



CHAPTER THREE

III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OF FERNANDINA BEACH

Historical Research Strategy and Methodology

The methodology for the Fernandina Beach historical context consisted of researching, compiling, and preparing a historical narrative associated with the City's history. Source materials were compiled from the Amelia Island Museum of History; Clerk of Court, Recording Department at Nassau County Courthouse; and Fernandina Beach Public Library. Research was also conducted at the Clerk of Court, Recording Department at Duval County Courthouse; Jacksonville Public Library; and the real estate division of the Department of the Army's Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers. Additional research was gathered at the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee, Florida; Map and Imagery Library at the University of Florida; P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida; St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library in St. Augustine, Florida; and Bryan-Lang Historical Library and Camden County Courthouse, both in Woodbine, Georgia. The research furnished contextual references that assisted in understanding some of the historic patterns of ownership, land use, and development in the city. Following the research, an outline and strategy were devised to prepare a historical report. In conjunction with composing the narrative, illustrations were incorporated into the text to help the reader visualize the history of the City of Fernandina Beach.

This report focuses primarily on the history associated with the historic-period standing structures in the City of Fernandina Beach, most of which date from the middle and late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, only a brief summary of the colonial period and early nineteenth century history will be included in this section.

Colonial Periods, 1565-1821

Founded in the early nineteenth century and incorporated in 1824, Fernandina Beach is one of Florida's oldest cities. The principal city of Nassau County, Fernandina Beach is located on the north end of Amelia Island, which has a colonial heritage associated with early French explorers, the First Spanish period, the British period, and the Second Spanish period. Early French explorers named the island "Isle de Mai" and Pedro Menendez built a fort there in 1567. In 1598 and 1675, Spanish missions built on the island contributed to a larger system implemented by the Spanish Crown to convert the Indians to Catholicism. In 1702, an English incursion from Charleston, South Carolina, attacked St. Augustine, but also invaded an outpost on the island and threatened the missions. Later, in 1735, when James Oglethorpe attempted to secure the St. Marys River as the southern boundary of his new colony, the Georgian scouted the island, which he named Amelia for one of King George II's daughters (Johannes 2000:3-4).

Between 1513 and 1763, Spain failed to settle permanently any area of Florida except the immediate environs of St. Augustine. Besides establishing a permanent base at the port city and a



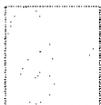
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chain of missions into the interior, the Spanish accomplished little of lasting significance. Farmers and ranchers cleared land for cattle and planted crops and fruit trees. But, the growth of English colonies to the north in the 1700s and forays by settlers and militia into Florida, destabilized Spain's nascent agricultural economy and mission system. In 1702, Governor John Moore of South Carolina attacked and burned St. Augustine. The marauders reduced the influence of Spain's mission system and the Crown's settlement policies. Gold contends that after Moore's attack "the colony lost all geographic meaning outside the port city of St. Augustine" (Gold 1969:32).

Later, in 1740, using the War of Jenkins's Ear as a pretext, James Oglethorpe led his Georgia troops into Florida. Oglethorpe captured Fort San Diego and Fort Picolata, using the former as his temporary Florida headquarters, but failed to capture St. Augustine. In 1743, he invaded Florida a second time, but failed to capture St. Augustine. After repelling the Georgia leader a second time, the Spanish improved their defensive positions. But, the threat of incursions by the English dampened further expansion of the land grant system and the nascent economy based on cattle ranching and citrus languished. Over the next two decades, Spain developed a strong defensive network in Florida and demonstrated effective diplomatic skills in playing off Native Americans against the English and French. After 1743, the English made few attempts to dislodge the Spanish Crown from Florida (Adams Bell Weaver 1985:18, 22; Sastre 1995:26-29, 32, 35; TePaske 1976:xxxix-xl).

In 1763, the Spanish Crown, for its part in backing the defeated French in the Seven Year's War, was required to surrender Florida to England. In October 1763, as one of its first official acts in the newly acquired colony, England reorganized Florida, creating east and west districts. General James Grant, a prominent British subject, was appointed governor of East Florida. Serving until 1771, Grant developed amicable relations with the Seminole Indians. His equitable policies kept the Seminoles loyal to England during the American Revolution. Grant was also responsible for improving the King's Road, which extended south from St. Augustine. The road, completed to New Smyrna in 1776, served as the principal overland route in East Florida. Its alignment through the region supporting the Nassau River and St. Marys River led to the establishment of plantations in the region (Tebeau 1971:75-77; Johannes 2000:121-123).

The English Crown issued 122 grants in 1767, the peak year for Florida grants by the royal government. East Florida real estate attracted more British investment than any other Crown province in the decade before the American Revolution. Many of the grantees were Scots who became associated with the East Florida Society of London, which, in part, contributed to the Scottish renaissance of the late eighteenth century. Perhaps the most famous of East Florida's investors was the Scottish physician Andrew Turnbull and the ill-fated colonization experiment at New Smyrna. Indeed, the British Crown conceived settlement in Florida far different than that in Georgia and South Carolina, where colonial and trustee grants had been relatively small. By contrast, in East Florida the British Crown awarded grantees large tracts of land ranging from 5,000 acres to 20,000 acres. Despite the relatively large grants, Henry Laurens of South Carolina saw little of promise in the sandy soils. Still, East Florida played an important role in England's



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North American policies, which encouraged settlers to move to the south of existing settled areas, rather than to the west. The British Crown attempted to block the movement of settlers beyond the Appalachians, where contact with Native Americans disrupted England's foreign affairs. The opening of Florida to settlers from the Carolinas and Georgia in the 1760s and 1770s briefly helped England displace some of its westward frontier pressures (Rogers 1976:479, 484, 486-487; Mowat 1943:21-26, 53-55, 57-61; Notes and Comments 1927:120-121; Harper 1958:118; Bailyn 1986:431-434, 451-452).

Still, only sixteen grants in East Florida were settled by the outbreak of the American Revolution, most of those in coastal areas and near rivers, such as Amelia Island, and in close proximity to St. Augustine and New Smyrna. William Drayton, the chief justice for East Florida who held several estates in northeast Florida, inventoried various crops on East Florida plantations, finding indigo for dyes, naval stores for pitch and turpentine, and a variety of agricultural harvests, such as corn and rice. Many investors and settlers purchased or imported black slaves, a process that led to the Africanization of the East Florida colony during the British period. The process accelerated during the second Spanish period, especially after 1808, when the importation of slaves into the United States became illegal (Landers 1999:167, 175-176; Rogers 1976:479; Mowat 1943:21-26, 53-55, 57-61; Notes and Comments 1927:120-121; Harper 1958:118; Bailyn 1986:431-434, 451-452; Siebert 1929 1:68).

References from the British period pertaining to Amelia Island associate the island with the Earl of Egmont, the son of one of the founders of Georgia. Egmont, also known as John Perceval, was famous in England for his nostalgia for a "feudal world long since vanished" (Bailyn 1986:79). Coined a "curious antiquarian and colonizer" by Harvard historian Bernard Bailyn, Egmont never intended to reside permanently on any of his overseas holdings. As an absentee landlord, he developed plantations in East Florida, Ireland, and Nova Scotia. Eventually, he claimed 65,000 acres in East Florida and over 120,000 acres in Nova Scotia (Bailyn 1986:366, 438). In 1770, William Gerard DeBrahm, England's surveyor-general for the southern district of North America, prepared a "Plan of Amelia Now Egmont Island," depicting Egmont Town and Morris's Bluff. DeBrahm assessed Amelia Island as the best of the coastal islands in British East Florida (DeVorsey 1971:125, 203).

Egmont established plantations throughout northeast Florida early in Florida's British period (1763-1784). His first plantation was Mount Royal, located on the St. Johns River near Lake George. Communication problems, poor management, and slow development by Egmont's agent, Martin Jollie, compelled the British aristocrat to abandon the St. Johns River plantation in September 1770 and move the operation to Amelia Island. In September 1768, Governor James Grant had awarded Egmont 10,000 acres on Amelia Island, essentially the entire island. Fondly referred to by Governor Grant as the "Lordship of Amelia," Egmont made plans for a town named Egmont near the mouth of the St. Marys River and a series of sixteen slave villages, each located on one-square mile tracts. He encouraged the building of log houses modeled after thirty-eight by fourteen foot dwellings built by African-Americans on the French island of Cayenne (Schafer 1982:47-48; Schafer 1984:176). Egmont had only recently launched his development of



the island in 1770, when DeBrahm prepared his "Plan of Amelia, Now Egmont Island," which depicted most of the planned development at the north end. Egmont died in December 1770, leaving much of his plan unfulfilled (Schafer 1984:172-180; Mowat 1943:70).

Lady Egmont, his widow, persisted in the development of the plantation, in part, by transferring management of the plantation to Stephen Egan, a supervisor at one of Egmont's Irish estates. On visits to Amelia Island in 1773 and 1774, respectively, Lieutenant Governor Moultrie and Frederick Mulcaster recorded fields of potatoes, 140 acres of corn and peas, 200 acres of indigo, and a herd of cattle. Plantation fields yielded over 1,000 bushels of corn in 1773 and nearly 2,100 pounds of indigo were shipped from the plantation to England in December 1774 (Schafer 1984:179-180).

William Bartram visited Amelia Island the following year. He crossed into the region using King's Ferry along the St. Marys River, and then headed east to Amelia Island. Bartram wrote of the beauty of the river, which he estimated to be ten feet deep and 100 yards wide at the ferry (Johannes 2000:121). In his *Travels*, Bartram cited another waterway at "Amelia Narrows," which Harper later interpreted as Kingsley Creek and then theorized that Bartram probably made camp at the north end of Talbot Island (Harper 1958:350). On Amelia Island, the renowned naturalist noted that "After walking through a spacious forest of live Oaks and Palms, and crossing a creek that ran through a narrow salt marsh, I and my fellow traveller arrived safe at the plantation." During his visit "Mr. Egan politely rode with me, over [a] great part of the island." Bartram commented that much "of the island consists of excellent hammocky land, which is the soil this plant [indigo] delights in, as well as cotton, corn, batatas, and almost every other esculent vegetable." Bartram also recorded evidence of prehistoric human activities, saying that "On Egmont estate, are several very large Indian tumuli, which are called Ogeechee mounts...[where] their bones [are] entombed in these heaps of earth and shells" (Schafer 1984:179-180).

One of Bartram's contemporaries, Bernard Romans found the "...water of the St. Mary's and Nassau, and all the brooks that run into them is very good, wholesome, and well tasted, the colour in the rivers is dark, as in all the American rivers of the southern district" (Braund 1999:107). In the early-1770s, along the St. Marys River, Romans believed the soil "...is not very fertile, unless it be at its very head," but along the Nassau River "is almost all very fertile." Amelia Island to Romans was "...in general sandy and hilly, but has some fertile spots on it capable of fine improvements" (Braund 1999:241).

Egmont's development of Amelia Island and development pressures in England and Scotland to settle the Crown's newly-acquired province compelled additional settlement west of the island. The British found Florida with few remaining European settlers, for more than 3,000 people left with the evacuating Spanish. Without colonists, the English government realized its plans for developing the province were threatened. Consequently, Grant and the British Crown launched a vigorous public relations and land grant program designed to encourage settlers and development. The program enjoyed some success; between 1764 and 1770, approximately



3,000,000 acres of grants were issued by the Crown in East Florida alone (Rogers 1976:479, 484, 486-487; Mowat 1943:21-26, 53-55, 57-61).

Amelia Island and the lands immediately south of the St. Marys River stood at the northeastern tip of British East Florida. Hardly one decade old at the outbreak of hostilities between patriots and British soldiers in the colonies farther north, the royal province of East Florida remained conspicuously loyal to the Crown throughout the American Revolution. East Floridians realized that the amount of money expended in the province to develop the nascent road system and defense networks by the British government greatly exceeded the taxes they paid. In need of the Crown's protection, residents of the sparsely settled region could not afford to protect themselves from Indian raids. In addition, enslaved African-American inhabitants outnumbered whites two-to-one, and an exposed coastline, vulnerable to French and Spanish warships, also demanded significant security measures. The presence of the British Army irritated many colonists in populated colonies to the north. But, in Florida their presence gave residents a sense of well-being. Indeed, many Loyalists from Charleston and Savannah fled to Florida during the conflict to avoid persecution by patriots. The population of East Florida increased from 3,000 in 1776 to nearly 17,000 by 1784 (Murdoch 1951:3; Proctor 1978:1-3).

In September 1776, after the outbreak of hostilities associated with the American Revolution, most planters north of St. Augustine asked the British government to protect their plantations from patriots to the north. Most pleas went largely unheeded, and patriots from Georgia destroyed the Egmont Plantation on Amelia Island in 1777 and several other plantations along the Nassau River and St. Mary's River. After the incursions, most planters on the mainland and along Bell's River, St. Mary's River, Nassau River, and Trout River abandoned their plantations in the late-1770s (Schafer 1984:181; Schafer 2001:213-214; (Siebert 1929 1:43).

Many loyalists from Charleston and Savannah fled to Florida during the American Revolution to avoid persecution by Patriots. The population of East Florida increased from 3,000 in 1776 to nearly 17,000 by 1784. But many of loyalists and settlers abandoned the colony in the latter year, when the British Crown returned Florida to Spain as part of its agreement outlined in the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution. The towns of St. Johns and Hillsborough, the latter near present-day Old Town Fernandina, had been hastily assembled by loyalists fleeing Charleston and Savannah in the late-1770s and early-1780s. At those towns, the evacuating British dismantled the buildings worthy of salvage and shipped them to Nassau, Providence, and other locations in the British Empire. In June 1785, to make room for the incoming Spanish authorities, former Governor Tonyn shifted his command to the Town of Hillsborough on Amelia Island, from where he sailed for England later that year. By 1785, only 450 whites and 200 slaves remained in East Florida. Within several years, much of the progress made under British rule had unraveled, and Florida's economy stagnated as the province returned to the status of an obscure Spanish outpost. The Spanish Crown began conveying property to loyal subjects, but refused to recognize the East Florida claims of most settlers and planters associated with the British era (Murdoch 1951:3; Proctor 1978:1-3; Schafer 2001:263).



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To promote settlement and spur development in East Florida, the Spanish Crown emulated the former British policies in East Florida by improving roads and awarding large land grants. In 1790, the Crown issued a royal order that opened East Florida to all English speaking settlers professing the Roman Catholic faith. Among the few requirements for land ownership leading to the establishment of a farm or plantation included evidence of financial resources and the swearing of an oath of allegiance to Spain. Contrary to official policy elsewhere in the Spanish empire, the Crown eventually relaxed some of its policies, and permitted non-Catholics to settle and receive land grants in Florida. Yet, by allowing settlers from Georgia, the Carolinas, and other states in the newly-formed United States of America to establish farms and plantations in Florida, Spanish authorities helped set the stage for unrest and rebellion in the province (Murdoch 1951:5-6; Tanner 1963:13-36; Miller 1974:1-10).

Early in his administration of Spanish East Florida, Governor Vicenete Zespedes expressed various observations and concerns about affairs along the Nassau River and St. Marys River. In November 1784, he thought it would be of "...great advantage to the royal service to send a frigate with some sloops, launches, and armed boats for guarding both the St. Marys and the St. Johns. Although the bar of the latter is shallower than that of the St. Marys, it is always better than that of St. Augustine..." (Lockey 1949:305). Zespedes stationed Lieutenant Grenier on the St. Marys River, "...where I have kept him since my arrival in this province, more as a diplomatic agent than a military officer...for I consider this post the most important one in the province. It will surely be so in the future because of deep water on the bar, an abundance of timber, the practical knowledge that the English have of the river, and their great need for timber and lumber" (Lockey 1949:305).

Later that year, Grenier reported that "The St. Marys Bar, generally so called, though its real name is Amelia Bar, is considered as one of the best and least dangerous in North America. Ships of five hundred tons burden can enter it. At the entrance there are two islands... The one on the left is called Amelia. Its soil is considered very fertile and it produces pine, cedar, and oak in abundance. Its inhabitant's number, I suppose, about twenty families... From the anchorage of Amelia to the mouth of the St. Marys River is considered a distance of one and one half miles. The river is navigable for a distance of forty miles by any ship which is able to pass the bar. Twelve miles from the mouth of this river there is a place called by the English New Town or Prince Town, which was intended to be built into a city, but the plan was not put into execution. The greatest breadth of this river must be about one thousand one hundred fifty fathoms. I estimate the number of people living on the mainland between the town of St. Johns and the St. Marys to be sixty families. Among them there are probably some of good reputations who may prove to be of great utility to our nation. But for the rest, I believe that it would be better to throw them out of the province as soon as possible. They are men without God or king, men who would only serve to destroy the public tranquility; men, in short, capable of the greatest atrocities" (Lockey 1949:307). Grenier's closing comment presaged incursions and illicit activities that rocked East Florida over the following decades.

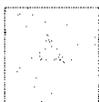


Along the west shore of Amelia Island he observed "...a passage in the interior from the St. Johns to the St. Marys where boats of four or five feet draft may pass, but it requires a very skillful pilot because of the many sand bars and small streams where, at times, the most skillful pilot may be deceived... I consider it to be a very difficult thing to keep the Americans from introducing their merchandise into this province, because, in addition to this inland passage which they know so well, there are also small waterways navigable for launches and small boats; and I am persuaded that two thousand men scattered through the province would not be able to stop their smuggling. I believe, therefore, that the best way to impede such trade would be by stationing boats and armed launches which, with skillful pilots, would be able to stop the smuggling by taking the rogues into custody or by driving them off, for they will not for sometime to come cease to infest these parts" (Lockey 1949:307-308).

Grenier provided critical estimates for navigating the Nassau River and St. Marys River. He believed that "The St. Marys is very deep in its entire course. There is only one sand bar toward the northern point of Tiger Island, where all the boats which enter must await high tide to pass. After this there are eight or nine feet of water in the shallowest parts for a distance of forty miles from its mouth. The river is not more than a pistol shot in width at the old ferry, where the king's highway of Florida and that of Georgia came together, and, although it is very deep, the trees impede navigation. From this place, it is forty miles to the post of St. Nicholas on the St. Johns. The Nassau River has a very narrow and deep channel, but any storm is likely to cause it to change. In calm weather the river is nine or ten feet deep, but it is full of sand banks (Lockey 1949:309).

Controversy and armed conflict became endemic in Spanish East Florida in the 1790s, in part, because of the Crown's restrictive business and trade climate imposed upon its Florida citizens, and, in part, because of the economic and social unrest prevailing throughout Europe associated with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. In addition, Jay's Treaty of 1795, a low-water mark in the administration of President Washington, failed to curb the British Navy's impressments of American merchantmen into its service and failed to compensate American planters for slaves kidnapped or liberated during the Revolutionary War. Dissent against Washington, the Federalist Party, and British and Spanish presence in North America was especially sharp in the South. Holding many of these beliefs, most American settlers in East Florida detested foreign interference in the domestic affairs of their mother country, and even though they were now Spanish citizens, they increasingly perceived Spain as ineffectual in its governing of East Florida (Murdoch 1951:5-6; Tanner 1963:13-36; Miller 1974:1-10).

Mary Mattair and her family were the sole occupants to remain on Amelia Island following the British evacuation. Along with her husband, Lewis Mattair, she had moved from Pensacola to St. Augustine about 1781. Two years later, Lewis Mattair died at St. Augustine, leaving Mary with two children: eight-year-old Luis and five-year-old Maria. Prior to the evacuation of East Florida by the British, Mattair received a grant from Governor Tonyn for property along a bluff on Amelia Island overlooking the Amelia River. She found the island virtually unpopulated, a



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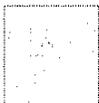
condition that had persisted since depredations by patriots in the mid-1770s (Jaccard 2000:77-78).

Following the exchange of flags in 1784, the Spanish Crown permitted Mattair to remain on the island; in exchange for her earlier British grant, the Spanish authorities awarded her 150 acres in the present-day municipal limits of Fernandina Beach and a 200-acre head rights grant called "Naranjal," also known as the Orange Grove on the mainland west of Amelia Island. Mattair's initial grant on Amelia Island became the site presently known as Old Town Fernandina. Although initially only 200 acres, Mattair's "Naranjal" property eventually included approximately 800 acres, which contributed to the early formation and development of the Mattair/Fernandez Orange Grove Plantation. Completed in 1787, the first Spanish census recorded the Mattairs as the only residents of Amelia Island; two years later, another census enumerator recorded Mary Mattair with fifteen-year-old Lewis Mattair, twelve-year-old Maria Mattair, nine pigs, three cattle, and two horses. William Youngblood worked for Mary Mattair, helping her cultivate crops (Confirmed F 30, Spanish Land Grants; WPA 1940 3:90-91; Jaccard 2000:78, 84).

In October 1790, Mary Mattair died, compelling her children to manage the plantation. Her son, Lewis, and daughter, Maria, each received one-half of the plantation and Mary Mattair's other holdings. In December 1793, Maria Mattair married Domingo Fernandez. Born in 1766 in Vigo, Galicia, Spain, Fernandez arrived in St. Augustine about 1786. He worked for the Spanish government as a harbor pilot at Amelia Island and captain of a gunboat until 1800. During the era, several Spanish governors awarded Fernandez grants on the island, in part, as rewards for his service. In 1800, Fernandez retired from the service to engage full-time as a planter. Between 1797 and 1816, Domingo Fernandez acquired several additional lands through service grants and outright purchase, and became one of the most prominent planters in the district (*East Florida Herald*, 19 September 1833; Jaccard 2000:89-90).

In March 1811, Domingo Fernandez was accused of beating to death Yare, one of his slaves. The local justice of the peace, Santiago Cashen, arrested Fernandez, embargoed his property, and launched an investigation, even though the accused enjoyed distinguished careers as both planter and gunboat captain. One slave, Bely, testified before Cashen that Yare had told him before his death that Fernandez had beat him with a stick. Bely asserted that Fernandez often permitted to him to punish recalcitrant slaves with beatings. Fernandez confirmed beating two of his slaves, Yare and Somer, on the head and backs with a rattan walking stick, an action he employed after finding both slaves idle and unwilling to work twice on the same day. In an examination of Yare's body, Dr. Francisco Sontag found the abdominal cavity "putrefied and destroyed," a condition not uncommon in other deceased slaves brought in recent overseas shipments. The physician declared that Yare's death was not caused by Fernandez's beating (Landers 1999:192-193).

Troubled by the physician's findings, East Florida's Governor Estrada continued the investigation. He eventually found fault with the proceedings because of insufficient inquiry



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about the slave's clothing, the walking stick, and the witness interview process. He placed Fernandez in jail in the Castillo de San Marcos. In the further investigation, Estrada inquired about Fernandez's providing his slaves with adequate clothing and provisions for baptism and religious services. Satisfied with Fernandez's responses, the governor acquitted Fernandez of any wrong doing in the death of Yare, but charged him with a 300-peso fine, ostensibly for court costs, and released him from prison in June 1811 (Landers 2001:193).

The marriage of Domingo Fernandez to Maria Mattair in 1793 represented one of the relatively few recorded English-Spanish unions in late eighteenth century East Florida. The marriage brought a former British subject into the inner circles of East Florida's militia. Just as importantly, the marriage combined the plantation holdings of two important families on Amelia Island and the adjacent mainland. In 1807, Lewis Mattair and Maria Fernandez received royal titles confirming their ownership of the "Naranjal." Then, in April 1820, Domingo Fernandez purchased Lewis Mattair's share of Orange Grove Plantation for \$250, thereby bringing under a single ownership one of the earliest land grants and plantations on the mainland west of Amelia Island (East Florida Herald, 19 September 1833; Jaccard 2000:89-90; WPA 1940 3:90-92).

Late in the second Spanish period, headright and service grants accounted for a large number of acres awarded to settlers and loyal subjects of Spain. Between 1815 and 1818, the Crown awarded seventy-eight headright grants, amounting to 47,496 acres, or twenty-two percent of all grants later confirmed by the U. S. Board of Land Commissioners. In contrast, service grants to veterans during the same four years amounted to 322,884 acres, which comprised more property than all the headright grants awarded during the entire second Spanish period. Eighteen individuals received most of the property, and eleven received more than 10,000 acres each during those four years. Among the recipients were Fernando Arredondo, Charles W. Clarke, and Domingo Fernandez (Hoffman 2002:269-271).

The service grants were most often associated with military or government duty. The Fernandezes and many other planters and settlers along the Nassau River and St. Marys River endured several decades of conflict and turmoil associated with American and French intrigues and attacks. In 1795, American rebels inspired by the French Revolution and disgruntled by Spanish rule were led by Richard Lang in raids against several Spanish outposts on the St. Johns River. A native of Georgia, Lang had received a land grant from the Spanish Crown in 1790, but soon grew discontented with Spain's policies. He assembled a small rebel force, and in June 1795, the marauders attacked the Spanish garrison and held the prisoners captive on Amelia Island. The insurgents captured a two-gun battery along the St. Johns River, news of which alarmed the Spanish authorities in St. Augustine and troops stationed elsewhere in northeast Florida. The raid devolved into outright plundering of plantations, which dispersed slaves and planters and weakened the political and social structure of East Florida's frontier. Assisted by American and British forces, the Spanish authorities squashed the insurrection later that year (Miller 1978:176-182; Murdoch 1951:89; Ward 1989:92; Landers 1999:81).

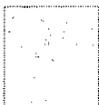


Enacted by the administration of President Thomas Jefferson, the Embargo Act of 1807 had a chilling effect on shipping in the United States and prompted the organization of the town of Fernandina, the northernmost port in Spanish East Florida. The Constitutional prohibition on the importation of slaves into the United States after 1808 and the Nonintercourse Act of 1809 eventually moved Fernandina ahead of St. Augustine as the preferred port of entry in East Florida. Growth prompted the Crown's officials to act. In 1810, Governor Enrique White named the town Fernandina and ordered surveyor-general George I.F. Clarke to survey a town plan, which was completed in a classical Spanish grid form in 1811. An illicit trade in prohibited items increased tensions with Georgians to the north, especially at Savannah. The transshipment of goods also irritated President James Madison and later President James Monroe, especially as enterprising shippers forged alliances in Spanish Florida and with merchants at the Town of St. Marys in Georgia, efforts that essentially contravened American trade restrictions (Coker and Watson 1986:274-275; Ward 1989:160).

The St. Marys River served as an international border between the United States and Spanish East Florida during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Described by historian Susan Parker as an "Anglo suburb" of St. Marys and southeast Georgia, the region lying immediately south of the St. Marys River supported some of East Florida's most fertile soils, abundant forests, and wealthiest plantations. Navigable inland for approximately forty miles, the St. Marys River connected to the Amelia River to form Cumberland Sound at the northern tip of Amelia Island. Approximately sixty settlers established plantations along the mainland region formed by these rivers. Generally, Georgians and other southerners moved across the St. Marys River without interference from Spanish patrols. Marauding Indians and Georgians found the plantations easy targets. Referring to their cultural differences and the settlers' movements across the St. Marys River, one Spanish official described the people inhabiting this region as men "without God or king" (Lockey 1949:307; Landers 1999:70-72).

Samuel Harrison, a prominent planter on Amelia Island, maintained a home at Old Town Fernandina. A captain in the South Carolina loyalist militia who moved from Beaufort, South Carolina to Amelia Island during the English period, Harrison was among the thousands of loyal British subjects who fled from patriot officials and militia after the evacuation of Charleston and Savannah in 1782. In the 1790s, Harrison owned seven slaves and acquired "Harrison's Old Fields" and Seymour's Point from the Spanish Crown. Later, between the 1820s and 1840s Harrison signed several memorials to the Territorial Council, Congress, and governing officials regarding various affairs and improvements in northeast Florida. He moved easily between his town home at Fernandina and his island and mainland plantations, which contained extensive fields, a road, and buildings (Confirmed H 16 Spanish Land Grants; WPA 1940 3:215-218; Siebert 1929 2:376; Carter 1959 23:295, 479, 600).

About 1801, James and Susannah Cashen began developing Plum Orchard Plantation, a 700-acre tract on the west side of Amelia Island. Earlier, Indians had driven the Cashens from their St. Johns River plantation and they found Samuel Russell of Amelia Island willing to sell the Plum Orchard Plantation that he had cultivated since 1796. In 1803, when Juan Purcell surveyed the

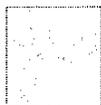


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Cashen's property, fields and buildings sprinkled the landscaped bounded by St. Patrick Creek and the Amelia River. By 1812, James Cashen had become the second-wealthiest man on Amelia Island, served as Fernandina's judge magistrate and captain of the town's militia. His "town" home faced the parish grounds on the north side of the plaza in Fernandina. Closely tied to British commercial interests, the Cashens resided in Fernandina and operated several plantations on Amelia Island that were destroyed during the Patriot War. In September 1812, patriot rebels invaded Amelia Island from the west several miles south of Fernandina. Their incursion took them onto the island at Cashen's Erin Hall Plantation and near his Plum Orchard property. Before dawn, the patriots broke into his plantation home, seized Cashen as a hostage, looted the home, and hunted down his thirty-six slaves (Confirmed C 20 Spanish Land Grants; WPA 1940 2:263-264; Cusick 2003:105, 114, 124, 282).

The nascent, stable economy of East Florida, promoted, in part, by the growth of numerous plantations, was disrupted in 1812 by the United States government, which instigated the so-called Patriot War of 1812. The conflict drew its roots, in part, to President James Madison, who had successfully seized Spanish territory between the Perdido River and the Mississippi River from Spain in 1810. In 1811, Madison appointed General George Matthews, a former governor of Georgia, as a commissioner to confer with Spanish authorities about their temporary cession of Florida to the United States. Madison authorized the support of federal troops, should the need arise. Matthews exceeded his authority and launched a campaign of "armed diplomacy" using his troops bolstered by frontiersmen and adventurers in what became known as a Patriot army. In March 1812, with the support of federal gunboats, Matthews attacked Fernandina, invaded Amelia Island, and then moved into the interior. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Adams Smith, 276 federal soldiers landed on the island on 18 March 1812, and by July 1812 occupied bivouacs at Davis Creek, Fernandina, Hollingsworth's Plantation near Cowford on the St. Johns River, Pass Navarro near St. Augustine, and Picolata. Demands associated with the War of 1812 and political pressures at the national level forced a recall of the troops, who retreated from their outposts and evacuated Amelia Island in May 1813. Following the evacuation of the federal troops, Matthews's irregular forces were compelled to retreat. The raid and destruction at Amelia Island disrupted Fernandina's nascent port operations and persuaded the prominent firm of Arredondo & Son to relocate their slave importation business from Fernandina to Havana. Still, most planters defended their property and supported Spain. Among others, James Cashen and Domingo Fernandez assisted in the defense of the colony and the recapture of Fernandina. In April 1813, the patriots withdrew from Florida, burning plantations along the St. Johns River in the wake of their retreat. In June 1813, a census of Fernandina inventoried 428 free whites and 861 enslaved African-American (Landers 2001:178, 340; Alexander 1978:283, 285, 295-296; Davis 1930:1; Cusick 2003:1-5, 233-235, 276-277; WPA 1940 3:81).

Unrest persisted in the departure of the patriots. Buckner Harris, apparently a self-styled general of the patriots' militia, maintained a company of armed men with headquarters on the Nassau River and St. Marys River from which he threatened to burn the properties of patriots seeking amnesty from Spain and attack Spanish mail boats. Residents had only begun to rebuild stores and plantations, when in 1817 an invasion force of fifty-four men recruited by Gregor



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MacGregor, a Scottish adventurer, assaulted Amelia Island. In June 1817, MacGregor's men marched through the marshes into Fernandina, which the Spanish surrendered. In September, after MacGregor became discouraged with events and retreated, Jared Irwin assumed command, and some residents again fled the island for St. Marys and St. Augustine. Later that month, Irwin defeated a Spanish attack launched from gunboats and McClure's Hill. But, within a few weeks, Irwin yielded his authority to Luis Aury, a Mexican privateer and self-style "Brigadier of the Mexican Government and Generalissimo of the Floridas," who occupied Fernandina with a force comprised mainly of pirates. A former MacGregor associate, Aury used Amelia Island as a base to attack Spanish shipping and barter in slave contraband. These events caused Georgia settlers and the United States government to become anxious about the uncertain future of the island. Consequently, after considerable debate in the U. S. Congress, federal forces were dispatched. On 23 December 1817, 250 federal troops led by Major James Bankhead, 1st Battalion Artillery of the U.S. Army, occupied Amelia Island to help restore order. Bankhead's forces held the island until Spain surrendered Florida to the United States in 1821 (Cusick 2003:270; Lowe 1966:18-30; Carter 1835-1962 22:20; Bowman 1975a:295; Jaccard 2000:124-125, 127-130).

In the early nineteenth century, the United States sought to acquire Florida from Spain. The largely undeveloped area tempted the expansionist government and private land speculators to lobby in Washington for its acquisition. Over the years, Florida had presented the federal government with numerous problems. The area provided a haven for runaway slaves and Seminole Indians, who became involved in armed conflicts with settlers residing in Georgia and Alabama. Florida provided a setting for contraband trade and slave smuggling. Amelia Island, especially, with its close proximity to Georgia and a deepwater port, was a center of this activity. Due to its strategic geographic location, Florida was perceived by the government to pose a threat to national security. The area could serve as a base for attacks against the United States if acquired by a foreign power, particularly England. When Andrew Jackson invaded Florida during the First Seminole Indian War (1815-1818), it became clear that Spain no longer could hold or control Florida. The military incidents on Amelia Island in 1812 and 1817 only served to disrupt negotiations between Spain and the United States over acquisition of Florida. In 1819, mounting pressure from the United States forced the signing of the Adams-Onis Treaty, which transferred power in 1821 (Dovell 1952 1:169-170).

Territorial and Statehood Periods, 1821-1860

In 1821, the United States government combined the former provinces of East Florida and West Florida into a single jurisdiction that became the Territory of Florida. The Congress confirmed Andrew Jackson as military governor, who initiated the Americanization of the territory. He named Tallahassee the seat of territorial government and provided for county courts and trials by jury. Although St. Augustine lost its political influence as capital of the province of East Florida, it became the seat of government for St. Johns County. Using the Suwannee River as the dividing line, Jackson and the Territorial Legislature created Escambia County out of the former West Florida province and St. Johns County out of the former East Florida province. The first



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territorial census in 1825 enumerated 5,077 residents in East Florida (WPA 1936; Tebeau 1971:134).

Initially, the legal affairs of Amelia Island and the adjacent mainland were administered through St. Johns County. The expansive county jurisdiction rapidly diminished in size. In 1823, the Territorial Council created Duval County, which initially stretched between the St. Marys River, the Suwannee River, and the Gulf of Mexico. Then, in 1824, the council created Nassau County, which occupied a small region at the northeast corner of the territory. Fernandina became the seat of government for Nassau County and the territorial legislature incorporated the town in December 1824. Small alterations to the county's jurisdictional boundaries occurred in 1828, 1844, 1859, 1861, and 1911, but largely left the early-nineteenth-century configuration of Nassau County intact (WPA 1936; Johannes 2000:27).

In the 1820s, the federal government initiated the process of surveying the public lands and reviewing private claims throughout Florida. Surveying began in Tallahassee in 1824, and public land offices initiated sales at the territorial capital in 1825 and from St. Augustine in 1826. Surveyors identified Spanish land grants and existing private claims, laid out range and township lines, then filled in those areas with section lines and numbered government lots. Surveyed in the 1830s and 1840s, Amelia Island and mainland Nassau County presented several challenges to the surveying officials. Much of the difficulty lies in the irregular nature of the land grants, many of which had been poorly surveyed and now possessed ill-defined corners and boundaries. The boundaries of some grants were further confounded by the effects of the ocean, rivers, and sounds on the land mass and small supporting waterways and creeks. Thomas Washington, a contract surveyor hired by the surveyor-general's office in Tallahassee, surveyed Amelia Island in 1831. The surveyor-general's office approved preliminary plats of the northwest end of the island in 1831 and 1849. The survey activities confirmed that much of the north end of the island had been in private claims before the United States acquired Florida. Many of those properties were held by the Fernandez family (Figure 3-1) (Putnam 1849; Knetsch 2002).

In 1822, Congress appointed a board of land commissioners, who reviewed and either confirmed or rejected private claims in Florida. A process that often included translating Spanish documents, obtaining old surveys from archives, and deposing witnesses, the reviewing of claims slowed the public survey and land sales by the state and federal governments. Still, by the end of 1825, the East Florida commissioners had confirmed 325 claims and rejected sixty-one others. The land commissioners confirmed most of the private claims on Amelia Island and the adjacent mainland in the 1820s. The Congress furnished final adjudication for eighty-eight other claims that consisted of 3,000 or more acres. Several large grants, including those claimed by John Forbes and F. M. Arredondo, were settled in the 1830s (Tebeau 1971:123-124).

Fernandina began a slow decline during this era, in part, because of the founding of Jacksonville, which eventually became northeast Florida's gateway city. Initially named Cowford, the new village soon became a town and then a city, luring many settlers and



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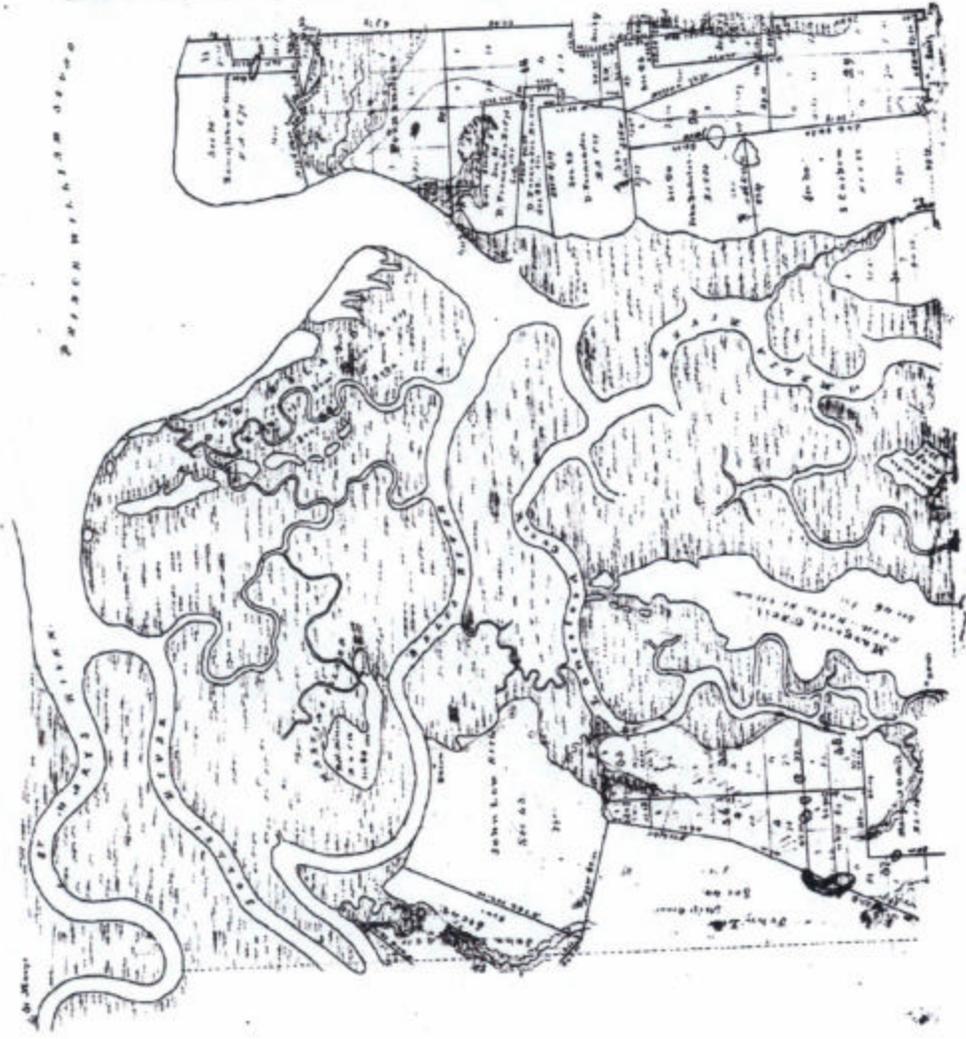
Map Section

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Method of the survey and any other remarks on the survey of the boundary of the tract of land shown on this map. The survey was made by the late John L. Smith, Jr. in the year 1849. The survey was made by the late John L. Smith, Jr. in the year 1849. The survey was made by the late John L. Smith, Jr. in the year 1849.



Township 3 North, Range 28 East, 1849
Showing northwest Amelia Island
Putnam 1849

Figure: 3-1
Project No.: BAJ0701088.01
Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007

The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida
Figure 3-1

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entrepreneurs. One of the principle developers of Jacksonville, Isaiah D. Hart was the son of a pioneer and settler of the St. Marys River, and the namesake for the Hart's Road that ran through the central part of Nassau County. Hart abandoned his family's Nassau County home place to participate in the growth of the new town. Rising in political prominence, he served Duval County as a senator on the Legislative Council between 1837 and 1845. Although growth languished at Fernandina, the significance of the waterway supporting the town and nearby St. Marys prompted the construction of a lighthouse on Amelia Island. To the north, the United States government had built a lighthouse on Cumberland Island in 1820. In the 1830s, the entrance's channel shifted southward, causing the lighthouse to lose much of its effectiveness as an aid to navigation, and prompting its relocation to Amelia Island. In November 1837, Archibald Clark, the customs collector at St. Marys, Georgia, was directed to select and purchase a site for the new lighthouse on the island. Clark chose the highest point on the island on a bluff nearly sixty feet above sea level overlooking Egan's Creek east of Fernandina. About two miles south of St. Marys Entrance and one-half mile from the Atlantic Ocean, the site was the highest point of land and the most inland for any of Florida's territorial-period lighthouses. In April 1838, Clark executed a deed for six acres with Mary Fernandez for the lighthouse site. In late-1838, work crews dismantled the existing structure on Cumberland Island and completed rebuilding the lighthouse on Amelia Island on 4 March 1839 (ORB 52, p. 403, Nassau County Courthouse; Taylor 1995:243-245).

Fernandina made few advances during the 1830s and 1840s. The federal government had established a post office in Fernandina in September 1821 and during the decade Fernandina became the seat of government for Nassau County. Political change and demands for a more centralized location on the mainland compelled the board of county commissioners to relocate the courthouse and seat of government to the village of Nassau in the early 1830s. The federal government organized a post office at Nassau in May 1835, but discontinued it in 1839, an indication that the new county seat experienced little growth and had its own political challenges. In 1839, fire consumed the new courthouse, destroying land title instruments and other legal documents. That year, Isaiah Hart contracted to build a road between Jacksonville and the St. Marys River, an alignment known as Hart's Road, which improved access through central Nassau County. But, at Fernandina, evidence of further decline included the federal government closing the post office on 23 May 1844 (Bradbury and Hallock 1962:28, 57; Johannes 2000:27, 185, 333).

On September 3, 1833, Domingo Fernandez died, bringing to a close an important link between Spanish colonial and antebellum history on Amelia Island. His family buried his body and installed a grave marker in a family cemetery located in the northernmost of the Fernandez's grants. In 1803, when Juan Purcell surveyed the 150-acre grant for Fernandez, it already had well developed field system adjacent to the Amelia River, bracketed by a *bosque* and *sacatal*. Known as the Fernandez Reserve (Figure 3-2), the cemetery and accompanying park is among Fernandina Beach's oldest historic sites and is one of the few tangible reminders of the Fernandez's extensive holdings and activities on Amelia Island and Nassau County.



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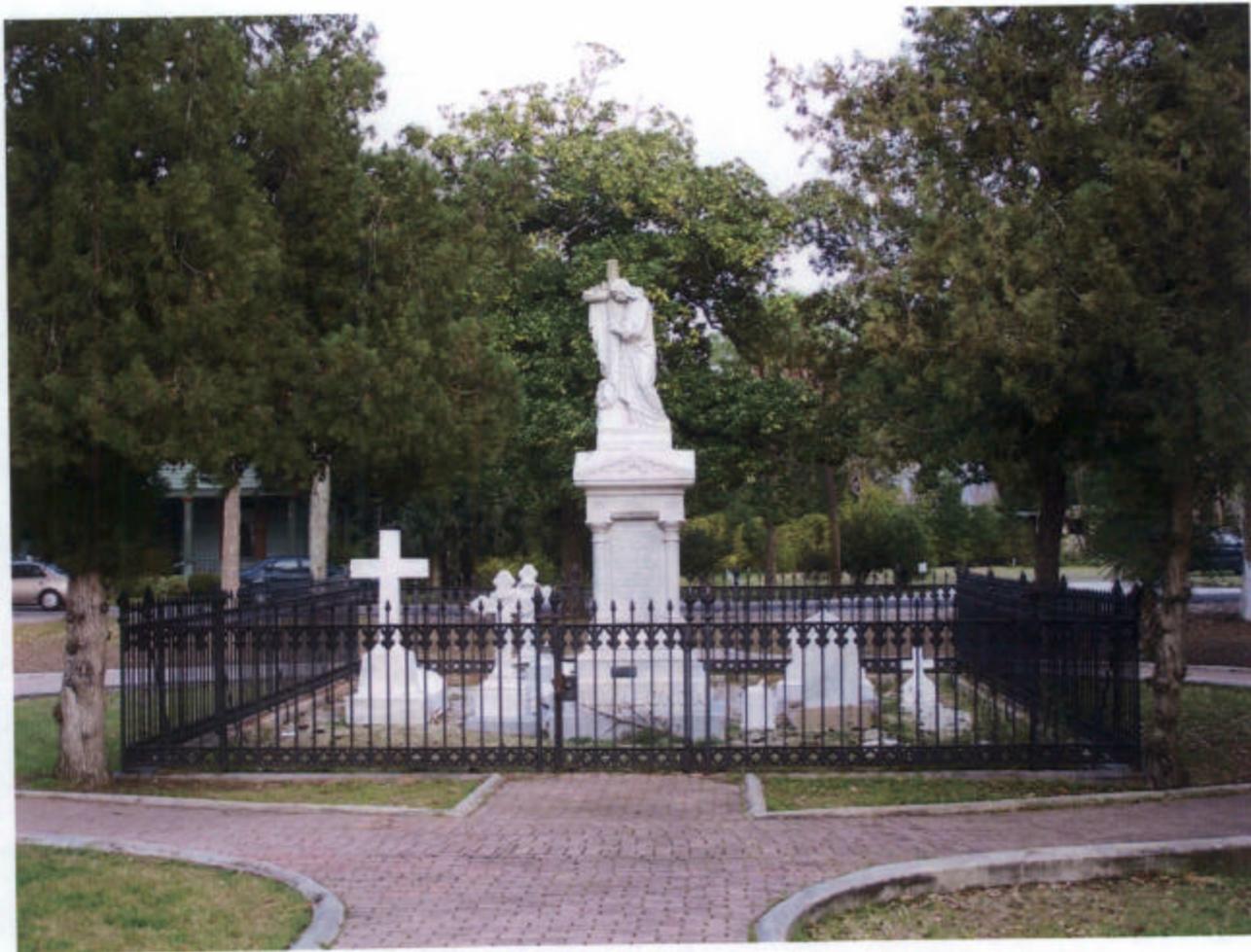
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3-15



Fernandez-Villalonga Cemetery
Broome, Calhoun, 4th, and 5th Streets



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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-2

Figure: 3-2

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

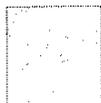
Date: April 2007

Lethargic growth in Fernandina and Nassau County may be attributed, in part, to incomplete surveys of private claims and public lands, forestalling their sale and development. In 1841, the general land office received correspondence from George Cole who recommended that the government make no land sales of public lands in or around Fernandina "...as it may be for some purposes a very important point for the use of the Government" (Carter 1962 26:257-258). Earlier that year, the Army's chief of engineers wrote to John Bell, the U. S. secretary of war, that accurate surveys around Fernandina and on Amelia Island and even a precise location for the "...old Spanish Fort at Fernandina called Fort San Carlos" made impossible "...the information necessary to an accurate designation of the tract that should be reserved" for government purposes. Most official surveys and maps of the county from the surveyor general's office were not made available until the late-1840s (Carter 1962 26:322-323, 326, 922).

The relocation of the seat of government in Nassau County coincided with the era of the Second Seminole War, which began in December 1835, causing panic and alarm throughout the peninsula. The warfare, which persisted between 1835 and 1842, raged throughout much of the territory, but was particularly brutal in Florida's north-central counties. Bloody engagements took place from Jacksonville to the Suwannee River, and well into the Everglades. Frontier settlements were especially vulnerable to Indian raids. Many plantations were abandoned as settlers withdrew to fortified areas. Far removed from the center of battles and Seminole incursions, Fernandina provided a safe haven for planters forced to abandon their lands. Many black slaves fled plantation life to join the Seminoles. General Thomas Jesup later declared that it was not a Seminole war, but instead a "Negro war" with one historian estimating that nearly 1,000 former slaves fought with the Indians. Jesup believed that many former slaves often fought better than the Seminoles. By January 1838, federal troops had broken the organized resistance of the Indians, but, amid continued sporadic violence, the war sputtered to a fitful end four years later. Peace of sorts came in 1842, when nearly 4,000 Seminoles were shipped west to Oklahoma Territory, and most of the tribe remaining in Florida moved south to the Everglades (Rivers 2000:13; Mahon 1967:150-151; Dovell 1952 1:418).

In 1845, three years after the close of the Seminole war, Florida was admitted to the Union as a southern slave state. Tallahassee became the state capitol and sent to Congress its first senators, David Levy Yulee and James D. Westcott. Yulee's role in gaining statehood brought together planters near Tallahassee with business interests in northeast Florida who sought railroads. While desiring a railroad, some residents in the former East Florida sought division of the territory into two jurisdictions, rather than one single state. One of Yulee's hard-fought political victories, statehood, prevented potential meddling in local affairs by national authorities, but brought little hope of a revitalized economy. Amelia Island, Fernandina, and Nassau County remained agricultural, rural, and largely undeveloped. Slaves represented between thirty and fifty percent of the county's population between 1830 and 1850, but few planters held more than ten slaves (Hilliard 1984:31-37).

The diary of James Gignilliant Cooper provides a glimpse into the daily activities of a local planter on Amelia Island and Nassau County. In December 1857, he hired three of his slaves to



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Captain Simpson for \$22 per month. On 10 April 1858, Copper permitted the slaves to plant their own crops, but then whipped Henry and Clarissa in July 1858 for "rioting" and stealing watermelons. His slave, Stephen, received a whipping later that month for letting the cows and calves into the same pasture. In December 1859, he tried to lease another slave to a neighbor, Horace Vaughn (Smith 1973:75).

On the heels of the Seminole war, the federal government initiated a new strategic plan to defend America's coast. Possessing a coastline amounting to nearly 1,300 miles, Florida attracted the attention of military planners who identified sites at Cumberland Sound, Escambia Bay, and Key West as strategic points. Jefferson Davis, the secretary of war under President Franklin Pierce, played an instrumental role in developing the nation's defenses, especially in the South. A site at the northwest tip of Amelia Island was acquired by the federal government in 1850 for the site of Fort Clinch, an installation named for Duncan Clinch, an Army general who commanded troops in Florida during the Second Seminole War. Fort Clinch displayed thick, high walls assembled with Savannah Grey bricks and common red bricks, but remained inadequately defended in 1861. That year, when Union forces seized the fort from Confederates, they found only thirty-two guns, most outmoded and improperly mounted (Tebeau 1971:208-209; Johannes 2000:27, 30).

Perhaps no activity promoted more growth on Amelia Island, Nassau County, and the State of Florida between the Second Seminole War and the Civil War than the construction of the Florida Railroad. The transportation company was organized in January 1853 with a capital stock of \$1,000,000 by the prominent planter and politician David Levy Yulee (Figure 3-3). Yulee's co-incorporators consisted of George W. Call, A. H. Cole, Phillip Dell, Joseph Finegan, and Isaac Bronson, the latter a judge. One of Florida's territorial representatives in the federal Congress and later a U. S. Senator (1845-1851, 1855-1861), Yulee played a pivotal role in Florida's early railroad history and internal improvement programs. As a U. S. Senator of one of the country's least populated states, Yulee was among the most influential men in Florida. In the early-1850s, he guided the Internal Improvement Act through the Florida Legislature, which served his economic interests and helped him accomplish a grand vision of developing a cross-state transportation network. The Act permitted rail companies to defray some of their construction costs by issuing bonds amounting to \$10,000 per mile of track. Established in 1854, the act created a fund and a board of trustees, comprised of the governor, treasurer, attorney-general, and registrar of state lands. Bonds were issued after a company had graded and furnished ties for a ten-mile section. Additional securities could be issued for bridges, rolling stock, and trestles. A company had only to construct its roadbed along an alignment set out in conjunction with the state engineer and conform to a five-foot gauge roadbed with at least sixty-pound rails. The subsidy encouraged some construction and represented a significant step in setting a precedent for future assistance (Johnson 1969:293; Pettengill 1952:20; Stover 1955:32).

Following the survey, the railroad contracted with several companies, including Finegan & Company, McDowell & Callahan, and William Phelan, to cut and grade the alignment, develop



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David Levy Yulee, c. 1855
White 1909:425



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-3

Figure: 3-3

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

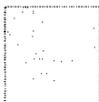
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Date: April 2007

the roadbed, and construct the tracks. Following the trend of most railroad companies during the antebellum period, the contractors relied heavily upon slaves to build the roadbed and tracks, often negotiating with planters along the alignment and elsewhere in Florida for the workforce. Not without controversy or delay, construction of the railroad began in 1855 in Fernandina, but soon Yulee and the company encountered financial difficulties. He turned to Edward N. Dickerson and other northern investors who required Yulee to provide them with over one-half of the capital stock of the Florida Railroad Company in exchange for sufficient capital to complete the project. In 1856, he mortgaged the company to James Souther and John McRae for \$1,500,000 to help finance construction of the tracks. As laid out by engineer Smith and constructed, in part, by Finegan & Company, McDowell & Callahan, and Mr. Phelan, the company completed the 155-mile route into Cedar Keys on 1 March 1861. To support its western terminus, the company built on Way Key a depot, warehouse, and wharf (Prince 1966:73; Pettengill 1952:21; Johnson 1965:74-108; Bradbury and Hallock 1962:28; Johannes 2000:30; Archibald Abstract Book Entry #2340 Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, FL).

Yulee's involvement in state politics, the railroad, and Fernandina brought him into contact with various people in Duval and Nassau Counties, including the heirs of the Fernandezes and future leaders of Florida's Confederate government. His railroad's eastern terminus and headquarters radiated across the former lands of Maria Fernandez, who had operated her plantations on Amelia Island and Nassau County's mainland following the death of her husband in 1833. In November 1842, she prepared a will that bequeathed the holdings to her daughters and their respective husbands and children, the Stewart and Villalonga families, respectively. Following her death in 1845, trustees George Stewart and John Villalonga assumed the administration of her estate. In 1851, Stewart and Villalonga conveyed for \$10,800 most of the largest tracts and parcels of the Fernandez estate, including Louisa Plantation and Pine Island, to the partnership of Bellechase & Finegan located at Jacksonville, Florida (Deed Record D, p. 208, 239-242, 273, Clerk of Court Nassau County Courthouse).

Established in the 1840s, Bellechase & Finegan was organized by John D. Bellechase and Joseph Finegan. By the mid-1850s, Finegan had ended his association with Bellechase, relocated to Fernandina, and organized Finegan & Company, which helped to build the Florida Railroad. Finegan later achieved some stature as a political and military figure. In 1861, he represented Nassau County in Florida's secession convention. Serving as a brigadier general, Finegan commanded East Florida's Confederate troops in the closing years of the Civil War, and defeated the Federal forces at the Battle of Olustee in February 1864. Finegan represented Duval County in the Florida Senate in the mid-1860s. Bellechase & Finegan briefly held the former Fernandez properties before selling the holdings to George and Sarah Law of New York City in September 1851. In November 1853, the Laws conveyed most of those holdings to Yulee who conveyed some of the former Fernandez properties to the railroad company in September 1855. On that property, the railroad company laid out New Town Fernandina, a town plan with a series of rectilinear blocks that radiated back from the Amelia River (Deed Record D, p. 208, 239-242, 273, 277, Deed Record E, p. 1, 63, Clerk of Court Nassau County Courthouse; Pettengill 1952:20-21; Jaccard 2000:144; Johannes 2000:30, 84, 92).



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An ocean-to-river subdivision, the town plan (Figure 3-4) provided hundreds of blocks for development arranged in a conventional rectilinear plan. To maximize the available real estate, offer attractive home and building sites, and promote land sales, Yulee designed the lots with the narrow profile of each lot facing the accompanying street. The plan used Centre Street as its focal point supplemented by railroad tracks and a wharf out from which radiated the blocks, lots, and streets. To the south of Centre Street, street designations reflected the alphabetized names of trees, that is, Ash, Beech, Cedar, Date, and Elm. To the north of Centre, street names reflected prominent surnames and place names then in vogue in Florida and southern history, again reflecting an alphabetized order beginning with Alachua, Broome, Calhoun, Dade, and Escambia. Streets radiating in north-south fashion carried numeric designations beginning with 1st Street, with the exception of Front Street, which ran parallel along the banks of the Amelia River. Designed to accommodate commercial buildings, the smallest lots were adjacent to the Amelia River. The smallest lots measuring 25' by 100' radiated west of 4th Street; between 4th Street and 6th Street lots measured 50' by 100'; between 6th Street and 11th Street lots measured 100 feet square; and east of 15th Street were largest lots measuring 333' square. Containing the Fernandez Reserve, only block twenty-one deviated from the overall plan with the central part of the block reserved and lots provided along Broome Street and Calhoun Street. The plan provided an eighty-foot right-of-way for Centre Street and a sixty-foot right-of-way for all other streets. Large undivided blocks to accommodate industrial activities radiated south of Centre Street. Eleven blocks east of the riverfront radiated Central Park, a green space that occupied a sixteen block area bracketed by residential and larger farm blocks. In 1857, to help promote sales and assist potential investors with a visual reference of the new town, Yulee and the Florida Railroad Company published a *Map of Fernandina, Amelia Island, Florida*, through Henry Seibert & Bro of Warren, New York (Seibert 1857).

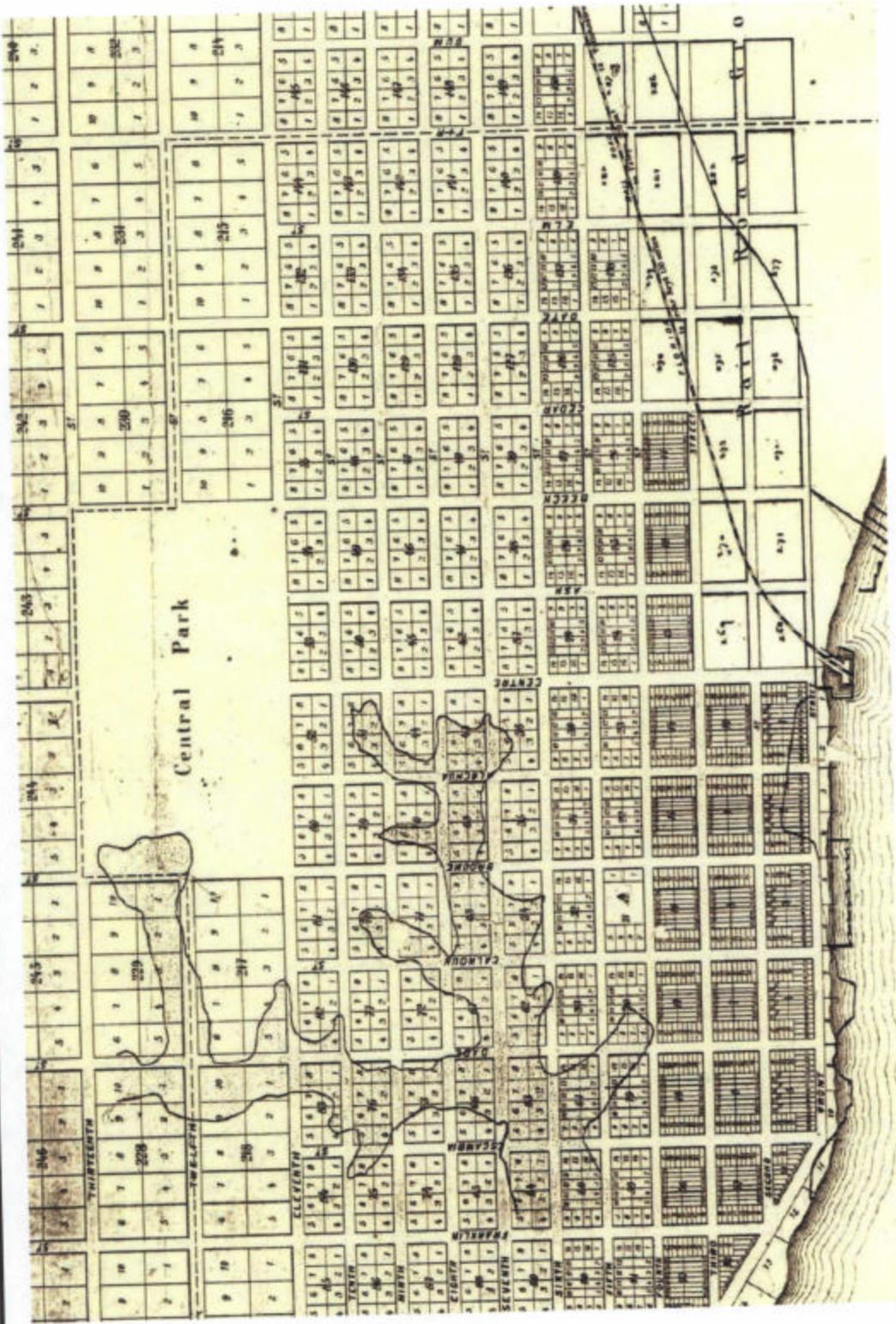
In selecting Amelia Island and developing Fernandina to anchor an ocean-to-gulf railroad, Yulee and his partners masterfully sidestepped potential political wrangling and land disputes at Jacksonville and St. Augustine. The island afforded one of the best deep water ports in the South. Wetlands south of Old Town Fernandina prevented the company from beginning the railroad at the decades-old town site, so the officers selected the new location about one mile south at the former Fernandez plantation. Located at the eastern terminus of the Florida Railroad, the new town of Fernandina created by Yulee ushered in an era of transportation and commercial activities on a decades-old plantation site. Near the foot of what became Centre Street, the company established its headquarters and railhead, and built a depot and dock system. The federal government approved the opening of a post office in the village on 11 May 1855. Not without controversy and delay, construction of the railroad began in 1855 in Fernandina and the 155-mile route was completed in March 1861. The company completed the ten-mile stretch of tracks between Fernandina and Lofton on 1 August 1856. The twenty-mile segment between Lofton and Crawford was officially recorded as completed on 1 November 1856; tracks reached Fiftone in Duval County on 1 August 1857; and the rails were built into Gainesville in February 1859. Months later, the tracks of the newly-organized Florida, Atlantic and Gulf Central Railroad out of Jacksonville crossed the Florida Railroad tracks at Baldwin, making the village of



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Town Plan of Fernandina, 1857
Seibert 1857

The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-4

Figure: 3-4

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

Baldwin an early Florida railroad center. Extending between the port towns of Fernandina and Cedar Key, the Florida Railroad became the state's most significant transportation artery of the antebellum period. The company purchased rights-of-way for its mainline, but much of its other holdings came from alternating sections granted to the company by the state and federal government. In total, the Florida Railroad eventually received about 790,000 acres from the government for its track construction (Prince 1969:73; Pettengill 1952:21; Johnson 1965:292-294; Bradbury and Hallock 1962:28; Johannes 2000:30).

Yulee's railroad supported Florida's plantation system and established a new shipping network between the Atlantic seaboard and Gulf of Mexico. Against the cries of the critics, Yulee insisted that although cargoes hauled by his railroad would be handled additional times at the port towns, shipping companies would experience fewer losses and improved profits by avoiding the journey around the treacherous Straits of Florida. Yulee also claimed improved safety for travelers, and fewer lives lost at sea due to storms and tortuous straits. A significant enterprise in north central Florida, Yulee's railroad supported existing plantations, opened new areas, and created along its path many new villages and towns, including Archer, Baldwin, Bronson, Gainesville, and Waldo (Pettengill 1952:21-22; Johnson 1965:292-294; Johannes 2000:30).

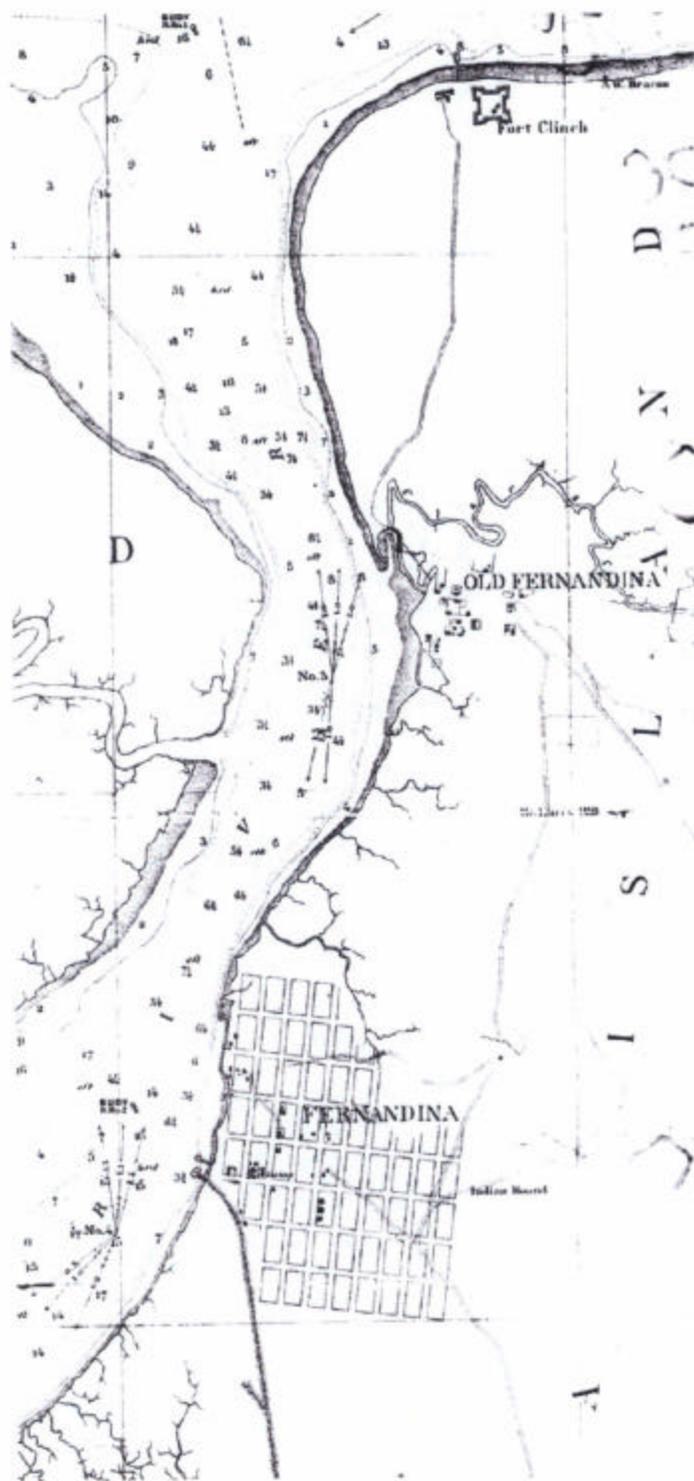
Even as trains began servicing Fernandina, concerns over improved shipping lanes and channels into Fernandina's harbor compelled the first federal surveys of the region. Yulee served as a primary impetus for the surveys. As a U. S. Senator, he possessed considerable influence over the activities of federal agencies, such as the U. S. Coast Survey. After the coast survey conducted examinations of the region's waterways, a map was published in 1857 and updated in 1862. (Figure 3-5) Surveying Fernandina harbor, portions of the Amelia River and St. Marys River, and part of the adjacent mainland, engineers depicted the spatial arrangements between Fort Clinch, Old Town, and Fernandina. In addition, the federal map provides one of the earliest accurate views of Fernandina's built fabric in its opening decade of development. Approximately forty buildings sprinkled the landscape with two docks projecting into the Amelia River. Several buildings still stand from the 1850s, including the Lessene-Angel House at 415 Centre Street, Florida House Inn at 24 South 3rd Street, the dwelling at 112 North 6th Street, and First Presbyterian Church at 21 North 6th Street (Figure 3-6). Development at Fernandina persisted at a brisk pace until 1861, when the Civil War interrupted the plans of the Florida Railroad and a few prospective homeowners and businessmen to construct still more buildings and provided a brief interlude after which development resumed (Bache 1862).

Civil War, Reconstruction, and Late Nineteenth Century Periods, 1861-1899

The third state to secede from the Union, Florida joined the Confederate States of America in January 1861. Within months of that action, the Confederate government requested that Florida supply 5,000 troops. Hundreds of male residents abandoned their farms to join the army. Many left for Tennessee and Virginia, leaving the rural economy almost immediately bankrupt and the territory relatively undefended. Federal steamships patrolled the coastline, and Navy gunboats



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Map of Fernandina, Old Town, and Fort Clinch, 1857
USCS 1857

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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida
Figure 3-5

Figure: 3-5
Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01
Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007



8NA00101
First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach
Gothic Revival Style
Built 1860
21 North 6th Street



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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-6

Figure: 3-6

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

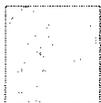
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sailed into Cumberland Sound to seize Amelia Island, Cumberland Island, and Fort Clinch. Amelia Island, Fernandina, and the fort were occupied by Federal troops with little resistance on 4 March 1862. Union forces directed cannon fire on a train filled with residents and a few Confederate soldiers evacuating the island on the Florida Railroad. Two months earlier, Union forces had captured the western terminus of the Florida Railroad at Cedar Keys. Because the Florida Railroad was closed between Fernandina and Baldwin during the war only the inland sections of the tracks were available to Confederate forces, which used the route with limited success. Union forces used Fernandina as a base of operations for expeditions along Florida's east coast and remained under federal control until the end of the conflict. The Amelia River served as a buffer zone between Union forces occupying the island and Confederate troops and raiders on Nassau County's mainland. The arrival of Union forces hampered Confederate plans. In February 1862, an officer in the 24th Mississippi Infantry noted that communications between Confederate commanders in Florida were infrequent, in part, because "the Lincolmites have taken possession of the St. John's and St. Mary's Rivers" (Hewett 1996 45:706; Staudenraus 1962:63; Proctor 1963:347; Prince 1969:74; Cowles 1891-1895).

Amelia Island served as a center of Union operations under the purview of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Patrol ships periodically entered the sounds, docked at Fernandina, and sailed the Nassau River, St. Johns River, and St. Marys River. In October 1862, Rear-Admiral Samuel F. DuPont received reports of a blockade runner in the area bearing cotton and turpentine. The Holmes's Mill was the scene of repeated Union raids. In November 1862, Lieutenant Snell of the *U.S.S. Hale* captured on Lofton Creek the Confederate pilot boat *Wave*, which was loaded with cotton and turpentine that the crew had set on fire before fleeing the boat. Formerly the *Friend*, the *Wave* was well-known to Union naval forces as a boat generally docked at Fernandina, but sent to Port Royal by Woodhull. The goods were moved onto a large vessel for transport to Philadelphia. At Holmes's Mill, Snell seized a fifty-ton schooner badly deteriorated. Of more interest was nearly 1,000,000 board feet of newly-manufactured lumber located at mills "...upon a small island, easily defended. Most of this lumber is suitable for decks, just the material most wanted and most difficult to be obtained at our navy yards at the North" (ORN 1901 Series 1 Volume 13:424-425, 429-430, 444).

In January 1863, Commander William Watson of the *U.S.S. Uncas* was providing army transport service from Fernandina, when he discovered a large fire one night. The next day, he proceeded up the Nassau River with the transports to the mill of John Holmes. Waving a white flag, Holmes requested the protection of his mill, having lost all his finished lumber to the fire. After determining no Confederates remained at the mill, the Union detachment proceeded down river. Along a nearby bluff, the transports came under musket fire from Confederates. After Watson positioned the *Uncas* within range of the rebels, he ordered his cannons to open fire. He later reported that "They did not fire after my third shell, which fell in the thicket they were firing from and exploded and no doubt with good effect... No attempt was made to fire into me; in fact no man could live within 800 yards of the bluff as the *Uncas* passed it, so rapid and well directed was the fire. We returned with a loss of 3 men wounded and an unsuccessful expedition" (ORN 1901 Series 1 Volume 13:501-502).



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The *U.S.S. Hale* and *U.S.S. Uncas* were typical of Union warships that docked at Fernandina, patrolled the coast, and navigated interior rivers under the command of the South Atlantic and East Gulf Blockading Squadrons of the U. S. Navy. Built in 1861, the *Hale* measured 117 feet long, weighed 220 tons, and averaged eight knots. Its armament and battery changed over time. In November 1862, when it initially docked at Fernandina and sailed the Amelia River and up the Nassau River, was equipped with four thirty-two pound cannons. Decommissioned in early-1863, the schooner was sold after the war. Similar in size and firepower, the *Uncas* carried one twenty-pound Parrot rifle and two thirty-two pound cannons when it opened fire on Confederate troops hidden on a bluff near Holmes's Mill in January 1863. Later that year, the battery of the *Uncas* was increased with two additional thirty-two pound cannons. The acquisition of newer schooners compelled the U. S. Navy to sell the ship in August 1863 in public auction at New York (ORN 1921 Series 2 Volume 1:76, 228).

Other relatively large Union warships docked in Fernandina, including the 860-ton *U.S.S. Cimarron*. Launched in 1862, the side-wheel steamer displayed two masts, measured 205 long, and had a maximum speed of ten knots. Its initial battery consisted of one 100 pound Parrott rifle, one eleven inch Dahlgren rifle, and six twenty-four pound howitzers. Commanded by M. Woodhull in late-1862, the *Cimarron* served as flagship in the St. Johns District of the South Blockading Squadron. The *U.S.S. Mohawk* also occasionally made port in Fernandina. Chartered in 1858 for the Paraguay Expedition as the *Caledonia*, the 464-ton screw steamer averaged six knots. When berthed at Fernandina in March 1863, the *Caledonia* boasted an armament of one thirty-pound Parrott rifle and six thirty-two pound cannons (ORN 1921 Series 2 Volume 1:76, 147, 228). The *U.S.S. Perry* was one of the most celebrated federal schooners to dock at Fernandina. Built in the U. S. Navy's Norfolk Yard in 1861, the ship weighed 270 tons and measured 124 feet long. Equipped with six thirty-two pound cannons, the Perry captured the Confederate privateer *Savannah* in June 1861 (ORN 1921 Series 2 Volume 1:176).

Various regiments and detachments of federal troops were stationed at Amelia Island and occupied homes in Fernandina during the conflict, including the 11th Maine and the 97th Pennsylvania regiments. In late-1863, Companies A and G of the 97th Pennsylvania guarded Fort Clinch and periodically sent out patrols to scout the length of the island. Company C served as provost at Fernandina and Companies E and H occupied outposts on the island, including a post four miles south of Fernandina at the Florida Railroad bridge over the Amelia River (Hewett 1998 73:228, 238, 253).

Union forces stationed on Amelia Island often patrolled the mainland of Nassau County. During November 1863 and February 1864, Union detachments crossed the Amelia River on several occasions to attack targets on the mainland, including Camp Cooper, and Woodstock Mills and King's Ferry Mills on the St. Marys River. In early February, the 97th Pennsylvania made an incursion against Camp Cooper, an encampment north of Yulee and five miles south of the St. Marys River. During the raid, federal troops captured three horses and two rebel cavalymen, and then burned the camp's barracks and contents. Later, working in concert with the cavalry and

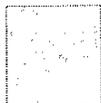


supported by five armed transports, 300 troops in the 97th Pennsylvania seized between 700,000 and 1,000,000 board feet of lumber at Woodstock Mills and King's Ferry Mills, which they transported by rafts to Fernandina. Periodic patrols of Confederate and Union troops led to minor clashes. In June 1862, Confederate cavalry captured two Union soldiers at the bridge of the Florida Railroad and later ambushed Union troops occupying Judge O'Neil's home. In December 1864, when President Lincoln lifted the blockade of the Port of Fernandina, military and federal officials were convinced that the region was relatively free from Confederate raiders (Johannes 2000:324; Hewett 1998 73:228, 238-239, 253, 273-274, 303).

Farther south, Union troops made little effort to extend their control beyond the town limits of St. Augustine, in part, because the region east of the St. Johns River became known as "Lincoln's congressional district in East Florida." Union gunboats periodically sailed the length of the St. Johns River to destroy rebel boats to help prevent Confederates from crossing to the east bank of the river. Governor John Milton wrote Confederate President Jefferson Davis that he was ready to declare martial law in the region east of the St. Johns River because so many of its citizens were too willing to submit to Union authority. Blacks and white Unionists thwarted several attempts by Confederates to ambush Federal troops along the river. Residents on the east side of the St. Johns River became popularly known by Union troops as "Florida Yankees" (Buker 1986:3-9, 18).

Florida, on the eve of the Civil War, contained the third smallest mileage of railroad tracks of any southern state, a mere 327 miles of serviceable roadbed. A single stretch of tracks developed by two separate companies connected Jacksonville and Tallahassee, sharing a common terminus in Lake City. Connecting Fernandina and Cedar Key, the Florida Railroad was the longest and most expensive transportation venture in the state. The pride of Senator Yulee, the Florida Railroad in terms of rolling stock was the poorest road of its size in the Confederacy. The company's equipment roster consisted of four locomotives and various freight and passenger cars. Early stations were generally one-story wood frame buildings. An under built and fragmented rail system plagued the Confederate armies. Rail transportation reached a critical point after the fall of Vicksburg in 1863. Early in the war Robert E. Lee lamented the lack of a Georgia-Florida connection, which he later observed would have facilitated the movement of beef, foodstuffs, and troops out of Florida (Black 1952:208-209; Pettengill 1952:27-28).

During the Civil War, David Levy Yulee yielded his home in Fernandina to federal commanders, but maintained his interest in the Florida Railroad. His grudging approval of secession and withdrawal from the U. S. Senate in January 1861 convinced some northern observers that Yulee had used the secession movement, in part, to regain control of his railroad and remove the influence of his northern investors. Confederate legislation provided for the seizure of bonds, stocks, and properties owned by Edward Dickerson and a majority of northern stockholders, who were considered enemy aliens by the Confederate government. With Fernandina in Union control, Yulee maintained his home at Marguerite on the Homosassa River until 1864, when it was destroyed during a Union raid. He continued to direct the business affairs of the railroad, even though it was reduced to less than one-half its original length and operated without the



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benefit of a port facility. The head of a private company and a prominent political figure during a time of conflict, Yulee exhausted significant resources preventing Confederate authorities from seizing the tracks and rolling stock of the Florida Railroad, fearing further curtailment of profits and the enhancement of a competitor's line (Graham 1997:441; Clarke 1953:182).

Between 1862 and 1864, Yulee argued with Confederate authorities over the railroad. In March 1862, Governor Milton reluctantly ordered the removal of the rails of the Florida Railroad between Fernandina and Baldwin for use in building the tracks designed to connect main lines at Live Oak, Florida and Lawton, Georgia. Several prominent Confederate generals, including Robert E. Lee and J. A. Trapier, strongly supported the construction of the forty-seven mile spur, which the Confederate Congress never cited as a military necessity, in part, because of Yulee's presence in the legislative body. Unlike many other state governors, Milton generally cooperated with Confederate authorities regarding state's rights and even private property matters. Political posturing and even veiled threats of imprisonment failed to persuade Yulee to yield the railroad's property. For several years, the senator effectively used state court injunctions to prevent both state and Confederate authorities from seizing the tracks. Having divided loyalties as one of the contractors of the Florida Railroad and a Confederate Army general, Joseph Finegan, unlike other Confederate officers, personally supported Yulee, in part, because of his past business activities with the senator, even though he, too, recognized the military necessity of using the railroad as source of iron for the new system. Complicating the process, James Banks, a Confederate government attorney, seized the securities of Edward N. Dickerson & Associates of New York. Considered enemy aliens by the Confederate government, the Dickerson interests were then the major stockholder of the Florida Railroad. Holding an investment amounting to \$2,800,000, Banks disallowed the destruction and removal of the Florida Railroad tracks to another location by another company. Banks refused to support the Confederate military and state government, in part, because the removal represented a loss in value of the shares of stock that his branch of the government had been sequestered, value that might become Confederate government property. Urging Florida's civil government to exercise one of its fundamental responsibilities, both President Jefferson Davis and Secretary of War James Seddon reminded Governor Milton in 1864 that the taking of "private property for public is one of the great powers of Government." Seddon assured Milton that the War Department could not sustain the Confederate armies if the government did not use the materials of less valuable railroads to benefit more necessary lines. To no avail, Seddon also encouraged the governor to play a role in dissolving the state court's injunction. Frustrated by years of delay and inadequate transportation of supplies and troops through north Florida, Seddon asked Milton "shall the State be left defenseless in compliment to Mr. Yulee's and General Finegan's opinions?" Nonetheless, Milton was unwilling to defy the authority of a state court injunction or Senator Yulee (Shofner and Rogers 1965:217-228; Black 1952:208-213; The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series 1, Volume 53, p. 350; Series 4, Volume 2, p. 648-650; Series 4, Volume 3, p 560-562).

Following the Battle of Olustee, General P.T.G. Beauregard entered the stand off between Yulee, the state and national governments, the military, and the courts. Beauregard, then commander of



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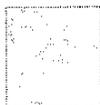
Jacksonville, FL

Atlanta, GA

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the District of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, complained about the lack of train access into Florida. He claimed that with adequate transportation for his reserve units, he could have driven Union forces out of Florida following the Federal defeat at Olustee. Beauregard arrived at McGirt's Creek in northeast Florida in March 1864, again frustrated by a lack of train access between Charleston and Florida. At his urging and that of members of the Engineer Bureau of the Confederate Iron Commission, the demolition of the Florida Railroad tracks resumed west of the Amelia River in April 1864. But, that month Yulee brought another suit that resulted in a restraining order issued against the Confederate secretary of war, secretary of the navy, and several military officials from "removing the iron rails, chairs, bolts, and spikes of the Florida Railroad." Later, in June 1864, responding to orders from Major General Patton Anderson, Lieutenants Jason M. Fairbanks and J. H. Burns of the engineer bureau resumed dismantling the tracks between Hart's Road and Callahan Station. At a confrontation on the tracks, the Nassau County sheriff attempted to arrest the officers. Soldiers armed with muskets and bayonets blocked the law enforcement official from taking the lieutenants into custody. Enraged, Yulee continued to object to the destruction and insisted that his attorneys redouble their efforts to compel the military authorities to observe the injunction by the state court. Although Fairbanks temporarily suspended track demolition, he returned to the task within several weeks, and three miles were dismantled by the end of May 1864. A federal raid destroyed about one-half mile of tracks east of Baldwin, which further slowed the dismantling process, and it required several more months before the tracks between the Amelia River and Baldwin had been dismantled. The connector between Live Oak and Lawton was completed in March 1865, too late to re-supply Confederate armies with Florida beef or for use in military maneuvers. The head of a private company and a prominent political figure during a time of conflict, Yulee exhausted significant resources preventing Confederate authorities from seizing the tracks and rolling stock of the Florida Railroad, fearing further curtailment of profits and the enhancement of a competitor's line (Shofner and Rogers 1965:217-228; Black 1952:208-213; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume 53, p. 353-363; Clarke 1953:188-189).

Following the war, federal authorities imprisoned Yulee in Fort Pulaski for his leadership in the Confederate government. Paroled in early 1866, Yulee struggled to mend business affairs with the company's majority northern stockholders even as he surrendered his role as president to Dickerson and became vice president and the company's manager. The *New York Tribune* considered Yulee as one of the "baker's dozen" in Florida politics who controlled the levers of power. But, Yulee appeared to be more interested in business than political ambition, and by 1870 many of the state's leaders became disgruntled by his lack of commitment to their respective campaigns. He traveled to New York to secure additional funds to repair and rebuild the railroad company. In 1880, Yulee made Washington, D.C. his permanent home, although he still maintained several dwellings and properties in Fernandina and elsewhere in Florida. He made the move, in part, to retire from active business as reorganizations of the Florida Railroad into larger systems reduced his role in the company, in part, because Florida's electorate did not return him to public office due to his cooperation with moderate Republicans during Reconstruction, and, in part, because of accusations of fraud associated with Governor Harrison



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Reed and misuse of railroad bonds, charges that were eventually dropped. In 1883, he completed a \$40,000 three-story mansion on Connecticut Avenue near DuPont Circle. Having reduced his activities in the railroad business, Yulee became involved in land management and real estate sales associated with the huge quantities of lands the company owned along the railroad's right-of-way (Johnson 1965:294; *Washington Post*, 23 June 1883; Stover 1955:92-95; Summers 1984:93, 243-244; Prince 1966:74-75; Shofner 1974:114-115; Clarke 1953:190-191; Richardson 1965:2, 230, 232-233).

In early 1886, several years removed from his investments in Florida's railroads and residing in Washington, D.C., Yulee briefly returned to Amelia Island to develop real estate. Connected to Florida through his real estate and railroad contacts, he found himself at odds with political opponents in Jacksonville and Duval County as he struggled to increase Fernandina's significance as a port. Some of his activities were in association with the Florida Town Improvement Company for which he served as vice-president and resident manager. In 1886, the company opened the Ocean City development along the Atlantic Ocean northeast of Fernandina. Yulee hired architect Robert S. Schuyler to divide the property, locate and design the Strathmore Hotel, set out another hotel reservation and a water works and park, and plan the street, block, and lot system. Schuyler, a native of New York City, where he learned the art of architecture, arrived in Florida in 1878, initially based in Waldo, but then moved to Fernandina in 1881. Later, Schuyler completed churches and dwellings in Fairbanks, Fernandina, Jacksonville, Lake Santa Fe, Pablo Beach, and Waldo. With his new development activities on Amelia Island only in their infancy, Yulee died in New York City in October 1886 while en route to Washington, D.C. after a visit to Bar Harbor, Maine and Bermuda. His body was interred in Oak Hill Cemetery in the nation's capital city. Characterized as Florida's last antebellum political chieftain to survive the Civil War and Reconstruction, Yulee was eulogized by the editors of the *Florida Times Union* as a personality who "...has had a larger influence upon the character and development of the State, and played a larger part in its history than any other man." Estimating Yulee's fortune at \$1,000,000, the newspaper pointed to the irony that Yulee was neither a native son nor a resident of Florida at the time of his death, but played one of the most significant roles in the development of Florida's antebellum growth, statehood, and railroad development. The year of Yulee's demise, Henry M. Flagler had only recently arrived in St. Augustine to develop resorts and railroad tracks along Florida's peninsula. Surpassing Yulee's railroad system in length and vision, Flagler's tracks arrived in the settlement of Miami a decade after Yulee's death. Flagler's achievement placed him permanently in the public spotlight as the state's preeminent railroad builder. By then, Yulee's image had faded from memory as the father of Florida's railroads. Nevertheless, it was Yulee's vision to use land grants in association with the Internal Improvement Fund that helped build Florida's nascent railroad industry in the antebellum period, encouraged Flagler to build railroads in Florida in the 1890s, and provided Flagler's railroad company with over 500,000 acres in land grants along the east coast of Florida (Wood 1989:223; *Washington Post*, 12 October 1886; Akin 1988:114, 141,177, 180-181; Webb 1885:180; *Florida Times Union*, 13 October 1886; Williamson 1976:190-191).



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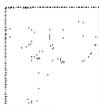
Atlanta, GA

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Other than his railroad alignment between Fernandina Beach and Cedar Key, few tangible reminders remain of Yulee's life. His homes in Fernandina Beach and Washington, D.C. have been destroyed and little remains of his plantations in Alachua County and on the Homosassa River. Installed on the Florida Railroad depot (Figure 3-7) on Centre Street, a Great Floridian commemorative plaque identifies the building with Yulee. Elsewhere in Fernandina Beach, a bronze marker at the northeast corner of Alachua Street and 3rd Street (Figures 3-8, 3-9) identifies the location of his two-story 1850s home, which had been destroyed by the 1920s. All of this is to say that the influence of David Levy Yulee looms large in the history of the State of Florida, but other than the railroad depot and a few antebellum buildings constructed by the railroad company in Fernandina Beach during the 1850s relatively little built fabric remains to interpret that history.

Because of Fernandina's capture and occupation by Federal troops early in the war, the port city became a haven for slaves fleeing the sanctuary offered by Union forces. By 1863, more than 700 former slaves lived on Amelia Island, prompting the Federal government and northern aid societies to respond to some of their needs. Supervised by the War Department, the Freedmen's Bureau was the foreshortened name of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Established in March 1865, the Bureau functioned as a relief agency, which, in addition to providing black settlers with supplies and rations, drafted and enforced labor contracts between planters and freedmen, and assisted voluntary associations in the operation of schools. Through the Freedmen's Bureau, the Federal government responded to some of the education needs of emancipated slaves. The state and local governments were ill-equipped to provide an education for black children, who nearly doubled the number of pupils in need of an education. The Bureau allocated significant resources for Florida's schools. In association with various northern aid societies, it built an education system throughout much of the South, investing far more in public education than had southerners during the antebellum era. During the Reconstruction era, black Floridians participated in what is known as the South's first crusade for black common schools. George Bentley, a historian of Reconstruction, characterized education for the former slaves as "...the fruit so long forbidden, ...a mystery which seemed almost holy. The freedmen flocked to teachers who would provide them with the magic of reading and writing (Anderson 1988:4-32, 148; McPherson 1982:401, 561; Richardson 1965:97).

The main impetus for educating and supporting black Floridians during the closing years of the war and Reconstruction was provided by northern aid societies. People who contributed to the education of Florida's black children in the post-Civil War era represented a cross-section of American society. White abolitionists such as Esther Hawks at New Smyrna and Chloe Merrick in Fernandina stood at the forefront of the state's education efforts. Benevolent societies, organized primarily from the ranks of New Englanders, operated in discreet areas of the South during the latter part of the war and then spread throughout the southern countryside and into its cities following the conflict. Often opening schools in areas only recently captured by Federal troops, the societies hoped to implant among southern blacks and whites alike the values of education, the Protestant work ethic, and free-labor ideology. A resettlement experiment at Port



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8NA00078
 Florida Railroad Depot
 Masonry Vernacular Style
 Built 1899
 102 Centre Street



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 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-7

Figure: 3-7

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



8NA1229

David Levy Yulee Bronze Marker
 Northeast Corner Alachua Street & 3rd Street
 1810 - 1886

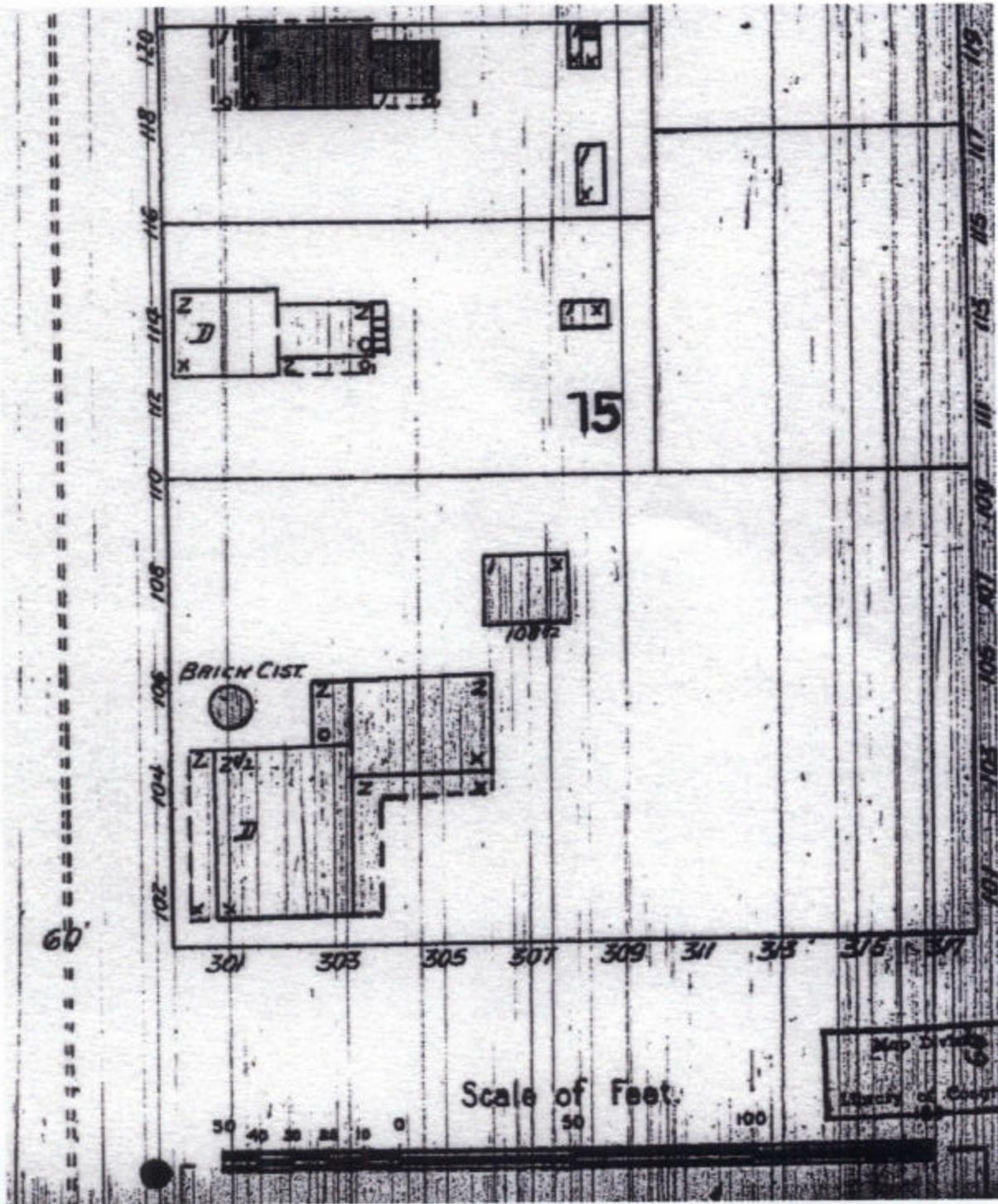
David L. Yulee lived near this location.
 He was a senator, statesman, developer, Florida's first railroad developer.

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 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-8

Figure: 3-8
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Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007



Location Map of David Levy Yulee Residence
 Northeast Corner Alachua Street & 3rd Street
 Sanborn 1897

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 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-9

Figure: 3-9
 Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01
 Scale: Not to Scale
 Date: April 2007

Royal, near Beaufort, South Carolina was the first and among the largest attempts by the Federal government to educate and resettle blacks. Developments at Port Royal prompted further Freedmen's colonies and schools. Chloe Merrick and Cornelia Smith of the Freedmen's Aid Society of Syracuse, New York organized schools in Fernandina and St. Augustine. Born in Syracuse, New York in 1832, Merrick taught in the public schools of her hometown between 1854 and 1856. She responded to the plight of freed slaves in 1863, when she arrived on Amelia Island. At Fernandina, Chloe Merrick's school and orphanage operated in the former home of Confederate General Joseph Finegan (destroyed). In 1869, she married Harrison M. Reed, who served as Florida's governor between 1868 and 1873. At the end of his term, Reed moved to a farm on the St. Johns River. Chloe Merrick died in 1897 and Reed died in Jacksonville in 1899. The dwelling at 102 South 10th Street (Figure 3-10) in Fernandina Beach, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, bears a Great Floridian commemorative plaque to Chloe Merrick (Foster and Foster 1993:283-284; Richardson 1965:84, 98-99).

In January 1865, General William T. Sherman had issued Special Order No. 15, the so-called "Sea-Island Circular." The orders declared that islands south of Charleston to the St. Johns River and abandoned rice fields along rivers thirty miles inland from the sea, an extensive region that became known as Sherman's Reservation," were to be reserved for the resettlement of freed slaves. The circular applied to hundreds of plantations and news of the circular spread throughout northeast Florida, prompting some Freedmen and former bondsmen to seize and occupy properties in Fernandina. Later, in May 1865, before the formal implementation of the land redistribution plans, President Andrew Johnson issued an amnesty proclamation and restored the property rights of white southerners (Oubre 1978:18-19, 46-51; Bullard 2003:159-163; Hewett 1998 90:276; Wise 1994:45, 48-49).

Although most citizens of Fernandina Beach and Nassau County welcomed the end of the war and the opportunity to return to a normal life, some residents held bitter feelings about the South's loss for years. In August 1866, a deserter of the Confederate Army returning to his home in Nassau County was shot by a former acquaintance, in part, "...because the feeling against such men by old rebels is intense" (Shofner 1974:96). The "Sea-Island Circular" and tax sale purchases of properties in Fernandina pitted some unrepentant rebels against Freedman who had claimed their properties. A civilian-military clash found Freedmen banding together and requesting federal authorities to protect and affirm their possession of recently-seized properties. Johnson amnesty proclamation and restoration of property rights ended the confrontation. The end of the Civil War brought with it an impoverished economy and difficult times for the average person. Statewide property values had decreased by nearly one-half from an estimated value in 1860 of \$47,000,000 to about \$25,000,000 in 1865. Nearly \$22,000,000 dollars was lost in the form of emancipated slaves. A saw mill and brick works supplied some jobs at Fernandina and the Drew & Bucki lumber mill in Ellaville, Florida on the Suwannee River shipped much of its finished products to Fernandina for overseas shipping and local construction projects (Shofner 1974:15, 35, 73, 99, 134, 137-139, 150).





8NA00133
Chloe Merrick House
Greek Revival Style
Built c. 1863
102 South 10th Street



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Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-10

Figure: 3-10

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

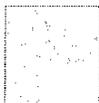
Date: April 2007

The unsettled economy persisted. Most freedmen labored at plantations during Reconstruction, but substantial numbers worked for private contractors in the lumber and railroad industries. The Florida Railroad was the largest employer of freed bondsmen, who generally earned less than those blacks cutting trees in the state's forests. The Mallory Steamship Company established Fernandina as one of its major ports with connections in New York. Other steamship lines operated between Baltimore and Boston. Freedman's Bureau agents helped former slaves develop contracts with lumber companies in Nassau County, one of Florida's important timbering sections during Reconstruction. During the era, Fernandina experienced growth with the population increasing from 1,722 in 1870 to 2,562 in 1880. In 1890, the population reached 2,803. Outside of Fernandina, Nassau County experienced significant growth with the population increasing from 6,635 to 8,294 between 1880 and 1890 and reaching 9,654 in 1900. Economic forces driving the economy at the port city consisted of the railroad, shipping, and fishing industries. Growth brought construction in the form of new commercial and public buildings and housing (Shofner 1974:68).

In the early-1880s, the construction of the Fernandina & Jacksonville Railroad expanded Nassau County's antebellum transportation system and provided still more jobs in Fernandina. Extending south from its northern terminus at the Hart's Road depot of the FT&P, tracks extended twenty-two miles south to Jacksonville. Completed in 1881, the route provided the first direct railroad access between Fernandina and Jacksonville. To expand its system and eliminate the new competition, the FT&P acquired the Fernandina & Jacksonville Railroad Company several years later (Prince 1969:75-76).

Construction in Fernandina accelerated after the end of Reconstruction in 1876, prompted by the departure of federal troops from Florida and a fire that swept through Fernandina. The Great Conflagration of 1876, as the fire became known, destroyed forty of the city's oldest wood-frame structures between the docks and North 3rd Street. By then, the commercial district had emerged along North 2nd Street, which experienced a total loss from the fire. The event re-aligned Fernandina's commercial district along Centre Street and ushered in a new period of development using brick for commercial buildings in the downtown. A subsequent fire in 1883 destroyed the wooden buildings along Centre Street between 2nd and 3rd Street, providing further impetus to change the character of the city's downtown (Johannes 2000:36-37).

In 1873, just before the fires, the J & T Kydd Building had been constructed at 301 Centre Street (Figure 3-11), a precursor suggesting a fashionable brick look to Fernandina's downtown along Centre Street. An unusual Reconstruction-era project and the first brick building on Centre Street, the Kydd Building was developed by James and Thomas Kydd of New York, who opened a clothing and general merchandise store in Fernandina as a branch of their New York City business. By 1884, much of the area destroyed by fires had been rebuilt with brick buildings as illustrated by a footprint map of Fernandina published by the Sanborn Map & Publishing Company of New York in March 1884 (Figure 3-12). Used by insurance companies to assess insurance premiums, the footprint maps depicted a well-developed commercial district along





8NA00655
 J&T Kydd Building
 2-Part Masonry Vernacular Style
 Built 1873
 301 Centre Street



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 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

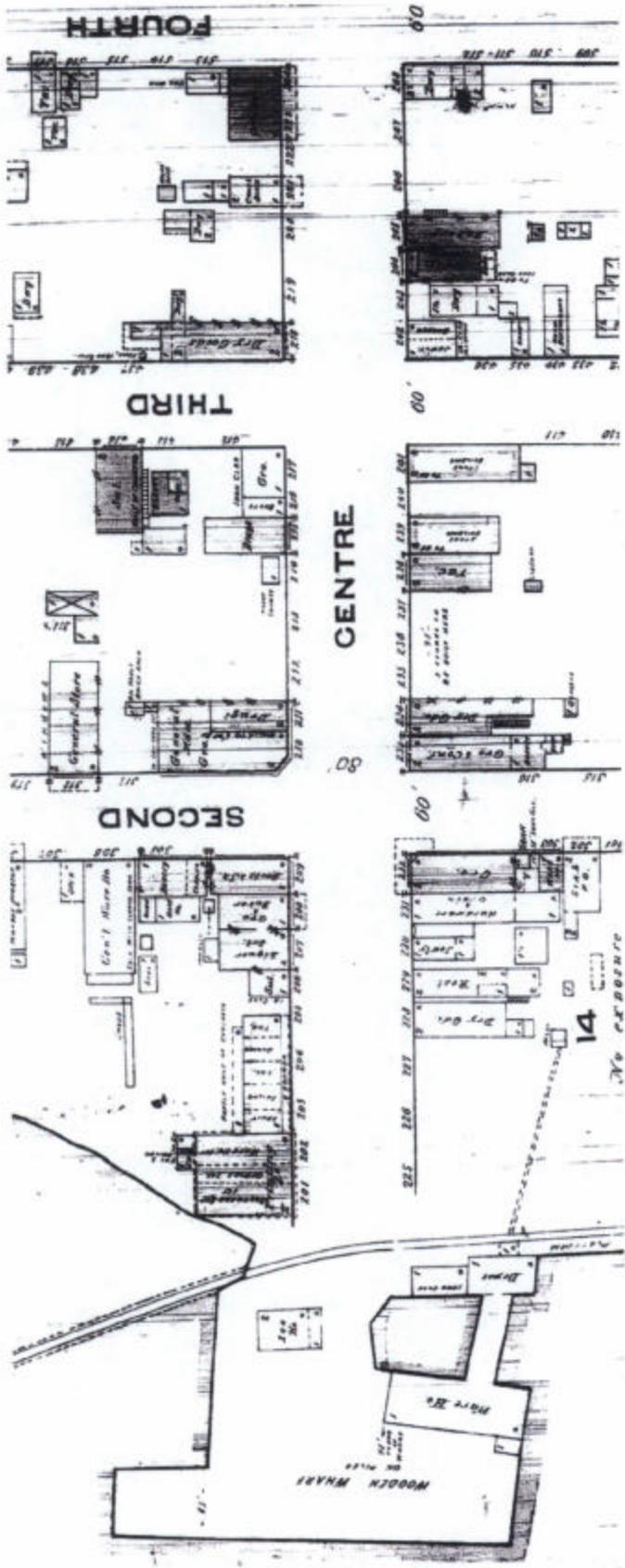
Figure 3-11

Figure: 3-11

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



Centre Street, 1884
Sanborn 1884

The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida
Figure 3-12

Figure: 3-12
Project No.: BALJ0701088.01
Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007

Centre Street that ended at a wharf and depot at the Amelia River. By then, relatively large brick buildings contributed to the downtown, including the general store at 201 Centre Street, the C. H. Huot Building at 101 North 2nd Street (Figure 3-13), another C. H. Huot Building at 12 North 2nd Street, and the Prescott Building/Palace Saloon at 117 Centre Street. The wood-frame Florida House on South 3rd Street survived the various fires and continued to accommodate tourists and travelers throughout the nineteenth century. Despite the fires, property owners such as Huot refused to yield their hold on the commercial character of North 2nd Street to Centre Street (Webb 1885:177-178; Johannes 2000:36-37).

The same year the Sanborn Company produced a map of Fernandina, map-maker J. J. Stoner published a bird's eye view (Figure 3-14) of the port city. The map depicted a well-developed city with a commercial district bracketed by residential neighborhoods to the east, north, and south. Prominent landmarks consisted of churches and hotels, the shops and yards of the Florida Railroad, then known as the Florida Transit & Peninsular Railway, and the recently-completed St. Joseph's Convent. Several of these buildings and their original owners were noted in contemporary travel guides and gazetteers. Despite its relative isolation, nineteenth-century Florida attracted vacationing northerners, some seeking investment opportunities and prompting a flurry of Florida guidebooks. The flurry of visitors increased after railroads opened the state in the mid-1880s. Medical doctors and journalists composed many of these guides, most of which furnished a glimpse of activities taking place along the state's major waterways and in its largest cities. One notable author to describe the region was S. G. W. Benjamin, a seasoned writer and illustrator. In 1878, his article in Harper's *New Monthly Magazine* on the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina included a description of Amelia Island and a line drawing of the Amelia Island Lighthouse projecting above the surrounding tree line. The article characterized the "...light-house of Fernandina [as] exceptionally situated, a mile from the sea, on a steep eminence with a most picturesque grove of ancient oaks." Prepared with characteristic nineteenth-century flair and artistic license, Benjamin's illustration portrayed the keeper and a young assistant crossing the footbridge over Egan's Creek and beginning the long ascent up the plank walkway to the lighthouse (Benjamin 1878:839-861).

Among the physicians and writers publishing guidebooks about Florida were George Barbour, Daniel Brinton, James Henshall, and Sidney Lanier. Most wrote about Fernandina and Amelia Island. Published in 1885, Wanton Webb's *Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida* contrasted from these travel guides, providing specific information and statistics on many cities and villages throughout the state. At Fernandina, Webb revealed in typical Victorian hyperbole that "One of the principal attractions of Fernandina is its magnificent sea-beach, which is reached from the city by a pleasant drive of two miles along a smooth shell road... The harbor here is one of the finest on the South Atlantic coast, being roomy enough to accommodate the fleets of all the great powers of the world at one time. From this port is shipped immense quantities of naval stores and lumber to Europe, South America, and other parts of the world" (Webb 1885:81-82, 176-181).





8NA00244
C. H. Huot Building
Masonry Vernacular Style
Built 1882
101 North 2nd Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

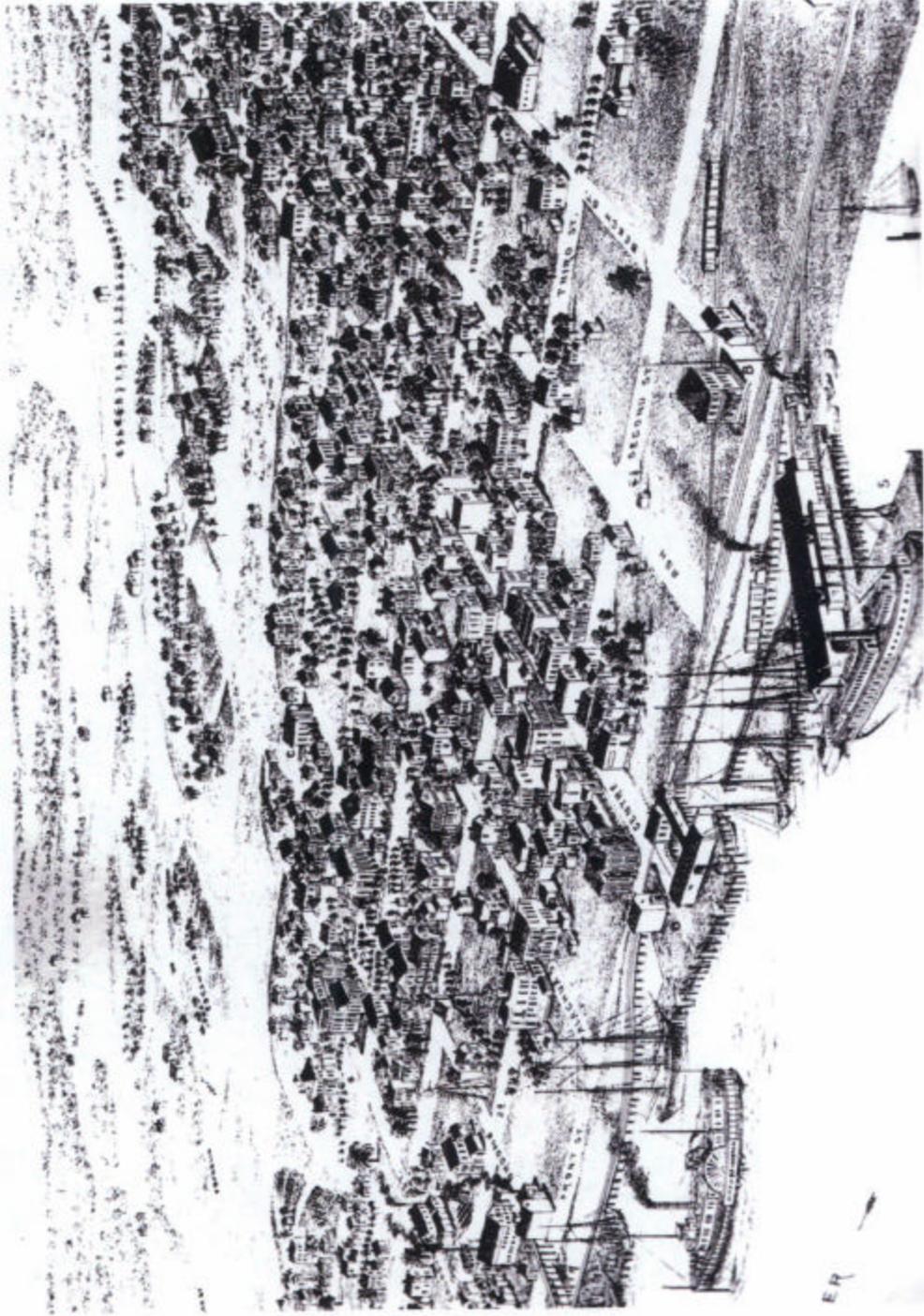
Figure 3-13

Figure: 3-13

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Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



Bird's Eye View of Fernandina, 1884
Stoner 1884

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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-14

Figure: 3-14

Project No.: BALJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

Webb labored on to record some of Fernandina's new buildings and thriving businesses and professionals, including C. H. Huot's general merchandise and saw mill businesses on 2nd Street. A native of France, Huot had immigrated to the United States in 1852 and then moved to Fernandina in 1857. By the close of Reconstruction, Huot had emerged as a leading businessman in the city and developed three commercial buildings in the 1870s and 1880s. By 1885, his general merchandise business employed four people and thirty-five others worked in his saw mill on 2nd Street. Webb also recorded the presence of Thomas Kydd managing six salesmen at the J. & T. Kydd Store on Centre Street. Other prominent businesses of the era mentioned by Webb included the Amelia Steam Saw Mills, *Fernandina Mirror*, Jacob Klarer Grocery & Meat Market, Nassau Palm Fibre Company, Alonzo B. Noyes Grocer, O. S. Oakes Steam Saw and Planing Mills, Palmer Brothers Drug Company, and Samuel A. Swann Real Estate Company (Webb 1885:178-180).

Few people in Fernandina influenced development patterns and real estate sales in northeast Florida as Samuel Swann. Born in North Carolina in 1832, Swann worked in the commission business in Wilmington, North Carolina until 1855, when he moved to Fernandina to help develop the Florida Railroad as an accountant with Joseph Finegan & Company and the railroad's assistant secretary and treasurer. During the war, he helped move the company's headquarters to Gainesville, Florida and then sailed to Cuba where he procured merchandise for Confederate troops and civilians. In 1876, he returned to Fernandina to organize Swann & Brother, a shipping company. In the late 1870s, Governor George F. Drew (1877-1881) appointed Swann as an agent of the Internal Improvement Fund to sell much of the state's public lands to help relieve the state's debt. Drew's hand-picked agent, Swann would later be trumped by Governor William D. Bloxham (1881-1885), who helped arrange a 4,000,000-acre land sale with Hamilton Disston of Philadelphia in 1881. The previous year, Bloxham had trumped Drew, winning the gubernatorial election by marshalling the support of Florida's conservative Democrats. Following his reversals in finance and politics, Swann returned to business in Fernandina, where he served as the principal agent for the Florida Town Improvement Company, Florida Land and Immigration Company, and the Fernandina Development Company. Swann also continued his political relationship with Drew through business with the Fernandina businessman encouraging the former governor to ship lumber cut at the Drew & Bucki mills at Ellaville on the Suwannee River through Fernandina's port. In 1880, Swann developed the Swann Building (Figure 3-15) at 313-319 Centre Street; farther east along Centre Street he constructed Ornée Cottage, a home (destroyed) that compiler Wanton Webb claimed as "...one of the handsomest dwellings in the city" (Webb 1885:180; Williamson 1976:49-51, 53, 72).

Swann's activities helped to sustain growth in Fernandina during the late nineteenth century. Prominent personalities arrived and developed landmark buildings, some through the design skills of professional architects and builders. Born in New York City in 1830, Robert S. Schuyler learned the profession of architecture in American's preeminent city before arriving in Waldo, Florida in 1878. He moved to Fernandina in 1881 and by 1885 had established an office at the corner of Centre Street and Second Street. Reflecting a broad range of Victorian era styles, his





8NA00659
Swann Building
Masonry Vernacular Style
Built 1880
313-319 Centre Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-15

Figure: 3-15

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

projects in Fernandina included Public School No. 1 at 914 Atlantic Avenue in 1888 and landmark residences that included the Louis G. Hirth House, the George R. Fairbanks House at 227 South 7th Street (NR 1973), and the Charles W. Lewis House, or Tabby House, at 27 South 7th Street (NR 1973), which the Florida Mirror described as an "...ornament to the city." Soon Schuyler's influence stretched beyond Nassau County. By 1888, the architect had completed churches in Fairbanks, Lake Santa Fe, Pablo Beach, and Waldo, in addition to Fernandina. Schuyler's design of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Eastside Jacksonville received high praise in King's *Handbook of Notable Episcopal Churches in the United States* (1889), which regarded the brick sanctuary as "...one of the most satisfying pieces of architecture in the South..." Schuyler died in July 1895 from complications associated with a fall while supervising work on St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Fernandina. Organized in 1858, Fernandina's Episcopalians completed a new masonry sanctuary in 1884. Schuyler designed the landmark with "...concrete in the English perpendicular style, with lancet windows open timber roofs, covered with metallic shingles, and with its thick walls and substantial timbers seems capable of lasting for generations." A fire in 1892 cut short the church's initial life, destroying the interior wood-work. Schuyler again applied his design skills, but was injured in the closing days of the restoration and improvements to the sanctuary in 1893 (Wood 1989:223; Webb 1885:180; *Florida Mirror*, 6 January 1882, 5 April 1884; *Fernandina News*, 26 July 1895; Johannes 2000:67; Samuel A. Swann File, Amelia Island Museum of History).

In the 1880s, the *Florida Mirror*, a local weekly newspaper that had been organized by C. W. Lewis and C. H. Berg in 1878 and edited by historian and writer George Fairbanks, reported on some of the city's development. Fairbanks found work beginning on the Pratt Thompson House on 7th Street in May 1882 and believed three or four more dwellings would be built on 7th Street later that year. Elsewhere in Fernandina, Fairbanks commented on the construction of the Kelly House, Lewis House, Maxwell House, Read House, the Mullarkey Building, an addition to the Florida House, and the initial stages of his own elaborate residence on South 7th Street. One of the largest and most unusual buildings reported in the *Florida Mirror* was St. Joseph's Convent and School. Catholics had maintained a presence on Amelia Island since European contact with churches the primary evidence of those activities in the late nineteenth century. After the Civil War, the diocese of St. Augustine moved to establish more permanent buildings in Fernandina. Completed in 1882, the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph at the southeast corner of Calhoun Street and North 4th Street displayed a distinctive Mansard roof associated with the Second Empire style of architecture. Built with a steeply-pitched roof, a school connected to the south wall of the convent and faced North 4th Street. At the south end of the same block at Broome Street and North 4th Street stood St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, a Gothic Revival design completed in 1872. In 1879, the Catholic Almanac reported that "The Church in Fernandina is dedicated to God, under the patronage of St. Michael, in remembrance of St. Michael de Aunon, who suffered martyrdom at the time of the Indian rebellion against Catholic clergy in 1597." Radiating around the Fernandez Reserve, these buildings provided Fernandina with a distinctive ecclesiastical presence in one of the City's predominantly residential neighborhoods (*Florida Mirror*, 15 April, 26 August, 4 November 1882; Johannes 2000:71; Gallagher 1999:104; Sanborn 1891).



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Growth in the 1880s in Nassau County and Fernandina prompted the development of a new courthouse. Located at 416 Centre Street, the new government building (Figure 3-16) was designed by Alfred E. McClure and William H. Mann supervised construction. Displaying Italianate influences, the new courthouse reflected the design skills of a pioneer Florida architect. Born in Ohio in 1836, McClure moved to Jacksonville, Florida in 1869 and opened Ellis & McClure, architects with his brother-in-law and civil engineer Robert N. Ellis in 1873. Maintaining the partnership until 1888, Ellis & McClure designed early landmark projects in Florida's gateway city, bringing them regional attention. Those included the Duval County Courthouse and Park Opera House in Jacksonville, and several buildings at the Florida Agricultural College in Lake City. Soon after ending his partnership with Ellis, McClure designed Clay County Courthouse in Green Cove Springs, which closely reflected the Italianate and Second Renaissance Revival features applied to Nassau County Courthouse, which was completed in 1891 (Chapin 1914 2:16; Winsberg 1995:16; Webb 1885:175; Esgate 1885:125).

Fernandina's African-American community grew along with the rest of the city, generally radiating around a collection of churches. The First Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1860 with Elder Rose of Savannah serving as pastor. The congregation's initial building stood at Broome Street and North 2nd Street, but in 1873 a new site was acquired at 20 South 9th Street and construction of the Gothic Revival sanctuary was completed the following year. (Figure 3-17) Prompted by financial and political gains associated with the Reconstruction era, sixty-nine African-American residents organized the New Zion Baptist Church in 1870 under the leadership of the Reverend Lewis Cook. The nascent congregation acquired a lot on Centre Street in 1878 and completed a wood-frame sanctuary in 1881. Fire destroyed the first building in 1907, but a larger masonry Gothic Revival church arose from the ashes later that year through the leadership of the Reverend P. A. Callaham. (Figure 3-18) William Rivers, a prominent African-American mason, supervised the construction of the new building. In 1895, under the direction of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Fernandina's Catholics provided for an African-American Catholic church in Old Town. Father Kilcoyne, then the priest of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, established the new church, which the diocese named St. Peter Claver Chapel. The African-American Catholic parish remained at Old Town until the 1920s, when the diocese moved it into Fernandina (New Zion Baptist Church cornerstones; New Zion Baptist Church State Historic Site Marker; Johannes 2000:71; Gallagher 1999:104).

In June 1880, when the census bureau inventoried Fernandina's residents, enumerator William Wood, Jr. recorded several dozen African-American households. The population sprinkled the city's streets with churches, commercial stores, and residences generally radiating east of 8th Street. Not surprisingly, many of Fernandina's African-Americans worked for the railroad either in the company's shops or abroad locomotives and freight and passenger trains. Railroad workers of the era included Alfred Collins, Silvester Ellison, Allen Gibbs, John Hays, Thomas Heddin, Samuel Howard, Hector Hyde, Edward Johnson, Henry Kennedy, and Thomas Wilson. Frederick Gibson measured lumber for a timber company and Ganus Spicer and John Felder worked in a



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8NA00105
Nassau County Courthouse
Italianate Style
Built 1891
416 Centre Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-16

Figure: 3-16

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Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



8NA00513
First Missionary Baptist Church
Gothic Revival Style
Built 1874
20 South 9th Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-17

Figure: 3-17

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8NA00673
 New Zion Baptist Church
 Gothic Revival Style
 Built 1907
 10 South 10th Street



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 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-18

Figure: 3-18

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

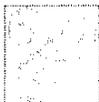
Date: April 2007

saw mill. James McGriffin was a drayman operating a mule and wagon. Chester Bradley served as a municipal policeman. Carpenters William Joseph, Edward Langley, and Levy Young built many houses of the period. These tradesmen and laborers and other African Americans who worked as businessmen, doctors, pastors, and teachers contributed to a vibrant fully-developed neighborhood (Sanborn 1891; Census Bureau 1880 Nassau County Fernandina Precinct).

By the 1890s, Jacksonville had eclipsed Fernandina as a major port on the South Atlantic Coast. Both cities were rocked by yellow-fever epidemics and longshoremen's strike, but Fernandina seemed less capable of surviving the turbulence than the larger port city. Marketing itself as Florida's gateway city, Jacksonville supported several railroads companies in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and several more arrived in the opening decade of the twentieth century. In addition, the federal government deepened the main channel of the St. Johns River and improved the river's mouth to accommodate increasingly larger ships. Hard freezes in December 1894 and February 1895 severely curtailed citrus shipments, killed vegetable fields, and drove much of the state's tourist economy into south Florida. After enjoying many years of a growing tourist market, the Egmont Hotel and Florida House began a slow decline in patrons. Indeed, the 1897 Sanborn Company map indicated the hotel had been "closed tight" and in 1901 the three-story wood frame hotel was demolished. By then, Fernandina's greatest promoter, David Levy Yulee, had died and even the best efforts of promoter and businessman Samuel Swann could not overcome the effects of the freezes and rail and river center to the south. Still, Fernandina had developed a solid infrastructure to accommodate, albeit at a slower pace, the growth of new industries that guided the economy in the early twentieth century (Johannes 2000:72).

Twentieth Century Development, 1900-1957

Scholars often term the opening two decades of the twentieth century as the Progressive Era, an interval associated with reform movements in banking, business, conservation, education, food and drugs, government, labor, and transportation in the United States. The "Square Deal" and "New Freedom" espoused by presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson became emblematic Democratic Party watchwords for a generation and provided a backdrop for an even larger Democratic Party program, the "New Deal," implemented several decades later. Generally defined as the years 1896 to 1917, the Progressive Era also brought substantial changes to America's landscape. Tangible changes in Florida included land reclamation projects, the expansion of the citrus industry, the construction of new schools, highways, and railroad tracks, and a boom that resulted in thousands of new buildings in communities and villages alike. During the era, Florida's forests yielded more naval stores than any other state in the Union and hundreds of lumber companies harvested thousand of acres of Florida's pine forests to help make the boom possible. The state's reorganization and funding assistance to institutions of higher education. The growth also spurred the organization of new churches and some congregations expanded and modernized older sanctuaries. The state's population almost doubled in size, increasing from 528,542 in 1900 to 968,470 in 1920. The cities of Jacksonville, Key West, Pensacola, and Tampa emerged as major ports.



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Fernandina initially participated in the overall state and national growth pattern, but then showed an unexpected decline with the population increasing from 3,245 in 1900 to 3,482 in 1910, and falling to 3,147 in 1920. The economy was tied primarily to the fishing, shipping, naval stores, lumber, and railroad industries. Responding to the initial growth pattern, the local government launched a program of municipal improvements, building a new city hall in 1904 and paving many of its streets with vitrified bricks. Architect Rutledge Holmes of Jacksonville drafted the plans for the new municipal building and the W. T. Hadlow Company of Jacksonville supervised its construction. It appears that the city hall was the first major building constructed in the city since the death of local architect Schuyler in 1895. The commissioning of the design services of the Jacksonville architect indicated the willingness of residents and local officials to cast a wider net for their plans associated with major buildings. An architect transplanted from Charleston, South Carolina to Jacksonville about 1902, Holmes established himself as an important designer of buildings in northeast Florida. He worked in partnership with Arthur Gilkes between 1906 and 1908, and maintained his practice in Jacksonville until 1924. In addition to the Fernandina City Hall, Holmes drafted the plans for several Jacksonville landmarks, including the Baldwin School, Duval County Armory, Duval County Courthouse, Consolidated Building, Professional Building, Public School No. 4, and an addition to the Lackawanna School. With Gilkes, Holmes designed the Seminole Club Clubhouse, but ended his life and career in 1929, when he committed suicide in Quincy, Florida (Wood 1989:10, 34, 64, 93, 132, 143).

Established about 1900, the W. T. Hadlow Company developed Fernandina's new city hall soon after its organization in Jacksonville. The construction company developed some of Jacksonville's distinctive landmarks of the early twentieth century, including the Herkimer Block, H. & W. B. Drew Building, Bisbee Building, and State Board of Health in downtown Jacksonville. By 1914, the company had completed large projects throughout Florida and various southern states. Hadlow constructed buildings at the University of Florida in Gainesville, the Florida State College of Women in Tallahassee, the Clarendon Hotel in Seabreeze, a post office at Greenwood, South Carolina, and banks at Florala, Alabama; Hattiesburg, Mississippi; and Albany and Dawson, Georgia. At Albany, the company also built a courthouse and library. Railroad depots built by the company in the 1920s included those for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in Orlando and the Florida East Coast Railway in Daytona Beach and at Cordele, Georgia. Other large projects completed by the company in the 1920s included the Jacksonville Woman's Club Clubhouse, Old Holy Rosary Catholic Church, and Los Cedros Villa and Florida Yacht Club in Ortega. The Hadlow Company's construction of the SAL shops in Jacksonville in 1907-1908 placed it among the largest construction companies in Florida (Seaboard Air Line Railway, 1914 Shippers Guide, 442-443; Wood 1989:38, 42, 60, 67, 151, 202, 355, 356; Daytona Daily News, 28 May 1924).

Growth also spurred the development of a federal building that included a post office, customs house, and federal court. In 1908, the federal government acquired property at the northeast corner of Center Street and 4th Street and James Knox Taylor, the supervising architect of the United States Treasury, drafted the plans for the new federal building in 1909. Knox's design of



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the Fernandina federal building in 1909 came near the end of his career, which had begun after studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In fifteen years as supervising architect (1897-1912), Knox designed various government buildings at Norwich, Connecticut; Annapolis and Carrollton, Maryland; Asbury Park, New Jersey; and San Francisco, California. The contractor, D. J. Phipps Company of Newport News, Virginia, completed Fernandina's new federal building in 1912 (Figure 3-19), the year that Knox left government service to open a private practice in Boston. Several years later, he moved to Tampa, Florida, where he remained until his death in 1929 (Withey and Withey 1970:592; U. S. Post Office File AIMH).

The development of the new city hall, federal building, and numerous dwellings and several commercial buildings in the opening decade of the twentieth century was driven, in part, by naval stores and turpentine imported into Fernandina from north and central Florida and south Georgia for shipment to processors and manufacturers. In Florida, the use of pine tree sap, called "naval stores" since the seventeenth century for its use as a caulk to seal seams of wooden ships, dates to the first Spanish period. Spanish settlers had chipped trees to obtain sap for various uses. Naval stores extraction increased during the English period (1764-1783), but slowed with the return of Florida to Spain following the American Revolution. Florida ranked fourth in the nation in the production of naval stores by 1850. In the 1880s, the railroad brought settlers and investors who perceived a great wealth in the natural resources of the state. Turpentine harvesting gained momentum in the 1890s. By 1900, Florida's naval stores industry, valued at \$7,794,101, accounted for nearly 32% of the nation's production. Between 1905 and 1923, Florida ranked first in the nation in naval stores output. Possessing both rail connections and a deep harbor, Fernandina became an important exporter of naval stores and lumber. By 1938, the state stood in second place in production, falling slightly behind Georgia, but still produced nearly twenty percent of naval stores worldwide. By then, Florida's forest wealth had been depleted to one-quarter its volume from a century earlier (WPA 1939:88, 377-378; Rerick 1902 2:316; Lauriault 1989:310-328).

During the early twentieth century, Florida's turpentine camps varied in size depending on the resources of the company. Most consisted of a fire still, spirit shed and glue pot, rosin yard, blacksmith and cooperage shed, cup-cleaning vat, barn and wagon shed, and living quarters for the manager and workers. During a season, an average camp would harvest about 50,000 trees, or 2,500 acres, typically utilizing trees with a diameter greater than nine inches. In sparse forests, one worker could manage upwards of ten acres. The Florida Naval Stores and Commission Company of Jacksonville, perhaps the largest and earliest naval stores enterprise in the state, were organized in 1899. By 1902, the company owned 250,000 acres of timber, and handled naval stores processed from an additional 1,000,000 acres controlled by other Florida operators. The firm employed 5,000 men who worked in a yard capable of containing 100,000 barrels of resin, 10,000 barrels of turpentine, and two storage tanks of 10,000 gallons each (WPA 1939:88, 377-378; Rerick 1902 2: 316; USDA 1938:18).

In Florida, turpentine camps generally were centrally located within a forest owned or leased by



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8NA00660
Fernandina Beach United States Post Office
Second Renaissance Revival Style
Completed 1912
401 Centre Street



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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-19

Figure: 3-19

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

a company to facilitate transportation of the sap to the still. Each tract was assessed in a preliminary survey, when a "woods rider" marked suitable trees with an axe smoothing the bark several feet above the ground. A "chipper" would hew three to five slashes about $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep into each tree three to four feet from the roots. Below this "face" were set metal gutters and clay or galvanized iron cups. As the cups filled with the resinous sap, generally once per month, they were emptied, or "dipped," into metal buckets, which, in turn were emptied into fifty-five gallon barrels. The face on each tree was gradually lengthened to extract more sap, and the tree eventually bled to death. After the trees yielded most of their sap, lumber companies harvested them for their lumber (WPA 1939:378).

The still typically consisted of a copper kettle with a removable lid, built into a semi-round brick firebox. Sap was poured into the kettle, which ranged in size between six-barrel or ten-barrel quantities with one barrel containing fifty-five gallons. Water was added to the sap, which then was heated. The turpentine would begin to vaporize at 212° Fahrenheit, rising into a hollow arm attached to the kettle lid. As part of the distillation process, the vapor traveled through a copper worm submerged in a tank of cold water with the resulting liquid discharged into a separator barrel, which collected the condensed spirits of turpentine. Rosin, a by-product, remained in the kettle after the sap-boiling process was complete. The turpentine was generally packed into steel drums and the rosin in wood barrels for shipment to market, the largest of which in Florida included Apalachicola, Jacksonville, and Pensacola. Until the advent of new synthetics and improved chemicals in the middle of the twentieth century, naval stores were important products in the manufacturing of ink, leather dressings, paint, paper, pharmaceutical preparations, soap, and varnish. Rosin products continue to have applications in baseball for the pitcher's hand, in dance on the soles of slippers, and in music on the strings of instruments. A publication on naval stores in northeast Florida issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture confirmed Nassau County as a major source of naval stores into the 1930s. Fernandina's port benefited from this forest production with ships bearing the product to distant distillers and manufacturers. Along Fernandina's docks, the National Transportation and Terminal Company developed a large facility to accommodate the import of spirits and turpentine by railroad and exports of the products aboard ships (WPA 1939:378; Lauriault 1989:314; Sanborn 1903, 1909).

The naval stores and lumber industries provided wealth to a number of Fernandina's residents in the early twentieth century. Nathaniel B. Borden was prominent among Fernandina's industrial and commercial interests. A native of Jackson, Mississippi, Borden arrived in Fernandina after the Civil War to work as an agent for a New York lumber company, which shipped Florida's forest products to northern ports. In 1892, Borden organized N. B. Borden & Company, an export business through which he acquired ships and built railroad tie and lumber docks at the foot of Dade Street in Fernandina. The lumber merchant participated in filibustering expeditions to Cuba in the late-1890s and his Fernandina warehouses were suspected by federal authorities of harboring arms and ammunition planned for shipment to Cuban patriots. In 1907, Borden married Florence Reynolds of Brooklyn, New York and he built his bride *Villas Las Palmas*, one of Fernandina's residential gems of early twentieth century. Located at 315 Alachua Street



(Figure 3-20), the dwelling occupied the former gardens of the adjacent home of David Levy Yulee. An architect drafted the plans for the Borden House in 1908 and builder John R. Mann of Fernandina completed the Mission Revival style dwelling in 1910. Other distinctive houses assembled during the era included the "Egmont Houses," four two-story dwellings at the corner of South 7th Street and Beech Street. The homes were built following the demolition of the Egmont Hotel, which offered salvage material used in part to construct the new dwellings in 1901 (Rerick 1902 2:446-447; Chapin 1914 2:631-632; Sanborn 1909; Johannes 2000:72, 79, 90; *Florida Times Union*, 5 October 1908).

In addition to *Villas Las Palmas*, builder John Mann constructed many of Fernandina's early twentieth century dwellings. Born in Orange Springs, Florida in 1861, Mann moved with his family to St. Marys, Georgia in 1869 and worked as a carpenter on Andrew Carnegie's Dungeness Mansion on Cumberland Island in the 1880s. The development of large homes in Fernandina in the early 1880s encouraged the carpenter to relocate to Nassau County's seat of government in 1886. His brother served as contractor for the Nassau County Courthouse in 1891, and John Mann worked as a carpenter on the project. Later, he started his own construction business and supervised the development of numerous buildings in Fernandina, including the Keystone Hotel, Allan Building, Baker House, Borden House, Horsey House, Hoyt House, Humphrey House, Palmer House, and Memorial Methodist Church (John R. Mann File AIMH).

Generally, after 1916, the building trades declined as the United States turned its energies toward assisting the allied forces in World War I. Federal government restrictions on the construction industry reduced commercial development and house building, causing a postwar housing shortage whose effects were aggravated by rising material costs. Fernandina showed signs of slowing growth; between 1913 and 1917 port shipments fell from 552,835 tons to 55,701 tons and had only rebounded to 473,863 tons by 1919. In 1920, only sixty-one vessels with a draft of sixteen feet or more transported shipments from Fernandina. Despite the down turn in the local economy, the period between 1900 and World War I brought expansion to the city as residents and property owners developed new public, housing, and commercial buildings, and businessmen and railroads expanded their holdings and infrastructure (House 1924:8).

John Mann's construction of the Methodist church on Centre Street (Figure 3-21) came near the height of the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s and represents one of the largest projects of the era. In the decade following World War I, the nation entered a period of rapid economic expansion. The population of Florida increased from 968,470 to 1,468,211 and the legislature created thirteen new counties, mostly in south Florida. Improved transportation networks facilitated travel by automobile and railroad. By 1927, 6,000 miles of railroad tracks crisscrossed the state and 1,600 miles of roadways supported vehicular traffic. In early-1925, twenty-five passenger trains arrived daily in Jacksonville carrying 600,000 travelers to Florida destinations. That year, the Florida East Coast Railway Company installed a second track on its mainline to increase the railroad's ability to transport passengers and freight. Jacksonville's chamber of commerce also reported that 150,000 out-of-state automobiles passed through the city that





Villas Las Palmas/N. B. Borden House
 Mission Revival Style
 Built 1910
 315 Alachua Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-20

Figure: 3-20

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First United Methodist Church of Fernandina Beach
Classical Revival Style
Built 1926
601 Centre Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-21

Figure: 3-21

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

season. Real estate sales mushroomed, quickly inflating property values. Although the land boom had its genesis in south Florida, in virtually every Florida city and town new subdivisions were platted and lots sold and re-sold for quick profits (Tebeau 1971:377-382).

Fernandina appears to have lost ground during the land boom with the population declining from 3,147 in 1920 to 3,023 in 1930. In February 1926, the Sanborn Map Company estimated the population of the city at 5,400, but appears to have included Amelia Beach, Old Town, and neighborhoods outside the municipal limits in its statistic. Still, new homes and some commercial structures infilled lots along and surrounding Centre Street. Most were smaller in size and less elaborate than those built in the late nineteenth century. In the 1910s, new fish houses were built along the banks of the Amelia River and by the mid-1920s numerous fish houses dotted Fernandina's port. Some of those were associated with the commercial shrimp fishing industry. Pioneers in the industry included Solicito "Mike" Salvador who launched his career hauling a shrimp seine net behind a power boat. A native of Italy, Salvador arrived in Fernandina in 1898 and eventually rigged his boats with modified Otter Trawl nets. In 1906, he established Salvador Fish Company and shipped shrimp to cities along the eastern seaboard as well as to California, Canada, and Denmark. Later, William Corkum introduced the modern trawl net into Fernandina's shrimp industry. A New England native, Corkum arrived in Fernandina in 1913 to develop a bluefish market. Nets filled with inland waterway shrimp persuaded him instead to fish for shrimp with a large diesel powered watercraft up to seventy-five feet in the Atlantic Ocean. Each developed fish houses to process their catch and berth their boats. Elsewhere on the docks, the Gulf Refining Company and Standard Oil Company had established a presence by the 1920s. In the early 1920s, 400,000 tons of phosphate from central Florida was shipped from Fernandina's port, but by 1926 the Florida Terminal Company had closed its phosphate warehouse (Sanborn 1926; WPA 1939:374-375).

Aging buildings compelled the Nassau County School Board to replace some of its public schools. In 1927, the board completed Public School No. 1 (Figure 3-22) at 1201 Atlantic Avenue and Peck High School at 516 South 10th Street. The board hired Jacksonville Roy A. Benjamin to prepare the plans for each building. A charter member of the Florida Association of Architects, Benjamin was the 31st architect to be granted a license to practice his craft in Florida by the Florida State Board of Architecture. He contributed to the rebuilding of Jacksonville following its devastating May 1901 fire. His landmark projects included the Chamber of Commerce Building, Elks Club, Jewish Center, Otis Elevator Building, Park Lane Apartments, Scottish Rite Temple, and State Board of Health Building. Beyond the two Fernandina schools, Benjamin drafted the plans for the John Gorrie and Kirby-Smith junior high schools. He became best known, however, as a theater architect, designing approximately 200 movie houses throughout the South, including the Arcade Theater, Center Theater, Florida Theatre, Riverside Theater, and San Marco Theater in Jacksonville. (Dovell 1952 4:839-841; *Florida Times Union*, 29 January 1963, 10 October 1982; Florida Master Site File).

Fernandina's African-American population showed signs of growth as the neighborhood



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Fernandina Beach High School
 Classical Revival Style
 Built 1927
 1201 Atlantic Avenue



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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project

City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-22

Figure: 3-22

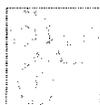
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Date: April 2007

expanded in size and new buildings were constructed. In 1920, the congregation of New Zion Baptist Church improved their sanctuary with a distinctive side entrance under the leadership of the Reverend J. Rayford Talley. Deacons directing some of the spiritual affairs of the church then consisted of A. Baker, J. Cook, R. Drummonds, W. Isom, J. Lewis, H. Love, R. Merrell, and S. Mitchell. Trustees supervising the church's finances and especially the improvement to the sanctuary consisted of R. Drummonds, S. Edwards, W. Flowers, E. Jones, and J. Robinson. To the north of Centre Street, two new African-American churches were constructed. The Catholic diocese moved its sanctuary for African-Americans from Old Town into the city, constructing St. Peter Claver Catholic Church at 302 North 3rd Street in 1924 (Figure 3-23). Farther east, the Reverend L. C. Way lead his congregation in 1926 to build Mt. Calvary Baptist Church (Figure 3-24) at 905 Broome Street. But, the largest project in the city's African-American neighborhood was Peck High School at 516 South 10th Street. Completed by the Grahn Construction Company in 1928, Peck High School (Figure 3-25) was developed through the impetus of William H. Peck, the educational leader of African-Americans on Amelia Island. Teacher and principal of Fernandina's African-American school, Peck arrived in Fernandina from Washington, D.C. in 1887. A graduate of Howard University, Peck was appointed principal of Fernandina's African-American school that year, following the death of its principal Moses Payne, a victim of the yellow fever epidemic. Tireless and gifted in his profession, Peck by 1894 had established a program teaching students through the 10th grade and in 1908 established a high school curriculum. In 1911, that school, then known as Nassau Colored School Number 1, was renamed Peck High School. Peck was instrumental in securing funds through the Rosenwald Foundation for the development of the school (Johannes 2000:69, 71, 80, 99; Church Cornerstone; School Date Plate)

Rosenwald initially endowed the Fund with \$20,000,000. Accrued interest and additional donations increased the endowment to \$34,000,000 by 1929. By 1932, the Fund had distributed over \$4,000,000 for rural school construction. In all, between 1914 and 1932 the Rosenwald Fund and its predecessor organization assisted in the development of over 5,300 rural schools in 853 counties in fifteen southern states. The first Rosenwald schools were built in Alabama (1914) and the following year Tennessee's education department received its initial funds. The states with the most active records of building schools with Rosenwald support included North Carolina (787), Mississippi (557), and South Carolina (481). Florida fell far behind the rest of the South, however, building its first "Rosenwald school" in 1921 and completing only 126 schools by 1932. In addition, one teacher's home and four shops were assembled in Florida using Rosenwald Funds. Large projects supported by the Rosenwald Fund near the close of the era included the Practice School at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, the Gould's School in Dade County, and Industrial High School in Palm Beach County. Fernandina's Peck High School was among the largest of the African-American public schools funded by the Rosenwald Foundation in Florida and only one of a handful constructed using brick. Built on a four-acre site, the high school was completed at a cost of \$59,040 with the Rosenwald Foundation contributing \$2,100 toward its construction. It was the only Rosenwald school developed in Nassau County by the foundation, a tribute to the expertise of William Peck





St. Peter's Claver Catholic Church
Mission Revival Style
Built 1924
202 North 4th Street



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Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-23

Figure: 3-23

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Date: April 2007



8NA00628
Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Frame Vernacular Style
Built 1926
905 Broome Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-24

Figure: 3-24

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



8NA00132
 Peck High School
 Masonry Vernacular Style
 Built 1927
 516 South 10th Street



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City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-25

Figure: 3-25

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

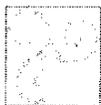
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Date: April 2007

(Hanchett 1988:425-427; Hoffschwelle 1993:109-129; Anderson 1988:155; Cawthon 1932:171; "Total Cost for Buildings, Grounds & Equipment in Florida," Rosenwald Fund, Florida File, Fisk University Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee).

The completion of Peck High School came at the close of the Florida Land Boom. The air began to seep out of Florida's speculative land bubble in late 1925. Statewide bank deposits reached \$875,000,000 in 1925, but then began to decline. In August the FEC announced an embargo on freight shipments to south Florida, where ports and rail terminals became clogged with unused building supplies. Bankers and businessmen throughout the nation complained about transfers of money to Florida. As the collapse unfolded and construction slowed, it became clear that many subdivisions would remain undeveloped and become bankrupt. Some banks collapsed, were reorganized, and then failed again. Many investors lost faith in the state's economic future. As construction tapered off, devastating hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 flooded several south Florida communities, swept buildings off foundations, and killed thousands of people, providing a sad closing chapter to the land speculation fever gone bust. Approximately 2,000 people lost their lives in Palm Beach and Martin Counties during the 1928 hurricane, the second-most deadly hurricane of the twentieth century. The storm assaulted Florida's peninsula in a south-to-north arc, exited near the mouth of the St. Johns River and wreaked havoc on some of Florida's northeast cities and towns. Although both storms entered the peninsula in south Florida, the aftermath of the storms reverberated throughout the state, and temporarily altered Florida's east coast vacationland image to that of a wasteland of wind-swept beaches. Although many people of Duval County suffered financial reverses from the collapse of the boom, the misfortunes of some became windfalls for others. Sagging property values and foreclosed properties attracted investors fortunate enough to have retained some level of wealth after the Depression began. Within a decade of the collapse of the land boom, however, renewed tourism and construction promised jobs and revitalized growth (Tebeau 1971:386-390).

Many of Florida's home owners and developers were still reeling from the collapse of the land boom when, in October 1929, the stock market began its downward spiral into the Great Depression. The financial panic delivered its full impact in the early-1930s. By 1933, numerous Florida banks had failed. Deposits and investments fell and annual incomes declined statewide. At Fernandina, growth initially flagged, but driven by a steady demand for shrimp and fish products and then the introduction of a major factory by the National Container Corporation along the Amelia River, the economy experienced renewed growth late in the decade. Spawned in the early twentieth century, a shrimp industry thrived in the 1930s, when three canneries were installed near the docks. Fernandina also became a production and shipping center for Kraft paper, paper bags, and pulp wood for newsprint. In the late-1930s, Kraft Corporation of America built a \$7,000,000 paper plant at Fernandina. During a two year period when the company built the pulp mill, a temporary housing shortage ensued and dozens of prospective employees anxiously awaited jobs. Among other developments, the city's industries included a menhaden fertilizer factory. Phosphate and pulp wood remained important commodities delivered by the railroad and transported by ship to markets. The Fernandina Pulp & Paper Company, Nassau Fertilizer & Oil Company, and Kraft Corporation were industries that depended upon



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Fernandina's harbor and the supporting Intracoastal Waterway. The population of Fernandina remained stable, recorded at 3,492 in 1940, showing only a slight upward trend from the 1930 statistic (Morris 1949:250; Tebeau 1971:393-402; WPA 1939:374).

During the Great Depression, the Intracoastal Waterway between Amelia Island and mainland Nassau County gained significance associated with an increase in commercial shipping and recreational yachts and motor boats plying the region's inland waterways. Anchoring the south end of the sea islands of Georgia and South Carolina, Cumberland Sound and Amelia Island accommodated increasing numbers of relatively small boats. By 1936, approximately 3,600 vessels with drafts between three and ten feet plied the Intracoastal Waterway between Fernandina and Savannah. Small yachts, sailboats, and motor boats accounted for nearly 700 of the watercraft. During the period, Amelia Island benefited from a flush tourist economy enjoyed at Jekyll Island and St. Simon's Island to the north. The establishment of Fort Clinch State Park at the northern end of Amelia Island offered a popular tourist destination near the Intracoastal Waterway (House 1938:20; House 1941:3, 6).

Fort Clinch became a top attraction in the state park system. Local support came from the City of Fernandina, the County of Nassau, local civic clubs, and several individuals, including Representative Daniel Kelly and Jacksonville historian T. Frederick Davis. Harry Lee Baker, Florida's state forester, also advocated the establishment of a park at Fort Clinch because he believed the site would provide tourists with a sense of the region's rich history and offer recreational facilities in a natural seashore and hammock environment. Approximately 1,000 acres of land was acquired for the park. The City of Fernandina donated \$6,500 and provided underwriting for an additional \$7,500. The Florida Park Service contributed \$5,000. The park experienced considerable use even in advance of any improvements. Park officials reported an attendance of 36,000 in 1936, the highest for any Florida state park except Highlands Hammock near Sebring. In 1936, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees from Company 2444 at Gold Head Branch State Park were temporarily assigned to a side camp at the fort, where they conducted some stabilization work to the structure. With assistance from Congressman Robert "Lex" Green, the CCC transferred Company 1420 to Fort Clinch in July 1938. Assigned project number SP-8, the CCC camp was located at McClure's Hill, a site one mile from the fort in the vicinity of Old Town Fernandina. CCC enrollees worked at stabilizing and rehabilitating fort buildings, participated in conservation activities on dune and beach areas, constructed roads, and assembled recreational and support buildings for visitors and park personnel. Park officials dedicated Fort Clinch State Park in 1939 and opened it to the public in 1940 (Civilian Conservation Corps 1937:70-71, 73, 86-87; Civilian Conservation Corps 1939; Scoggin 1947:20; Florida Forest and Park Service 1938a: 62; Florida Forest and Park Service 1940:36, 37; Holmes 1986:5).

During the 1930s, the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt conceived and engineered a "new deal for the American people." Roosevelt's New Deal consisted, in part, of a series of Federal programs to improve the nation's infrastructure by constructing buildings, conserving natural resources, and creating recreational facilities. Primarily focused on furnishing jobs to the unemployed, this series of "alphabet programs," so-called for the acronyms assigned



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to them, provided employment and promoted economic growth. Designed as matching grants, these programs were responsive to political and economic changes to help states and municipalities improve infrastructure through the Civil Works Administration (CWA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Public Works Administration (PWA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA). The implementation and elimination of these programs demonstrated the flexibility of the Roosevelt administration in creating pragmatic, responsive bureaucratic agencies. In Nassau County, the WPA assisted in the improvement of U. S. Highway 17 and bridges spanning the Nassau River and the development of the Callahan Airport. In Fernandina, New Deal programs assisted in the repair and improvement of some of the city's infrastructure. A CCC camp installed at Hilliard assisted with various forest-related projects in the region. Working in the WPA's Federal Writers' Project, Alice Youngblood composed a tour of the county and pointed out Pine Breeze Farms east of Callahan as one of the largest poultry farms in the southeast (Johannes 2000:188, 211-212; Florida Photographic Collection PRO1743).

Through the vision and persistence of Abraham Lincoln Lewis, the Afro-American Insurance Company of Jacksonville developed American Beach during the Great Depression. A native of Florida, A. L. Lewis worked as a mill machinist in Jacksonville, and helped found the Afro-American Industrial and Benefit Association about 1901. Organized by A. L. Lewis and W. H. Lee, the Afro-American Corporation of Duval County provided insurance needs for blacks throughout northeast Florida. The company also opened several large developments in Jacksonville and St. Johns County. By the 1930s, Lewis had built the life insurance business into one of the largest black-owned companies in Florida. He found the south end of Amelia Island relatively unpopulated and suitable as a beach and resort for African-Americans. For years, blacks had been relegated to Pablo Beach only on Mondays for their beach-going activities, and Lewis intended to provide blacks with their own beach. He began purchasing property through the company's pension bureau, and soon a development was surveyed and dunes leveled north of Franklinton. Houses appeared. Willie S. Rivers, a Jacksonville contractor, completed the first dwelling at the beach in 1935. The beach and surrounding real estate soon became a popular vacation spot for northeast Florida's black population (Phelts 1997:1-47).

The few large projects completed in Fernandina during the 1930s came late in the decade after the worst effects of the Great Depression had faded. Those projects included the Nassau County Jail and Nassau County Hospital. Since the 1870s, a county jail had been located in Fernandina at the northwest corner of 3rd Street and Cedar Street. At that location, different wood-frame and masonry buildings, even a wood-frame "calaboose," had securely held prisoners over the decades. Acknowledging their aging facility and the attractive new school buildings recently planned by Roy Benjamin of Jacksonville, Nassau County's commissioners hired the Duval County architect to design their new jail with Art Modern influences. Benjamin submitted the plans in July 1937 and Charles J. Davis, Inc. of Jacksonville supervised construction of the new facility. Iron work for the doors and cells was fabricated by the Decatur Iron & Steel Company of Decatur, Alabama. The Davis company demolished the aging two-story facility and completed

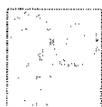


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construction of the new two-story jail in April 1938 (Figure 3-26). The Nassau County Hospital on North 14th Street followed several years later. Jacksonville architect Abner C. Hopkins drafted the plans for the \$60,000 building in 1941, the same year that the school board completed a new gymnasium west of the 1920s high school (Sanborn 1903, 1909, 1926; Nassau County Jail File AIMH; Minutes, Board of County Commissioners, Nassau County, 14 April, 11, 17 August 1937, 28 April 1938, 11 September 1940, 4 August 1941; Sanborn 1960).

Four years after the completion of the jail, the United States entered World War II, which lifted the nation out of the Great Depression. Florida with its flat terrain and moderate climate played a significant role in the war, arguably the pivotal event of the twentieth century in United States history. The war lifted the American economy out of the Great Depression, and changed the face of Florida's landscape beginning in the late-1930s, when the War Department expanded some existing facilities and began construction of several large installations. Increased development occurred after Germany attacked Poland, and Congress raised spending levels to new heights after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. An important part of a nationwide coastal defense program, watch towers dotted Florida's coastline, traditionally placed about every ten miles apart. But, soon substantial military spending washed across the state. By 1945, the United States had allocated more resources to the war effort and supported more construction projects than anytime in its history. Florida received a significant amount of that military construction and activity. The flood of wartime projects brought an era of prosperity to the nation. By 1943, about sixty primary military installations supporting the Army, Army Air Corps, and Navy occupied sites in Florida and dozens of smaller support facilities. The Navy constructed one of the nation's largest naval air stations at Jacksonville, and auxiliary fields (AAF), out lying fields (OLF), and emergency landing fields (ELF), including ELF Callahan, dotted the surrounding countryside (Johannes 2000:211; Gannon 1996:323-324).

By 1945, activities associated with the Fernandina's docks, Kraft Paper, Container Corporation, and World War II pushed the city's population to 4,438, the first notable gain in several decades. A post-war boom ensued with new commercial and residential buildings constructed throughout the city. In 1947, the municipal appended the term "beach" to its name, linking the city with recreational and resort activities along the Atlantic Ocean. The physical development of most Florida counties stalled during World War II, with the exception of military related construction, and then resumed with renewed vigor in the 1950s as the state entered another period of growth. Many veterans who had served on the numerous military bases in Florida during the war returned at its close to seek permanent residence. Nassau County experienced only modest growth in the few decades following the war. Between 1940 and 1950, the county's population inched upwards from 10,826 to 12,811 with much of the growth in Fernandina, which reincorporated as Fernandina Beach in 1947. Part of the post war development included new schools, including Atlantic Avenue Elementary School in 1950 east of the older high school on Atlantic Avenue. In addition, Peck Gymnasium (Figure 3-27) and a new classroom building were added to the north of Peck High School. Other expansion projects included additions to Nassau County Courthouse and Nassau County Jail, both of which were supervised by Jacksonville architect Abner C. Hopkins and completed in 1954. That year, Ward Builders, Inc.



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8NA00287
 Nassau County Jail/Amelia Island Museum of History
 Art Moderne Style
 Built 1938; Addition 1954
 233 South 3rd Street

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The Historic Structure Survey Update Project
 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-26

Figure: 3-26

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



8NA1221
 Peck Gymnasium
 Masonry Vernacular Style
 Built 1956
 516-A South 10th Street



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 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-27

Figure: 3-27

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

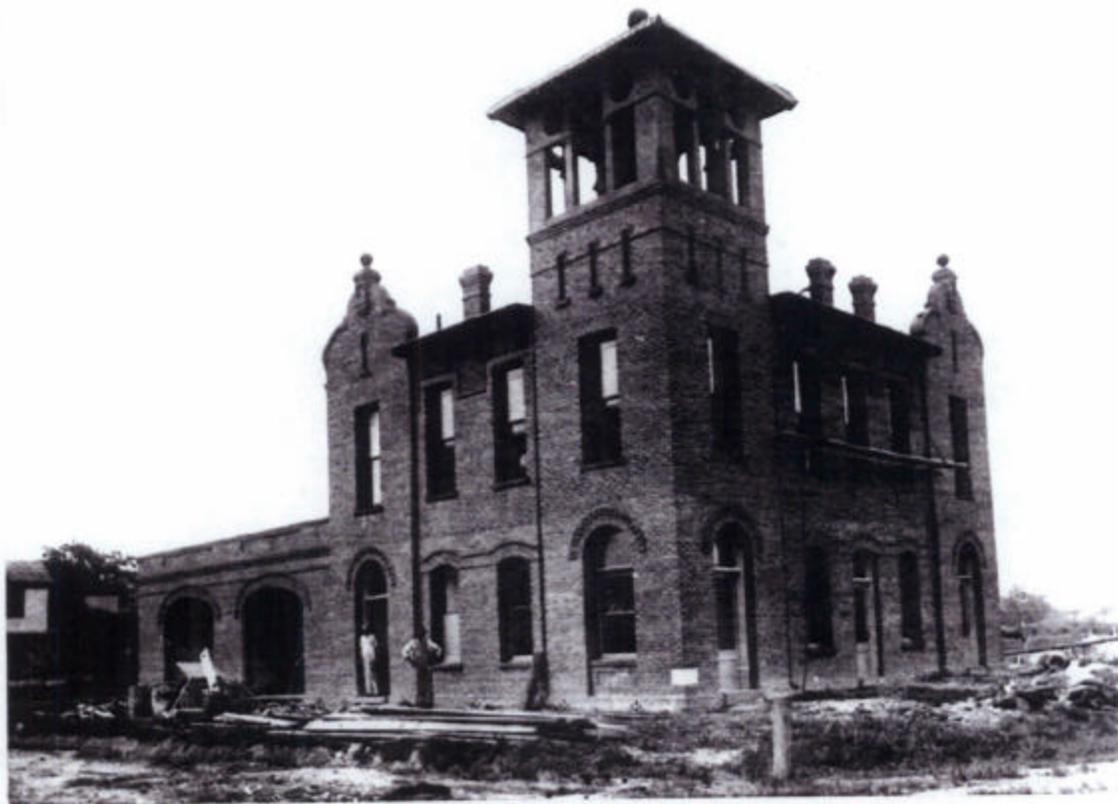
Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007

of Augusta, Georgia opened an office in Fernandina to develop new homes in the city. In 1955, the Coca-Cola Company broke ground for a new building on Ash Street and the Nassau County initiated construction on a new health center. The addition of a new fire station to Fernandina Beach City Hall and then a complete remodeling of the building occurred in the mid-1960s, prompted by a hurricane, presumably either Cleo or Dora (Figures 3-28a, 3-28b, and 3-28c) (Sanborn 1960; Minutes, Board of County Commissioners, Nassau County, 13 October, 18 November 1954; Census Bureau 1951:10-13). Another example of the contemporary style may be found at 604 Centre Street (Figure 3-29).

In the last half of the twentieth century, the city and county's population increased nearly four-fold, rivaling all previous demographic patterns. The county grew quickly during the 1950s and the population reached 17,189 in 1960. Fernandina Beach accounted for nearly one half of that population with 7,276 residents in 1960. But, the city again experienced a decline in the economy and in 1970 the census bureau recorded a population of 6,955. Growth resumed in the 1970s and the population reached 7,227 in 1980. In 2000, the census tallied 10,549 residents and then 11,815 in 2006. Nassau County shared in the growth pattern with the population reaching 32,894 residents in 1980, climbing to 43,941 in 1990, and recorded at 57,663 in 2000. In the opening decade of the twentieth-first century, more people reside in Fernandina Beach than the census bureau had recorded for all of Nassau County in 1940 (Census Bureau 1951:10-13; Morris 1949: 251; Morris 1985:549-551, 557).





8NA1218
Fernandina Beach City Hall, 204 Ash Street
Contemporary Style, Built 1904



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Nassau County, Florida

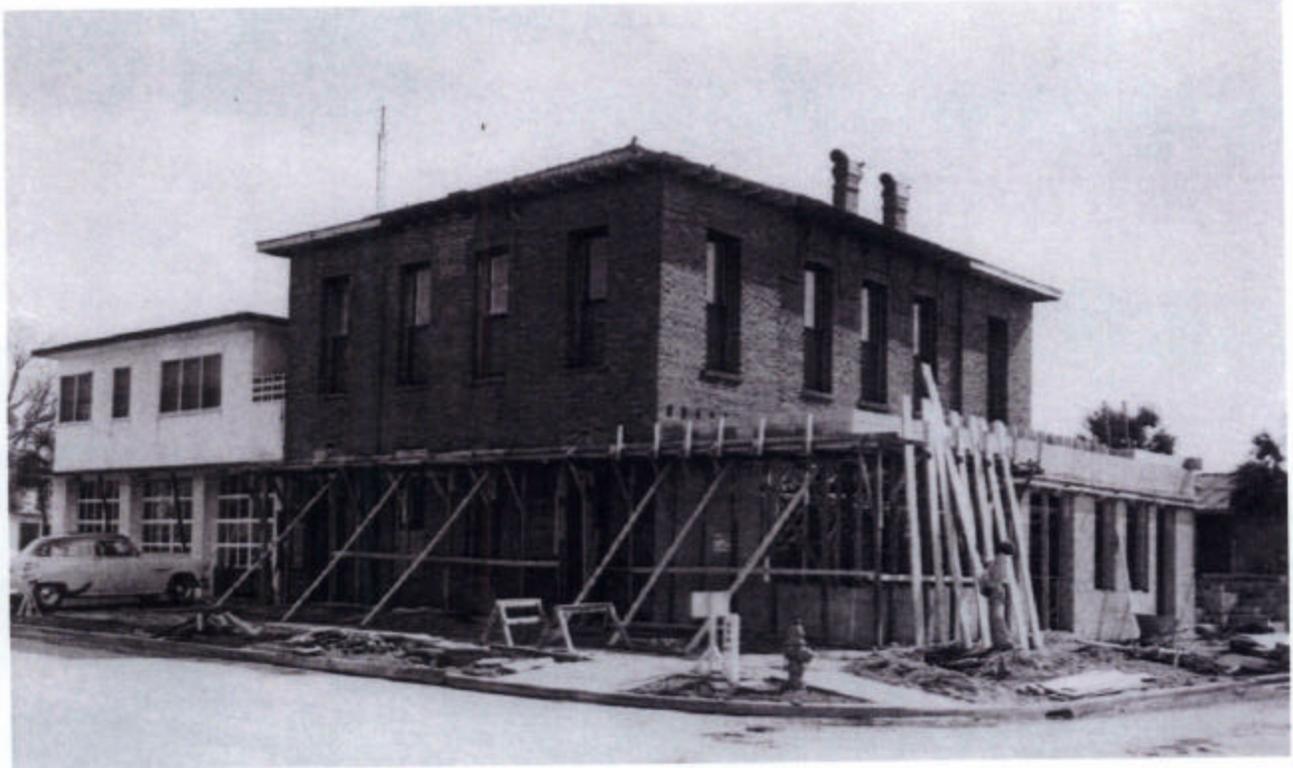
Figure 3-28a

Figure: 3-28a

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: April 2007



8NA1218
Fernandina Beach City Hall, 204 Ash Street
Contemporary Style, Built 1904, Addition c. 1958

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Nassau County, Florida
Figure 3-28b

Figure: 3-28b
Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01
Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007



8NA1218
 Fernandina Beach City Hall, 204 Ash Street
 Contemporary Style, Built 1904, Remodeled c. 1964

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 City of Fernandina Beach
 Nassau County, Florida
Figure 3-28c

Figure: 3-28c
Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01
Scale: Not to Scale
Date: April 2007



8NA1125
 Additional Example of Contemporary Architecture
 604 Centre Street

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 Nassau County, Florida

Figure 3-29

Figure: 3-29

Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01

Scale: Not to Scale

Date: May 2007