

Florida's New Smyrna Colony: A Study in Failure

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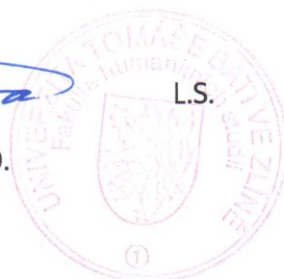
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá selháním kolonie New Smyrna na Floridě, která existovala v letech 1768-1777. Kolonie vznikla z důvodu potřeby osídlení Floridy, která byla po odchodu Španělska téměř vylidněná. Velký vliv na formování celé kolonie, měl její zakladatel Andrew Turnbull. On sám byl ovšem nakonec jedním z důvodů, proč se celá kolonie tak brzy rozpadla. Další faktory, které způsobily její zánik bylo tyranství, porušení předem domluvených smluv, Americká revoluce, ale především konflikt mezi Floridskými Guvernéry a Turnbullem samotným. Zkoumání těchto důvodů je hlavní náplní této bakalářské práce. Jejím obsahem je také dokumentace plánování kolonie, její průběh a odkazy, které zanechala.

Klíčová slova: Florida, Kolonie New Smyrna, Andrew Turnbull, Menorca, St. Augustine, Británie, Španělsko, Spojené státy, nevolnictví, Americká revoluce

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the failure of Florida's New Smyrna Colony, which existed from 1768 to 1777. The colony was established because of the need to repopulate Florida at the end of the First Spanish Period. Andrew Turnbull founded the colony, and he was eventually one of the reasons why it failed. Other causes were tyranny and oppression from overseers, contract violations, the American Revolution, and most importantly, the conflict between Florida's governors and Turnbull himself. The thesis also documents the history of the New Smyrna Colony and its legacy.

Keywords: Florida, New Smyrna Colony, Andrew Turnbull, Minorca, St. Augustine, Britain, Spain, United States, indentured servitude, American Revolution

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I hereby declare that the print version of my bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

"Why should not Athens and Lacedaemon be one day revived in North America? Why should not the city of Turnbull become in a few centuries the residence of politeness, of fine arts, and of elegance?"¹ This statement by Abbe Raynal reflects the optimism of Europeans about the colonizing of the New World in the eighteenth century. There were many colonies, British, Spanish, French, Dutch, etc., some of them important, some not, but this thesis focuses on the largest importation of white inhabitants into America at the time, the New Smyrna colony in Florida.

The story of New Smyrna started in 1763, when the Paris Treaty that ended the Seven Years' War required Spain to yield Florida to Britain. Britain inherited a largely depopulated territory. To rectify this, it offered land grants to people who would settle in Florida and cultivate the land. These grants represented profit opportunities for entrepreneurs like Andrew Turnbull, who decided to transport Europeans to the New World and use them to cultivate his lands. Thus, the New Smyrna Colony was established in 1768 with great hope and fanfare. However, for many reasons, the colony failed after only 9 years. In 1777, oppressed colonists abandoned New Smyrna for St. Augustine, the capital of East Florida.

The first chapter of the thesis provides the reader with necessary background information about Florida and its history. The second chapter documents the planning of the colony, which was connected with Turnbull's voyage to the Southern Europe where he gathered his workforce. The main part of the thesis describes the real situation in New Smyrna Colony and, most importantly, its failure. Various reasons for the colony's collapse are analyzed and put into the perspective. The thesis will prove that the main reason why the colony failed was the dispute between the Governors of Florida and Andrew Turnbull. It also points out how the American Revolution influenced the breakdown of the colony. Lastly, the thesis will provide the information about the legacy of the New Smyrna Colony and of the settlers who survived.

¹ Epaminondas P. Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1978), 5.

1 THE FORMATION OF FLORIDA

In order to understand the context of the New Smyrna Colony, it is crucial to know the history of Florida, in which the colony was located. Christopher Columbus discovered the New World in 1492 when he landed in Bahamas. On the other hand, much fewer people know that during his second voyage he was accompanied by a man named Juan Ponce de León. Columbus left him in Española, and Ponce de León quickly asserted a strong influence over the island. In 1509, he was appointed a governor of Puerto Rico. However, the new governor of the Indies, Diego Columbus, resented this decision because he believed that Puerto Rico should have been under his administration, because the island had been discovered by his father. The King of Spain was forced to dismiss Ponce de León from the office of governor but he at least gave him a license to explore the lands reputed to lie north of the Bahamas. Ponce de León was satisfied with the reparation, mainly because he was well known for his gold obsession and this was the chance to fulfill his dreams.²

Indian legends and a report from Diego de Miruelo, who supposedly wrecked on Florida's shore during his voyage for slaves, convinced Ponce de León that there may be an island to explore. In March 1513, three vessels sailed from San German. One month later on April 3, they saw the peninsula for the first time. Ponce de León and his company went ashore and name the land La Florida, because they arrived at Easter season, which is called Pascua Florida in Spanish. Florida was declared a new Spanish territory.³

A long period of battles against Native Americans ensued. Almost all of the 80 men under Ponce de Leon's command were killed. The second Spanish explorer, Panfilo de Narvaez, was killed with the majority of his crew when he tried to Christianize the natives. Hernando de Soto experienced a similar situation. He came to Florida in 1539 and lost 700 of his 1,000 men.⁴ However, this expedition was partially successful, because it provided new information about inland Florida and about the diversity of Native Americans. Despite

² Samuel P. Turner, "The Caribbean World of Juan Ponce de León and His Discovery of Florida," Culturally La Florida, accessed February 26, 2018, http://www.culturallylaflorida.org/papers/Turner_CaribbeanWorld.pdf.

³ Ibid.

⁴"The Spanish Claim to Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, 1513-1821," National Park Service, accessed February 26, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/american_latino_heritage/Spanish_Claim_to_Florida_Georgia_and_the_Carolinas.html.

these facts, the expeditions continued. Spanish ships brought conquerors, priests and cartographers to Florida.⁵

In 1562, France started to be jealous of the new Spanish territory and encroached upon it. Jean Ribault and Rene Laudonnière were sent to Florida with the task to build forts and drive out the Spanish settlers. However, their efforts failed due to conflicts with natives and due to the arrival of Pedro Menendez de Aviles.⁶ He arrived in Florida in 1565 with the goal of destroying the French Fort Caroline and driving the French out of their lands. He ordered the construction of a fort on the east coast, at St. Augustine. Once finished, he ordered his troops to attack Fort Caroline and destroy it and to kill all of its inhabitants. This done, Menendez became the first Spanish colonial governor of Florida, and he set about creating a mission system across the northern portions of the peninsula, a system that would “civilize” the Indians.⁷

The third country interested in the Florida territory was England. In September 1585, England sent 26 vessels with more than 2000 soldiers to attack Spanish forts in the West Indies. The fleet was under the command of Sir Francis Drake. After sacking St. Domingo and a few other islands in the Caribbean, they sailed to Florida and attacked and successfully sacked and burned St. Augustine. Governor Menendez was determined to rebuild St. Augustine, and with the help of Cuba and Spain, the city was quickly restored.⁸ These attacks on the Florida capital were repeated several times during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, prompting the construction of Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine, a stone fortress that would make it much more difficult to conquer St. Augustine.⁹

At the end of the seventeenth century, England’s rule over the New World had increased and Spain tried to weaken it by founding America’s first free black settlement, Fort Mose, near St. Augustine. The origins of this settlement are derived from a Spanish attempt to destabilize the slave-based economy of English colonists. King Charles II promised that slaves would become free and safe if they ran away from the British colonies. The only

⁵ Pamela Davis-Diaz, "Spain’s Reign in Florida," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 13, 1995, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/263084176?accountid=15518>.

⁶ "Jean Ribault Claims Florida for France," Exploring Florida, accessed February 27, 2018, <https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/ribault/ribault1.htm>.

⁷ "Pedro Menendez de Aviles Claims Florida for Spain," Exploring Florida, accessed February 27, 2018, <https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/menendz/menendz1.htm>.

⁸ William W. Dewhurst, *The history of Saint Augustine, Florida* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), 70-72.

⁹ "Castillo de San Marcos National Monument," National Park Service, accessed March 03, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/american_latino_heritage/Castillo_de_San_Marcos_National_Monument.html.

condition was that they had to convert to Catholicism. In 1730, more than 100 slaves arrived into the settlement and Governor Manuel de Montiano decided to form new military company from them. In 1740, this black military company helped to defend the capital from the army of James Oglethorpe. Fort Mose was destroyed, but England's attack was unsuccessful because England's troops were unable to take the Castillo de San Marcos.¹⁰

In conclusion, the first Spanish rule over the Florida lasted over 200 years and is considered rather unsuccessful. First, Florida did not have enough transportable wealth, so the Spanish government did not support the colony financially. Second, the Spanish failed in their attempt to Christianize and civilize the natives because they were too ethnocentric and they forced them to assimilate and the natives were against that. Furthermore, they consider all native Floridians together as Indians and they were not able to recognize differences between them. Finally, the colony broke down thanks to conflicts with France and England.¹¹

The final clash between these three countries for the North American empire was known as the Seven Years' War (1757-1763). The results of this global conflict were spelled out in the 1763 Treaty of Paris. It was a great victory for Britain and an unmitigated disaster for Spain and France.¹² As a result, France had to give up most of its North American territories to England in exchange for the return of Guadalope and Martinique.¹³ Spain had to exchange Florida for Cuba, which had been captured by England in 1762. As a response, the Spanish evacuated Florida, taking with them many of the surviving Indians. The goal was to leave the colony as empty as possible before the British arrival.¹⁴

¹⁰ Darcie MacMahon, and Kathleen Deagan, "Legacy of Fort Mose," *Archaeology* 49, no. 5 (October 1996): 54-55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41771187>.

¹¹ Gregory Jason Bell, "The British Influence on the Development of Florida, 1763–1783," *Theories and Practices* 3 (2012): 285, accessed February 02, 2018, <http://conference.uaa.utb.cz/tp2011/TheoriesAndPractices2011.pdf#page=285>.

¹² John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 5.

¹³ Consuelo López Springfield, *Daughters of Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 21.

¹⁴ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 5.

2 THE BIRTH OF THE NEW SMYRNA COLONY

2.1 Legal preparation of the colony

Due to the Spanish exodus to Cuba, Florida lacked inhabitants. According to official statistics, in 1763 the colony had only 3,000 inhabitants, not including the Native Americans. In response, the British government had to develop a plan to lure people to Florida, so as to replicate its profitable plantation system there.¹⁵

The first step was to survey and map their new territory. They even divided it into two parts, thereby making administration easier: The peninsula became East Florida, and the "extended panhandle" became West Florida.¹⁶ The land was then parceled up and offered to settlers under the so-called "family right", according to which the head of the family, regardless of race, could claim 100 acres for himself and 50 acres for each family member. If one family could afford more, the patent for an additional amount up to 1,000 acres was issued, but the family had to meet certain conditions. There was also the opportunity to claim grants of 20,000 acres or more, but these were made only by orders of the King in Council. The owners of such grants had to promise to settle a certain number of families in Florida within a certain timeframe. Although this offer was quite fair, it did not attract much attention, in part because Florida remained largely unknown.¹⁷

However, one wealthy Scotsman, Dr. Andrew Turnbull, took notice and saw great potential in the colonization of this newly acquired area. He had spent a long period of time in the Levant, in Smyrna.¹⁸ He married a local woman, the daughter of a Greek salesman. Thanks to such experiences, he knew the Greeks, their skills, their problems and their willingness to emigrate. Therefore, he started to dream of establishing a large and successful colony that would make him wealthy.¹⁹

He soon acted upon his idea. He contacted prominent friends, among them Sir William Duncan, and persuaded them to partner with him on a colonial venture.²⁰ They applied to the

¹⁵ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 10.

¹⁶ Bell, "The British Influence on the Development of Florida, 1763–1783," 285.

¹⁷ "British Land Grants in Florida," Florida Memory, accessed February 02, 2018, <https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/spanishlandgrants/wpa3.php>.

¹⁸ Carita Doggett Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 1919), 16.

¹⁹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 13.

²⁰ Arlene Fradkin, Roger T. Grange, and Dorothy L. Moore, "'Minorcan' Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrna Settlement, Florida, 1766-1777," *Historical Archaeology* 46, no. 1 (2012): 29, Accessed February 5, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23264522>.

king for land grants, and on June 18, 1766, both Turnbull and Duncan were granted 20,000 acres of Florida land. However, these grants came with conditions. Both men were required to populate their lands within ten years with a proportion of one person for every hundred acres, and all the settlers had to be protestants.²¹

After obtaining grants in Florida, Turnbull wanted to see local conditions with his own eyes. He also planned to visit Governor James Grant who tried to recover the country from Spanish rule. Furthermore, he needed to choose the perfect location for his colony. Firstly, he landed in the capital city of East Florida, St. Augustine.²² Then he went south, and about 75 miles from the capital, he discovered Mosquito Inlet. This swampy area was considered as one of the most fertile lands of East Florida. Turnbull was impressed with local conditions, and so he decided to establish his colony right there.²³ Afterward, Governor Grant decided that this newly formed settlement would be named New Smyrna Colony, after the birthplace of Turnbull's wife Maria. Turnbull then just edited the name to Smyrnéa settlement.²⁴

Governor Grant was an experienced soldier. His military carrier began in 1741, and he fought in many important battles, including one against the Cherokees in the Carolinas in 1760 that brought him fame.²⁵ He parlayed this fame into an opportunity to be governor of Florida. Despite all the problems, he was optimistic about the future of this land, which he expressed in a letter to a friend: "This province, which was desert when I came into it tho' inhabited by Spaniards at least two hundred years will soon be a fruitful and plentiful country."²⁶ It did not take long for Grant to realize that Turnbull's Greeks were the best chance for Florida's development, so he offered him help and he aided him until 1771 when he left the New World and returned to England.²⁷

Turnbull then needed to prepare the colony for the Greeks' arrival. He hired a skillful cotton planter as an agricultural overseer and a head carpenter whose task it was to build houses for the new settlers. Governor Grant also purchased 40 African American slaves to

²¹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 13.

²² Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁴ Arlene Fradkin, "Fishing to Survive: Minorcans in Britain's Smyrnea Settlement, Florida, North America, 1766-1777," *Archaeofauna* 22 (2013): 180, Accessed February 17, 2018, <https://revistas.uam.es/archaeofauna/article/download/6381/6857>.

²⁵ Philip C. Tucker, "Notes on the Life of James Grant Prior and Subsequent to His Governorship of East Florida," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1929): 117, Accessed February 6, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30150783>.

²⁶ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

clear the ground, but Turnbull disagreed with that. He wanted to form a permanent establishment and blacks did not fit in his plans. Therefore, the number of black slaves was reduced, and in 1773, there were only 28 of them for the whole colony.²⁸

On April 2, 1767, Turnbull's plans captured the attention of another English businessman. George Grenville joined the company of Turnbull and Duncan, and they together signed the first indenture. In fact, Lord Grenville had served as Britain's prime minister just one year prior. Grenville did not want to be personally connected with this partnership, so he approached his brother Sir Richard Temple to represent his ideas for him. This newly formed partnership was most important for the future of the colony because of the Grenville's connections to the British government. He also brought a significant amount of money thanks to which the area of the colony could be enlarged.²⁹

Turnbull was highly motivated, and he was not ashamed of asking for anything he wanted, including asking the First Lord of Trade and Plantations for a 1,500 £ grant, which encouraged the production of cotton and indigo in East Florida. Moreover, he requested also a bonus of 3 £ per head for the first 500 Greeks who would be brought to the island and for the continuation of the 500 £ payment for years to come.³⁰ Despite Turnbull's connections, the Board of Trade offered him just 40 shilling per head for the first 500 Greeks, although they offset this smaller amount with the opportunity to use one of their sloops to carry settlers to the New World. Turnbull agreed to these terms and was ready to sail in search of colonists.³¹

2.2 Turnbull's voyage to Southern Europe

In 1767, Turnbull was ready to sail to the Archipelago islands to look for laborers. He believed that Mediterranean people were skillful planters with a great knowledge of cultivation of crops in a hot climate. In fact, the production of commercial crops was the main reason of the whole venture, so it was crucial to choose the right settlers.³²

²⁸ Fradkin, Grange, and Moore, "'Minorcan' Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrna Settlement, Florida, 1766-1777," 29.

²⁹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

³¹ Epaminondas P. Panagopoulos, "The Background of the Greek Settlers in the New Smyrna Colony," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (October 1956): 101, Accessed February 15, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30139009>.

³² Fradkin, "Fishing to Survive: Minorcans in Britain's Smyrna Settlement, Florida, North America, 1766-1777," 180.

At first, Turnbull decided to go to Mahon, which was the capital city of the island of Minorca. Minorca was a perfect location for gathering settlers because it was close to France, Italy, Spain, and Africa. However, Turnbull planned to use it just as a naval base and look for colonist in the nearby islands and countries. During his stay in Mahon, Turnbull heard rumors that in the Italian town Leghorn were many husbandmen who would gladly leave their land and join his adventure. He decided to give it a chance, and in June 1767, he arrived at Leghorn and he quickly found strangers willing to follow him. Nonetheless, the governor of Leghorn was against the migration because he feared that it would cause a mass exodus, which would depopulate the town. Therefore, Turnbull had to give up this plan and create new alternatives. At least, he managed to ship 110 persons out of Leghorn with the help of British Proconsul Mr. Burnaby.³³

In July 1767, Turnbull went to a second destination, the Levant area, but this trip did not produce the expected results. The Levant Company had a monopoly on British trade in the Near East, and its representatives feared that Turnbull's new colony would be highly competitive to them because they would sell similar types of products. Therefore, they decided to do everything possible to keep Turnbull's ships from their area. They even notified the Turkish authorities and explained to them the purpose of Turnbull's trip and the possible harm it could do to the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, the French were jealous of England's recent achievements and wanted to prevent their economic expansion. Above that, they were afraid that England would become the most powerful empire, and their position would further deteriorate. Consequently, they took the same approach as the Levant Company and started to notify the Turks about all Turnbull's plans, which made it almost impossible for him to recruit anyone.³⁴

After these two unsuccessful efforts, Turnbull decided to return to the Greek islands. He heard about the Mani Peninsula where there were hundreds of villages filled with people who were dissatisfied with their living conditions and with continuous battles with the Ottoman Empire. The people of Mani had paid a heavy price for their freedom and had suffered numerous casualties during the previous century. They would rather migrate than live in slavery. Additionally, they lost hope when their bishop was beheaded, as he was a leader and a source of great strength. Turnbull used these facts to his advantage and spoke

³³ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*), 25-26.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-28.

to them about the opportunity for a new life in beautiful and peaceful East Florida. Turnbull also offered them the opportunity to leave Florida if life there did not meet their expectations. The citizens of Mani were impressed by Turnbull's offer and accepted it.³⁵ They formed a second group of settlers. They departed from Mani in February 1768 and sailed to Mahon. When they arrived, a surprise was waiting for them, in the form of another 200 Greeks completely unknown to Turnbull.³⁶ Most were refugees from Corsica. With them, Turnbull now had almost 700 settlers ready to depart.³⁷

Things looked even better for Turnbull when he found out that local Minorcans were starving because their crops had failed for the third consecutive year, and another 700 people begged to join his venture. And because Minorca had been under British control since 1713, he would not face any obstacles with the government like before. Religion was the main impediment. Two years prior, Turnbull had agreed to the grant condition that all the settlers had to be Protestants, but Minorcans were Catholic. Turnbull argued that it would cause no damage if he took the Minorcans with him, as there were other colonies that had successfully set aside religious differences. His argument won, he had all the colonists he needed.³⁸

By March 1768, ships were ready to sail from Mahon, but contrary winds made it impossible, and the departure had to be postponed. On the plus side, Turnbull was pleased that many of his recruits from Leghorn took wives in Minorca, during their stay here. He encouraged this way of recruiting. These marriages increased the final number of settlers to 1,400. Even though these circumstances supported Turnbull's plan, he had to deal with increasing costs of transporting such a large group of people. He wrote several letters to William Duncan and George Grenville asking them for greater financial support to provide room and clothing for the new recruits. He informed his partners that the cost of transporting everyone to Florida would be up to 3000£.³⁹

The last thing which had to be done was signing of "indentured servitude" contracts with his colonists. The terms of these contracts were precisely stated. Turnbull's duty was to transport his settlers at his own expense and provide for them. In return, the settlers were obliged to work as farmers and cultivate their own lands. When the lands start producing,

³⁵ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 30-31.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 40-43.

³⁸ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 32-33.

³⁹ "The 'Peopling Plan': Recruiting Indentured Laborers in Greece, Italy, and Minorca," Florida History Online, accessed March 06, 2018, <https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/spanishlandgrants/wpa3.php>.

the settlers would share a percentage of their crop with Turnbull, to compensate for his expenses. Additionally, the contracts contained reassurances that Turnbull could not fire any of the men and that none of them could leave the colony prior to ten years of service. The final part of the contract stated that settlers could keep one hundred quarters of land for themselves, and fifty for each family member, upon successful completion of the contract.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 46-47.

3 THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NEW SMYRNA COLONY

3.1 Clearing the land and the rebellion

On 17 April 1768, Turnbull assembled 1,403 colonists, loaded them on 8 ships, and sailed from Gibraltar to East Florida.⁴¹ The number of settlers exceeded any previous colonization effort.⁴² The ships were also carrying supplies for the colony as well as "cotton gins for the cleaning of cotton and other models of engines of agriculture," and cuttings of grapes, olives and mulberries. The ships were accompanied by the military frigate Carysfort, to protect them from Algerian pirates.⁴³

Despite the fact that Turnbull selected the best traveling season, the voyage took up to four months, with some ships caught in the Gulf Stream, their arrival delayed. Corse claims that the settlers suffered from seasickness and depression and she records 28 casualties.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Panagopoulos writes that sickness and scurvy during the long journey led to the deaths of 148 settlers.⁴⁵

The initial plan of Governor Grant was to land the ships directly at the colony. However, inclement weather led the eight ships to regroup in St. Augustine before heading to Mosquito Inlet. Some settlers continued the trip on ships, while others, tired of sailing, decided to walk the last 70 kms. The first impression of the area was great. On the east side, there was the Hillsborough River, with sandy shores and few small islands. The colony settled on the west bank of the river, which provided excellent land for the cultivation. The lowlands were covered by palmetto forests and salt marshes, whereas the higher parts had plenty of cabbage palms, papaw trees and other tropical plants.⁴⁶

However, the preparation for the settlers was inadequate. Ships carrying 500 slaves from Africa wrecked on the southern coast of Florida. These slaves should have cleared the land, but in their absence, this difficult task was left to the settlers. Moreover, there arrived nearly three times as many people as were expected, and no one in Florida was prepared for that.⁴⁷

The neighboring natives, Creeks, quickly noted the invasion of Europe workers and painted their faces black as a warning. They considered them to be Spaniards thanks to their

⁴¹ Fradkin, "Fishing to Survive," 181.

⁴² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 48.

⁴³ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 39-40.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁴⁵ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 54.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 56-58.

⁴⁷ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 44-45.

languages, which were similar to Spanish. Governor Grant was aware of the problems the Creeks could cause to the colony, and he negotiated peace with them. He explained to them that Minorcans are loyal British subjects who had been oppressed by Spaniards just like they had, and that the Minorcans were in Florida only to help the English cultivate their lands, and they did not have to fear them.⁴⁸ Creeks believed him and left the settlers in peace, at least for a few years.

For several reasons, the colonists started to lose their illusions about New Smyrna just a few weeks after their arrival. First, the clearing of the swampy land was difficult, and their overseers from Carolina and Georgia were strict.⁴⁹ Second, dirty water and a lack of food caused many health problems, sometimes even deaths. Furthermore, the settlers still had problems with scurvy and other diseases caused by the long journey. Finally, settlers were not prepared for the number of insects in the area. Every night, millions of mosquitos swarmed over their shelters, not allowing them to sleep properly and biting them repeatedly, spreading malaria among them.⁵⁰

These reasons led to a settler revolt in August 1768. One of the overseers, Carlo Forni, declared himself commander-in-chief of the workers and persuaded them to go to Havana. He argued that the Spanish would protect them from the English rule and free them from the hard work. A crowd, influenced by his speech, started to plunder the colony. They killed the English supervisor and stole casks of rum, which gave them liquid courage. Before long, almost all of the Greeks participated in the revolt, because Forni threatened to kill anyone who would try to escape and warn authorities.⁵¹

Meanwhile, Turnbull who was away from New Smyrna, received a message about these events from two Italians who were able to escape from the colony. He was scared, all his money was at stake, therefore he asked Governor Grant for the help. Within 9 hours from the warning, Grant managed to prepare war frigate called East Florida which sailed with troops to Mosquito Inlet. On August 22, only one cannonball fired from the ship was enough to frighten the rebellions and they gave up the plan to escape. Except for thirty-five who sailed off in the small boat. They were captured several weeks later in the Florida Keys, 100

⁴⁸ Patricia C. Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991), 31.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 58-59.

⁵¹ Nick Wynne, and Joe Knetsch. *Utopian Communities of Florida: A History of Hope* (Charleston: History Press, 2016), 37.

miles from Havana. In January 1769 the trial took place and the outcome was that two men were sentenced to death. Carlo Forni, the leader for piracy and Giuseppe Massiadoli for killing English supervisor. The execution of these men was planned to be a lesson for the remaining colonists. Governor Grant claimed that after that “they will not be apt to attempt such a thing again.”⁵²

“In some beginnings, the end is foretold.” This sentence by Luther perfectly summarized the first years of the New Smyrna. Notwithstanding the insects, diseases and the hard work, there were many other reasons why this revolt happened. First, it was a questionable selection of Carlo Forni as a colony overseer. He was known for his problem with the law, he was even accused of the rape of the women on the plantation. Nevertheless, Turnbull gave him his trust, and it was the mistake.⁵³ Second, the protection of the area was inadequate as there was no fort or watchtower. In 1765 Governor Grant sent the proposal to Board of Trade to build a fort as he expected migration from Bermuda to the mosquitos. The proposal was approved right after it was received, but the migration had failed to materialize and the need for the fort disappeared. It is unclear why this fort was not constructed before the Greeks arrival. It could save few lives and hundreds of British pounds. More precisely, the losses were estimated at four to five hundred pounds.⁵⁴ After these recent events, at least twenty-two soldiers were assigned to protect the colony.⁵⁵

A question concerning economic expenses was crucial for the survival of the whole New Smyrna. Large sums of money were needed to ensure embarkation and to provide clothes and food for the workers. The funding of the colony had two main sources. The first one came from the owners themselves. In fact, the financing was held only by Lord Grenville and Willian Duncan as they agreed that Turnbull would pay his part by personal managing of the colony. The initial agreement concluded, that both of them would jointly pay maximum £9000 for the first seven years. Nevertheless, in July 1769, the expenditures had already been at £28 000 which were three times more than was expected. As it was not enough, Turnbull asked his partners for additional £24 000. It was too late to stop, they agreed and their total investment raised to £52 000. Government investments covered the second part of the funding. As was mentioned, the government provided Turnbull a bounty

⁵² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 61.

⁵³ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 34.

⁵⁴ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 63-64.

⁵⁵ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 35.

for the encouragement of the culture of cotton and 40 shillings per head to his first 500 Greeks. Additionally, Turnbull was able to negotiate that the payment of £1000 would be repeated annually. He promised to use this money for building roads and another improvement in the colony. After the revolt, in 1768, Grant asked the government for the £2000 relief grant. Lord Hillsborough, the man who was in the charge of the colonies, replied that the request was approved. However, he added, that this was the last expense, the government was willing to pay.⁵⁶ Consequently, the grant came with the condition, that the colony had to focus on growing crops such as olives, silk, wine, and honey because England had to buy these products from different countries since then.⁵⁷

3.2 Starvation, diseases, and problems with supplies

Despite the fact that almost all settlers were spared and none of them died during the rebellion, the number of them decreased rapidly during the first year. As Grant wrote to the Government in 1768, the colony lost about 300 people because of diseases.⁵⁸ Some sources state that the number was even bigger with 450 casualties of which 300 were adults and 150 children.⁵⁹

The situation did not get much better in the following years. In contrast to expectations, the Greeks were not prepared to live the climate of Florida. For them, the country was humid and too hot. As was mentioned, they were tortured by the scurvy since their arrival. However, malaria was the disease which threatened their lives the most. Mainly the people from Mani were affected by it, as they did not have any similar illness in their peninsula.⁶⁰ According to official statistics, among the 23 Greeks who survived in New Smyrna and came to St. Augustine, only two were Maniotes.⁶¹

The majority of the settlers were accustomed to living in the clean environment. However, in Florida, they had to acclimatize to completely different conditions. The families were forced to stay in temporary palmetto huts, equipped with only one blanket and few pieces of clothes.⁶² These huts offered neither the comfort nor the protection. The palmetto

⁵⁶ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 68-70.

⁵⁷ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 50.

⁵⁸ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 63.

⁵⁹ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 35.

⁶⁰ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 81-82.

⁶¹ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 42.

⁶² Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 39.

leaves could not keep the rain out during the storms and failed also in protection against the insects.⁶³

Nonetheless, the main problem of New Smyrna was the scarcity of food. Turnbull brought a huge group of people to Florida but he did not think about the circumstances. Before the arrival of the Greeks, no food had been stored on the island. Therefore, they had to rely on themselves and on the resources, they could find in the colony. Turnbull declared that he encouraged them to fish, however, it may not be the truth. Rafael Simenis, one of the former colonists, stated that he was whipped by Dr. Turnbull for not fetching the grass and when he caught some fish or Oysters, it was taken away from him immediately.⁶⁴

The food distributed to the settlers was insufficient. It said that each person was granted a quart of maize per day, usually in the form of hominy grits, and two ounces of pork per week. To get this ration, the workers had to gather in one mess and wait to the beat of the vile drum that signaled their chance to get the food.⁶⁵ Governor Grant was aware of these issues and he tried to help the colony the best he could. This is visible in his government letter in which he stated: "I took care to save a considerable quantity (of seeds) for Mr. Turnbull from my own garden, of which a grain does not fail here." Thanks to that, settlers were able to produce green vegetables and fruits to cure their diseases.⁶⁶

The clothing of the colonists was also very poor. The few pieces of clothes and one blanket which each of them brought from Europe were after some time in terrible condition. Turnbull reacted to that by ordering clothes for 1000 £, however, the time showed that the investment was insufficient. The clothes had substandard quality and it did not last the hard work, thus the majority of the settlers were naked.⁶⁷

By the 4th of March 1769, the health of the colonists got little better and they had cleared seven miles of waterfront, therefore they could establish farmhouses. Each house was set 210 feet from the another and reached several acres westwards toward the interior. Turnbull claimed that these farms reminded him of Egyptian farms along the Nile. This is also the reason why he later introduced Egyptian irrigation system to Florida.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the distance between the houses created isolated and uncongenial living situation. This

⁶³ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 82.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁵ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 39.

⁶⁶ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 63.

⁶⁷ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 86.

⁶⁸ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 67-68.

arrangement impeded socializing, such as evening gatherings between the friends and relatives.⁶⁹

Two years after the arrival, it was too early to support the settlers with their own production. Above that, Turnbull's partners started to be reluctant to pay other expenses, therefore, he was not sure if the payment would be stopped or not. Governor Grant recommended him to have six months provision constantly in store. However, Turnbull used to renew his provisions only when it was necessary due to his limited funds.⁷⁰

Due to this approach, in March 1769, Turnbull find himself "much pinched for Provisions" as he was left with Indian corn enough for only one month. Once again, it was Governor Grant who saved the day. He set the schooner East Florida to Charleston where it was loaded with corn sent back to New Smyrna. This situated repeated once again in July 1769 and without Grant, most of the colonists would starve to death.⁷¹

3.3 Plantation and the treatment with settlers

In October 1770, the little improvement was visible. Some of the gardens started to produce corns and vegetables, even so, it was still not enough for independence. The fact that Turnbull did not meet the condition he agreed on with the settlers, made them more resentful. Anthony Stephanopoli, one of the former farmers, claimed that he closed a deal with Turnbull, in which he was promised to receive two pounds of fresh bread a day plus pound of a fresh meat. He received nothing of these and he agreed with others that they would rather leave and die in woods than life in such desperate condition.⁷²

The main product of the plantation became indigo. This tropical crop was very valuable in Europe and thanks to its typical blue color, it was known as the king of dyestuffs. The cultivation of indigo was expensive because it required extensive equipment, so it can be produced only on large plantations, like the New Smyrna.⁷³ The indigo required the constant attention of the farmers. They had to work for long hours, especially at night and in the rain,

⁶⁹ Fradkin, Grange, and Moore, "'Minorcan' Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrnéa Settlement, Florida, 1766-1777," 44.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁷¹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 84.

⁷² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 85.

⁷³ Fradkin, Grange, and Moore, "'Minorcan' Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrnéa Settlement, Florida, 1766-1777," 30.

because the indigo is best harvested in rainy weather. The secondary crop was corn but the production was much poorer than the indigo one and it also brought lower profits.⁷⁴

According to sources, the working conditions were terrible. The drivers forced to work all people, notwithstanding their gender or age. What is even worse, they commanded pregnant women to work until the childbirth. Giosefa Lurance described in her deposition that after she refused to work on the field, she was beaten by the driver and three days later she was delivered of a dead child. As the Greeks were used to, the children were also obliged to work. However, in the Mediterranean, they used to give them much easier tasks. Michael Alamon talked in his deposition about the treatment with the ten years old boy who was driven to work on the plantation. The boy said that he was too sick to work and the overseer commanded the other boys to stone him to death.⁷⁵ The days on the plantations were long and settlers had to work seven days a week without any rest. The drivers pushed the workers to their limits, using "unchristian manners", with the aim of achieving maximum productivity. If someone was sick, they would rather beat them to death than let them stay out of the fields. If the work was not satisfactory, the same punishment followed.⁷⁶

Although the colony was situated in a natural environment rich in resources and people were forced to work over their limits, the economic life of the plantation was problematic. First, it was because they used the model of American plantations which was used before with African people. In this model, the trusted people were selected as drivers. However, Turnbull named mostly Italian and Greeks on the position of the drivers and Minorcans were, for unknown reasons, omitted. Second, the relationship between the colonists and the leader was impersonal. Turnbull failed in building a mutual relationship with his workers because he found that unnecessary. The lack of managerial skill was reflected also in the behavior of his nephew, Andrew, who was left in charge of the plantation and who relied heavily on the overseers. Third, the Turnbull tried to transform Mediterranean farmers into plantation labor and he did not realize the consequences. These people did not care about the work, for them, it was just a means to the new life. Lastly, the variety of languages and cultural differences caused problems among settlers. Total of six languages occurred in the colony, with English, being the most significant in terms of power and authority. Day-to-day operation on the

⁷⁴ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 54.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁶ Panagoulou, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 87-88.

fields was difficult, and the problems of communication probably contributed to the driver's adoption of physical control practices.⁷⁷

3.4 Religion

The hardships of the worker's life were mitigated by the two Minorcan Roman Catholic priests, Father Camps and Bartolome Casanovas. At first, Turnbull planned to bring a Greek Orthodox priest but this idea had never materialized. For six years they suffered the oppression and shared the hard condition of the new colony while providing spiritual comfort to both Catholic and Orthodox believers.⁷⁸ However, in 1774, father Casanovas spoke about the difficulties happening to his people and was accused of contact and collaboration with the Spanish government. Therefore, he was deported from the Florida and Father Camps had his workload doubled, because the government did not want to send another priest.

⁷⁷ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 65-66.

⁷⁸ James R. Early, "The Rise and Fall of the New Smyrna Colony," in *Reflections on Medieval and Renaissance Thought*, ed. Darci N. Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 180-181.

4 FIGHT BETWEEN THE NOTABLES OF EAST FLORIDA

4.1 John Moultrie

In 1770 Governor Grant asked for the permission to resign his office due to the ill threatening illness. By October 19, he received his Majesty's license to return to England with the condition that Grant had to choose his successor. He immediately spurned the Hillsborough's candidates and he also refused to pass his responsibilities to Turnbull with the argument that "his constant Residence at Smyrna is absolutely and indispensably necessary."⁷⁹ This was the official reason but there were many other why he did not approve him. He criticized him for thoughtless transportation of so many people without having made necessary preparations. Moreover, he disagreed with his peculiar handling of the colony and with his aggressiveness towards settlers.⁸⁰

Grant's own choice was John Moultrie. Until 1770, he was president of the Royal Society of East Florida. He was highly respected planter who was known as the best producer of the indigo in nearby Carolina.⁸¹ This was the main reason why Grant chose him, because in the New World "the real value of a man was judged by what he could produce." The decision caused a lot of damage and become one of the main reason why the colony failed. Turnbull developed hostility towards Moultrie and was accompanied by William Drayton, the Chief Justice of Florida who supported Turnbull's appointment.⁸² Their personalities were completely opposite, Turnbull was outgoing and Moultrie, on the other hand, suffered from an insecurity complex that influenced many of his decisions. This caused that Moultrie was ignored by the officers in the British military office because they found him weak. On the contrary, Turnbull was admired and respected by them, therefore, he became the target of Moultrie's anger.⁸³

The hostility between Turnbull and Moultrie grew during the next three years. In May 1771, just few weeks after Moultrie's appointment, a group of Native Americans (the Creeks) came to New Smyrna.⁸⁴ They arrived because of two reasons. First, they thought that at the Mosquitos there was a village of Yamasee Natives, their former mortal enemies.

⁷⁹ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 78.

⁸⁰ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 101.

⁸¹ "John Moultrie British Lieut. Governor of Florida," Dr. Bronson's History Page, accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.drbronsontours.com/bronsonjohnmoultrie.html>.

⁸² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 101.

⁸³ Nick Wynne, and Joe Knetsch. *Utopian Communities of Florida: A History of Hope*, 39.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Second, they heard rumors about settlers speaking Spanish tongue, so they anticipated Spanish settlement.⁸⁵ However, information was inaccurate. In 1771, the Yamasee did not exist as a tribe anymore as they were destroyed by British army back in 1764 and there were left only 40 of them. To disclaim the second worry, Turnbull had to return from St. Augustine and meet with the Upper Creek chief. He treated him generously and explained, that the misunderstanding was caused by the Spanish dialect used by Minorcans. The incident itself was not dangerous, however, it included a side story which uncovered the political climate after Grant's departure.⁸⁶

Right after the confrontation, Turnbull wrote a letter to Moultrie, informing him, that the possibility of conflict with Natives was a false alarm. On the basis of that, Moultrie wrote to Lord Hillsborough that there was no immediate danger from Creeks.⁸⁷ However, a few days later Turnbull sent another letter to his partner William Duncan, describing the incident in a "grave tone" and asked Duncan to convey this message to Hillsborough himself. When Moultrie found out about these completely different reports, he was dismayed. This humiliation remained in Moultrie's head and he was waiting for proper time to make his revenge.⁸⁸

Despite the conflict, Turnbull ought to be satisfied with some of Moultrie's achievements. For example, the Old Kings Road which had been completed in 1772 his command. It helped all planters of the area because it made the transportation much faster and less risky. The road served as a principal route into Florida until the Civil war when it was replaced by the Florida East Coast railroad.⁸⁹

4.2 Patrick Tonyn and the American Revolution

In the meantime, incidents in the Northern colonies scared the British authorities and they wished for stronger hands in Florida's government. They were afraid that there would happen similar events like the Boston tea party in 1773 as the people in Northern colonies started to resent the measures for imperial reorganization.⁹⁰ However, Florida was an

⁸⁵ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 84.

⁸⁶ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 96.

⁸⁷ Nick Wynne, and Joe Knetsch. *Utopian Communities of Florida: A History of Hope*, 40.

⁸⁸ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 98-99.

⁸⁹ William S. Lowe, "An Aerial Photographic Search for the Old King's Road," Emporia State University, accessed March 28, 2018, http://academic.emporia.edu/aberjame/student/lowe2/old_king_road.htm.

⁹⁰ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 105.

exception because most of the settlers were newcomers, who did not have time to develop roots to the new lands. In 1773, Moultrie was dismissed from the position of Governor and was replaced by the Colonel Patrick Tonyn.⁹¹ Thanks to his military background he was determined to keep his province loyal to Great Britain and was stickler for observing points of protocol.⁹² When Moultrie was about to leave, he informed Tonyn about the situation in the New Smyrna and biased his opinion against Turnbull and Drayton.⁹³ Tonyn found their attitude unacceptable but he was waiting for their bigger mistake to rid their position in the Florida Council as well as in whole Florida.⁹⁴

In November 1774, Tonyn was notified by Governor of Georgia that Jonathan Bryan, a former member of Georgia's council bought the land from the Native Americans with Drayton's permission and Turnbull's help. This act was against the proclamation of 1763 as it forbidden any individual land purchases from the Indians. Aware of this action, Tonyn started to chase Bryan, but when he escaped north, he aimed his wrath against the Drayton and Turnbull. He accused them of helping Bryan with his undertaking and asked for their dismissal. In 1776, the council released Drayton from the function of Chief Justice because of sympathizing with the rebels.⁹⁵ This attack was not directly connected to the colony; however, it caused that Turnbull had to spend part of 1776 and 1777 defending himself before the government, therefore, it was impossible for him to govern and protect the settlement.⁹⁶

Even more significant was the impact of the Revolution on the settlers of New Smyrna. The years spent in the colony made them discouraged and they could not have helped to sympathize with the colonial rebels. The American Revolution "made large numbers of settlers conscious of their political rights, emboldened them to raise their voice, and intensified their reaction against the royal government." When they found about Revolutionary ideas, they started to search a way out of the colony.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 114.

⁹² Jim Piecuch, "Patrick Tonyn: Britain's Most Effective Revolutionary-Era Royal Governor," *Journal of the American Revolution*, accessed March 29, 2018, <https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/03/patrick-tonyn-britains-most-effective-revolutionary-era-royal-governor/>.

⁹³ James R. Early, "The Rise and Fall of the New Smyrna Colony," 181.

⁹⁴ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 116.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 117-119.

⁹⁶ James R. Early, "The Rise and Fall of the New Smyrna Colony," 181.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

5 THE END OF THE NEW SMYRNA COLONY

5.1 Turnbull leaves the colony

Once again it was a conflict between Tonyn and Drayton that caused difficulties to the colony. On February 27, 1776, friends of the Chief of Justice organized a meeting to discuss Drayton's dismissal and to sign a document which suggested that the suspension was unjustifiable. Finally, they agreed that Turnbull should carry the original copy to London and submit it to King.⁹⁸ In May 1776, Turnbull arrived together with Drayton to London and was determined to make their trip successful. Partly, they succeeded. Board of trade decided, that the Office of Chief of Justice should be returned to Drayton. However, Turnbull decided to stay in London to achieve much bigger achievement, to replace Florida's governor.⁹⁹

Turnbull had to wait until September 19, 1776, for submission of his memorial to the Board of Trade, because it was constantly engaged thanks to the American revolution. In the memorial, he charged Tonyn for various crimes, among other things for bribery and interfering the validity of contracts, which disturbed order and industry in the New Smyrna. Their lords discussed it and rejected Turnbull's accusations. For them, Tonyn was the governor who was devoted to the Crown. He succeeded in the war against the rebels, as Florida was the only colony which did not sever their ties with the mother country.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, Tonyn found out about the Turnbull's escape from Florida and he summoned his Council and convinced them to suspend him from office as the Secretary of the Council. He argued that Turnbull had anti-British attitude and sympathized with the rebels from the north.¹⁰¹ Knowing that, in February 1777, Turnbull submitted Defense against Tonyn's charges. To save the time, Lord Germain came with an idea how to terminate this needless affair. He suggested, that Turnbull should withdraw all charges against Tonyn and in response, he would receive the office he had before the departure to England. He agreed, but he was despondent that this time-and-money consuming attempt

⁹⁸ Roger C. Smith, "The Façade of Unity: British East Florida's War for Dependence," PhD diss., University of Florida, 2008, 41.

⁹⁹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 137-138.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

ended in nothing. He arrived back to New Smyrna in October 1777 and quickly discovered what had happened during last years.¹⁰²

5.2 New Smyrna during Turnbull's absence

Early in 1776, Florida had to mobilize their forces for a possible conflict with the rebels. However, they had lack of men, because they had left Florida to reinforce British forces in Georgia. Therefore, Tonyn enlisted also Creek Natives to protect the forts. Moreover, Tonyn asked Turnbull to evaluate his workers for a potential military force. Turnbull answered that although the settlers are loyal to his Majesty, they had to stay on the plantation to prevent their families from starvation. Nevertheless, the real reason why Minorcans never been enlisted was, that the government did not trust them with firearms. They worried that the colonist would join the rebels in return for independence.¹⁰³

In 1776, administration of the colony was held by Turnbull's nephew, also named Andrew Turnbull. It was very successful year, concerning the agriculture, as they produced 6390 pounds of indigo, more than ever before. However, series of events caused great hardships to the colony.¹⁰⁴ In July 1776, a group of Natives broke into several houses of the colonists and stole their property and the corn supply. This attack cause demoralization among the settlers because they scared that they will starve again because of empty food stores.¹⁰⁵ The next month, Governor Tonyn was forced to reinforce the defense of New Smyrna because of the rumors about the American privateer who sailed toward the Mosquitoes coast. Once again, they were afraid that most of the workers would join the Rebels.¹⁰⁶

The most important change that happened in New Smyrna history is based on a story, that becomes Minorcan's heritage. It said that group of gentlemen from St. Augustine were visiting the colony to see the improvements. They were alarmed by the roughshod conditions under which the settlers were living and one of the visitors remarked, that if the people knew their rights they could obtain freedom. Luckily for them, one of the children overheard the

¹⁰² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 143-144.

¹⁰³ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 96.

¹⁰⁴ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 145.

¹⁰⁵ James R. Early, "The Rise and Fall of the New Smyrna Colony," 182.

¹⁰⁶ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 146.

conversation and told it to her mother. She told it to the rest of the settlers and in no time, they came up with the plan.¹⁰⁷

On March 25, 1777, three of the settlers got the permission to leave the colony to go fishing to the coast. However, instead of fishing, they decided to go to St. Augustine to complain governor Tonyn about their hardships in the colony. Tonyn claimed that he persuaded them to return, but it seems that he gave them some promise or assurance of help.¹⁰⁸ When the three settlers return, they shared this happy news with the rest of the colonists and they created a secret plan of escape. At the end of April 1777, 90 workers left New Smyrna which created a veritable exodus.¹⁰⁹

When the overseers realized what happened, they notified Andrew Turnbull, Jr. and he rushed after them and tried to persuade them to return. Nevertheless, they despised his arguments and after three days arrived to St. Augustine. They were directed to Spencer, Justice of the Peace, who decided that the colonist should make written deposition under the oath.¹¹⁰ Spencer thought that the number of deponents was too big, therefore only eighteen men were chosen to represent the others. The rest was sent back to New Smyrna by Governor Tonyn with the task of securing the crops.¹¹¹ Doing that, Tonyn killed the two birds with one stone. He protected Florida from the food shortage and improved his reputation in front of Lord Germain whom he promised to take care of Turnbull's colony during his absence. He knew that the colony is doomed, but this gesture looked gallant and helped him in the future.¹¹²

Among the deponents, there were mainly the craftsmen from the colony because they were the most literate of all settlers. Ten of them signed the deposition with their names and the rest signed it with the "X." They all mentioned the terrible working and living condition of the plantation and the severe punishments from the Turnbulls' servants. Especially, they focused their deposition on the fact that their indentures had expired, therefore, they were illegally held in the colony. These depositions were set down by interpreters and one of them was Joseph Purcell, who was lucky enough to leave the plantation at an early date. Turnbull

¹⁰⁷ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 158.

¹⁰⁹ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 148.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹¹¹ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 159.

¹¹² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 149.

accused him of misrepresentation of the translation of the depositions and said that he was biased against him.¹¹³

When the stories were told, the final decision about the colony's future laid on Governor Tonyn and on the government at Whitehall. Tonyn used this opportunity as the biggest possible revenge against Turnbull and his friends. Using the revolutionary situation, he persuaded the government to support the termination of the colony. He argued that "the discharging of the White People will be no real loss to them, as the expense of their and their Families maintenance will equal the value of their labor." Consequently, Tonyn profited from the fact that he was admired by the colonists and they saw him as the person who gave them the freedom. Afterward, some of the younger settlers joined Florida's militia, thus, finally, Tonyn gathered enough men for the protection of Florida's borders.¹¹⁴

When the settlers receive the permission, the majority of them left the New Smyrna and migrated to St. Augustine. The sick and dying were left behind because they worried that they will not survive the seventy-five-mile walk. Others stayed in the colony hoping for eventual ownership of the property. According to official statistics, in June 1777, only 150 people out of 750 stayed in the colony. However, when the summer was over, the rest of the colonist decided to leave. On November 9, 1777, the last member of the New Smyrna, Father Pedro Camps, moved to St. Augustine and the colony had come to an end.¹¹⁵

It was a terrible surprise for Turnbull, who had recently returned from London, just to find that his expensive undertaking was in the ashes. Though he returned to apologize and with orders to resume his office as Secretary of the colony, Tonyn used the New Smyrna affair to suspend him once again. Not only that he lost his position in the Council but he had to face the prosecution from his London partners because they suffered great losses and turned their backs against him. Moreover, he was forced to await the trial in the jail in St. Augustine until March 1780. In 1783, Florida was returned to Spanish and Turnbull was unable to leave the territory with other British loyalists and had to remain under American sovereignty until his death¹¹⁶.

¹¹³ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 99.

¹¹⁴ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 150-151.

¹¹⁵ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 99.

¹¹⁶ Roger C. Smith, "The Façade of Unity: British East Florida's War for Dependence," 44-45.

6 MINOR REASONS OF THE COLONY'S FAILURE

6.1 Weather

Not only the government's disputes and the outbreak of the American revolution caused the breakdown of this promising settlements. In fact, there were many other reasons and one of them was the weather. More specifically it was the severe drought years from 1773 to 1775 which dried up the fields in the whole Florida. Thanks to that, people were again exposed to starvation and diseases like in the first years of the colony. This drought is documented mainly on demographic data's and on the indigo export.¹¹⁷ Whereas the birth rate in 1773 was 56.79, the highest of all years of the colony, in the following year it dropped because of drought back to 36.06.¹¹⁸ The even bigger difference is visible on the indigo export. In 1773, the colony produced 10 262 pounds of indigo which were six times more than in 1774 when was produced only 1 633 pounds.¹¹⁹

Turnbull, aware of these problems came with the solution of building canal system to irrigate the land. He formed these canals like the ones he saw in Egypt but he had to work out how to make them efficient in Florida.¹²⁰ Although the canals were well constructed and remained in Florida until today, they did no solve the problem entirely. The settlers had to live in these aggravated conditions until the end of 1775 when the weather slightly improved.¹²¹ Concurrently, the drought was also the reason of an attack of Natives in 1776, as they also suffered the starvation and they were used to attack neighboring settlements to get resources.¹²²

6.2 Failure of indentured servitude

As was mentioned, Turnbull signed specific contracts with all his settler before they went to the New World. However, the settlers quickly realized that they will not receive the amount of food and protection that had been promised to them. Nevertheless, they at least hoped that Turnbull will make a free man of them when their servitude will come to the end. Later, it turned out that it was another lie and Turnbull wanted to extend the period when the settlers

¹¹⁷ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788*, 86.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹²⁰ Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, 93-94.

¹²¹ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida*, 90.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 86.

had to work for him. Such example was Louis Margan, former blacksmith of the colony, who signed the indenture for serving six years in the colony. However, as he stated in his deposition when he went to get released, Turnbull sent him to Goal and ordered him fifty lashes. In addition, Turnbull sent his wife to the plantation and allowed her to come only twice a day to feed her Infant. This forced Margan to capitulate and sign a document that he will serve five more years in the colony.¹²³

Settlers, aware of this news, started to be pessimistic about their future. Their only motivation was gone and without it, they could not bear this amount of hardship. If trained craftsman could have his contract prolonged for five more years, then what could ordinary farmer expect.¹²⁴ Those who were brave enough to ask for the release encountered the same or even worse punishment as Margan. Babpina Poutchedepourga stated that she was like many others "afraid to ask for his discharge for fear of being flogged and put in Irons". This hopeless feeling of no-way-out undoubtedly contributed to the exodus in 1777, when 627 settlers left the colony.¹²⁵

Turnbull's main reason for breaching these contracts was money. He lost about one-third of all settlers during the first two years, therefore, he needed to cover these unexpected losses by prolonging the servitudes to those, who survived. Moreover, he was oppressed by his partners who refused to invest more money into the colony and were afraid if their investment will ever return to them. The indentured servitude system later turned out to be too expensive for the government to hold and was replaced with African slave labor.¹²⁶

6.3 Turnbull's mistakes

Carita Doggett in her book pays no attention to Turnbull mistakes as she described him as the person who only managed the colony and ensured its survival. It is not shocking since she was a direct descendant of Andrew Turnbull and the main purpose of her whole book was to improve his reputation in the eyes of the public.¹²⁷ However, the reality was different and Panagopoulos described it in his book in detail. He claims that Turnbull was preoccupied

¹²³ Griffin, *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida*, 91-92.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²⁵ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 91.

¹²⁶ "The Decline of Indentured Servitude," Gettysburg College, accessed April 19, 2018, <http://public.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/hist106web/site18/The%20Decline%20of%20Indentured%20Servitude.htm>.

¹²⁷ James R. Early, "The Rise and Fall of the New Smyrna Colony," 183.

with two main concerns. First, how to get the maximum efficiency from his men's labor and second, how to prolong their originally agreed time on the plantation.¹²⁸

His decisions were carried out by his overseers; hence, they were hated by the settlers for their severity. The evidence that Turnbull was involved in the harsh treatment with the colonists came from the Louis Sache, one of the former overseers. He claimed that he had been forced by Turnbull to beat the people hard, even to kill them, if they would not obey. However, Sache refused to kill them and Turnbull put him in the jail. After that, he replaced him with someone else. Most often, Turnbull used Negro slaves or even the colonists themselves, who reluctantly performed this duty.¹²⁹ Though there is no recorded evidence that Turnbull killed a man himself, there are many that show that the punishments he chose were severe.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 88.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

7 LEGACY OF THE NEW SMYRNA COLONY

7.1 The Minorcans of Florida

After the departure from the New Smyrna Colony, settlers found an asylum in St. Augustine, where they worked as farmers, fishermen, and tradesmen.¹³¹ Community tagged them as the "Minorcans" because the people from the Spanish island were the most numerous group of all the immigrants.¹³² However, their hardships persisted because they still suffered from diseases and famine. They were reliant on Governor Tonyn as they found themselves in the middle of the noisy city, the situation they had never faced before. At first, Tonyn did not want to grant them their own land and he only assigned them an area in the north of the city for their temporary settlement. It is another evidence that he did not care about the colonist, his primary goal was the destruction of Andrew Turnbull. Nevertheless, in December 1777, after the pressure from the government, Tonyn granted them the land between St. Augustine and St. John's river. The settlers quickly build houses, opened their small business enterprises and when Pedro Camp joined the group, a Roman Catholic church was established. Despite the adversity that the settlers encountered during the last ten years, by the January 1778, 419 of them were still alive.¹³³

In 1783, both East and West Florida were ceded back to Spain by the Paris Peace Treaty. Thus, the British twenty years of rule over Florida was over.¹³⁴ In response, the British government sent Tonyn instructions about the evacuating plan that involved taking away every inhabitant of Florida. By doing so, they wanted to transfer a deserted area to Spaniards and to take revenge for the same action twenty years ago.¹³⁵ Although the Minorcans got along well with the British in St Augustine, they were happy to see Spaniards in the rule of the territory. They considered themselves culturally closer to Spain as their homeland is

¹³¹ Matt Soergel, "Minorcans of Northeast Florida Maintaining Identity through Generations," Jacksonville, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.jacksonville.com/news/metro/2015-12-16/story/minorcans-northeast-florida-maintaining-identity-through-generations>.

¹³² Fradkin, Grange, and Moore, "'Minorcan' Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrnéa Settlement, Florida, 1766-1777," 46.

¹³³ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 174.

¹³⁴ Donald Sullivan, *Turnbull's Slaves: A Minorcan Story* (Morrisville: Lulu, 2013), 79.

¹³⁵ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 175.

located only few hundred kilometers away.¹³⁶ Therefore, they decided to stay and they formed, together with the number of loyalists, the basis of second Spanish Florida.¹³⁷

In 1821 Florida was purchased from the United States and Minorcans decided to stay. In fact, they did not have a choice. A few years earlier, in 1812, U.S. Troops attacked St. Augustine and they destroyed Minorcan's plantations and houses. To indemnify the losses, they had to fill a Patriot War Claim, which stated that "Spanish citizens could file for damages suffered by the U.S. Troops and after investigation would receive compensation for said damages." Minorcans had to wait several years for this compensation and it was one of the reasons, why they decided to stay and live as American citizens.¹³⁸

Eventually, the descendants of Florida became the dominant population of St. Augustine until the last few decades of the twentieth century, when a large immigration from the other states happened.¹³⁹ After that, few of them spread through Northeast Florida, into the Vilano Beach and Mayport, but the majority stayed in the capital. Glenda Frawley, vice president of the Menorcan Cultural Society, claims that 20 000 people in St. John County have links to the original Minorcans. It is a noteworthy success in comparison to the few hundreds who arrived from the New Smyrna Colony. They were able to keep their identity for generations because of two simple reasons. First, it was because of religion. As was mentioned, Minorcans were Catholics, whereas Americans were largely Protestants. This fact unified them and they kept apart from the larger society.¹⁴⁰ Second, their food was the difference between them and the rest of the citizens. Even today, they are well known for the use of their datil peppers and for the dishes full of the seafood. Especially, they are famous for the preparation of the mullets, the fish that saved them from the starvation.¹⁴¹

7.2 New Smyrna Beach

After the settler's departure to St. Augustine, New Smyrna became a ghost town. The situation remained the same even when the Spaniards came to Florida in 1783. Spanish

¹³⁶ Donald Sullivan, *Turnbull's Slaves: A Minorcan Story*, 79.

¹³⁷ Sandie A. Stratton and Stacey A. Cannington, "From the River to the Sea, Upwardly Mobile Minorcans and Florida's First Beachside Development," accessed April 21, 2018, <https://www.unf.edu/floridahistoryonline/FHO/Minorcans/NorthBeach.html>.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Donald Sullivan, *Turnbull's Slaves: A Minorcan Story*, 80.

¹⁴⁰ Matt Soergel, "Minorcans of Northeast Florida Maintaining Identity through Generations," Jacksonville.

¹⁴¹ Anna Hamilton, "Minorcans of St. Augustine," Southern Foodways, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.southernfoodways.org/oral-history/minorcans-of-st-augustine/>.

governor, Jose Coppinger, tried to rebuild the plantations but he was not successful, because he had not had enough people who would take care of the fields.¹⁴² The change came when Florida was acquired by the United States in 1821. American planters saw the opportunity in the fertile land of New Smyrna and they established several large plantations, which concentrated mainly on the sugar production. However, all the efforts were lost during the Second Seminole War, when the plantations were attacked by the neighboring Natives.¹⁴³

The real resettlement began after the Civil War. In 1887, the Town of New Smyrna was incorporated with only 150 inhabitants. The population increase came with the Henry Flagler, who established the Florida East Coast Railway in 1892. The railway accelerated development of the New Smyrna economy that was based on tourism, commercial fishing, and the citrus industry.¹⁴⁴ In 1947, New Smyrna was renamed to New Smyrna Beach when the community of Coronaro Beach joined the city.¹⁴⁵ Today, New Smyrna Beach has more than 23,000 citizens.¹⁴⁶ The only thing that remained from the original settlement from the eighteenth century are Turnbull's irrigation canals that serve as the memory to the bloody birth of this city.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 185-186.

¹⁴³ "History of New Smyrna Beach," New Smyrna Beach, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.cityofnsb.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/240>.

¹⁴⁴ "Historical City Info," Chateau by the Sea, accessed April 26, 2018, <http://nsbchateau.com/historical-city-info/>.

¹⁴⁵ "History of New Smyrna Beach," New Smyrna Beach.

¹⁴⁶ "Demographic information," New Smyrna Beach, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.cityofnsb.com/491/Demographic-Information>.

¹⁴⁷ Panagopoulos, *An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, 189.

CONCLUSION

Florida's New Smyrna Colony was one of several failed utopian experiments in the New World. Certainly, diseases, weather, and famine negatively influenced the settlers and their attitude, but such factors were also faced by the other settlements and yet, some of them endured.

The great blame falls on the shoulders of Andrew Turnbull, the founder of the colony. He is the one who is generally considered the main cause of the failure of the colony, as he made some serious mistakes, the greatest being the irresponsible transportation of a huge number of colonists without considering the consequences. If he brought the intended number of settlers, the problems with the shortage of supplies would not have occurred. The second mistake he made was that he established himself as the supervisor of the colony, despite lacking experience. He viewed them as a tool for profit, not as human beings. If Turnbull had chosen someone competent, who would treat the settlers with respect and who would give them the motivation to become self-sufficient, the fate of the colony might have been different.

Then, there was the American Revolution. The settlers, inspired by the revolutionary thought and by the events that were happening in the north wanted to end their suffering and join the rebels, who promised them freedom. However, the New Smyrna colonists never joined the rebels, and the Revolution did not have a serious impact on Florida in that time. The changes, which British government made to defend Florida from the Revolution had a much bigger effect on the future of the colony. Especially, the choice of Florida's new governor, Patrick Tonyn.

The clash between the strong personalities of Turnbull and Tonyn was the most important reason why the colony failed. Both had supporters and opponents, and their bickering affected not only the New Smyrna Colony but all of Florida. The turning point of their dispute was the moment when Turnbull left the colony and went to London with the goal of replacing Florida's governor. Tonyn used that moment to destroy the colony by releasing of all Turnbull's workers and granting them freedom. Therefore, it can be concluded that the colony failed because of the vindictiveness of Gov. Tonyn and the stubbornness of Turnbull.

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