida a national quest.

The first eye-witness account of East Florida arrived in England during late 1763, penned by Lieutenant Colonel James Robertson after his officially sanctioned inspection tour of the new British possession. His image of Florida created a picture of a besieged Spanish garrison trapped in the walls of St. Augustine. The “lower Creeks”, yet to be identified separately from the Creek nation and be given the name “Seminoles,” had successfully forced the Spanish out of the interior of the peninsula, reclaiming the land as part of their new hunting grounds. The Indians expanded their hunting range as the demand for deerskins and other furs exploded following the cessation of hostilities after the Seven Year’s War. The Spaniards had no or “very imperfect” maps of the country, but Robertson contended that the rivers, particularly the St. Johns, “will make the expense of removing its (East Florida’s) produce small.”⁵⁵ Major Francis Ogilvie, commander of the 9th regiment that secured St. Augustine from the Spanish, seconded this account: “There was no trade or manufactures of any kind in the province, and by the constant war with the Indians and their little capacity to carry it on, they were hemmed in within the limits of St. Augustine.”⁵⁶

As is so often the case with empires, new and old, unlikely individuals find themselves representing worldly politics in unforeseen and intensely personal situations. Two more unlikely candidates could not be found for East Florida than the royal botanist, John Bartram, and South Carolina middleman, Henry Laurens. Both shaped early East Florida policy unintentionally, following a script based on the intellectual and cultural baggage they brought with them.

John Bartram hailed from Philadelphia, a founding member of the American Philosophical Society, where he undoubtedly ingested much of the same intellectual flotsam that engendered the speaking and writings of imperialist-minded Franklin and climate-

altering Williamson. More importantly, Bartram occupied the position of “King’s Botanist for North America,” making him responsible for the cataloging of new plant species for the Royal Gardens in Kew, as well as sending seeds to Oxford. Franklin and Bartram’s agent in London, Paul Collinson, lobbied for Bartram to be awarded the position, considering him to be a dependable scientist and of like mind on many issues.⁵⁷ As part of his new imperial job description, Bartram received royal orders that dispatched him to East Florida on a botanical excursion, with instructions to forward seeds, specimens, and notes to the King’s Royal Society in London.

On a personal level, these orders represented the pinnacle of Bartram’s career. He had often voiced a desire to move past the colonial frontier and find the sources of the continent’s major rivers. Rumors abounded of the wealth of plant and animal species that populated the Florida peninsula, with the Okefenokee Swamp representing more of a barrier to expansion and exploration than the remnants of Spanish empire in St. Augustine. Beyond the simple pride gained by recognition and the prospects of a new adventure, Bartram saw the trip as a means to address some issues closer to home. His son William, who he always affectionately called “Billy,” had gained a reputation as a ne’er-do-well in the close-knit Quaker community where Bartram resided just outside Philadelphia. William possessed more talent with his pencils and paints than with the plow and the purse. Bartram enlisted William to assist him with cataloging and drawing specimens on his trip, and secretly hoped to attach the young man with the royal cartographic exercises soon to be taking place in East Florida, particularly the main survey being conducted by Gerard De Brahm. The younger Bartram sold his farm and livestock and traveled south with his father in September 1765.⁵⁸

After stays in South Carolina and Georgia, the Bartrams crossed the St. Mary's River and entered East Florida in early October 1765. Their path took them overland to St. Augustine, crossing stretches of forest and swamp that John described as "unhealthy to white people," the soil as "poor" and "sandy," and labeled the area the "pine barrens," using the term given the area prior to his arrival.⁵⁹ Arriving at St. Augustine on the 13th, and soon meeting with the governor and "several Carolina gentlemen," their conversations undoubtedly turned to land grants. Within three days, John Bartram fell ill with the, "ague and fever," most likely malaria. The Bartrams confined themselves to John's St. Augustine sickbed for the next month, John writing letters and "stitching his specimens." Future events lead us to suppose that William came under the sway of the siren song of land surveyors and the governor's publicists looking for new planters.⁶⁰

By mid-November, the Bartrams, with John oscillating between sickness and health, set out on a botanical expedition up the St. Johns River, the water thoroughfare that the imperial administration saw as the new backbone of East Florida settlement. For the first time in his numerous travels, John set forth in lands where no Englishmen had gone and no Spanish records remained.⁶¹ Bartram stayed true to his scientific passions, cataloging everything he saw, describing grasses, cypress swamps, pine forests, and eventually an alligator, of which his party killed and ate. The immensity and depth of Florida's natural world seemed to swallow the group, with webs of rivers and creeks feeding into and out of their path. John never wavered in his descriptions, but an overwhelming sense of awe and human frailty appears from between the lines of Latin genus and type. On January 12, 1766, the Bartram's party could go no further; the reeds and water grasses combined with the meandering path of the river to stop their bateaux. The men attempted to shoal forward,

wading in the shallows in forty-degree temperature, but to no avail. The party turned back and spent the night at the hammock they slept at the night before, an omen of Hollywood-size proportion.⁶²

Cypress swamps, winding rivers, alligators, herons, turkeys, and deer populated this untrammelled land. Bartram described a complete wilderness, not the notion of an uncivilized opposition to the urbane or the land of a lurking Satan, but a region of immensity juxtaposed with the claustrophobia of the deep swamp shadows. The party heard a bear one night growling on the next ridge over, and the baying of wolves punctuated their expedition on several instances. The St. Johns existed as a land apart, devoid of any moral prerogative, but also a fantasy world for eighteenth century life scientists. To call the land an Eden entailed no stretch of the imagination.

An important research and exploratory adventure, the account of the trip on the St. Johns is revealing also for the passing comments Bartram made. He deemed several rivers and streams suitable for mills, discussed sites already acquired by “squires” ready to settle in the new colony, and even discussed the construction of a canal that would link the proposed area for a new town with St. Augustine and forego the winding and tortuous traversal of the St. Johns swampland [a pet project of Governor Grant’s]. Even as a botanist, enlivened by the wealth of new species before him, John still felt the inertia of the new imperial ecology. East Florida’s development never left his mind, residing just behind his duty to study and catalog for the king. Governor Grant’s involvement further linked the expedition with the colony’s development.

The land brimmed with potential. And why not: the land was empty! Once the Bartrams departed the southern of two Indian trading posts on the St. Johns, they never saw a

soul. This land, full of natural bounty and untapped resources, had only deserted Indian village sites (Bartram supposed over a century old), broken pots, small mounds of collected sea shells, and abandoned Spanish homesteads as its only evidence of previous human residence. Nothing even indicated humans had passed through the region recently. East Florida appeared lost in time, waiting for an industrious British people to realize the land's potential.⁶³

Henry Laurens also wanted to assist with the maturation of this imperial destiny. Laurens made his fortune as a planter and merchant in Charleston, South Carolina, particularly in slaves, operating the largest slave-trading company in eighteenth century North America. Thirty-nine when the Seven Year's War ended in 1763, Laurens immediately saw the advantages of East Florida as a British possession. Writing to a friend on February 14, 1763, he maintained that, "the accession of Florida...will prove an excellent barrier to us and open a boundless field or new trade as well as prove a horrible check to the Spaniards and be no small degree of security for their good behavior and in short our circumstances were such that I in my opinion we have made an honourable peace and in the nick of time and I believe that people in general will say so when they cool."⁶⁴ A month later, Laurens indicated to another friend that the new peace created, "an immense acquisition of territory and of Indian acquaintance which no doubt will be improved in the usual way for the benefit and advancement of commerce but hitherto we are ignorant of the measures intended to be pursued for subjecting and settling that vast country."⁶⁵

Security and markets rested foremost in his mind, and Laurens knew best how to access them. Laurens first met then-Colonel James Grant during the late 1750s, when Grant served as the leader of the expedition against the Cherokee that vanquished that tribe and

brought peace to the contentious South Carolina/Georgia borderland. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Laurens of the South Carolina militia served under Grant, and the two created the foundation for a lasting friendship. In June, 1763, Laurens wrote in passing to another veteran of the Cherokee War, “I intend soon to write to Col Grant,” possibly aware of the good Scotsman’s impending appointment as governor of East Florida.⁶⁶ By September, 1764, Laurens replied to an earlier letter from Grant and indicated that he had begun handling Grant’s business transactions in Charleston, becoming his *de facto* business manager.⁶⁷ This opened doors that allowed Laurens access to the coterie of the Royal East Florida Society of London, an informal group of elite Scotsman focused on the development and colonization of East Florida.⁶⁸ Laurens surveyed their lands, sold them their slaves, and gave them advice on plantation agriculture in the North American South. Laurens arrived very quickly among the new imperial elite.

Upon the end of his Florida sojourn, John Bartram spent time in St. Augustine preparing a map of the St. Johns and writing a report of his journey, both presented to Governor Grant in March, 1766. Yet again the personal intertwined with the professional, and Bartram spent the first few weeks in March surveying a site for William’s new indigo plantation, reportedly at the head of the Six Mile Creek, upstream, from Piccolata. Bartram actually thought this a bad idea as William had shown little initiative or stamina in Pennsylvania for farming. The semi-tropical environment of Florida forgave much less than the mid-Atlantic colonies. But the voyage on the St. Johns and the boom in plantation speculation fired William’s imagination. Not even an offer to work on De Brahm’s surveying team made any impact. William was to be an East Florida planter.⁶⁹ William

convinced his father, and in a story that resounds throughout culture and time, John Bartram looked for a means to provide for his wayward son.

Stopping in Charleston en route to Philadelphia, Bartram knew who to see about acquiring goods for William -- Henry Laurens. The two had met previously when Bartram had begun his journey. Laurens had spent an inordinate amount of time and money in creating a garden at his estate that captured all of the latest trends in European horticulture and Bartram wasted no time in answering an invitation to visit.⁷⁰ They enjoyed each other's company on several occasions before the Bartram's left Charleston in 1765. A year later, Bartram reunited with Laurens, but now on both business and personal terms. John purchased seeds, tools, and slaves, six total, for William's East Florida adventure.⁷¹

John Bartram and Henry Laurens became central actors in the unfolding imperial drama of East Florida. Driven by a desire to expand scientific knowledge, Bartram found himself in the midst of an immense and unmapped wilderness, creating the foundation of a new East Florida image. By 1767, disagreement over his written word strained the colonial program in East Florida, as contending images of empire and environment seemed to massage some of his accounts. Laurens helped to make Charleston the entrepôt for East Florida, his relationships and business acumen not only making him rich, but creating the aura of an expert around him.⁷² He traveled several times to East Florida, surveying lands and advising London capitalists on their sprawling purchases. On one of his visits in 1766, in order to assuage the anxiety of a worrying father for his in-over-his-head son, Laurens stopped at William Bartram's plantation on Six Mile Creek. John Bartram had not heard from his son in several months.⁷³

The intertwined lives of the Bartrams and Laurens seem an unlikely avenue from which to access the intersection of empire and ecology in British East Florida. Empire, as the traditional argument goes, is decided in the halls of government, boundaries drawn over maps by diplomats tipping the occasional glass of sherry or port, and destinies decided in martial conquests and the spilling of blood. While these large-scale events are both illustrative and important, they do little to show what empire looked and felt like on the ground. Conquest and colonization occur less at the point of a gun or with a scratch of a pen, but more readily in the unique ecological relationships that an individual or community engenders with the natural world where they find themselves. For East Florida, more can be ascertained by studying an explorer-botanist and a slave trader-land speculator than in far away parliament or the crumbling walls of now-British St. Augustine, of which everyone agreed that the streets were far too narrow.

¹ George III to Lord Bute, November 10, 1762, in *Letters from George III to Lord Bute, 1756-1766*, ed. Romney Sedgwick (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), 161.

² *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, vol. XV (1753-1765), 1255.

³ Jeremy Black, *Pitt the Elder: The Great Commoner* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992), 194-203.

⁴ *Hansard*, vol. XV, 1259.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1259.

⁶ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 297-311.

⁷ Anderson, 476-486; Paul Kleber Monod, *Imperial Island: A History of Britain and Its Empire, 1660-1837* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 198-199.

⁸ Monod, 207-212; Anderson, 503-506.

⁹ *Hansard*, vol. XV, 1273.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1265.

¹¹ For an account of the Havana campaign, Anderson, 498-502 and J. R. McNeil, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 169-187.

¹² John Douglas, *A Letter Addressed to Two Great Men, on the Prospect of Peace; and on the Terms Necessary to be Insisted Upon in the Negotiation*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29douglas%2C+john%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%28TI%2CMed%2C17%29a+letter+adressed%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3330293657&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3330293657&relevancePageBatch=CB130293657&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011), 32.

¹³ Douglas, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-47

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁷ William Burke, *Remarks on the Letter Addressed to Two Great Men; In a Letter to the Author of that Piece*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T>

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¹⁸ Jack Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 9-10

¹⁹ Burke, 7-8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

²² In support of Douglas see *A Candid and Fair Treatment of the Remarks of the Letter to Two Great Men. Directed to the Author of that Piece*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C100%29a+candid+and+fair+examination+of+the+remarks+on+the+letter+two+great+men.++directed+to+the+author+of%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3318999206&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3318999206&relevancePageBatch=CW118999206&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011); and Owen Ruffhead, *Reasons Why the Approaching Treaty Should be Debated in Parliament as a Method Most Expedient and Constitutional. In a Letter Addressed to a Great Man and Occasioned by the Perusal of a Letter Addressed to Two Great Men*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R3&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=17&userGroupName=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29owen+ruffhead%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CW3307491655&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3307491655&relevancePageBatch=CW107491653&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011). In support of Burke see *A Letter from a Gentleman of the Country to his Friend in the Town on his Perusal of a Pamphlet Addressed to Two Great Men*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R5&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C24%29gentleman+in+the+country%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C4%291760%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CW3303966874&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3303966874&relevancePageBatch=CW103966873&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011). For a closing argument in favor of the administration, see *Reflections on the*

Terms of Peace, Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R7&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C33%29Reflections+on+the+terms+of+peace%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C4%291763%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%290LRI+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEJ+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEG+Or+2NEI+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRN+Or+0LRM+Or+2NEF+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRF%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CW3306063314&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3306063314&relevancePageBatch=CW106063313&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilit=y (accessed 12 June 2011).

²³ Benjamin Franklin, "The Interests of Great Britain Considered with Regards to Her Colonies and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadaloupe to Which are Added Observations Concerning the increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.," in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. IV (1760-1766), ed. Albert Henry Smith (New York: Haskell House Publishers LTD., 1970), 37.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 50-51, 70-71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁸ George Louis Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 137-139.

²⁹ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang), 1983, 54-81; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 13-20.

³⁰ Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought From Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 429-460 and 655-705; Nash, 23-43.

³¹ Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 62-75 (quote 73).

³² *Ibid.*, 181-197.

³³ Neil Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 57-71 and 88-103.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-17.

³⁵ The *magnum opus* of this idea is Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Publishing, 1972); with Cronon, also see Elinor G. K. Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, *To Defend our Water With the Blood in our Veins: The Struggle for Resources in Colonial Puebla* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1999).

³⁶ Evernden, 88-103; Nash, 67-83. For a general work that approaches this angle from a distinctly American perspective, see Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's role in American History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³⁷ For a European account, see Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16-72. See also Robert Olwell, "Seeds of Empire: Florida, Kew, and the British Imperial Meridian in the 1760s," in *The Creation of the British-Atlantic World*, ed. by Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

³⁸ John Evelyn, *Silva; Or a Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in his Majesty's Dominions*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=6&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C11%29john+evelyn%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C5%29sylva%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3327926090&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3327926090&relevancePageBatch=CB127926088&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 24 July 2011), 19-20

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴² Stephen Hales, *Vegetable Staticks: Or an Account of Some Statistical Experiments on the Sap in Vegetables: Being an Essay Towards a Natural History of Vegetation. Also, a Specimen of an Attempt to Analyse the Air, By a Great Variety of Chymio-Statistical Experiments: Which were Read at Several Meetings Before the Royal Society. By Stephen Hales, B.D.F.R.S. Reactor of Farringdon, Hampshire and Minister of Teddington, Middlesex.* Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R3&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=6&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29stephen+hales%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C18%29vegetable+staticks%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3307072654&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3307072654&relevancePageBatch=CW107072654&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 22 July 2011).

⁴³ Glacken, 551-623.

⁴⁴ Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.," in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. III, ed. by Albert Henry Smyth (New York: Haskell House Publisher LTD., 1970), 65.

⁴⁵ Grove, 153-168 and 264-308.

⁴⁶ Harold Williamson, "An Attempt to Account for the Change in Climate, Which Has Been Observed in the Middle Colonies," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 1 (Jan 1769-Jan 1771): 275.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁸ Donald Worster uses the same term in *Nature's Economy* to discuss the ecological concept that saw human existence as above the natural world, a role of domination. While my model is part of this concept, I use the safe term in a more sharply focused construct, looking at English theories of empire and ecology in the mid-eighteenth century. See Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: The Roots of Ecology* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1977).

⁴⁹ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 60-75.

⁵⁰ Some authors debate the extent of Florida's military weakness by the Seven Year's War; see, Weber, 141-145; Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 174-206; Ronald L. Gold, *Borderland Empires in Transition: the Triple Nation Transfer of Florida* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 8-11; and J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1971), 95-100.

⁵¹ Alexander Cluny, *American traveller: Or, Observations on the present state, culture and commerce of the British colonies in America*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C15%29alexander+cluny%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3326275967&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3326275967&relevancePageBatch=CB126275964&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 22 July 2011), 105-106.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 106-108.

⁵³ Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=3&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29robert+rogers%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3300789515&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3300789515&relevancePageBatch=CW100789514&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 22 July 2011), 148.

⁵⁴ John Huddleston, *A General History of the British Empire in America*, Eighteenth Century Collection Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R4&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C16%29john+huddleston%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C4%291776%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CB3328183888&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3328183888&relevancePageBatch=CB128183888&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 22 July 2011), 319-340.

⁵⁵ James Robertson, "Robertson's Report of Florida in 1763," in *The British Meet the Seminoles: Negotiations Between British Authorities in East Florida and the Indians: 1763-1768*, ed. by James D. Covington (Gainesville, FL: Contributions of the Florida State Museum, Social Sciences, 1961), 5-8.

⁵⁶ Francis Ogilvie, "Ogilvie to Board of Trade, 26 January 1764," in Covington, 17.

⁵⁷ Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkley, *The Life and Travels of John Bartram: From Lake Ontario to the River St. John* (Tallahassee, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1982), 224-225; and Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "John Bartram: A Biographical Sketch," in *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram, 1699-1777* (Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 2004), 16-18.

⁵⁸ Berkeley and Berkeley, 226-229; John Bartram, "Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida: From July 1, 1765 to April, 10 1766," ed. Ann Frances Harper, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (Dec 1942): 1-3.

⁵⁹ John Bartram, 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-35.

⁶¹ For an almost poetic analysis of the St. Johns Expedition, see Lawrence Hentrick, "The Origins, Goals, and Outcomes of John Bartram's Journey on the St. Johns River, 1765-1766," in *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram, 1699-1777* (Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 2004).

⁶² John Bartram, 42; Hentrick, 133-134.

⁶³ For the account of the St. Johns expedition in full, see John Bartram, 36-49.

⁶⁴ Henry Laurens to John Knight, February 14, 1763, *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (from hence, PHL), vol. 3, ed. Philip M Hamer and George C. Rogers, Jr. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 253.

⁶⁵ Henry Laurens to John Etwein, March 19, 1763, PHL, vol. 3., 374.

⁶⁶ Henry Laurens to Stephen Papon, June 4, 1763, PHL, vol. 3, 469-470.

⁶⁷ Henry Laurens to James Grant, September 15, 1764, PHL, vol. 4, 428-432.

⁶⁸ George C. Rogers, Jr., "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, volume LIV, number 4, April 1976, 479-496. Also see Henry Laurens to Dennis Rolle, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, volume four, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1974, 483.

⁶⁹ John Bartram, 49 and 76; and Berkeley and Berkeley, 262-263.

⁷⁰ John Bartram, 26-28 and 63-64; Berkeley and Berkeley, 229-234.

⁷¹ John Bartram to William Bartram, April 15, 1766, *The Correspondence of John Bartram* (henceforth CJB), 1734-1777, ed. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), 661-662; Berkeley and Berkeley, 262-264.

⁷² Two of the best known biographies say little of Laurens' role in East Florida or mention it in passing; see David Duncan Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens, With a Sketch of the Life of Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915) and Daniel J. McDonough, *Christopher Gadsden and Henry Laurens: The Parallel Lives of Two American Patriots* (Sellingsrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2000). The Historiography focuses either on his role in the Continental Congress or the abolitionist bent of his son, John.

⁷³ Henry Laurens to John Bartram, August 9, 1766, PHL, vol. 5, 151-155; John Bartram to William Bartram, April 5 and 9, 1766, CJB, 661-665; and Berkeley and Berkeley, 265-267.

III. “These Indians have had less intercourse with Europeans than any other nation on the continent.”: Boundaries and the Ethnogenesis of the Seminoles in British East Florida

John Bartram’s account of the opening of the Treaty Congress of Picolata in 1765 remains the only eyewitness description. John and William traveled to Picolata (18 miles west of St. Augustine) on 15 November, 1765, at the invitation of Governor Grant. Upon their arrival, the Bartrams learned that Grant had arranged for them to sleep in a tent with the administrative party. John declined, opting for a room in the old Spanish watchtower that presided over the St. Johns River. The Bartrams thought that their room would be warmer and drier, as they still feared a recurrence of John’s malaria prior to their ascent of the river.¹

As Bartram recounted, “the Governour sate on the back of the pavilian and the Superintendent [John Stuart] on his left hand, facing the open end, with a table before them.” The Creek headmen “assembled about 150 yards distance in the same plain in which the pavilian stood, right in front, to about 50 in number, marching in a column 6 in front.” Paying homage to the burgeoning deer skin trade, about 20 Indians “on one side too that caried on thair arms a number ... [of]bucksins dressed.” On the other side, “2 other chiefs, each carrying pipe dressed with eagle feathers, by which the interpreters marched.” To conclude the formalized recognition of kinship and inclusion, “2 chiefs advanced prety fast, with a kind of dance, to the Governour and the Superintendent, which they stroaked with

their eagle alternately all over their face and heads with their eagle feathers surrounding their pipes...one of the chief indians held the pipe of peace by the bole while the governour and superintendent and chief indians smoaked.” After the Indians completed their ceremony, “the superintendent opened the affair to them.”²

The Treaty of Picolata in 1765 created the dividing line between British East Florida and the territory of the Lower Creeks. Governor Grant and Southern Indian Superintendent John Stuart sought to preempt any confrontation in East Florida between the burgeoning colony and the Lower Creeks. Vivid accounts of Spanish ineptitude in the face of Indian expansion gave both men pause. The creation of an Indian-Anglo boundary line emerged as the predominant theme of the treaty, crafting the appearance of causality from one to the other. This perspective gives no justice to the ideology or personal prerogatives of the actors who negotiated along the riverbank during November 1765, nor does it analyze the treaty as existing on its own merits. The Treaty of Picolata embodied the new imperial plan of East Florida. To claim that it represented the essence of the new conception of British Empire also is valid, in that it sought to create an ordered colonial world in a London-approved mold. The treaty, and the ideologies of empire and environment behind it, personified the expectations that the English had about their territorial “blank slate.” Traditional views of the treaty portray it as demarcating East Florida as civilized and savage, with benefits accruing to each side in a much hoped for balance of security and profits. Land speculation, military funding, urban expansion, the slave trade, and unfounded promises of potential all revolved around the treaty.

In reality, the Proclamation never explicitly dictated the creation of a boundary line in Florida. Instead, Grant and Stuart held to the same imperial ideology that formulated the

early proclamation and attempted to impose it on the metaphorical clean slate of East Florida. Conceptions of commerce and ecology, first exhibited in the Florida Cession and institutionalized in the Proclamation of 1763, colored the imagination of the East Florida administration as it prepared to meet with the Lower Creek delegation in November, 1765. The British failed to ascertain that East Florida never purported itself as the above mentioned “blank slate.” A variety of ecotones, constructed landscapes, and shatterbelts between different cultures all composed East Florida. The removal of the Spanish did little to change the immediate ecological reality of the newly British colony. By focusing on Indian relations before and after the signing of the Treaty of Picolata, new perceptions of cultural interaction, land use, and British weakness become readily apparent. Instead of formalizing Indian-Anglo separation and trade, the Indian policy in British East Florida informally constructed a tribute system that reinforced the Indian notion of Anglos as lessees. At the same time, the ethnogenesis of the Seminole people further created complexity in Indian relations, and prevented the British hegemony from forming on the peninsula. And John Bartram, a botanist from Philadelphia, witnessed its inception, further placing him at the crux of the development of East Florida.

The Treaty of Picolata relates to the proclamation in a non-contiguous manner. Neither Grant nor Stuart, the two conveners of the congress, claimed that it acted as their guide or rubric. But the proclamation did change the landscape of colonial affairs in East Florida. The treaty formed as an amalgam of ideas about Indians, colonists, Empire, trade, and land use. Land quickly became the most critical element in East Florida’s internal affairs by 1766, as an aggressive public relations campaign soon saw more grants of land being issued there than in any other location in the empire since the close of the Seven Years War.

Grant and Stuart both assumed that Indian trade existed separately from land development. Pursuance of a boundary line in accordance with the vague guidance as issued in the King's Proclamation of 1763 seemed to be the most direct way to create peace and promote commerce in the new colony.

History rarely views the Proclamation of 1763 objectively. One can argue that the Proclamation is the most important document from the colonial era. Historians analyze it more for its causes and effects than for its own stand-alone merits and the ideological factors that its arguments exemplify. After assessing the historiographical context of the proclamation, a further strategic assessment shall serve to show the document for the ideological creation that it is. Historians often portray the proclamation in one of two lights: as either a reaction to Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763 or as the foundation for the American Revolution. Neither perspective recognizes the independent thought and actions that went into creating the proclamation, nor portrays it as a product of the nascent imperial ecology forming in the administration.³

Pontiac's Rebellion shook the image of continental empire in North America. Extending from May through October, 1763, the rebellion saw the formation of a near pan-Indian resistance to British imposition of control in the trans-Appalachian west. As the traditional narrative describes, the British Empire, reeling from economic hardships and exhausted from seven years of global war, hung on until the rebellion ran its course. Royal representatives followed the rebellion's closing by making concessions with select Indian chiefs in the region. The Crown perceived the real issue behind the rebellion as the unmitigated westward migration of small farmers. Uncontrollable Anglo migration served only to impinge upon the rights and concessions of the allied Indians. The crown

immediately realized it needed a remedy to the issue, and the proclamation set the Appalachians as a boundary for westward expansion. By keeping the two races separate, the Empire could maintain peace along its new imperial frontier. As historian Colin Calloway claims, “The Royal Proclamation reflected the notion that segregation not interaction should characterize Indian-White relations.”⁴ The British retreated from their imperial conquests and hoped to shield their Atlantic colonies from further bloodshed.

The Proclamation Line became the central historical fact from late 1763. Our republican fathers found themselves awash with debt from pre-proclamation land speculation across the line. They quickly created an image of the boundary line as a tyrannical injustice, a means to hinder the spread of British civilization and peace.⁵ The line solidified in order to prevent future outbreaks of intra-ethnic warfare over contending land claims and cultural differences. Issues with financing the large standing army needed to police the proclamation line subsequently forced the Empire to explore revenue collection in the colonies through taxation - without representation.⁶ Several present day observers draw narrative linkages progressing from Pontiac’s Rebellion in May 1763 to the issuance of the Proclamation that fall.⁷

The historical community often wrestles with the temptation to find linkages of past events in order to create a logical continuity. Several factors influenced the composition of the Proclamation. It is important to realize that the document is a product of its time and the new imperial regulation had unforeseen consequences. The King’s administration sent initial queries involving the ordering and regulation of the Empire during early 1763, prior to the first rumblings of Pontiac’s Rebellion.⁸ Orders to formulate an official policy came down from the Secretary of State that May, more than likely as Indian warriors began to make their

plans to besiege several forts in the Ohio country. The initial draft was complete and ready for review by June 8 yet never proposed in council until September 16, several months AFTER the news of Pontiac's Rebellion reached London.⁹ Pontiac's Rebellion may have influenced the drafting of the Proclamation, but it by no means seems to have sped up its issuance.

Showing that the document's genesis occurred before the advent of Pontiac's Rebellion does not completely discount the notion that Indian resistance had an impact on the Proclamation's writing. Instead, Indian-white relations appear to have held a central position in the Proclamation's ideological foundation. Historian George Beer contends that the inability of the colonies to agree on a continental Indian policy at the Albany Congress in 1754 forced the government to extend its prerogative over Indian affairs. The 1763 rebellion placed an extra emphasis on the need to create a unified policy, not merely to craft a reactionary maneuver to placate Indian chiefs.¹⁰

The ideological origins of the Proclamation reside in two documents: Henry Ellis' *Hints Relative to the Division and Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America* and John Pownall's *Sketch of a Report concerning the Cessions in Africa and America at the Peace of 1763*. The creation of both works in 1763 speaks to the need to create a colonial policy in accordance with the new imperial ecology that London used to frame its concept of empire. The Peace of 1763 became emblematic of a watershed moment in imperial affairs. No longer a haphazard collection of independent colonies, the royal government sought the means to create an ordered and profitable continental empire based on security and the importation of English manufactures.

Henry Ellis had once held the position of royal governor of Georgia, among a host of other titles. Awaiting confirmation as the new governor of Nova Scotia, Ellis found himself with time on his hands and the ear of Lord Egremont, the Secretary of State. Ellis posed himself as an expert on colonial affairs. Egremont believed him. He forwarded a memo of Ellis's that provided a rough outline for the new colonial acquisitions. *Hints Relative to the Division and Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in the America*, slim in length, comes across more as notes or ideas than as the formal policy recommendations. Ellis's *Hints* sought to create an ordered model for governance in the new colonies. Establishing the means to form colonial government represented a new challenge for the administration. The other colonies had a myriad of governments, although all of them exhibited some form of popular representation. Ellis wanted to ensure this form of popular legislation carried over to the new colonies. He assumed that familiarity among the colonists with English institutions allowed that they "might therefore be adopted at once, without any material Alterations."¹¹

Ellis's most far-reaching recommendations related to the formation of "some Line for a Western boundary." "It might also be necessary to fix upon some Line for a Western Boundary to our ancient provinces," he argued, "beyond which our People should not at present be permitted to settle, hence as their Numbers increased, they would emigrate to Nova Scotia, or to the provinces on the Southern Frontier." Rather than concerning himself with Indian problems, Ellis instead claimed that priority should be given to keeping colonists "where they would be useful to their Mother County, instead of planting themselves in the Heart of America, out of the reach of Government." Ellis feared that the growing distance between colonists to mother country meant "great Difficulty of procuring European

commodities.” The isolated settlers “would be compelled to commence Manufactures to the infinite prejudice of Britain.”¹² Ellis pitched his tent firmly in the king’s camp by advocating for imperial management of the colonies in order to maximize commodities consumption. Granted, as the soon-to-be governor of Nova Scotia, he ought to have identified with the king. What is striking is that he barely mentioned at all the potential for Indian violence. The boundary line’s intent focused on colonial containment and commerce, not segregation.¹³

To John Pownall, Secretary of the Board of Trade during the genesis of the proclamation, fell the task of writing an initial “sketch” on the proposal to order the empire’s new possessions. While discussing at length the necessity to organize the colonies and provide for their government, the most enlightening portion of his report focused on settlement and manufactures: “As in the case...of permitting the colonies, at present at least, to extend their settlements beyond the heads and sources of those rivers and waters which do directly discharge themselves into the Atlantick Ocean or the Gulph of Mexico, would probably induce a necessity for such remote settlements [out of the reach of navigation] to ingage in the production of manufactures of those articles of necessary consumption which they ought, upon every principle of true policy, to take from the mother country, and would also give rise to a separation of interests and connections, in other points, not consistent with that policy...such settlements would not be made or colonizing allowed without a manifest breach of our general engagements with the Indians which would naturally excite in them a jealousy and disgust that might prove of fatal consequences.”¹⁴ Pownall addressed both imperial elements succinctly in one sentence. The maintenance of continental security necessitated the recognition of Indian rights to land. Encroaching on those lands held the

potential for increased Indian hostility and eventually for war. Pownall appeared to have the oracle's gift as British forts in the Ohio Country began to be sacked.

By listing colonial manufacturing first and describing it the most, Pownall contends that the protection of the British commercial market was the proximate cause for his proposal of a western boundary line. Echoing Ellis' concern, Pownall feared that the lack of infrastructure in the colonies precluded interior development. The concern did not rest on the fear of the colonists' inability to migrate, but on a lack of manufactured commodities that could penetrate the western frontier. Forced to either manufacture their own goods or look for alternate importation methods, the colonists would inevitably drift away from the imperial center. This detachment served to shift the locus of imperial hegemony, and through its expansion, the Empire would fracture. The victors of the Pamphlet War found their policy voice. And with the issuance of the King's Proclamation on October 7, Ellis's and Pownall's imperial theories survived in almost complete form.

The King's Proclamation of October 7, 1763, focused on three central areas: colonial organization and governance, land dispensation and grants, and Indian reserves and trade. The Proclamation began by naming the new additions to the continental empire, including East Florida. It also explicitly described the mechanisms to create a colonial assembly in each colony, and vested power in an appointed governor until the formal seating of the assembly. Next, the Proclamation focused on the ability of the Board of Trade, and through them the governor, to dispense land grants in the colonies. Those that had served in the Seven Year's War, officer and soldier alike, received special attention. Awarding of land grants to veterans formed a significant portion of the Proclamation. Squatters fell under the purview of royal law, with removal from their lands as punishment. Finally, pointing to a

history of abuses and corruption in relation to Indian land sales, the crown forbade land settlement in the areas not demarcated as imperial colonies across the Proclamation line. The colonial governor, acting in accordance with the royal administration, now issued all Indian trading licenses. Those who did not follow the regulations as stipulated in the Proclamation were subjected to the “displeasure” of the king.¹⁵

Sentence-wise, more space in the actual proclamation fell under the guise of colonial organization than any segment about land grants or the Indian boundary line. The document places much more emphasis on royal order throughout all three portions than dwelling on either an Indian rebellion or taxations, neither which it mentions. This omission should come as little surprise, as the Pamphlet War of 1760-1763 and the Florida Cession plainly show that the heads of state reformulated their conception of empire prior to the Proclamation’s writing. In fact, the Proclamation symbolized the ascension of their ideology, with emphasis placed on security and internal manufactures consumption.¹⁶

The Proclamation line represented a new commercial reality. The empire strongly felt the need to regulate Indian trade. The Board of Trade prepared a plan titled “Plan for Future Management of Indian Affairs,” or the “Plan of 1764,” as a step towards this goal. Building on the Proclamation, the plan formalized Indian trading, describing the specifics of the policy that the Proclamation had glossed over. At the time of the Proclamation, each colony conducted its own trade with the native tribes within their borders. As the borders became less distinct and harder to convey to the Indians, trade increasingly became contentious. The plan expanded the purview of the colonial Superintendents of the Northern and Southern Departments to include complete control over Indian trade. Superintendents now licensed individual traders and allowed them access west of the boundary line. The plan

sought complete standardization of Indian trade and formal incorporation of it into the Imperial system.¹⁷

The board disseminated the plan shortly after its official presentation during July 1764. As the Superintendent of Indians for the Southern Department, John Stuart wrote to the Lords of Trade that December. “The first and main step towards the right Governing of Indians and bringing them under some Police will be having Good men Traders in the different Nations subjected to good and wholesome regulations; this can hardly be effected while each Governor of the several Provinces can grant a License to any person to Trade indiscriminately to all the Indian Nations.”¹⁸ Stuart wanted to see the imposition of an imperial system of Indian commerce regulated by the superintendent and his agents. He also proposed the construction of a system that benefitted the crown in two important ways. First, as the “consumption of British manufactures by these nations are at their utmost extent,” traders could establish a single fair price throughout North America, a move that Stuart believed would prevent price gouging and inflation. As it was, the Indians already knew the going rate for commodities among white traders in any given region. Second, “a tariff for carrying on the trade appears to me to be the next best step.” Now that a boundary line prevented white incursions and only authorized traders could travel past this line, formalized trade created the conditions upon which government could exact a duty from the exchange.¹⁹

Stuart continued at length in his letter, displaying his ability to name specific trade zones and embarkation points. Like many imperial commentators before him, Stuart visualized security along commercial lines. Limiting white access, for Stuart, allowed for the consolidation, regulation, and taxation of the growing Indian trade in deer skins and British manufactures. The trade became the linchpin of Stuart’s plan for the Southern department.

His biographers contend that Stuart thought “imperially.” He viewed the strengthening of the crown, over the local elite, as a significant portion of his job description throughout his time in office.²⁰ Although some contemporaries claimed that Stuart’s handling of the Southern Department stank of megalomania, his “Observations to the Board of Trade” offers a policy plan for implementation of the new British ecology. Stuart does discuss Indian violence more readily than the composers of the intellectual backdrop to the Proclamation. This fact should serve as no surprise. The Cherokee War along the South Carolina/Georgia hinterlands had barely cooled by the time Stuart put pen to paper. Clearly, Stuart linked frontier security with expanded and regulated trade. Problems arose among the Indians when they perceived that they were being swindled or treated unfairly. Limiting traders and guaranteeing their moral acumen, Stuart presumed, ultimately precluded the advent of further conflict.

The Proclamation line does become the central colonial fact of late 1763, but not in the traditional sense. Instead, one can see the Proclamation for what it was, a strategic policy document intended to create a uniform imperial plan amidst the reality of a hodge-podge of separate colonial entities. As an imperial policy document, it quickly identified problems in need of addressing, and then created a fair means by which to remedy the situations. The design of the Proclamation in October 1763 created many unforeseen issues concerning the implementation of the Proclamation’s policies. This observation is particularly true if one considers that Benjamin Franklin, perceived as the most representative Anglo-American by the crown, had emphasized the connections between the independent colonies and the crown a few short years earlier in *The Interests of Great Britain Considered*.

The Southern Department appeared to be most in need of order and regulation. The weakness of the Spanish garrison in Florida, when combined with the quick successes English forces scored in the Caribbean, precluded any threat from materializing in the Florida peninsula. In 1761, the fractious Cherokee War came to an end, with the defeat and fragmentation of the Cherokees serving to stabilize the Carolina backcountry. The Cherokees' decline also solidified Creek ascendancy in the Old Southwest, creating a dynamic power shift among Indian-Anglo relations. Concurrently, many elite colonists had already amassed fortunes in the deerskin trade, but lack of an imperial prerogative left the issue of regulation to each individual colony. Prices fluctuated madly by colony and trader. This fact, when combined with the rapacious want of land by North American settlers, guaranteed future Indian conflict.

The Proclamation of 1763 also established East Florida as a distinct entity from West Florida, bounded by the "Gulph of Mexico" and the "Apalachicola" and St. Mary's River. Like the other new colonies, instructions specified the steps with which to create a representative assembly and granted wide-ranging powers to the royally-appointed governor in the assembly's absence. Extending the Proclamation Line into East Florida seemed vague, especially considering that no one had made a full accounting of the rivers in the colony, let alone the direction of their flows. Pressure from London to create a boundary line never seemed to materialize, yet Governor Grant and Superintendent Stuart wasted little time in calling the Indian headmen into council and demarcating distinct colonial boundaries. Many scholars often contend that this rush to division represented a strong desire by Grant and Stuart to force the Indians away from the settlements around St. Augustine and create a

“civilized” zone ready for Anglo-American cultivation.²¹ The reality of the events lends itself to another interpretation, one that swings the balance of power in another direction.

In 1775, James Adair wrote *History of the Indians*, and described the “Muskoge,” or Creek, Indians as “certainly the most powerful Indian nation we are acquainted with on this continent.”²² The Creeks maintained a loose confederacy of like tribal groups along the border of white settlement in the Southern colonies, stretching from the South Carolina hinterlands west to the areas in present day Alabama and Mississippi, and south to the Georgia fall line. Adair noted that the heterogeneous nature of their confederacy allowed them to be the only nation in the Old Southwest that increased population during the eighteenth century.²³ Disease, famine, and warfare had decimated the other tribes in the region, while the Cherokee War on the South Carolina frontier during the Seven Year’s War served to remove any vestige of Cherokee hegemony from the colonial borderland. The Creeks easily assumed the mantle of Indian preeminence after the war.²⁴

Having existed in earlier times at the nexus of three European empires, the Creeks quickly gained proficiency in frontier diplomacy, particularly commercial negotiations. Adair described at length the imperial ramifications of the Creek competitiveness, portraying a shrewd political entity that adeptly managed the vagaries of the imperial system prior to 1763.²⁵ Following the war’s end, the Creeks forced themselves to the forefront in the deerskin trade, the largest commercial venture in the colonial South. The Creeks capitalized on the global demand for deerskin and established a huge trade monopoly in the post-war era. The Proclamation’s designs on Indian trade fortunately eased the process of exchange, imposing imperial regulation and guaranteeing the sanctity of Creek hunting lands.²⁶

During the chaos of the early imperial eighteenth century, the nascent Creek Confederacy began a campaign into Spanish Florida, expanding its hunting ground alongside further demands for deerskins from English merchants. This campaign coincided with an intense spate of slave raiding against the Yamasee and Apalachee nations. Both nations had aligned themselves with the Spanish in St. Augustine, gravitating towards the mission system that Spain sought to expand from its administrative centers in St. Augustine and Pensacola. Decimated by the Creek incursions, the Yamasee and the Apalachee either incorporated into the Creek village system or moved further south down the peninsula. Some groups, particularly the Yamasee, rejected the remnants of the Spanish alliance system, deciding to either abandon the missions and Spanish trade or actively raiding Spanish settlements for goods, food, and revenge.²⁷

By approximately 1730, a group of Creeks descended past the Apalachicola River and settled in the interior savanna of the Florida peninsula. The trigger for this migration remains hidden. Speculation surrounds the nature of the political connections between the Florida polity and the Lower Creeks, a division of the confederacy that British observers began to see as distinct from the Upper Creeks that populated the South Carolina backcountry. The Lower Creeks gravitated towards Savannah as its imperial nexus with the British Empire. Historians provide little consensus. David Cockran calls the group Seminoles or “outlaw Creeks” by 1764. He continues to claim that this group was outside the pale of Creek affairs and existed as an independent entity in the Alachua region of Florida. These “outlaws” had acted separately from the Lower Creek consensus during the Cherokee War.²⁸ Kathryn Holland Braund draws a closer connection between the Creek splinter in Florida and the Lower Creeks, claiming, “these nascent Seminoles were still under

Lower Creek jurisdiction during the eighteenth century and were considered part of that nation.”²⁹ Paul Hoffman follows a more centrist track, calling the group “proto-Seminole.” This term appeals to an image of the nature of the group as being in flux and in formation, not a solidly defined entity in its own right.³⁰ At the same time, it does lend itself to an interpretation that supposes that the group is destined to become the Seminole nation. In light of the controversy over the ethnogenesis of the Seminoles, this work will use both “proto-Seminole” and the “Alachua Creek Splinter” to describe this group.

The proto-Seminole in the Alachua clustered in about thirty structures in the vicinity of the present city of Palatka. Their headman, Cowkeeper, presided over a community that grazed cattle, grew maize, and followed seasonal hunting patterns that at times took the group to Tampa Bay and the Keys. This group, along with other clan groups settling along the Suwannee and Apalachicola Rivers, began to repopulate north central Florida a generation after the forced migration of the Hispanized Indians tied to the Spanish mission system.³¹ Nominally Lower Creeks, the groups, particularly Cowkeeper’s Alachua Splinter, began to exhibit tendencies towards independent action in relation to the bulk of the confederacy.

While some historians and ethnographers argue about the creation and the nature of the proto-Seminole, a consensus exists on the group’s ferocity and tenacity. Many of the early accounts of East Florida discussed earlier blamed Spain’s inability to cultivate La Florida while under incessant Indian pressure and ambushes.³² Historian David Weber portrays St. Augustine at the time of the cession as racked by more than thirty years of frontier warfare, particularly raiding by the proto-Seminole that pushed back the farming and mission frontier.³³ Raids by the Alachua band on farms and ranches in the vicinity of

Picolata in 1759 forced the Spaniards inside the environs of St. Augustine proper and precluded movement west of the St. Johns River.³⁴ As the Spaniards prepared to evacuate the colony, the governor reported that the Indians were attacking lumber parties and soldiers within sight of the *presidio* at St. Augustine.³⁵

At some point in his travels, John Bartram spoke with one of the few remaining Spaniards in the colony. One expects that this conversation may have happened while John rested in St. Augustine while suffering from malaria, or after his return from the St. Johns, in between preparing specimens and trying to convince William that he was not an indigo planter. As soon as enough ships arrived, the majority of the Spaniards left the colony and scant evidence remains of any that chose to stay.³⁶ The day-to-day account of John's travels never mention a Spaniard, *per se*, only appearing towards the end of his account of the trip under the undated heading of "Remarks." John claimed to have "Just now talked with a Spaniard concerning that affair [issues with the encroaching Creeks]." Following this explanation, John further stated that the lonely Spaniard told him "that they had planted a great part of the country as far as Apilatchy [the Apalachee River] and St. Marks and the Apilachy fields [most likely the Alachua region] and all along to the mouth of the St. Johns, and up that river as far as Carolina." However, "the creek indians quarreled with those indians [Yamasee and their allies] and the Spaniards were confederates to take the Florida indians part, which the creeks resented and grewed Saucy...[the creeks]drive away all Spaniards from all their back settlements and confine them to their fortifications and all their improvements ruined." John, ever the botanist, sees the evidence in the account plainly in the trees about St. Augustine and on the trail to Picolata. As he states, "(t)here now grows large evergreen oaks and pines, and in many places orange groves and fir trees, great distance

from the town.” Trapped inside St. Augustine, John supposes that the prevalence of “fish and oysters” in the Spaniards’ diet owed to the loss of grazing land for cattle due to the incursions of the Alachua Creek splinter.³⁷

The Bartram party found evidence of several Indian towns and Spanish settlements during their sojourn on the St. Johns River, yet, never saw a proto-Seminole the entire trip. Clearings, mounds of sea shells, and orange groves all attested to the creation of ecological niches along the St. Johns. Small affairs, they exhibit trends towards agriculture among the earlier peninsular tribes. Even if some of the sites testified to Spanish settlement, their small size contrasts markedly with the few burgeoning plantations running alongside the river owned by British planters. The lack of any large clearing indicates local agricultural production. These small establishments grew food for those that lived nearby, foregoing entry into the markets of the Atlantic World in order to maintain a balance with the ecological realities of the swamps and marshes that bordered their homes.³⁸

The proto-Seminoles had altered this nascent ecological reality on the St. Johns River. Rumors of their presence sent many Spaniards fleeing these small homesteads to seek shelter in St. Augustine. John indicated that none of the evidence for settlement he had found pointed towards recent occupation or cultivation. Living on the savannas of the peninsula’s interior, the proto-Seminoles developed a pastoral lifestyle dependent on cattle grazing, rudimentary agriculture, hunting, and goods gained through the deerskin trade. Accounts of the group’s practicing any form of agriculture are sparse, although one can assume, through comparison with later Seminole groups, that they might have developed small kitchen gardens or cultivated maize to offset foraging and trade.³⁹ Grazing exhausts grass resources quickly, particularly in the confines of north-central Florida. Lack of forage serves to

disperse game, enabling a constant cycle of expansion in order to sustain both domestic and wild forms of caloric intake.

This reality weighed on the minds of both Governor Grant and Superintendent Stuart. Grant often spoke of his “infant colony” and feared that Indian expansion would lead to East Florida’s still birth. Early accounts of the St. Johns navigability indicated that it was the most accessible and settlement-ready area in the new colony. The dispatch of John Bartram on his expedition served as a means to evaluate this assessment. Grant and Stuart agreed that in order best to create an environment for cultivation and navigation, the colony would need to include both the east and west bank. This fact engendered new controversy. Stuart had presided over a council of the lower Creeks at Augusta in 1763 that sought to demarcate an Indian boundary line in the Southern Department. The discussion briefly concerned East Florida, but Stuart purposely engendered a sense of vagueness. He claimed that Governor Grant had not arrived in the colony at that time and that resolving this matter was not the purview of that assembly. All the same, Tallachea (Telletcher), the headman for the Lower Creek confederacy proclaimed, “The white people may settle the inside of the River St. Johns to Augustine. St Johns the Spanish possessed, the English must not exceed the same bounds, as from thence is their [Creek] hunting grounds.”⁴⁰

The Lower Creeks placed the boundary on the west bank of the St. Johns River, completely boxing in the new English settlement. Expansion by the Creek Splinter in Alachua already had forayed to the west bank and Grant feared that the St. Johns would become a moat for his fortified colony. Grant realized the need for a boundary revision and had envisioned an innovative plan, one that he boasted, “has never before been practiced in any part of America, but I believe it will answer.”⁴¹

The Board of Trade ordered Stuart to Florida after the issuing of the King's Proclamation to oversee the formation of the governments of both East and West Florida. Stuart seems to have taken a keen interest in East Florida particularly, stopping in both St. Augustine and at the St. Mark's fort on the Apalachicola River, spending far more time in those places than he did in Pensacola. The status of the boundary line in East Florida weighed heavily on his mind. With Grant's assignment to the governorship of East Florida, Stuart found an ally in his plans for Indian policy. They both hoped to resolve the lingering issues from the Augusta Congress in short order.

Grant and Stuart called the Lower Creek headmen to Picolata during the fall of 1765 to push the boundary line west of the St. Johns River. They feared reenacting the failures of the Spanish. Both Englishmen counted on a long history in Indian diplomacy to act as their guide in dealing with the Creek headmen. Grant still trod tentatively. In describing the proto-Seminoles during 1766, he claimed, "these Indians have had less intercourse with Europeans than any of the other nations in the continent."⁴² To Stuart and Grant fell the task of convincing the Lower Creek headman to amend a boundary line barely two years old. The Proclamation of 1763 sought to stop such contentious actions and soothe Anglo-Indian relations. Now, for the first time since the Proclamation had taken effect, the English wanted to take lands from the "Indian reserve" that the King's administration hoped would make a new addition to the growing manufactures market.⁴³

At first glance, the Treaty Congress at Picolata in 1765 mirrors the stereotypical Anglo-American negotiations that preceded further expansion at the cost of the indigenous inhabitants. After the lengthy introductory ceremony related by John Bartram, the negotiations followed a rote schedule of ritual recognitions and deferments. By the second

day, an impasse had occurred. Grant recalled in his account that the Lower Creeks did not see fit to amend the boundary line. He admitted that the Indians needed a “large tract of land” but added, “it is your interest to have your brothers the English near you. They only can supply you in exchange for your skins with cloths to cover you, your wives and children, with guns, powder, and ball for your hunting and with a number of other things which you cannot make for yourselves though you cannot exist without them.” Tallachea, speaking as representative for the entire lower confederation, clearly recounted the establishment of the boundary line two years prior in Augusta. To recant on this agreement could potentially lead to a shakeup in the Indian hierarchy. Presenting presents as supplication would only ease the immediate loss somewhat, for as Tallachea declared, “you will consider the presents which are now to be given us may last for a year but will afterwards not and become of no value, but the land which we now give will last forever.”⁴⁴ Grant and Stuart became visibly displeased with Tallachea when he demurred about maintaining accountability of Anglo cows and settlers that crossed the boundary line. Several lesser chiefs voiced themselves in unison with Tallachea, but their Anglo and Creek seniors stayed quiet. At the day’s end, the two Englishmen called Tallachea and Captain Aleck, a mid-level chief, into a private meeting. Grant and Stuart stated their demands in a much less diplomatic tone, showing them where they wanted the new line to go, then expressing their displeasure with Indian defiance by not inviting any of the chiefs to dine with them.

Another secret meeting evidently transpired that night, for by the morning, the Creeks all agreed on a new line west of the St. Johns. Captain Aleck took the lead in that morning’s negotiations, possibly revealing Grant and Stuart’s strategy. Sensing an age disparity in feelings about the treaty demands, the two Englishmen might have attempted to play king

maker by seeking out the younger Captain Aleck individually and pressing him to intercede. While a supposition, it is revealing that Captain Aleck, who spoke little the first day, emerged as a “great medal chief” alongside Tallachea at the Treaty Congress’s conclusion. The guns of the fort and a nearby schooner fired to signal the signing of the treaty on November 18, 1765. The Lower Creeks headed north to engage developing issues concerning the boundary line in Georgia, while Grant and Stuart congratulated themselves on the success of their Indian diplomacy. They recounted the affairs of the Congress in a December 9, 1765, letter to the Board of Trade in which they conveyed the Treaty Congress as heated and contentious. Through their firm resolve and by politically separating the younger headmen from the more senior chiefs, the two imperial officials had wrested from the Creeks the concession that they wanted.⁴⁵

Grant saw the 1765 treaty as a resounding validation of his new Indian policy. He described his strategy in a 1767 letter to the Board of Trade. He proposed to hold annual congresses with the Indians, where he would distribute English manufactures to the attendants as gifts and ask nothing in return. By following this policy, Grant felt that public gift-giving created peer pressure among the groups and ensured that each separate entity toed its respective lines. Grant’s policy showed a belief in the Empire’s new commercial strategy in the Americas. While his ultimate goal remained peace with the Indians, he saw it through an economics lens, rather than one of martial policy. His plan, “is the best way of preserving their (Indian) friendship and is cheaper and more politick measure than going to War with them.”⁴⁶

Grant’s Indian gift policy expanded markets. As he stated during the 1765 congress, the Creeks wanted the English close so that they had ready access to the goods that the

English supposed that the Indians were growing dependent on. The “most intelligent traders” agreed with Grant, and rightly so. John Bartram’s expedition up the St. Johns stopped at two Indian trade posts on the river, dubbed the “Upper” and the “Lower Indian Stores.”⁴⁷

Quickly established in accordance with the King’s Proclamation, these stores obtained all necessary licenses from the Royal administration. Stuart and Grant sought the expansion and cultivation of the deerskin trade in East Florida. To this end, the Alachua Creek splinter needed an adequate amount of land for hunting, along with trade posts in the hinterlands available to trade for the deerskins. Grant hoped to whet the appetites of the proto-Seminole’s and their kinsman with the annual gift allocation.

This plan sounded good in the letters Grant wrote to the Board of Trade. Yet small fissures appear in his accounts of the Treaty Congress of 1765 and the several events after. Oftentimes, they appear in oddly placed sentences and phrases that speak to a greater reality within the English accounts. Some notable recent additions to the historiography of Indian-European relations have helped to reframe our understanding of the trade and power dynamic that existed along the frontier of European settlement.⁴⁸ While one hesitates to jump from one paradigmatic construct, Indian relation in British East Florida needs re-imagining.

The strength and proclivities of the Lower Creeks became evident several weeks before the opening of the Treaty Congress at Picolata. Word arrived to Stuart and Grant in mid-October that the Lower Creek convoy had assembled west of Picolata. Confirmation of this news came in the form of two runners, sent ahead to determine if the promised gifts had arrived. Determining that they had not, the runners returned to the Lower Creek camp. There the headmen stayed. Grant and Stuart sent several letters in bundles with, “rum, pipes, tobacco and etc., according to their desires” but could not convince them to come to Picolata.

This standoff lasted for more than two weeks. On November 10th, Grant himself made the trip to the Creek camp on the rumor that the headmen were impatient with the delay in the arrival of their gifts from St. Augustine. Word came that day that the schooner with the supplies had met favorable weather and had begun to make the journey up the St. Johns from St. Augustine.⁴⁹

The Creeks, vindicated by their waiting, arrived at the congress conceding nothing. Once the welcome ceremony ended, they wasted no time in declaring their recognition of the boundary line as agreed at in Augusta two years prior. For two days, the Englishmen gained no traction on the issue. Not until the morning of November 17th did anyone concede anything to the English. Captain Aleck's transactions remain a mystery, but it is clear that an individual action took place somehow that greatly eroded the Creek position. Breathing a sigh of relief, Grant and Stuart "loaded them (the Creeks) with presents" and then provided an "assortment to some of the absent old men they recommended."⁵⁰ Plied with trade goods, the Creeks also paved the way to gain land in the Georgia backcountry. The ascension of Captain Aleck to "great medal" status coincided with his recognition before Stuart as being the Creek's representative on upcoming issues in Georgia. Although Stuart indicated that Picolata served as neither the time nor the place to discuss issues in Georgia, by no stretch of the imagination can one imagine that the Indians visualized concession on their part in East Florida to lead to gains in Georgia.⁵¹

Another recurring theme begins to appear in several of Stuart's interactions in Florida. At an impromptu conference at a fort on the Apalachicola River in September 1764, Stuart welcomed local Creek headmen in an attempt to secure the future of the garrison. After the typical ceremonial introduction, Chechayache, headman of the Chescatalennssa

village, replied, “The Spaniards are gone and you are now on the ground we lent them, we approve of it, and we shall hold you fast as brothers.”⁵² Tallachea, a headman geographically distinct from the group at the Apalachicola conference, echoed a similar conviction at Picolata, stating, “You have been allowed in our country and when we met you at Augusta you told us there would be a Governor sent to St. Augustine to settle the affairs of this Province. We now see him and rejoice.” [Underlining added by the author for emphasis] ⁵³ Both quotations lend themselves to the idea that the Creeks visualized a tenancy-style relationship with British, something that historian Hoffman believes existed under the Spanish.⁵⁴ In this light, Grant’s policy of annual gift giving appears as rent payment towards leasing the west side of the St. Johns. As long as the proper amount and concurrent recognition met the standards, the Indians allowed the colony to exist.

A stark example of this conception of British settlement remains amidst the myriad administrative letters to and from the British fort St. Mark’s, previously San Marcos de Apalachicola under Spanish rule. Situated along the Apalachicola River, the fort protected the mission towns founded by the Spanish during the late seventeenth century. The Creek incursions during the early eighteenth century erased these settlements, yet the fort remained. The Spanish worked hard to maintain the fort as a bastion of imperial prerogative in the midst of Creek chaos.⁵⁵ Captain Harries, soon to assume command of the fort from the Spanish, wrote to General Amherst, the commander of all British forces in North America, immediately following a tour of the facility in December 1763. He unequivocally wanted to abandon the fort. The majority of his letter concerned Indian issues. The Spanish had established a practice of annual gift giving, and Harries felt that he must be able to continue this policy or, “otherwise they will alarm their brethren: and Commanding officer (Spanish)

assured me that the country is so populous, in three or four days there may be collected four or five hundred Indians.”⁵⁶

Harries purposely dithered when it came to taking possession of the fort, and even after he did, his letters from St. Marks are rife with fear over the trenchant Indian population. In February 1764, he wrote, “there is an absolute necessity of giving the Indians presents, for they come hungry and ravenous, and expect to be supplied as they were by the Spaniards.” “Some of the Indians who lately visited me seem greatly disaffected to the English,” Harries added, “and Mr. Forester an Indian trader just gone off appears greatly terrified, he said he was obliged to go and look after his affects at the peril of his life.”⁵⁷ Even after Captain Harries’ replacement at St. Mark’s, every commanding officer references the need to continue the Indian gift trade. By 1768 commanding officers routinely dipped into the fort’s magazine to placate Creeks that arrived demanding provisions. When General Gage, Amherst’s replacement, initiated a program to raze inland forts, only Governor Grant fought to maintain a garrison at St. Mark’s. He believed that had the potential to become an Indian trading post. One can picture Gage scratching his head over Grant’s insistence to maintain the fort. “I have wrote to Governor Grant concerning the disposal of St. Mark’s at Appalachia [Apalachicola],” Gage wrote in a letter to the commander of troops in the Southern department, “for it must be abandoned, if useless...I don’t hear of any number of traders going there; and at this distance, judge that it should be entirely destroyed.”⁵⁸

Another issue developed shortly after the echo of Picolata’s guns faded over the swamps and marshes along the St Johns River. It became apparent that the Lower Creeks at Picolata had no reservation about giving land to the English along the St. Johns. None of the headmen present there in November 1765 lived close to the British East Florida colony. The

splinter group's headman, Cowkeeper, explained that he had an illness in his family, and sent a lesser chief instead. Wioffke, Cowkeeper's representative, never spoke during Grant's account of the negotiations, and we only know his name because Grant tells him that he has a great medal reserved for Cowkeeper. It seems odd that Grant, having bestowed great medal status on two recognized chiefs and Captain Aleck for mysterious reasons, finds it so easy to bestow the same on an absentee chief. Historians have until this point seen Cowkeeper as subordinate to Tallachea and Captain Aleck throughout the treaty process.⁵⁹ One can trace Cowkeeper's tardiness or absence from Lower Creek negotiations and discern a visible trend. In peninsular politics throughout the 1760s and '70s, Cowkeeper began to speak for himself.

Cowkeeper came to St. Augustine in December 1765 and had a personal meeting with Governor Grant. Grant took notice of the seriousness and sobriety of the proto-Seminole headman, claiming that, "Till business was settled, he kept perfectly sober." Marveling at his intelligence, Grant formally awarded him great medal status. As Grant saw it, "this Indian has a great influence over his people." "His friendship is of consequence," Grant continued, "and his help may be wanted in case his young men should play tricks on the inhabitants – which at times must be expected from such near neighbors who have no coercive powers to keep them in order." Having been absent from Picolata the month before, Cowkeeper told Grant "that he had no objections to the limits that had been fixed and expressed great satisfaction at having a line drawn as that would prevent disputes." At the departure of Cowkeeper's clan, Grant ensured not only that he had received a fair share of presents in accordance with his great medal status, but that he left with "as much provisions as he could carry home for his family."⁶⁰ Grant appears confident in his letter to the Board of Trade recounting the event that he had purchased the acquiescence of his closest potential threat.

As later appearances show, he had instead created a contractual obligation for peace, one that needed aggrandizement and gifts to continue.

A group of young Creek males waylaid the crew of a shipwrecked French ship on the Gulf Coast during early 1767, killing several sailors and plundering their goods. Grant used this event as reason to convene another treaty congress at Picolata that same year. The 1765 Treaty had aged well with no gross infractions having taken place. Grant wanted to address small problems and speak towards regulating Indian affairs in the area, as well as further implementing his annual gift policy in a manner where no significant concession were to tied with the provisions. He enlisted the aid of Indian traders in the area to send invitations to the Lower Creek headmen, appealing them to meet at a new congress in Picolata. At the same time, he addressed a special invitation to Cowkeeper, insisting, “I expect to see you all with the other Headmen of the Nation at the Congress of Picolata and I shall take it kind if the Cowkeeper and a few more will come immediately and smoke with me in the Great King’s House in this town (St. Augustine).”⁶¹

Cowkeeper never replied. He sent a second to the 1767 Picolata Congress. Nothing of any significance resolved itself at the Congress, although the Lower Creeks made promises to find the killers of a white man recently killed along the St. Mary’s River. The killing had created an initial tension at the conference, which Grant quickly eased once the headmen communicated assurances that they would find the murders.⁶² Cowkeeper might have realized that the murders were well outside his polity’s control and sought to distance himself from the crime. One cannot be completely sure. His practice of not meeting with the other Lower Creek headmen, though, continued until the revolution, including his late arrival

at Governor Tonyn's inauguration in 1774 that forced a personal meeting with the new governor and recognition of his superiority in the area.⁶³

Cowkeeper's relationship with the administration of British East Florida developed in a non-political manner, as well. Denys Rolle, one of the first planters on the St. Johns, gave account of a "saloon" established by one of Cowkeeper's kinsman in the vicinity of the Upper Trading Post. It is unknown if this establishment acted as a front for English traders who could not formally trade in rum, but it was well known that it had connections and oversight by Cowkeeper.⁶⁴ Rolle also gave an account of the regular occurrence of drunken Indians parading through his land, often passing out somewhere close to the residence. He attested to his Christian nature by taking them to an annex building and letting them sleep off their intoxication.⁶⁵

Much as at St. Mark's, St. Augustine seemed to be a regular destination for the proto-Seminoles. As Grant admitted in 1768, "The Indians come often into this town and in large bodys, fifty at a time. They are expensive guests but this sort of intercourse makes people easy in their minds as it is the strongest and best proof we have of their good intentions to their new neighbors for they are never troublesome with their visits when any mischief is going on."⁶⁶ This statement massaged the truth somewhat. A year earlier he related that a group of drunken proto-Seminoles stole nine horses and took them deep into the Alachua. Grant wasted no time in calling out a posse led by the colony's senior engineer, Mr. Moncrief. Once they found the horse thieves, Moncrief allowed them to leave upon the return of the horses, although claiming that white men would have hanged from the closest tree. Grant made little of the altercation but used it as evidence for the need of a "troop of rangers" in the colony. He envisioned these rangers answering to him and existing outside

the purview of the garrison. This request came at the close of the same letter where he described his new and original plan of annual Indian gift allocations, his answer to peaceful Indian relations.⁶⁷

No one ever formally charted the boundary line as described at the Treaty Congress in 1765. De Brahms, in his *Report of the General Survey of the Southern District of North America*, drew the boundary at stark right angles. He did not possess any further information about the inland areas beyond his brief reading of Bartram's account of the St. Johns and some discussions with the few remaining planters in the area. His line incorporated more than 679,000 acres past the boundary line, but no one ever seems to have contested it. East Florida never stretched at its seams.⁶⁸

Superintendent Stuart and Governor Grant saw the Treaty Congress of Picolata in 1765 and 1767 as the embodiment of the policy formulation behind the King's Proclamation of 1763. A boundary line between English colony and Indian hunting ground visualized the stark new imperial realities of 1763. Expansion and mono-crop cultivation no longer held the pre-eminent place in mercantilist ideology that it once did. Instead, the boundary line and the regulation of the Indian trade met the parallel demands of commerce and security that George III's administration laid as the foundation of their continental empire. East Florida enjoyed peace with their Indian neighbors during its short existence, but not necessarily for imperial reasons. A policy of annual gift giving took on the role of a tenant fee in the imperial relationship between the English and the Lower Creeks and the Lower Seminoles. In fact, attempts to engender peace through congresses and gift-giving empowered separate Indian chiefs and led them brazenly to demand goods without payment from their English tenants. Most notably, by the time of England's exit from East Florida in 1784, they had

begun to call the Alachua Creek splinter *Cimara*, a bastardization of the Spanish *Cimarron*, meaning wild. Cowkeeper's people had become a distinct, independent entity separate from the remainder of the Creek nation.

¹ John Bartram, "Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida: From July 1, 1765 to April, 10 1766," ed. Ann Frances Harper, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (Dec 1942): 35.

² John Bartram, 51.

³For the exact wording of the Proclamation, see *By the King, a Proclamation, 1763*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFOE%3D%28OX%2CNone%2C27%29king%27s+proclamation+of+1763%3AAnd%3ALOE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3304950010&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3304950010&relevancePageBatch=CW104950010&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 24 July 2011). For the linkages between the Proclamation and Pontiac's Rebellion, see George Louis Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 256-257; and Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 92-111; and Robert Middlekauf, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 56. Some portray the Proclamation as coming from a perceived need to create order out of the colonial governmental chaos, but links it with revenue creation; see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 568-571; and John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 30-32.. Older historians often saw the Proclamation as part of a political process and separate from later events; see R. A. Humphreys, "Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 194 (Apr. 1934): 241-264; and Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 51-56.

⁴ Calloway, 92.

⁵ Holton most closely links the western boundary line with the coming of the Revolution, see Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University Press of North Carolina, 1999), 3-38.

⁶ Fred Anderson does an outstanding job of putting the Proclamation in ideological/political context, but he links it unobtrusively with taxation and revenue growth, of which the Proclamation did not deal with in any means. See Anderson, 562-565.

⁷ See note 3 to reference causality between Pontiac's Rebellion and the Proclamation.

⁸ Humphreys, 248.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 245, 250; Anderson, 565-568.

¹⁰ Beer, 252-273.

¹¹ Henry Ellis, "Hints Relative to the Division of Government of the conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," reprinted in full in Verner W. Crane, "Hints Relative to the Division of the Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 8, No. 4 (Mar 1922), 372.

¹² Ibid., 371.

¹³ Verner W. Crane, "Hints Relative to the Division of the Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 8, No. 4 (Mar 1922), 367-369.

¹⁴ John Pownall, "Mr. Pownall's Sketch of a Report concerning the Cessions in Africa and America at Peace of 1763," reprinted in entirety in Humphrey, 259.

¹⁵ *By the King, a Proclamation* (1763).

¹⁶ The inaugural pamphlet in the Pamphlet War was John Douglas, *A Letter Addressed to Two Great Men, on the Prospect of Peace; and on the Terms Necessary to be Insisted Upon in the Negotiation*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29douglas%2C+john%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%28TI%2CMed%2C17%29a+letter+addressed%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CB3330293657&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3330293657&relevancePageBatch=CB130293657&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011); also see *A Candid and Fair Treatment of the Remarks of the Letter to Two Great Men. Directed to the Author of that Piece*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28OX%2CNone%2C100%29a+candid+and+fair+examination+of+the+remarks+on+the+letter+two+great+men.++directed+to+the+author+of%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3318999206&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3318999206&relevancePageBatch=CW118999206&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011); Owen Ruffhead, *Reasons Why the Approaching Treaty Should be Debated in Parliament as a Method Most Expedient and Constitutional. In a Letter Addressed to a Great Man and Occasioned by the Perusal of a Letter Addressed to Two Great Men*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R3&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=17&userGroupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29owen+ruffhead%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CW3307491655&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3307491655&relevancePageBatch=CW107491653&showLOI=&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 12 June 2011); and Benjamin Franklin, "The Interests of Great Britain Considered with Regards to Her Colonies and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadaloupe to Which are Added Observations Concerning the increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.," in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. IV (1760-1766), ed. Albert Henry Smith (New York: Haskell House Publishers LTD., 1970).

¹⁷ John Richard Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754-1775* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1944), 240-247.

¹⁸ John Stuart, "Observations on the Plan For The Future Management of Indian Affairs Humbly Submitted to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations," reprinted in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Jul. 1915), 817.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 821.

²⁰ J. Russell Snapp, *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Southern Frontier* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 2-3.

²¹ Clarence E. Carter, Introductory Comments, Stuart, John. "Observations on the Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs Humbly Submitted to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations," reprinted in its entirety in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Jul. 1915), 815-817; Louis De Vorsey, *The Indian Boundary Line in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 190-195; and Hoffman, 211-213.

²² James Adair, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, ed. by Samuel Cole Williams (Johnson City, TN: The Watauga Press, 1930), 275.

²³ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁴ Adair, 274-277; David H. Cockran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 229-252; Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 82-83

²⁵ Adair, 277-279. For an earlier conception of Creek dominance, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 327-341.

²⁶ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskin and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 139-163.

²⁷ James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 10-16; Galloway, 132-137 and 144-149.

²⁸ Cockran, 246.

²⁹ Braund, 7.

³⁰ Hoffman, 204.

³¹ Hoffman, 204-206; Kenneth W. Porter, "The Founder of the 'Seminoles Nation' Secoffee of Cowkeeper," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Apr 1949), 362-284.

³² Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=3&userGroup=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C13%29robert+rogers%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3300789515&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3300789515&relevancePageBatch=CW100789514&showLOI=&contentSet=&calistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 22 July 2011), 146-147; and John Huddleston, *A General History of the British Empire in America*, Eighteenth Century Collection Online, <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T>

[001&searchId=R4&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroup=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C16%29john+huddleston%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C4%291776%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CB3328183888&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CB3328183888&relevancePageBatch=CB128183888&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y](#) (accessed 22 July 2011),320-321.

³³ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 181-183.

³⁴ Hoffman 202-206.

³⁵ Account is derived from letter by Governor Melchor Feliu on April 16, 1764. Retold and credited in Wilbur H. Seibert, "The Departure of the Spanish and Other Groups from East Florida, 1763-1764," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Oct 1940), 145-154, 153.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 147-151; Charles Loch Mowalt, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1943), 3-13.

³⁷ John Bartram, 54-55.

³⁸ John Bartram, 45 and 48.

³⁹ Hoffman, 213-26; and Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 10-11.

⁴⁰ Quote from *Journal of the Congress of the Four Southern Governors, and the Superintendent of that District, with the Five Nations of Indians, at Augusta, 1763*. Quote reprinted in De Vorse, Jr., 184.

⁴¹ James Grant to the Board of Trade, 19 April, 1767, reprinted in full in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 44.

⁴² James Grant to Board of Trade, 13 January 1766, reprinted in full in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 40.

⁴³ De Vorse, Jr., 29.

⁴⁴ James Grant and John Stuart to Board of Trade, 9 December, 1765, "Report of the Congress," reprinted in full in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 24 and 28.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁴⁶ James Grant to Board of Trade, 19 April, 1767, in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 44.

⁴⁷ John Bartram, 37 and 39.

⁴⁸ The foundational work responsible for the paradigm shift in colonial Euro-Indian relations is Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1991). I have been fortunate to study in Texas at a time when many new and dynamic works involving Euro-Indian relations have been published that helped me to re-imagine the interaction between the two parties. See Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderland* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Brian Delay,

War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); and Pekka Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁴⁹ James Grant and John Stuart to the Board of Trade, December 9, 1765, "Report of the Congress," in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 20-22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁵² Quote in John Stuart's account of the meeting, reprinted in "From a Remote Frontier," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 2 (Oct. 1941), 207.

⁵³ James Grant and John Stuart, December 9, 1765, "Report of the Congress," in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 28.

⁵⁴ Hoffman, 206.

⁵⁵ Hoffman, 150 and 203; Mark F. Boyd, "From a Remote Frontier, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Jan 1941), 183-184.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Harries to General Amherst, in "From a Far Frontier," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Apr. 1941), 403.

⁵⁷ Jonathan Harries to General Gage, in "From a Remote Frontier," *Florida Historical Society*, vol. 20, no. 1 (Jul 1941), 83.

⁵⁸ General Gage to Brigadier Haldimand, "From a Remote Frontier," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Oct 1942), 142.

⁵⁹ Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 12-14; James Grant and John Stuart to the Board of Trade, December 9, 1765, "Report of the Congress," in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 28-29; and Porter, 375-377.

⁶⁰ James Grant to Board of Trade, 13 January 1766, in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 40-41.

⁶¹ James Grant to Cowkeeper, 10 October, 1767, in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 48-49.

⁶² Mowalt, 22-23.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁶⁴ Denys Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq.; Setting forth the Hardships, Inconveniences, and Grievances, which have Attended him in the Attempts to Make a Settlement in East Florida, Humbly Paying Such Relief, as in Their Lordships Wisdom Shall Seem Meet*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGroupoupName=txshracd2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CLOW%2C11%29denys+rolle%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&&docId=CW3300056593&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3300056593&relevancePageBatch=CW100056593&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&c allistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&hilite=y (accessed 02 August, 2011), 48; also related in Braund, 78.

⁶⁵ Rolle, 7-10; Braund, 56.

⁶⁶ James Grant to the Board of Trade, 20 June, 1768, in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 59.

⁶⁷ James Grant to the Board of Trade, 19 April, 1767, in Covington, *The British Meet the Seminoles*, 44-45.

⁶⁸ William G. De Brahm, *Report of the General Survey of the Southern District in North America*, ed. by Louis De Vorse, Jr. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 253-257; De Vorse, Jr., 195. For a current view of De Brahm's mapping program, see Mark A. Stewart, "William Gerard De Brahm's 1757 Map of South Carolina and Georgia," *Environmental History*, vol. 16, no. 3 (July 2011), 524-535.

IV. “The most indifferent land”: Land Policy, the Environment, and the Formation of a Plantation Economy in East Florida

Henry Laurens twice visited William Bartram’s plantation during the summer of 1766. John, “Billy’s” father, had appealed to Henry to see to him on his next trip to East Florida. Gauging the relationship between the South Carolina plantation owner/slave trader and the Quaker botanist fully escapes the modern historian. Earlier letters reveal not only the fiscal indebtedness of John to Henry, but also the respect that John afforded him as a planter, arborist, and Southern gentleman.¹ John strolled through the gardens on the Laurens Estate prior to his 1765 voyage to East Florida, marveling at the contemporary nuances incorporated directly from England. Reading between the lines of his diary, one senses that John could hardly fathom such thought and design in the parochial South.² After wayward William’s decision to enter the rolls of East Florida’s planter class, John sought out Henry, ordering supplies, sundries, and slaves for William’s new home amidst the swamps and marshes on the St. Johns River.

Henry began his letter to John, dated August 9, 1766, by attesting to the botanist’s knowledge of the country. John surely related his trip up the St. Johns to Henry, perhaps advising him on the best location for new plantations. Henry had written to Governor James Grant in mid-September 1764 indicating that he considered taking up a land grant in the new colony.³ John’s account of his expedition may have provided the further impetus to begin his

own plantation on the river. He traveled to East Florida in 1766 to assess several warrants of survey for English and American proprietors on the St. Johns River. If Henry found a tract of land available for his own cultivation, all the better.

Once pleasantries ended, Henry penned the most difficult portion of the letter. “His [William’s] situation on the river is the least agreeable of all the places that I have seen,” he insisted, adding that the stagnant water in the marshes about William’s house (he called it a “hovel”), “must make the place always unhealthy, as well as troublesome to come at, by water carriage, especially in the dry season.” William had “the fever” (most likely malaria), and a small house garden planted “in the sand on the swamp edge” showed no improvement in the three weeks between Henry’s two visits. Upon returning to Charleston, Henry forwarded supplies to William, mainly foodstuffs for subsistence. Most regrettably, William had planted no rice that summer, even though nearby marshland looked able to support a meager crop. Cultivating a crop required “more strength to put them in tolerable order, than Mr. Bartram is at present possessed of, to make any progress above daily bread, and that of a coarse kind, too.”⁴

Perhaps most vexing to Henry, William feared his slaves. William had confided that his slave most able to wield an axe “had been exceedingly insolent,” only clearing about an acre of land needed for rice or indigo cultivation in the last several months. Henry quickly changed the subject in his retelling to John, making little comment upon William’s lack of ability in controlling his slaves. A taboo in Southern slave culture, inability to control a slave population invited slave resistance and revolt. On William’s plantation, nine miles from his closest neighbor and some thirty miles from St. Augustine, William would decompose

among the saw palmettos and pines before anyone could imagine that his slaves had killed him.⁵

William's failure on the St. Johns River reflected the quandary of imperial ecology in East Florida. Many hopeful plantation owners, full of stories of Spanish ineptitude and the bounty of East Florida's land, found only hard times on the St. Johns. The confluence of institutional ignorance and ecological reality metaphorically muddied the waters of the river, leaving planters investing ever-larger amounts of capital and scrambling to adapt. Changes in crop production, labor, and development all followed the initial boom in settlement. Those able to weather the storm financially clung to their land grants. At the same time, settling in the new colony entailed significant economic burdens, particularly in costs associated with labor and clearing the land. In fact, these fiscal trials precluded many potential plantation owners from fully developing their possessions. Cleared land became scarce and expensive in East Florida, and the swamps and marshes seemed to drown all dreams of New World prosperity.

Historians in the last decade have forwarded new interpretations of the East Florida plantation complex in an attempt to reverse the failure narrative. Daniel Schafer's examination of Richard Oswald and Governor James Grant's indigo plantation demonstrates that economic and agricultural success did occasionally exist in East Florida. The Oswald plantation excavated more than three thousand acres from the Florida swamp and routinely turned a profit in the years before the American Revolution.⁶ Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna indigo plantation also turned a profit while using indentured white labor. Turnbull's indigo ranked among the best in the English world, and he exported more than eleven thousand pounds of the product in 1771, the year of the plantation's first harvest.⁷ While

Turnbull's luck did not run as long as Oswald and Grant's, one must recognize the existence of profitable plantations in East Florida. These strong investments shone like bright beacons in the dark swamps and on the banks of the slow flowing rivers. Those that invested heavily at first and muddled through early losses could make money as long as they possessed expansive tracts of land and the potential for future combinations. In the process, these plantation owners remade the imperial vision of the colony, foregoing earlier conceptions of a land filled with medium-sized independent yeomen for a plantation society composed of overseers and African slaves.

The King's Proclamation of 1763 addressed land grants in the new colonies at length. The ability to adjudicate land grants fell to the royal governors and their assemblies. The crown assumed that the governors, as political appointees, understood and approved of the administration's plans. Specifically, the Proclamation bestowed upon veterans of the Seven Year's War parcels of land in accordance with their rank. The largest awards, those available to senior officers, granted five thousand acres. Privates also received consideration, with tracts of fifty acres assessed as equivalent to their role in the war and society. This portion of the Proclamation served two purposes. First, it provided the means to draw down the very expensive army in a cash-less manner. Parliament sought a means with which to address the credit imbalance in the Treasury, and realized that the large army hold-over from the late war needed trimming. Land represented a cheap and ample commodity that the administration hoped would reduce the money spent on demobilization and pensions.⁸

Secondly, the crown believed that liberal allotments of land could relieve the building demographic pressure against the Indian boundary line that traced the Appalachians. By pushing settlement programs to the South and north along the Atlantic Seaboard, the

administration hoped to forestall any concerted efforts towards westward expansion. The Proclamation's early conceptualization focused on imperial overreach. Lack of a sufficient infrastructure to tie North American expansion with increased access to British manufactured goods, some worried, would lead to the separation of the frontier from the mother country. The setting of security and commerce as the foundation of Britain's imperial vision, when paired with the reality of "open" land stretching far to the west of the current line of settlement, necessitated a safety valve to advance the prospect of new settlement and future development.⁹ In 1763, the crown saw Quebec, West Florida, and particularly East Florida as this safety valve.

East Florida represented the best of these new colonies for a number of reasons. As numerous colonial commentators mentioned immediately following the Florida cession, Spain had done little to improve the peninsula during its almost two and half centuries of possession. English settlers entered a wilderness with scant evidence of prior Spanish settlement. The relics of previous Spanish cultivation, as John Bartram had found, receded into the swamps and forests, little more than touchstones to a different era. At the same time, the almost complete evacuation of the Spanish population by 1764 opened the land fully for development. Unlike West Florida and Quebec, East Florida had no vestiges of a colonial population to create socio-cultural conflicts over traditions of governance and religion. More importantly, no one had prior rights to any lands, leaving the bulk of the colony wide open for cultivation.¹⁰

In October 1764, the governor of East Florida, John Grant, issued a proclamation in broadside form concerning the potential acquisition of land in East Florida. Printed in both the *South Carolina* and *Georgia Gazettes*, Grant's announcement sought to elucidate the

current terms of land settlement in the colony. Each head-of-household received one hundred acres of land, with fifty further acres granted for each member of his family at the time of the land grant's issuance. If the master or mistress of the house desired to expand his or her acreage, they had the opportunity to "upon showing a probability of cultivation" in the lands they already possessed. These new lands also leased at the bargain rate of five shillings "quit-rent" per every fifty acres, up to one thousand acres.¹¹ Grant's proclamation espoused the small consumer mentality of the Peace of Paris and the Proclamation of 1763. If one follows the exact terms of Grant's proclamation, most land grants in East Florida would never exceed two thousand acres, still a good-sized tract. Limiting farm size allowed for expanding colonization and increasing the number of settlers/consumers. Accepting one's land contracted settlers to improve the land by cultivating three acres of each fifty brought under cultivation within the first two years of the confirmation of the grant. By tying grantees to the soil, the administration hoped to limit runaway land speculation, the bane of other colonies.

The colonial blueprint described by Grant's October 1764 proclamation imagined an industrious East Florida composed of a patchwork of medium-sized farms full of families in need of British manufactured goods. Grant did not mention instructions released almost a year earlier by the Board of Trade for the settlement of "townships" in East Florida. Beginning in November 1763, petitioners to the Board of Trade, if found able, received permission to survey up to twenty thousand acres in East Florida for the establishment of town sites. By issuing warrant of survey, the Board allowed petitioners to sanction a third party to travel to East Florida and demarcate a contiguous tract of land commensurate with the awarded acreage. Once the petitioners' representative completed the survey, they

reported to the governor who adjudicated the final results of a townships' granting. Awarding of a town site revolved on the petitioners' ability to bring "white protestant inhabitants" to East Florida. For each one that a petitioner could potentially provide, he would receive one hundred acres. The total amount of the grant was based on potential. A petitioner had three years to settle a third of the grant and a decade to completely cultivate its entirety. All uncultivated areas reverted to royal administration if the petitioner failed to meet these specific benchmarks.¹²

The crown intended its "township" policy to empower individuals to handle the mundane and expensive job of colonial settlement. The crown did not see itself responsible for the full settlement of East Florida. Instead, as the owners of the land, it attempted to ensure the "correct" form of settlement in accordance with imperial prerogative, particularly through the creation of middling farm communities. We may never know the full design behind the Board of Trade's township policy. As published in the London *Gazette*, East Florida "shall be surveyed and laid out in townships, not exceeding twenty thousand acres each, for the convenience and accommodation of settlers...."¹³ Petitioners financed the entire settlement and paid quit-rent at the same rate as settlers under Grant's proclamation of a year later.

The Bartrams' expedition up the St. Johns River during the fall of 1765 helped inaugurate what historian Charles Mowalt has called "East Florida's first public relations campaign."¹⁴ Neither the advertisement in the London *Gazette* nor Grant's proclamation led to a significant surge in colonization. By late 1765, the Marquis of Rockingham (the Lord of the Treasury) commissioned Dr. William Stork -- a German physician with royal connections -- to travel to East Florida and draft a description of the commercial value of the land.

Published in 1766, Stork's first edition of *An Account of East Florida* caused an immediate stir among many in London. As Stork reported, "I can assure your Lordship (Rockingham), that my pursuit was made agreeable by the satisfactory evidences found, both of the goodness of the soil, and the healthiness of the climate."¹⁵ He continued, equating the value of East Florida to the West Indies and claiming that the peninsula's relative closeness to the sun, in comparison to New England, allowed for the cultivation of "more valuable articles of trade."¹⁶

This idea, that East Florida presented the best new colonial acquisition in terms of entrance into the imperial economy, contrasted with previous proposals. Rather than adding to the idea that the future of East Florida revolved around the promulgation of medium-sized farms of consumers, Stork instead fills his section titled "Of Cultivation" with polemics about the potential for staple crop cultivation. "From the climate of Florida," he maintained, "and the great variety of tropical, as well as northern production, that are natives of this country, there is reason to expect, that cotton, rice, and indigo, not to mention sugar, will grow here as well as in any part of the globe." East Florida provided the optimal "soil and climate" for rice production, for which "no grain in the world yields so much profit to a planter." He proposed that cotton would someday become the "staple commodity in Florida."¹⁷

Most interestingly, Stork proclaimed that "there is no doubt but sugar will soon be planted in Florida." Where once imperial commentators on both sides of the Atlantic freely admitted that the Empire had enough sugar islands, Stork instead saw an expansive peninsula that possessed all the means for inexpensive sugar production. Sugar cultivation in the West Indies had grown overly expensive in the last several decades. Profits declined mainly due to

the need for importing timber to fire sugar extraction. Deforestation on the sugar islands, when combined with imperial conservation practices to manage the remaining forested lands, created a substantial and lucrative trade in North American lumber to the Caribbean basin.¹⁸ At the same time, soil exhaustion pushed sugar plantations farther and farther inland, increasing transportation fees. East Florida, Stork contended, erased all of these impediments to profit growth. Trees grew throughout the peninsula, providing a ready reserve for the sugar ovens that no longer needed to rely on imports from New England. The shape of the peninsula, along with the numerous rivers and marshes that slowly flowed to the sea brought plantations much closer to imperial markets. Even if the coastal depths forced tidewater planters to ship to St. Augustine before they engaged the global economy, this still represented a far cheaper alternative to hoofed transportation across a populated island.¹⁹

Stork called the future East Floridians “planters,” not “farmers” or “consumers.” His account’s “Sugar” subsection never entertains the notion that sugar cultivation would take place on one-thousand-acre farms through the work of an extended family. Sugar cultivation in East Florida entailed “labor,” “overseers,” and “white servants.” The healthy climate in East Florida drove down the cost of labor, the West Indies chief capital detractor. “Overseers and servants will be had at a reasonable price,” Stork wrote, “but horses, cows, and oxen may be purchased at less than one-fifth of the prices they bear in the West Indies.”²⁰ Stork envisioned the creation of a staple manufacturing system in East Florida in which the plantation embodied a self-regulating world that produced for the imperial economy. Harkening to pre-1763 conceptions of mercantilist exchange, Stork never mentioned the role of trading in manufactured goods. Instead, he wrote about profits, not about purchases.

The notion of East Florida as a resource extraction colony prevailed, Stork intimated, because the environment lent itself to such a vision. Good climate and regular sea breezes removed any vestiges of unhealthy air from the coast. The soil varied throughout the peninsula, but the interior of the colony saw bigger trees, taller grasses, and fatter cows, attesting to the region's vitality. "Florida differs materially from the rest of America," Stork opined, "[in that] the trees in Florida are a distance from one another, and being clear of under wood, this country has more the appearance of an open grove than a forest."²¹ Swamps, which he defined for an English public not savvy to these American environmental entities, need only to be drained to gain access to the rich soil underneath. Stork even tied the hearty number of deer in both East and West Florida to the imperial economy, noting that the deer skins composed the "only article of exportation" at the time. Stork stated that the buffalo roamed into the colony, a further example of the land's commercial and natural viability. No other accounts of East Florida make any reference to buffalo on the peninsula.²²

One is tempted to classify Stork's work as commercial propaganda. To an extent, it was. But the nature of the propaganda is striking. Rather than building his discourse on the well-trodden idea of the expansion of the consumer-farmer portion of society, he instead sought to incorporate East Florida into a sprawling national image of staple commodities and increased trade within the region. "The importance of East Florida, in a national view," Stork argued, depended on two issues. First, and most important, "its fertility, in producing such articles of commerce, as are particularly wanted by Great Britain." Second, the geographic position of Florida allowed it to eventually "carry on a beneficial commerce with the Spanish settlements in times of peace; and cut off their trade in time of war."²³ Stork

makes no mention of importation. He expected big things from East Florida, and there is little room for medium sized farmers. East Florida's future involved capital, labor, and cultivation.

The verbiage of both the official warrant of survey and the November 1763 *Gazette* article lend themselves to an interpretation in line with Grant's initial proclamation, not Stork's vision of plantations. "Township" settlement harkens back to the settlement of New England and a rejection of the large and spread-out plantation model propagated in the Southern colonies and the West Indies. To read the plan, it seems that Grant and the Board of Trade intended medium-sized farmers to produce staple crops (rice, indigo, sugar, etc.) for a global market. Forming a colonial nexus in the wilderness, towns served as entrepôts for goods into and out of the given region as well as administrative centers that served to ease the formation of local government. In theory, the township model meshed nicely with the family consumer model of the royal administration. Yet, in execution, a different model of settlement and labor took hold, one influenced by Stork's treatise. Petitioners required to finance fully their settlement scheme allowed little room for the vagaries of individual yeoman farmers. Instead, "townships" became plantations, and the "white protestant inhabitants" became indentured servants, toiling on a petitioner's land with only the prospect of potential freedom within four to six years of their entry into East Florida providing them comfort.

Stork claimed that only two people in England knew East Florida as he did. One was Lieutenant Colonel James Robertson, whose commission to travel the entirety of the Atlantic colonies in 1763 gave him a bird's-eye view of colonial policy and settlement.²⁴ The other was Denys Rolle, a gentleman of a puritanical bent "who has already made a considerable

settlement upon the St. Juan's [Johns] River."²⁵ Rolle petitioned the Board of Trade early for a township warrant, and they awarded him twenty thousand acres during the spring of 1764. Stork mentioned Rolle's settlement on the St. Johns numerous times throughout his account, proffering it as a fine example of his vision for the colony. The third edition of Stork's *An Account of East Florida* included a letter from Rolle that described the nature of his settlement and profits.²⁶

The case of Denys Rolle keenly illustrates the nature of white servitude in East Florida. In London on June 10, 1764, Rolle "embarked with fourteen people...with some imputation of kidnapping people for his settlement."²⁷ The only comment that Rolle made concerning these "kidnappings" appeared in 1767. "Though many cases have appeared," he charged, "and many more probably not known of such losses, yet it did not appear of such importance to his lordship [the first Lord of Trade, responsible for final granting of land], or the provision [law against kidnapping], mentioned by him against it, seemed improper." Yet, Rolle followed this admittance of illegality with a lengthy condemnation of the safety of those under his "care" -- white servants -- during the cross-Atlantic voyage. Shady sea captains provided inadequate water and foods for Rolle's charges. Rolle clearly appeared concerned about the welfare of his bonds people.²⁸ "Kidnapping," in Rolle's context, involved the removal from poverty of people trapped in London's growing pre-industrial slums. Rolle ensured the Privy Council that he took all necessary steps "of preventing misfortunes that might arise to families thereby, in the privation of their children, by some enquiries and bonds given to custom-house officers, at the different posts by masters of ships carrying passengers."²⁹

John Bartram stopped at “Rollestown” in January 1766, during his St. Johns journey. Bartram’s account comes across as an uninspired two-paragraph retelling of his visit.³⁰ Nevertheless, Bartram and Rolle met again later in London, this time in print. Bartram’s record of his trip up the St. Johns appeared in the second edition of Stork’s *An Account of East Florida*. The next edition witnessed the publication of Rolle’s piece next to a reprinting of part of Bartram’s journal.³¹ Published in 1767, Stork serialized his last edition of the *Account* in works like the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, a publication that circulated among the London and Edinburgh elites. The inclusion of Bartram’s comments added a sense of scientific legitimacy to Stork and Rolle’s obvious bombast. While Bartram went further in portraying East Florida as a wilderness that had enveloped Indian and Spanish settlements and halted his journey in the cold marshes of the sluggish St. Johns, his account did discuss creeks able to sustain large grist mills and potential canal-building plans that emphasized the potential for development in the colony.³²

A reading of Bartram’s diary of his Florida expedition, including the portions before and after the St. Johns journey, revealed a definite narrative disjointedness. Some question the legitimacy of the portion that appears in Stork’s second edition. Bartram intended his narrative for the King and the Royal Society of London, with all administrative dealings in London handled by Peter Collinson, Bartram’s “agent,” and life-long friend. Collinson, possessing a copy of the full journal, which he complained to Bartram that he needed “spectacles” to read. As he further noted in early February 1767, “I drew up in perusing thy Journal which I could not borrow before the 4th of January for few will buy so dear a book [Stork’s second edition] but as my friend John did not think mee worthy of the original I found no obligation to purchase an original.” Obviously hurt, Collinson continued, “If thou

hadst intended to lett Stork puff off his Book with thy Journal to publish the same as King Botanist to the World which by the way is a Title thou assumes without the Kings leave or license...I should have expect to have heard thee saye I know my Friend Peter would like to peruse the Journal but my eyes are bad and I can't undertake it....” Peter ended the letter with a curt “P Collinson’ and not the normal “sincere friend in perfect health” or “Now dear John farewell.”³³

Tentative letters from Collinson continued until July 1767, when he wrote, “I can take a squib from John Bartram without the least resentment, friends may be allowed to rally one another when it is done in anger or sharp resentment which I never intended, however my words may be taken.” A lost letter from Bartram must have arrived and given him reason to accede “if I can be thought too quick, my Dear John, thou wast too slow and we will let the matter go.”³⁴ One can only imagine what John wrote to his jilted friend. It may be that the publication of the journal in Stork’s volume surprised Bartram. His 1982 biographers, Edmund and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, contend that the portion of the journal in Stork’s second edition represented an account of the St. Johns expedition given to Governor Grant before Bartram left St. Augustine.³⁵ Bartram admitted in his journal that he spent several weeks composing the report for Grant.³⁶ The story-like narrative format and departure from scientific observation that the Stork-published excerpt contained leads one to question its editorial accuracy. No surviving Bartram letter or essay denies authorship of the piece or argues against its editorial veracity. Modern hindsight of the Stork-published segment of the journal demonstrates that it benefitted the promulgation of plantation settlement in East Florida.

The publication of Dr. Stork's second edition in 1766 helped to form an amorphous gentleman's group, the East Florida Society of London. Committed to land speculation and development in the new colony, the group counted among its ranks many members of the Scottish social elite and windfall millionaires who lined their pockets with money collected from Seven Year's War military contracts. Denizens of upscale London taverns pored over Stork, Bartram, and Rolle's accounts and devised new methods to create "combinations" of like-minded individuals to assist with colonial settlement. The Society possessed imperial connections and ready capital, both needed to finance passage of potential colonists and improvement of future plantation plots.³⁷ Beginning in June 1766, the crown increased the pace of warrant issuance exponentially, with 10,000- and 20,000-acre tracts making up the majority of the allocations. In June alone, the Board of Trade awarded 224,000 acres to only thirteen petitioners. The Board issued another 170,000 acres six months later, this time to only ten petitioners.³⁸

The machinations of the East Florida Society paid dividends by 1768. During the next 24 months, 661,549 acres passed to 191 petitioners, each warrant averaging over 3,460 acres. Tellingly, the Board of Trade issued 50 grants for a total of 617,000 acres during this time period, averaging more than 12,340 acres for London's claimants, most of them members of the East Florida Society. Petitioners in England decisively showed their predilection for large tracts of land, wagering their capital on plans for large cultivation programs and plantation settlement. From 1763 to 1775, a total of almost 2.9 million acres passed into 227 private hands, averaging more than 12,700 acres per grant.³⁹ The 12,000-acre plantations of 1767 onwards contrasted sharply with the 2,000-acre veteran and family plots advertised by the King and Governor Grant in their proclamations from 1763 and 1764.

As one petitioner stated, “Doctor Stork’s Pamphlet has sett us all Florida Mad.”⁴⁰ Having capital and connections provided half the solution to East Florida settlement. The granting of a warrant of survey required a representative of the petitioner to travel to East Florida and demarcate a contiguous acreage allotment and report it to the East Florida governing council. Here, geography played a crucial role. Several contemporary observers recounted the issues inherent with the sand bar at the seaward entrance to St. Augustine.⁴¹ Breakers at times complicated the approach to the bar, hiding the deeper troughs through the channel. Those troughs allowed the entrance only of ships drawing approximately eight feet, precluding the admittance of larger cross-Atlantic shipping. St. Augustine found itself pushed to the margins of imperial commerce, initially dependent on trans-shipment in other colonial ports. While most supposed that founding a new port would occur in the future, East Florida relied on St. Augustine for entry of trade goods and other commodities.⁴²

Charleston became the entrepôt for East Florida. No other port during the colonial period sailed as many ships to St. Augustine.⁴³ Location and distance served as the primary factors in Charleston’s assumption of the role of East Florida’s gatekeeper. Yet, one cannot deny the influence of Governor Grant’s South Carolina connections on East Florida’s development. The city had housed Grant’s headquarters during the Cherokee War and he had made a name for himself among the Charleston’s elite. Henry Laurens noted several times in his correspondence his expectations of Grant’s appointment to the governorship, telling several of his fellow militia veterans that he intended to contact him soon after realizing Grant’s appointment.⁴⁴

Scholars have not been able to locate the initial contract between Laurens and Grant, but by September 1764 Laurens had assumed the role of Grant’s North American business

manager.⁴⁵ In short order, members of the East Florida Society, most likely through Grant's recommendation, appealed to Laurens to not only manage their East Florida business affairs, but also to act as their official surveyors. Laurens also appeared the optimal choice for assessing the new lands for staple crop cultivation. He had not only found success in rice cultivation in the South Carolina low country, but he also possessed a commercial mindset beyond his agrarian roots. Laurens built the largest slave trading company in the American colonies. Other trade ventures extended to New England and the West Indies. Laurens distinguished himself as a militia officer during the Cherokee War, served under Grant, and used his position to begin a career in the colonial legislature. He became the model "renaissance-man" planter, versed in the multiple facets of colonial commerce and legislation. And Laurens was everywhere in 1765 and 1766, observing potential clam sites, recommending crops, discussing how other surveyors should work with their petitioners, and assisting two other agents with more than 40,000 acres of claims. At some point while juggling all of these tasks, Laurens found enough time to apply for his own 1,000-acre "starter" commission.⁴⁶

The reason behind Lauren's voyage in which he visited William Bartram's failed plantation in 1766 involved warrant surveying for several large English petitioners. On that voyage, Henry ascended and descended the St. Johns River, using his tidewater-planter experience to determine the untapped potential of the new imperial grants.⁴⁷ In a letter to Richard Oswald, a petitioner granted 20,000 acres in 1764, Laurens noted that he wanted to traverse the full of his claim "but there is no practicable road yet." Packed into a "small pilot boat," Henry listened to James Moncrief, "a diligent Young man," responsible for surveying Oswald's acres. Dripping with sarcasm, Laurens reported to Oswald, "How good a judge he

(Moncrief) is of the qualities of land I know not, but admitting all that he says to be very true I fear you will never make any great progress there for want of Neighbours, Navigation, and Markets convenient either for disposing or shipping off your produce....” In return he recommended several “tracts of sandy high land abounding with live oaks... [and] several large islands in the River full of trees... which I believe whill produce rice in abundance and after three or four years it may be greatly improved in indigo....”⁴⁸ Purely on his own conscience, Henry hoped to assuage Oswald’s future economic hardships. His experiential knowledge and savvy allowed him to judge other’s perspectives and comment on planters’ future worth.

Laurens’s gaze conveyed cultural predilections inherent in the South Carolina low country. In almost all of his agrarian advice, Henry espoused a “rice-first” prerogative. And why not – rice cultivation had made a significant section of South Carolina colonists wealthy. The century before the invention of the cotton gin saw the promulgation of rice growth throughout the colony and, with the settlement of Georgia during the 1730s, rice planting further expanded South. Rice planters formed their agricultural enterprise to meet the ecological niche of eastern South Carolina. Markedly moist and marshy, the region did not appear to lend itself to massive staple crop exploitation. South Carolina planters drained swampland and leveraged the knowledge of imported slaves experienced in African rice-cultivation practices that they gained prior to their Atlantic passage.⁴⁹

By the 1750s, South Carolina rice planters began to implement new scientific agricultural practices that used tidal forces to expand arable land. Tidal rice cultivation utilized the rhythmic draw of the ebb and neap tides to irrigate new fields. Tidal forces forced fresh water ahead of the brackish mixture of the tidal zone. By constructing a series

of dikes, canals, and levees, South Carolina rice men expanded their acreage under cultivation to include previously dry ground and spread plantations inland from the swamps' edge. The low country quickly transformed into a hydraulic machine, a grid pattern of sluices and waterways that completely remade the ecological reality in rice-growing South Carolina.⁵⁰

This transformation did not come without cost. The hydraulic system required constant upkeep and supervision. African slaves until the 1740s toiled under the "task system." In this labor model, the completion of a daily task allowed slaves the rest of the day to their own private pursuits. Large scale projects, for instance felling trees or draining swamps, occurred on a seasonal basis when care of the rice crop involved little labor allocation. In the new system, maintenance of the mechanisms for tidal cultivation now joined with the common cultivation tasks and previous labor-intensive jobs to completely fill the slaves' days. Any sense of direct slave autonomy in relation to daily or seasonal tasks went out with the tide.⁵¹

South Carolina planters developed other agricultural staples alongside rice in order to diversify their exports and soften the blow of economic reversals in the global market. Half a century of imperial European warfare caused numerous fluctuations within the international commodities market, and South Carolinians attempted to find surer methods to maximize their export profits. Advancements in tidal rice cultivation represented the most dynamic means towards this end. Bringing new soil under cultivation allowed for larger crops, and hopefully, more money from English merchants. Concurrently, starting during the 1740s, planters also looked to indigo harvesting to prop up their faltering rice investments. Indigo, in its early planting stages, required little labor for upkeep. Thus, slaves could plant a portion

of a plantation in indigo and leave it to grow with minimal supervision while improving tidal fields or clearing new land for cultivation.

The royal administration practiced a program of bounty payment for indigo crops from throughout the empire. The blue dye leached from the indigo leaves provided the color for the robes of England's royalty and nobility. Bounty payments secured ready access and prevented price inflation on the global market. The Spanish had previously cornered the market in indigo with their crops from Guatemala supposedly being the best in the world. Exorbitant prices prevented wide dispersal throughout the European world, which when combined with repeated Anglo-Hispanic hostilities, served to limit the ready consumption of the coloring in London. Controlling the home market reversed this trend, creating stability within the market and amongst the noblemen who wanted "royal blue" cloaks.⁵²

Labor demands increased significantly during indigo's harvesting and production process. Planters needed to build a large wooden press that could both hold water and provide the means to beat a collection of leaves in order to draw out the impurities from the raw dye. Slaves would then collect the compressed "cakes," rich with dying materials, and package them in hogshead for shipment. The process required a constant supply of water and labor to operate the mechanism that pressed and dried the leaves. Slaves then inspected the cakes as they completed the process. Subtropical climates, like those in South Carolina and Florida, could expect two harvests per year, and in some cases even a third crop of mediocre quality before the winter frost.⁵³

Henry Laurens related detailed information and recommendations about both of these agricultural practices. At no time point in his letters does he entertain the notion that small farms should populate the St. Johns. In fact, very early in 1766 he introduced the word

plantation in his East Florida correspondence and he never reverted back to any other term.⁵⁴ Strikingly, Laurens also filled his letters to East Florida parties at this time with accounts of overseers and slaves, of “promising Negro boys” and “Indigo Men.” Along with other low country traditions, Laurens readily espoused a slave-centric world view.⁵⁵ Wealth equated to slave ownership. By owning slaves, a planter harnessed their potential labor. The more a slave worked, the stronger a slave-owner’s overall investment. At the same time, Lauren also spoke hesitantly about expanding the slave system into East Florida. The sparseness of settlement, when combined with the dense swamps and marshes that separated individual plantations, made Laurens’s mind uneasy. An institutionalized slave setting such as South Carolina might have papered over William Bartram’s admittance of fearing his slaves, but a young man, “30 long miles from the Metropolis [St. Augustine], no money to pay for the expense of a journey there upon the most important occasion” would only make “a greater many smaller and perhaps imaginary evils the natural offspring of so many substantial ones.”⁵⁶ As Laurens wrote to Richard Oswald in 1766, “if you have no neighbors or no good ones your Negroes will be exposed to the arbitrary power of an overseer and perhaps sometimes tempted to knock him in the head and file off in a body.”⁵⁷

And yet, by the late 1760s, slave plantations seemed the more reliable of the two labor systems present in East Florida. The two large indenture projects of the time, Denys Rolle’s “Rollestown” and Andrew Turnbull’s “New Smyrna,” both appeared to have significant labor issues and barely stayed active. To hear Rolle tell it, he never caught a break when he came to East Florida in 1764. Initially intent on settling in the vicinity of the St. Mark’s River on the peninsula’s eastern side, he instead betrayed a chronic tentativeness towards making incisive decisions and informed Governor Grant that he would stake his

township claim on the St. Johns. Rolle spent five months traversing the country along the St. Johns while Grant dithered and held off other petitioners from making their surveys until Rolle had completed his. Early in 1765, Rolle met with Governor Grant, claiming that he had not found 20,000 *contiguous* acres, but instead had begun constructing small cabins for his servants throughout the St. Johns watershed. Enraged, Grant refused his request for several non-contiguous grants and forced him to select a contiguous tract on the east bank of the St. Johns. Rolle reluctantly conceded and settled his 14 servants at the now-named “Rollestown.”⁵⁸

John Bartram’s visit to the burgeoning Rollestown in early 1764 produced two sparse paragraphs about his two and a half day stay. He concluded that Rolle’s “steward, Mr. Banks,” carried himself as a “sober, careful, and agreeable man.”⁵⁹ In light of upcoming events, Bartram’s assessment may actually be the last favorable words written about the settlement and its people. Rolle’s late 1765 petition to the Privy Council for more land -- up to 100,000 acres -- reads as a convoluted and tortuous narrative of ineptitude and institutional disregard. Rolle placed the blame for the settlement’s inability turn a profit quickly on the nature of East Florida’s river country and Governor Grant’s disdain for Rolle. As he described in his petition to the Privy Council, “receiving a grant in one contiguous plot of twenty thousand acres, perhaps a twelfth, or a tenth part good, the residue, what is called pine-barren, of the most indifferent land,” drastically drove up expenses for settlement. Referring to the crown’s stated intent in 1763 to settle the new colonies with “white Protestants,” Rolle compared his white indenture project with the influx of South Carolina-style slave labor. The organizer of an indenture settlement “must set them down to cultivation, at a far greater expense than the other [slave owner], and must lose his entire

property in these settlers at the term agreed upon, which is typically four years.” At this time, freed servants had the opportunity to pay rent to Rolle on their land, or pursue much-cheaper new land issued under the guidance of the Proclamation of 1763. “Therefore,” Rolle concluded, “no person will settle with him.”⁶⁰

Beyond the governmental issues, Rolle faced another reality of settlement, one harder for him to imagine or to answer. His colony leaked people. White servants, forced to clear land for a church and town center before beginning their own kitchen gardens, slowly disappeared into the Florida marshes.⁶¹ Soldiers from Picolata also forcibly requisitioned the service of a married couple to work at a smallpox quarantine house outside of St. Augustine. Rolle appealed to the commander of the garrison for the return of the couple. Even though the commander decided in Rolle’s favor, the couple melted into the alleyways of St. Augustine and never returned to the plantation on the St. Johns.⁶² In 1770, while Rolle visited England stumping for new land and settlers, a herdsman for the plantation sold all one thousand of the cattle owned by Rolle and disappeared into the swamps.⁶³ Prior to this infraction, Rolle’s servants staged a mass walk out during the summer of 1768 and appealed to Governor Grant for their freedom. Grant, pressured into acting and inserting imperial prerogative into a master-servant relationship, admitted that “so many things appeared against him [Rolle] and in favor of the servants -- that if I had not underhand interposed the greatest part if not the whole of them I believe would have been discharged from their indentures.” Previous accusations against Rolle of withholding food and supplies until the completion of tasks gained further public credence. Surveying the mess that Rolle had placed before him, Grant embraced his personal feelings for the man, ordering the servants back to the plantation and to show Rolle proper deference. Any “Publick House” harboring

Rolle's servants would have its license rescinded. As Grant wrote, "servants getting the best of their master would be a bad precedent... [but] in any other country in America every man of them would have been set at liberty."⁶⁴ As Grant assessed it, "by his (Rolle's) management he will have nothing to show for so large an expense -- and I am much convinced he will never raise a hundred pounds worth of produce in the country."⁶⁵

The summer of 1768 witnessed hard times for the colony's other white servant venture -- Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna plantation complex. Located at Mosquito Inlet, seventy miles South of St. Augustine, between a broad expanse of beach composed of shells and sand and an even larger tract of lagoons and marshes, New Smyrna reflected Turnbull's unique experiences and visions. Turnbull had travelled throughout the Mediterranean during the 1740s and 1750s, eventually marrying a wealthy Minorcan. Familiar with the people on the island of Minorca and the subjugated Corsicans grinding under Turkish rule, Turnbull turned to these groups to provide him with white indentures for his colony in East Florida. Turnbull viewed his as a humanitarian task, presupposing that settlement of the Mediterranean poor in East Florida would provide them with more opportunities for future autonomy and land ownership. Historian/anthropologist Patricia C. Griffin claims that Turnbull viewed the older patronage system of the Mediterranean through a lens of labor capitalism, misunderstanding the reciprocal relationship between wealthy and workers in the Mediterranean world. He surely saw the Minorcans and the other Mediterranean settlers paternalistically, doubting their ability to self-govern and work independently on small plots of land in the model described in the Proclamation of 1763. As such, Turnbull decided early that the plantation system provided the most likely avenue for profit in New Smyrna.⁶⁶

More than 1,400 settlers arrived in St. Augustine on June 26, 1768. The exact nature of their indenture remains unclear. The one indenture contract still available today shows how Turnbull tied the signer to the land for ten years in a form of debt peonage. The proprietors of the colony drew payment from the gross production of the settler, with no more than two-thirds being drawn from the total. Yet, if the settler tended to act “lazy and indolent,” a subjective assessment at best, further produce could be subtracted from the yearly total. Turnbull contended that this system ensured that the proprietor would always provide for the worker and he would never starve.⁶⁷ The Mediterraneans arrived at the site for New Smyrna in early August and began the arduous task of clearing the saw palmettos and draining the swamps in the lagoon...not the most opportune time to initiate a new venture.

Bernard Romans, assistant to William de Brahm, the royal surveyor of the Southern Department, provided the most trenchant observations of what followed next. Romans worked alongside Joseph Purcell, a Minorcan who “happily withdrew from the yoke” of servitude in some unknown manner. Purcell could never speak of his time in New Smyrna “without tears.” The overseers responsible for the New Smyrna settlement drove the settlers relentlessly, preventing fishing in the lagoon to offset the meager food supplied in the communal mess. These same overseers forced a husband to whip his wife for stealing bread from the colony’s stores. Romans labeled Turnbull a “petty tyrant.”⁶⁸ At the same time, Henry Laurens penned several letters to Turnbull addressing the mounting financial difficulties. His correspondence to Turnbull from August to November describes numerous purchases on “debit” and the need to resell corn that had spoiled while in storage. By November 11, having not seen the contract that Turnbull agreed upon with a New Smyrna-

bound merchant, Laurens filled the hold of the outgoing ship with salt, flour, and rice in the hope of meeting the needs of the colony.⁶⁹ By the close of the year, New Smyrna depended on a wavering supply line and the vagaries of partnership finance for survival.

Concurrent to Henry's work to help feed the settlement that August, the workers at New Smyrna revolted. Some of the servants, noticing the close proximity of the ship *Havannah*, raided the settlement's stores and loaded their supplies on small crafts in the inlet, hoping to escape to Spanish Cuba. In the process, they purposefully maimed one of the overseers, Cutter, cutting off his ears, nose, and two fingers. Unfortunately, the rebellious group dithered under want of good leadership, and eventually soldiers from the St. Augustine garrison captured the group. Romans sat on the grand jury for the trial for five of the rebels, allowing him an "opportunity of canvassing it [the situation] well." Witnesses singled out the man responsible for disfiguring Cutter, the former overseer who eventually died from his wounds. He and another man, found guilty of the king's offense of killing a cow, faced execution. Governor Grant, again in an attempt to reinforce the deferential master-servant relationship, ordered that one of the remaining three rebels acquitted of their crimes would serve as executioner. Initially wishing death upon himself, the hapless former rebel eventually "mount[ed] the ladder [to the gallows], [took] leave of his friends in the most moving manner, kissing them the moment before he committed them to an ignominious death."⁷⁰

New Smyrna continued on after the 1768 debacle. Turnbull quickly transformed his lands to indigo production. Facing a recalcitrant servant population and a tenuous supply and financial reality, Turnbull quickly planted an indigo crop in an attempt to allow his labor more time to clear land. The indigo bounties also ensured some investment return. By 1771,

New Smyrna alone produced almost 12,000 pounds of indigo, fully a third of all indigo exports leaving East Florida. In many regards, the colony won renown as the maker of the purest indigo in East Florida, possibly in all of North America.⁷¹ Even though regarded as a fine indigo producer, Turnbull never escaped the shame of the 1768 revolution or the rumors of continued harsh treatment to the Mediterranean's. Romans, published in 1775, held Turnbull directly responsible for the outrages at New Smyrna.⁷²

Romans maintained that attempts to settle white servants in East Florida were "foolish" and "cruel." He firmly believed that natural breeding created a slave race among Africans, arguing "is it not therefore better to employ those, who labour at a similar work in their own sultry country, and in a state of slavery too, than to make victims of men who can by no means be qualified for the fatigue of the Southern plantation."⁷³ Those who penned anti-slavery diatribes, Romans continued, could not purchase slaves and wrote from a position of ignorance and envy. For the middling white farmer, slave acquisition promised capital accumulation and a means towards social mobility. Although Romans later described the ethnogenesis of the African race, linking them with a Jewish diaspora through some very shaky logic and science, his account of the benefits of slave labor in East Florida echoed many of the intellectual trends from the South Carolina low country. And Rolle agreed, stating that white indenture drained profits from any plantation-style economy. At the end of a servant's contract, he or she would walk away from their master and could apply to start in the new colony on fresh acreage provided by the colonial administration. White plantation labor forced a plantation owner to expand perpetually his acreage in order to capitalize on his investment. Slaves represented a quantifiable investment that had its own inherent value and could accrue through slave reproduction. Servants did not represent an investment but a

stop-gap towards an immediate labor problem that succeeded only if the possibility existed for sky-rocket profits, as in early tobacco Virginia. An assessment of Rollestown in 1782 showed that Rolle possessed 106 slaves on his land, showing his eventual acquiescence to the slave economy.⁷⁴

East Florida presented another unique problem, this one environmental. Plantation owners, white servants, and slaves gazing into the swamps and marshlands of the colony rarely perceived the “open groves” of widely-spaced trees denude of underbrush that Dr. Stork so beamingly described during the 1760s. Instead, dense underbrush and deep tree root systems made land clearing an arduous task. Saw palmettos grew throughout the pine barrens, often filling the spaces around and between trees in a dense mass. Their sharp, pronged leaves, from which they received their name, often tore clothes and skin and required significant effort to extract.⁷⁵ William Bartram, writing in 1774, described the palmetto royal (another locally growing tree) as “grow[ing] so thick together that a rat or bird can scarcely pass through them.”⁷⁶ Writing about the cypresses that grew throughout the St. Johns drainage, Bartram noted that they “grow in the water, or are covered...with two to three feet of water.” Further up from the tree’s base, the trunk “is greatly enlarged by prodigious buttresses, or pilasters...each pilaster terminates under ground, in a very large, strong, serpentine root, which strikes off and branches every way...”⁷⁷ Never mind that large colonies of alligators lived along the warm banks of the St. Johns and the marshes close by. William reported some alligators coming into night camps and attacking humans, exhibiting little fear for the soft skinned interlopers of their natural habitats.⁷⁸

Besides trees and alligators, potential planters also had to contend with the vagaries of the soil. As John Bartram had noted in 1765, good soil existed alongside the river and in

places in the pine barrens.⁷⁹ Romans described the same environmental pattern, although he extrapolated further in his account. The pine barrens “makes up the largest body [of land type] by far, the peninsula being scarce anything else.” Composed of “grey, or white sand, and in many places, red or yellow gravel,” the soil of the barrens required intense cultivation to increase fertility in the scale needed for a nutrient heavy extractive staple crop cultivation program. “The hammock land,” Romans wrote, “appearing in tufts among the lofty pines...when it is cleared this is the best; nay the only land fit for production of indigo [and] potatoes.” A layer of decaying leaves provided a rich base for crop growth. However, several successive seasons of intense production, when combined with the sandy content of the soil, increased the salinity of the small plot until it required repair. Letting the plot lay fallow did not suffice. Planters instead had to rely on a systematic program of irrigation and fertilization to reload the nutrient base in the soil.⁸⁰

Romans and John Bartram’s picture of arable land in East Florida resembled a patchwork, something that Rolle attested to in his *Petition*. A contiguous twenty thousand acres might only contain ten percent usable land. As Rolle argued, a far more logical land use pattern would have utilized small- to middling-size farms centered on the “hammock land.” Each farm would produce for a landowner in a share cropping system until the end of the contract. Once the indenture ended, the farmer, now tied to a piece of arable land, had the option of paying rent to the original land owner or striking out on his own to form a new hammock-centric farm. Confined to a twenty thousand acre continuous plot, the land owner found himself forced to practice an exploitative labor system of plantation agriculture that provided little for the servant.⁸¹ The servant also had the option of either buying land from the landowner or petitioning for a family-sized tract of land. But, he was not tied to a

demarcated acreage of good land that he had worked for years, and in essence, would enter into a landless wandering until he met another labor demand. We may shake our head now at Rolle's petition and his claim that he needed one hundred thousand more acres, but the contiguous confines hemmed him into a plantation-based system that required continually expanding amounts of land, labor, and capital. His transition to slave agriculture by 1782 shows Rolle's eventual accommodation to East Florida's environmental reality.⁸²

As John Bartram in 1765 and William Bartram in 1774 noted, evidence existed for the adaptation of agriculture to the non-contiguous reality of the East Florida soil reality. Both writers, but particularly William, attest to small- and medium-sized orange groves existing throughout the St. Johns region. The Spanish had imported Valencia oranges during the seventeenth century and, noticing how readily they grew in Florida's subtropical climate, farmers planted orange trees as a regular crop. As opposed to large orange plantations, groves speckled the countryside, mirroring Spanish attempts at subsistence agriculture prior to the Creek invasion of the early eighteenth century. Never able to muster a large enough labor force in Florida to practice any formalized system of extractive cultivation, the Spanish relied on mission Indians' incorporation into a small-scale subsistence agricultural exchange, of which small orange groves became a fixture. The remnants of this practice existed into the later portion of the eighteenth century. William Bartram accepted an invitation from the Alachua Creek-splinter to a watermelon and orange feast. Canoes travelled from distant villages full of citrus fruit that the Indians provided to traders as a means of exchange.⁸³ Almost as an unconscious rejection of this pre-English form of agriculture, plantation owners actively sought the destruction of orange groves to make room for crops of indigo and corn,

or to “extirpate the mosquitos” that they alleged “(the) groves near the dwellings are haunts and shelters for those persecuting insects.”

William Bartram decried this practice. “I have often been affected with extreme regret,” he recounted, “at beholding the destruction and devastation which has been committed or indiscreetly exercised on these extensive fruitfull orange groves, on the banks of St Juan (Johns), by the new planters under the British Government, some hundreds of acres which, at a single plantation, have been entirely destroyed.”⁸⁴ Writing in 1774, William had returned to East Florida far removed from the quaking and fevered failed-planter of 1766. Abandoning his plantation (no account exists of what happened to his slaves), he made a career for himself as an illustrator of *flora* and *fauna*, his illustrations from the 1765 expedition creating a stir in London’s scientific circles. Contracted to return to Florida in 1774 by Dr. John Fothergill, a scientist friend of William and John, William trod much of the same ground as he and his father had almost a decade before. In his published account of his 1774 voyage, William never mentions his plantation experiment. Passing by the mouth of Six Mile Creek, where most historians agree that he established his plantation, William writes not a word of his experience. But his gaze reflects his feelings, and he seems to revel in the “mouldering habitations” of several plantations on the St. Johns.⁸⁵ He witnessed a “hurricane” storm completely destroying a plantation nestled in a cove days removed from the closest English settlement. Losing his entire crop along with his and his slaves’ homes, the plantation owner seemed dumbstruck by the loss of all of his potential wealth.⁸⁶ Much as his father’s account, William’s is full of Indian mounds, deserted pre-Anglo farms, and a wealth of biological descriptions. By 1774, however, plantation owners had established plantations and failed, landowners had acquired expansive tracts of land

(some not under cultivation), and the Alachua Creek-splinter had established villages and regularly hunted on the west bank of the St. Johns (well across the boundary line that Grant had been so proud of).

Only patient men stood to profit in the East Florida plantation-complex by 1774. Unsuccessful attempts at harnessing a white servant labor force served to validate the South Carolina planters who espoused the expansion of their slave labor system into East Florida. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Henry Laurens asked Andrew Turnbull in a letter from November 1768, “Are your new settlers reconciled to their situation and become more tractable, or do you begin to be convinced that Negroes are the most useful servants in the Southern climes?”⁸⁷ Although concerns existed about possible slave uprisings in the remote East Florida settlements, Laurens repeatedly claimed that good overseers would preclude such revolts and recommended many to potential planters.⁸⁸ The adamant refusal of Governor Grant and the colonial administration to stray from its stated goal of contiguous township settlements forced potential East Florida investors towards a plantation-style economy that provided long-term stability in investment returns. As historian Daniel Shafer has noted, the inevitability of failure in East Florida didn’t exist for everyone. Those who could apply a ready source of capital and wait out long-term growth attained success on the indigo plantations that dotted the banks of the St. Johns River. By the early 1770s, the ascendancy of the South Carolina model of cultivation and labor exhibited itself throughout the colonies.⁸⁹

This reality contradicts the proclamations of 1763 and 1764. The British imperial vision immediately after the establishment of East Florida appeared to favor medium-sized farming settlements, particularly for demobilized soldiers and officers of the British army

and navy. Very quickly, though, adherence to a policy of granting contiguous tracts of land, sensational accounts of the fecundity of the colony, reliance on South Carolina merchants and planters, and the laxity in observing the regulation concerning township settlements changed the imperial dynamic in East Florida. The colony took shape as a staple crop plantation economy, not a region filled with small farms and consumers of British manufactures. Contrary to any ideas of independent farmers populating the new land, nascent agricultural capitalists turned to the stability inherent in a slave-labor system in an attempt to guarantee a return on their investment. The environmental reality of East Florida, the nature of the soil and the tremendous effort needed to clear the land, required planters to wager a steadily increasing amount of capital in the hope of creating a successful colonial enterprise. By 1774, East Florida provided an avenue of advancement only for the extremely wealthy.

Returning to Mount Hope, a high point in the voyage that William and John had shared in 1765, William walked alone and communed with a restive natural world, and quite possibly, with the memory of his father. Since 1765, an English indigo proprietor surveyed, established, planted, and failed on Mount Hope. William described a “noble Indian highway,” that in 1765 “led from a great mount, on a straight line... first through a point or wing of an orange grove, and continued through an awful forest of live oaks.” Now, “all has been cleared away and planted with indigo, corn, and cotton, but since deserted.” The failure of this plantation experiment, in a way reminiscent of William’s own failure, left the land appearing “like a desert to a great extent, and terminated, on the land side, by frightful thickets, and open pine forests.” As the sun rose the next morning, William spoke to the birds, singing out “My heart and voice unite with yours, in sincere homage to the great

Creator, the universal sovereign.”⁹⁰ Beyond the obvious religious theme, William’s psalm to the “Creator” recognized the ecological relationships between man and the environment, a joining of man and bird with the orange groves, the crocodiles, and the residue of imperial visions.

¹ John Bartram to William Bartram, April 5, 1766, *The Correspondence of John Bartram (CJB), 1734-1777*, ed. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992, 660-61.

² John Bartram, "Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida: From July 1, 1765 to April, 10 1766," ed. Ann Frances Harper, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (Dec 1942): 27-28.

³ Henry Laurens to James Grant, 15 September, 1764, *The Papers of Henry Lauren (PHL)s*, vol. 4, ed. by George C. Rogers, Jr. and David R. Chesnutt (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), 430.

⁴ Henry Laurens to John Bartram, August 9th, 1766, *CJB*, 670-671.

⁵ *Ibid*, 672; for an examination of white self-esteem and slavery, see Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 45-77.

⁶ Daniel Shafer, "Governor James Grant's Villa: A British East Florida Indigo Plantation," *El Scribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History*, vol. 37 (2000); Daniel Shafer, "A Swamp of an Investment?": Richard Oswald's British East Florida Plantation Experiment," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 11-38.

⁷ Patricia Griffin, "Blue Gold: Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna Plantation," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 39-68.

⁸ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 561-562.

⁹ Henry Ellis, "Hints Relative to the Division of Government of the conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," reprinted in full in Verner W. Crane, "Hints Relative to the Division of the Government of the Conquered and Newly Acquired Countries in America," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 8, No. 4 (Mar 1922), 367-373; and John Pownall, "Mr. Pownall's Sketch of a Report concerning the Cessions in Africa and America at Peace of 1763," reprinted in entirety in R. A. Humphreys, "Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 194 (Apr. 1934): 241-264.

¹⁰ An imbroglio did occur over the selling of Spanish land claims upon their exit. The Crown eventually invalidated these land claims, see Wilbur H. Siebert, "The Departure of the Spanish and Other Groups from East Florida, 1763-1764," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Oct 1940): 145-154. While an interesting anecdote from the Anglo-Spanish transfer, it did little to affect the following decade of development in East Florida.

¹¹ John Grant. "A Proclamation. East Florida." Reprinted in William Stork, *An Account of East Florida, with Remarks on Future Importance to Trade and Commerce*, 1st Edition, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/quickSearch.do?now=1318311024838&inPS=true&prodId=EC&userGroupName=txshracd2573&refineResults=true¤tPosition=>" (accessed 01 August, 2011), 82-86.

¹² Copy of royal grant and terms, reprinted in Stork, 1st edition, 88.

¹³ "Announcement." *London Gazette*, 19 November, 1763, <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/10367/pages/1> (accessed August 1, 2011).

¹⁴ Charles L. Mowalt, "The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 30, no. 3 (Dec. 1943), 359-376.

¹⁵ Stork, 1st edition, a3.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, xi.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 55-58.

¹⁸ Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁹ Stork, 1st edition, 60-62.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 62-63.

²¹ *Ibid*, 24-25.

²² *Ibid*, 49.

²³ *Ibid*, v-vi.

²⁴ For Robertson's account of East Florida, see "Robertson's Report of East Florida in 1763," in *The British Meet the Seminoles*, ed. James W. Covington (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1961), 5-16.

²⁵ Stork, 1st edition, v.

²⁶ William Stork, *An Account of East Florida, with a journal, Kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia, Botanist for his majesty for the Floridas, upon a journey from St. Augustine up the River St. John's* (1767), Eighteenth Century Collection Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?resultListType=RESULT_LIST&contentSet=ECCOArticles&doDirectDocNumSearch=false&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C13%29william+stork%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C12%29east+florida%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&sort=Author&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&searchId=R2¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=txshradc2573&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&showLOI=&bookId=0079900800&collectionId=TI10669&relevancePageBatch=CW103988134 (accessed 04 August, 2011); and 3rd edition (same title), Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=3&userGroupName=txshradc2573&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&sgHitCountType=None&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C13%29william+stork%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%280X%2CNone%2C12%29east+florida%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&&docId=CW3301116196&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=CW3301116196&relevancePageBatch=CW101116195&showLOI=Yes&contentSet=&callistoContentSet=ECLL&docPage=article&highlight=y (accessed 04 August, 2011).

²⁷ Denys Rolle, *The Humble Petition of Denys Rolle, Esq.; Setting forth the Hardships, Inconveniences, and Grievances, which have Attended him in the Attempts to Make a Settlement in East Florida, Humbly Paying Such Relief, as in Their Lordships Wisdom Shall Seem Meet*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&sort=Author&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&prodId=ECCO¤tPosition=1&userGr

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²⁸ Ibid, 2-5.

²⁹ Ibid, 2.

³⁰ John Bartram, 46.

³¹ William Stork, 3rd Edition.

³² John Bartram, 48.

³³ Peter Collison to John Bartram, undated letter, *CJB*, 679-680.

³⁴ Peter Collinson to John Bartram, July 31st 1767, *CJB*, 684.

³⁵ Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Life and Times of John Bartram: From Lake Ontario to the River St. John* (Tallahassee, FL: A Florida State University Book, 1982), 267-271.

³⁶ Bartram's diary, 48-49.

³⁷ George C. Rogers, Jr., "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. LIV, No. 4 (Apr. 1976), 478-483.

³⁸ Rogers, Jr., 481-482. Rogers obtains his numbers from Charles Mowalt's seminal study, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784*.

³⁹ Charles Mowalt, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1943), 59 and 62.

⁴⁰ Quote from Lord Adam Gordon, reprinted in Rogers, 483. Lord Adam was warranted 20,000 acres on 18 June 17, 1766.

⁴¹ John Bartram, 33 and 50; Henry Laurens to James Grant, 15 September, 1764, *PHL*, vol. 4, 430; and Robertson, "Robertson's Report of the Floridas 1763, 8.

⁴² Mowalt, *East Florida as a British Province*, 155-157.

⁴³ Ibid, 157.

⁴⁴ Henry Laurens to John Etwein, March 19, 1763, *PHL*, vol. 3., 374; and Henry Laurens to Stephen Papon, June 4, 1763, *PHL*, vol. 3, 469-470.

⁴⁵ Henry Laurens to James Grant, 15th September 1764, *PHL*, Vol. 4, 428-432.

⁴⁶ Warrant of Survey, *PHL*, vol. 5, 135

⁴⁷ Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, *PHL*, vol. 5, 180-184; and Henry Laurens to Gideon Dupont, Sr., *PHL*, vol. 5, 190-192.

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- ⁴⁸ Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald, 12th August 1766, *PHL*, vol. 5, 155-158.
- ⁴⁹ Joyce e. Chaplin, "Tidal Rice Cultivation and the Problem of Slavery in South Carolina and Georgia, 1670-1815," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. 49, no. 1 (Jan. 1992), 29-35.
- ⁵⁰ Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 227-277; Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76-79.
- ⁵¹ Chapin, "Tidal Rice Cultivation and the Problem of Slavery in South Carolina and Georgia, 1760-1815," 52-61; Steinberg, 79-81.
- ⁵² Chapin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 190-195.
- ⁵³ *Ibid*, 196-205; Griffin, "Blue Gold: Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna Plantation," 48-56; Bernard Romans give a good contemporary account of the process, see Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. by Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 169-172.
- ⁵⁴ Henry Laurens to James Grant, 31st January 1766, *PHL*, vol. 5, 58-60.
- ⁵⁵ Henry Laurens to Edward Graham, March 31, 1766, *PHL*, Vol. 5, 95-96; Henry Laurens to James Grant, April 22, 1766, *PHL*, vol. 5, 107-110; and Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald, August 12, 1766, *PHL*, vol. 5, 154-160 are but a few of the most striking.
- ⁵⁶ Henry Laurens to John Bartram, August 9, 1766, *PHL*, vol. 5, 154.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 156.
- ⁵⁸ Best primary source accounts are Rolle, *Humble Petition...*; and James Grant to Lachlan MacLeane, Esq.; 13th February 1767, reprinted in full in Carita Doggett Corse, "Denys Rolle and Rollestown, a Pioneer for Utopia," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Oct 1928), 122-127; best secondary accounts, see Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 447-451; Charles L. Mowalt, "The Tribulations of Denys Rolle," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 1 (July 1944), 1-14.
- ⁵⁹ John Bartram, 45-46.
- ⁶⁰ Rolle, 35.
- ⁶¹ James Grant to Lachlan MacLeane, 13th February 1767, reprinted in full in Carita Doggett Corse, "Denys Rolle and Rollestown, a Pioneer for Utopia," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Oct. 1928), 115-134, 127.
- ⁶² Rolle, 8.
- ⁶³ Dodge, 120-121.
- ⁶⁴ James Grant to Lord Hillsborough, 13th August 1768, in Dodge, 132-133.
- ⁶⁵ James Grant to Lachlan MacLeane, 13th February 1767, in Dodge, 127.
- ⁶⁶ The best assessment of New Smyrna is Patricia Griffin, *Muller on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788* (Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida Press, 1991). Also see Bailyn, 451-460; Kenneth H.

Beeson, Jr., *Fromajadas and Indigo: The Minorcan Colony in Florida* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2003); and E. P. Panagopoulos, *New Smyrna: An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1966).

⁶⁷ Quote from Turnbull quoted in Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach*, 24-25.

⁶⁸ Romans, 47-248.

⁶⁹ Henry Laurens to Andrew Turnbull, August 17, 1768, *PHL* vol. 6, 72; Henry Laurens to Andrew Turnbull, October 1, 1768, *PHL*, vol. 6, 120-121; and Henry Laurens to Andrew Turnbull, November, 14, 1768, *PHL*, vol. 6, 154.

⁷⁰ Romans, 248-249.

⁷¹ Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 202-205; Griffin, "Blue Gold," 39-68.

⁷² Romans, 247-248.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 152-153.

⁷⁴ "The Present State of the Plantation (1782)," reprinted in full in Dodge, 134.

⁷⁵ "Saw Palmettos," *Florida Forests*, http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/4h/Saw_palmetto/sawpalme.htm (accessed 10 October 2011).

⁷⁶ William Bartram, *Travels and Other Writings* (New York: Literary Classics of America, 1996), 80.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 93-93.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 115-116 and 212-213.

⁷⁹ John Bartram, 31-32.

⁸⁰ Romans, 96-98.

⁸¹ Rolle, 34-36.

⁸² "The Present State of the Plantation in 1782," reprinted in full in Dodge, 134.

⁸³ William Bartram, 252.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 215.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 97.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 131-133.

⁸⁷ Henry Laurens to Andrew Turnbull, November 14, 1768, *PHL*, vol. 6, 155-156.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 156

⁸⁹ Daniel Shafer, "Governor James Grant's Villa: A British East Florida Indigo Plantation," *El Scribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History*, vol. 37 (2000); and *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010); and David R. Chesnutt, "South Carolina's Impact

on East Florida, 1763-1776," in *Eighteenth Century Florida and the Revolutionary South*," ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1978).

⁹⁰ William Bartram, 100-101.

V. Conclusion -- “Doctor Stork has discovered the great skill of dying at the choice of times.”

William Stork died during the New Smyrna revolt of 1768. No one knows for certain the events that led to his death, although speculation ran rampant. Andrew Turnbull had decided to bring distinguished visitors through his new colony on Mosquito Inlet to help publicize his venture and increase his prospect for further extensions of credit.¹ Dr. Stork apparently arrived shortly before the uprising. Bernard Romans, ever the iconoclast, declared that he had died of fright, “being close to the spot of the insurrection.”² Turnbull claimed that Stork had attempted to defend himself with his umbrella, but succumbed to a wound to his groin two days after the revolt.³ Over time, less radical conceptions of Stork’s demise came to light. In his seventies, Stork suffered from ill health during his later years. As one East Floridian commented, Stork, already ill, “hearing there was a mutiny went into convulsions and then expired.”⁴

Henry Laurens worked with Stork in the past, having penned a letter to him on the day of the revolt discussing such sundry items as his bill and a chest being sent on the next

packet ship.⁵ By October, Laurens commented to Governor James Grant that “Doctor Stork has discovered the great skill in dying at the choice of times.”⁶ Laurens’s assessment, juxtaposed between news of business and an account of his wife’s depression following the death of a second child during the last year, seemed oddly out of place. He commented no more on the premier East Florida booster, but one notices the fading luster the colony had for Laurens. By April 1769, Laurens’s relationship had noticeably cooled with Governor Grant. “I heartily wish Your Excellency, and all my Brother Adventurers in the Plantation way, may succeed as well in East Florida,” Laurens stated, “but believe me, Dear Sir: the Plan for depending upon foreign supplies of provision is at all times a bad one and at some times a destructive measure.” By the end of the letter, Laurens indicated that he planned on visiting Broton Island within the next two weeks “and would go as far as Amelia to have the pleasure of meeting the governor of East Florida.”⁷ Laurens never intimated that he would make any trip to St. Augustine, or that he planned such a future trip.

John Bartram died nine years after Stork. The Revolution had washed over Bartram’s home by 1777, and fortunately for his family, the majority of his estate was in land, not devalued paper money. William received approximately 200 pounds in inheritance, far less than his older brothers.⁸ This did not appear to bother William. In an address before the American Philosophical Society, William eulogized his father, claiming that “Mr. Bartram was a man of modest and gentle manners, frank cheerful, and of great good nature; a lover of justice, truth, and charity,” who told his children to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God.” John “never coveted old age,” and as he neared the end of his earthly sojourns before the Creator, pronounced, “I want to die.”⁹

John's travels on the St. Johns took up much of William's speech. "At the advanced age of nearly seventy years," William recounted, "he (John) travelled several thousand miles in Carolina and Florida."¹⁰ William had made the same trip three years before his father's death, visiting the same lagoons and Indian mounds as they had together in 1766. East Florida, through the gaze of the younger Bartram, had changed significantly. Flourishing indigo plantations rested next to "mouldering habitations," Indian villages were now situated on the banks of the St. Johns, and slaves appeared in numbers far higher than either Bartram might have anticipated during the 1760s.¹¹ The scientific detachment that centered the work of John during 1765 and 1766 was absent from William's account of East Florida penned in 1774. Ever-resurgent nature lurked at the edge of each plantation on the St. Johns. Within years, unsuccessful cultivations disappeared into the swamps and palmettos. William reveled in the reverses, little empathy evident from his own trials on the St. Johns.

By 1774, East Florida was different. St. Augustine still served as the nexus of colonial affairs. Most of the population resided there, and their careers tied them to either the Army or the royal administration. A 1771 census for the entire colony conducted by William De Brahm, the Southern Department's royal surveyor, counted approximately 2700 people in the colony. Of those, about 1400 were the remaining Minorcans in New Smyrna, and 900 were slaves either in St. Augustine or on the burgeoning indigo plantations, leaving 288 white men as the remainder of the population. Of these 288, 87 worked for the crown directly, either in the administration, as Indian traders, or possibly as blacksmiths employed by the army. De Brahm counted 107 planters at the time of his census, and fully a third of those had been labeled "not in the province."¹² While these numbers are far less than exact, they do show some discernible trends for the colony on the eve of the Revolution. The

environmental reality of East Florida created a labor heavy population. Almost 7 out of every 10 people in East Florida was a bonded laborer by 1771. About a third of the free population worked for the bureaucracy, while another third owned the labor of, or in some cases the bodies of, the slaves and servants toiling in the swamps. The last third of the white population lived on the margins of a nascent market economy. We suppose that they are barbers, sailors, maybe even owners of the “publick houses” that Governor Grant threatened to close if they took in any indentured servants. This amorphous group filled the census anonymously, placeholders whose inability to tie themselves to either the administration or the plantation economy leaves modern observers to search for the facts of their existence. Few sources remain about white women residing in the colony, although many contemporary observers recorded the presence of either female servants or slaves.

Indigo, though haltingly, seemed to be taking off in the colony. A total of 22,119 pounds left East Florida that year, and most likely more would have if not for an uncharacteristically low yield from New Smyrna that season. Two years later, a bumper crop of more than 58,000 pounds left St. Augustine and New Smyrna, exhibiting the maturation of staple crop agriculture and the plantation system. At the same time, however, South Carolina continued to export more than 500,000 pounds of mediocre grade indigo annually, flooding the market and driving down prices on the imperial exchange.¹³ Only the protection afforded by royal bounties kept indigo profitable as a staple-export during the pre-Revolutionary era.

As Romans noted in 1775, the deer skin trade represented the most stable form of trade in the colony.¹⁴ The lack of manufacturing, coupled with inconsistent indigo crops due to the vagaries of cultivation, shipping, and weather, forced many East Floridians to rely on the skin trade with the Alachua-Creek Splinter, now commonly called Seminoles, for profits.

Yet, relations at the trading posts seemed contentious. A week before William Bartram entered the colony, several young Seminole men, believing that they had been swindled in a trade deal, attacked the traders at the upper post on the St. Johns. The traders fled, and combining their salvaged goods with another post downstream, cached them under guard on an island in the river. Governor Tonyn called for a conference with Cowkeeper, and the chief promised to punish the youths and see to the posts' protection.¹⁵

The Seminoles dominated the interior of the peninsula. Their villages had flourished during the decade of British rule. Cowkeeper welcomed Bartram to his central village, Cuscowilla, where William witnessed the flow of tribute goods to the Seminole headman. Large herds of cattle grazed on the interior savanna, horse breeding flourished, and each home in the village had an independent garden plot for family production. Most strikingly, the Seminoles had developed "plantations," large communally-managed agricultural enterprises that produced wheat, sweet potatoes, and watermelons for trade with the British colony. William, always one to notice the prevalence of orange groves in the colony, paid meticulous attention to the cultivation of wild orange trees, carry-overs from the Spanish imperial project.¹⁶ The entrance into the regional subsistence market did not represent the only way the Seminoles adapted to meet British market forces. William decried the "criminal excess" that the Seminoles practiced in their "war with the deer and bears."¹⁷ The presence of traders so close to the Indians' habitations increased the acquisitiveness of the Seminoles. Bartram commented several times on Seminole hunting parties either leaving or entering the post with skins during the summer, not the traditional hunting period. Seminole hunters had pushed the deer and bear further to the south, possibly all the way to the Keys, interrupting the animals' typical migratory and reproductive cycles.¹⁸

Governor Grant had left in 1771, being replaced by William Tonyn in 1774. Tonyn, an Army officer, had petitioned for a warrant of survey in 1768, but done nothing to improve the land by the time of his appointment. He came from outside of the East Florida Society of London, and his governorship served as a lightning rod of dissent among the South Carolina-styled planters already residing in the colony.¹⁹ It is hard to measure the impact of the political machinations in St. Augustine, but the lack of significant changes in settlement patterns or revenue distribution seems to indicate that this was more a court escapade than a colonial readjustment.

The portrait of East Florida in 1774 by no means resembled the image of the colony and the continental empire crafted in the years following the Peace of Paris. Romans called the current planters in the colony “land barons” and “monopolists,” their possession of large tracts of land along the St. Johns driving up land prices and preventing the settlement of small farmers.²⁰ Even though he strongly espoused African slavery as the correct form of labor in the colony, Romans had nothing but contempt for the large land owners who had made no moves to develop their lands, which to hear Romans, was most of them.²¹ Benjamin Franklin’s yeoman farmers/consumers, of which he wrote so eloquently about in *The Interests of Great Britain Considered*, and seemed to be an unofficial model for the organizational precepts followed by the administration in 1763, were hard to find. Instead, East Florida in 1774 represented a backwater in the Atlantic World, creating staple crops for an imperial market with a labor force of predominantly bound workers.

Modern observers struggle to discern an imperial/commercial conspiracy in East Florida settlement. Official policy, both from London and St. Augustine, appeared to favor middling farmers. Very quickly, though, colonial administrators recognized the

environmental reality of East Florida for what it entailed: back-breaking work and large sums of start-up capital. Those that had initially berated the Spanish for their lack of cultivation and improvement either found themselves constructing indigo presses in an attempt to wrangle guaranteed bounty money from the crown, complaining about wayward white servants and their inability to turn a profit without slave labor, or residing in London, unable to raise the necessary funds to plant a “township” of bound laborers and staple crop agriculture on the St. Johns. At the same time that Stork met his uncertain fate among the Mediterraneans of New Smyrna, members of the East Florida Society began to question his plans in the colony. Stork had petitioned the Board of Trade for a 20,000 acre warrant to settle German Protestant in East Florida, and his trip to New Smyrna was his first stop on his survey. By May of 1769, rumblings of “hypocrisy” began to surface about Stork’s account, with others claiming that he had ‘insinuated” himself among the Society and acted “specious enough.”²² East Florida’s propagandist had barely cooled in his coffin before his adherents began to roll up their sleeves, look into the swamps along the St. Johns, listen to the alligators’ roar, and wonder what had happened to their imperial vision.

¹ Patricia C. Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida* (Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida Press, 1991), 33-34.

² Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?startX=334&sort=Author&endY=38&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&searchId=R2&docId=CW3300808066¤tPosition=4&userGroupName=txshradc2573&docLevel=FASCIMILE&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28A0%2CNone%2C14%29bernard+romans%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%28OX%2CNone%2C7%29florida%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28BA%2CNone%2C124%292NEF+Or+0LRH+Or+2NEK+Or+0LRL+Or+2NEI+Or+0LRI+Or+2NEJ+Or+0LRK+Or+2NEG+Or+0LRF+Or+2NEH+Or+0LRJ+Or+2NEM+Or+0LRN+Or+2NEL+Or+0LRM%24&inPS=true&searchType=BasicSearchForm&starY=382&scale=0.33&endX=131¤tPosition=4&workId=0204400100&relevancePageBatch=CW100807782&contentSet=ECCOArticles&callistoContentSet=ECCOArticles&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&reformatPage=N&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&scale=0.33&orientation=&lastPageIndex=290&showLOI=Yes&quickSearchTerm=stork&stwFuzzy=None&forRelevantNavigation=true&pageIndex=290 (accessed 10 October, 2011), 272.

³ Griffin, 33.

⁴ Spencer Man to John Tucker, September 2, 1768, quoted in *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (PHL), vol. 6, ed. George C. Rogers, Jr. and David R. Chesnut (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), 74.

⁵ Henry Laurens to William Stork, August 17, 1768, *PHL*, vol. 6, 73.

⁶ Henry Laurens to James Grant, October 1, 1768, *PHL*, vol. 6, 118.

⁷ Henry Laurens to James Grant, April 4, 1769, *PHL*, vol. 6, 424-426.

⁸ Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Life and Travels of John Bartram: From Lake Ontario to the River St. John* (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University Press, 1982), 291-292.

⁹ William Bartram, "Some Account of the Late Mr. John Bartram, of Pennsylvania," in *Travels and Other Writings* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1996), 580-581.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 579.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 69-251.

¹² William De Brahm, *Report of the General Survey of the Southern District of North America*, ed., Louis de Vorse, Jr. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 179-180.

¹³ Griffin, 87; and Mowalt, 77-78.

¹⁴ Romans, 197.

¹⁵ William Bartram, 85.

¹⁶ Bartram, 165-172.

¹⁷ Ibid, 186.

¹⁸ Ibid, 142 and 186.

¹⁹ Charles Loch Mowalt, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1964), 83-106; and Daniel L. Schafer, "St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784," *El Scribano*, vol. 38 (2001), 169-188.

²⁰ Romans, 66.

²¹ Ibid, 159-160

²² Reprinted in the note, *PHL*, vol. 6, 74.

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VITA

Andrew Jackson Forney was born June 19, 1980 in Fort Hood, Texas. He is the son of John Russell and Cinderella Atchley Forney. A 1998 graduate of Meade High School, Fort Meade, Maryland, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Philosophy from Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland, in 2002.

Upon graduation, he entered the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant, pursuing a career that included combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as an assignment as a troop commander in Fort Knox, Kentucky.

In September, 2010, he enrolled in graduate study at Texas Christian University. Beginning in the fall of 2012, he will teach in the Department of History at the United States Military Academy, West Point. He is a member of the United States Strategist Association and the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic.

He is married to Heather Kaleen Forney of Havre de Grace, Maryland. They have two sons, Wyatt and Reed.

ABSTRACT

“AN UNINHABITED COUNTRY”: EMPIRE AND ECOLOGY IN BRITISH EAST FLORIDA, 1763-1774

by Andrew Jackson Forney, MA, 2011
Department of History
Texas Christian University

Thesis Advisor: Gene Smith, Professor of History

This thesis argues that Britain’s new imperial ecology did not recognize the environmental reality of East Florida. The need to clear stubborn trees from the soil, drain large swamps, and expand acreage to encapsulate the meager amount of arable land favored those with large amounts of ready capital and the ability to wait on investments. This, by definition, precluded small- and medium-sized farm settlement, a risky venture in the best of times and areas. East Florida devolved into a rich man’s gambit, favoring capital accumulation through natural resource and staple crop exploitation more than goods consumption. These capitalist programs had to contend with an Indian population that recognized its new assertiveness on the peninsula and disregarded the boundary line that the colonial administration had hoped would secure the colony. Rather than creating a colony full of consumers, the British enabled a system of tenuous colonial interaction between the administration, the nascent Seminoles, and the environment.