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Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Feb., 1990), pp. 9-30

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association

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# Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida

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JANE LANDERS

FOR TOO LONG, historians have paid little attention to Spain's lengthy tenure in the South.<sup>1</sup> As a result, important spatial and temporal components of the American past have been overlooked. Recent historical and archaeological research on the free black town of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, located in northeast Spanish Florida, suggests ways in which Spanish colonial records might illuminate these neglected aspects of the Southern past.<sup>2</sup> Because of this black town's unusual origins and political and military significance, Spanish bureaucrats documented its history with much care.

Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, hereafter referred to as Mose, was born of

This research was funded by the Spain/Florida Alliance, the Florida Legislature, the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and United States' Universities, and the Department of History of the University of Florida. An earlier version of this article was awarded the President's Prize by the Florida Historical Society. Dr. Kathleen Deagan was the principal investigator for the Ft. Mose Archaeological project of the Florida Museum of Natural History, and Mr. Jack Williams permitted her team to excavate on his property. I would like to thank Jim Amelang, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Cheryl Cody, David Colburn, Susan Kent, Helen Nader, John J. TePaske, Eldon Turner, and Peter Wood for their comments, criticisms, and encouragement. I am also indebted to my anonymous readers and the *AHR* staff for their suggestions and editing.

<sup>1</sup> An early classic that examined the tri-racial Southern frontier was Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670–1732* (New York, 1981), but, as Peter Wood noted in his historiographic review, "I Did the Best I Could for My Day": The Study of Early Black History during the Second Reconstruction, 1960–1976," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 35 (1978): 185–225, few scholars followed Crane's lead. The difficulty of the sources deterred some from crossing the cultural and linguistic frontier into Florida, but Latin Americanists have also neglected what were the northern boundaries of the Spanish empire. The "Borderlands" school pioneered by Herbert Bolton produced a number of important studies, but these focused primarily on the southwestern areas of the present-day United States. See Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands, A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (Toronto, 1921); and Herbert E. Bolton and Mary Ross, *The Debatable Land* (Berkeley, Calif., 1925). For a review of these borderland studies, see David Weber, "John Francis Bannon and the Historiography of the Spanish Borderlands," *Journal of the Southwest*, 29 (Winter 1987): 331–63.

<sup>2</sup> Scholars who have attempted to explore the African experience in northern America through Spanish sources include John TePaske, "The Fugitive Slave: Intercolonial Rivalry and Spanish Slave Policy, 1687–1764," in Samuel Proctor, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Florida and Its Borderlands* (Gainesville, Fla., 1975), 1–12; Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Role of Blacks in Spanish Alabama: The Mobile District, 1780–1813," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, 37 (Spring 1975): 5–18; Gilbert Din, "Cimarrones and the San Malo Band in Spanish Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, 21 (Summer 1980): 237–62; Jack D. Forbes, "Black Pioneers: The Spanish-Speaking Afroamericans of the Southwest," *Phylon*, 27 (1966): 233–46; Peter Stern, "Social Marginality and Acculturation on the Northern Frontier of New Spain" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1984); and Kimberly Hanger, "Free Blacks in Spanish New Orleans—The Transitional Decade, 1769–1779" (Masters thesis, University of Utah, 1985). Gwendolyn Midlo Hall has a detailed study of Africans in colonial Louisiana forthcoming that is drawn from Spanish as well as French sources.

the initiative and determination of blacks who, at great risk, manipulated the Anglo-Spanish contest for control of the Southeast to their advantage and thereby won their freedom. The settlement was composed of former slaves, many of West African origin, who had escaped from British plantations and received religious sanctuary in Spanish Florida. Although relatively few in number (the community maintained a fairly stable size of about 100 people during the quarter-century between 1738 and 1763, while St. Augustine's population grew from approximately 1,500 people in the 1730s to approximately 3,000 by 1763), these freedmen and women were of great contemporary significance.<sup>3</sup> By their "theft of self," they were a financial loss to their former owners, often a serious one.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, their flight was a political action, sometimes effected through violence, that offered an example to other bondsmen and challenged the precarious political and social order of the British colonies. The runaways were also important to the Spanish colony for the valuable knowledge and skills they brought with them and for the labor and military services they performed.<sup>5</sup> These free blacks are also historiographically significant; an exploration of their lives sheds light on questions long debated by scholars, such as the relative severity of slave systems, the varieties of slave experiences, slave resistance, the formation of a Creole culture, the nature of black family structures, the impact of Christianity and religious syncretism on African-American societies, and African-American influences in the "New World."<sup>6</sup>

Although a number of historians have alluded to the lure of Spanish Florida for runaway slaves from the British colonies of South Carolina and Georgia, few have examined what became of the fugitives in their new lives or the implications of their

<sup>3</sup> Theodore G. Corbett, "Migration to a Spanish Imperial Frontier in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: St. Augustine," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 54 (August 1974): 419–20. Corbett noted that St. Augustine, the largest of the borderland settlements, also had the most blacks, slave and free, in the Spanish borderlands. As late as 1763, St. Augustine was larger than any other town in the southern colonies except Charleston. See Theodore G. Corbett, "Population Structure in Hispanic St. Augustine, 1629–1763," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 54 (July 1975–April 1976): 268.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Wood, *Black Majority; Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1974), 239–68; Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," in *Slavery and Abolition*, 6 (December 1985): 57–78; Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650–1750* (New York, 1984), 180–87.

<sup>5</sup> The role of Africans as cultural agents is discussed in Wood, *Black Majority*, 35–63, 95–130. Also see Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves, Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, La., 1981), 98–99. Wood also pointed out that "in literally every conflict in eighteenth-century South Carolina there were Negroes engaged on both sides"; Wood, *Black Majority*, 128–29.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York, 1946). Tannenbaum's early view that institutional protections benefited slaves in Hispanic areas was challenged by scholars who found economic determinants of slave treatment more significant. See Eugene Genovese, "The Treatment of Slaves in Different Countries: Problems in the Application of the Comparative Method," in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese, eds., *Slavery in the New World* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), 202–10; Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York, 1964). Historians who have reviewed Spanish racial prejudice and discriminatory regulations include Lyle McAlister, "Social Structure and Social Change in New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 43 (April 1963): 349–70; Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of the Americas* (Boston, 1967); and Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America, 1502 to the Present* (Cambridge, 1976). On the varieties of slave experiences, see Sidney M. Mintz and Richard Price, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective* (Philadelphia, 1976). On resistance in Latin America, see Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies, Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Garden City, N.Y., 1973). On the formation of Creole cultures, see Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside, A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana, Ill., 1984). On black families, see Ira Berlin, "Time, Space and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *AHR*, 85 (June 1980): 44–78. On black religion and African cultural retentions in the "New World," see Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York, 1984); and Margaret Washington Creel, "A Peculiar People": *Slave Religion and Community-Culture among the Gullahs* (New York, 1988). For an interesting comparison of African and British world views and attitudes, see Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton, N.J., 1987).

presence in the Spanish province.<sup>7</sup> The Spanish policy regarding fugitive slaves in Florida developed in an ad hoc fashion and changed over time to suit the shifting military, economic, and diplomatic interests of the colony as well as the metropolis. Although the Spanish crown preferred to emphasize religious and humane considerations for freeing slaves of the British, the political and military motives were equally, if not more, important. In harboring the runaways and eventually settling them in their own town, Spanish governors were following Caribbean precedents and helping the crown to populate and hold territory threatened by foreign encroachment.<sup>8</sup> The ex-slaves were also served by this policy. It offered them a refuge within which they could maintain family ties. In the highly politicized context of Spanish Florida, they struggled to maximize their leverage with the Spanish community and improve the conditions of their freedom. They made creative use of Spanish institutions to support their corporate identity and concomitant privileges.<sup>9</sup> They adapted to Spanish values where it served them to do so and thereby gained autonomy. They also reinforced ties within their original community through intermarriage and use of the Spanish mechanism of godparenthood (*compadrazgo*). Finally, they formed intricate new kin and friendship networks with slaves, free blacks, Indians, “new” Africans, and whites in nearby St. Augustine that served to stabilize their population and strengthen their connections to that Hispanic community.<sup>10</sup>

THAT RUNAWAYS BECAME FREE in Spanish Florida was not in itself unusual. Frank Tannenbaum’s early comparative work shows that freedom had been a possibility for slaves in the Spanish world since the thirteenth century. Spanish law granted slaves a moral and juridical personality, as well as certain rights and protections not found in other slave systems. Among the most important were the right to own property, which in the Caribbean evolved into the right of self-purchase, the right to personal security, prohibitions against separating family members, and access to the courts. Moreover, slaves were incorporated into the Spanish church and received its sacraments, including marriage. Slaves in the Hispanic colonies were subject to codes based on this earlier body of law.<sup>11</sup> Eugene Genovese and others have persuasively argued that the ideals expressed in these slave codes should not be accepted as social realities, and it seems obvious that colonials observed these laws in their own fashion—some in the spirit in which they were written and others

<sup>7</sup> Irene Wright, “Dispatches of Spanish Officials Bearing on the Free Negro Settlement of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose,” *Journal of Negro History*, 9 (1924): 144–93; TePaske, “Fugitive Slaves”; Luis Arana, “The Mose Site,” *El Escribano*, 10 (April 1973): 50–62; Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *The Negro on the American Frontier* (New York, 1971); Jane Landers, “Spanish Sanctuary; Fugitive Slaves in Florida, 1687–1790,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 62 (September 1984): 296–313; Larry W. Kruger and Robert Hall, “Fort Mose: A Black Fort in Spanish Florida,” *The Griot*, 6 (Spring 1987): 39–48.

<sup>8</sup> Lyle N. McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492–1700* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1984), 133–52.

<sup>9</sup> On corporate privileges of the Spanish militias, see Lyle N. McAlister, *The “Fuero Militar” in New Spain, 1764–1800* (Gainesville, Fla., 1957); Herbert S. Klein, “The Colored Militia of Cuba: 1568–1868,” *Caribbean Studies*, 6 (July 1966): 17–27; Allan J. Kuethe, “The Status of the Free Pardo in the Disciplined Militia of New Granada,” *Journal of Negro History*, 56 (April 1971): 105–15; Roland C. McConnell, *Negro Troops of Antebellum Louisiana—A History of the Battalion of Free Men of Color* (Baton Rouge, La., 1968).

<sup>10</sup> On the function and meaning of godparents, see George M. Foster, “Cofradía and Compadrazgo in Spain and Spanish America,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 9 (1953): 1–28; Sidney W. Mintz and Eric Wolf, “An Analysis of Ritual Co-Parenthood (Compadrazgo),” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 6 (1950): 341–67.

<sup>11</sup> Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*.

not at all.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of a slave's humanity and rights, and the lenient attitude toward manumission embodied in Spanish law and social practices, made it possible for a significant free black class to exist in the Spanish world.<sup>13</sup>

Although the Spanish legal system permitted freedom, the crown assumed that its beneficiaries would live among the Spaniards, under the supervision of white townspeople (*vecinos*). While the crown detailed its instructions regarding the physical layout, location, and function of white and Indian towns, it made no formal provisions for free black towns. But Spanish colonizers throughout the Americas were guided by an urban model. They depicted theirs as a civilizing mission and sought to create public order and righteous living by creating towns. Urban living was believed to facilitate religious conversion, but, beyond that, Spaniards attached a special value to living a *vida política*, believing that people of reason distinguished themselves from nomadic "barbarians" by living in stable urban situations.<sup>14</sup> Royal legislation reflected a continuing interest in reforming and settling so-called vagabonds of all races within the empire. The primary focus of reduction efforts was the Indians, but, as the black and mixed populations grew, so too did Spanish concerns about how these elements would be assimilated into "civilized" society. The "two republics" of Spaniards and Indians gave way to a society of castes, which increasingly viewed the unforeseen and unregulated groups with hostility. Spanish bureaucrats attempted to count these people and to limit their physical mobility through increasingly restrictive racial legislation. Officials prohibited blacks from living unsupervised or, worse, among the Indians. Curfews and pass systems developed, as did proposals to force unemployed blacks into fixed labor situations.<sup>15</sup> The crown also recognized with alarm the increased incidence of *cimarronage*, slaves fleeing Spanish control. Communities of runaway blacks, mulattos, Indians, and their offspring were common to all slaveholding societies, but they challenged the Spanish concept of civilized living, as well as the hierarchical racial and social order the Spaniards were trying to impose. Despite repeated military efforts, the Spaniards were no more successful than other European powers at eradicating such settlements.<sup>16</sup>

Paradoxically, it was in this context of increasing racial animosity that Spanish officials legitimized free black towns. These towns appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a region described by one scholar as the "Negroid

<sup>12</sup> Genovese, "Treatment of Slaves"; Mörner, *Race Mixture*; Rout, *African Experience*. For a study of the law in practice, see Norman A. Meiklejohn, "The Observance of Negro Slave Legislation in Colonial Nueva Granada" (Masters thesis, Columbia University, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> Hanger, "Free Blacks"; David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, eds., *Neither Slave nor Free, The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World* (Baltimore, Md., 1972); Landers, "Spanish Sanctuary"; Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters—The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1974), 108–32; Lyman L. Johnson, "Manumission in Colonial Buenos Aires," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 59 (1979): 258–79; Frederick Bowser, "Free Persons of Color in Lima and Mexico City: Manumission and Opportunity, 1580–1650," in Stanley Engerman and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., *Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, N.J., 1974), 331–68.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Morse elegantly analyzed the concept of the *ciudad perfecta* and Spanish efforts to reproduce it in the New World in his chapter, "A Framework for Latin American Urban History" in Jorge Hardoy, ed., *Urbanization in Latin America: Approaches and Issues* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), 57–107.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Konetzke, "Estado y sociedad en las Indias," *Estudios Americanos*, 3 (1951): 33–58; Rolando Mellafe, *Negro Slavery in Latin America* (Berkeley, Calif., 1975), 109–17.

<sup>16</sup> Meiklejohn, "Observance of Negro Slave Legislation," 103–14, 295–306; Carlos Federico Guillot, *Negros rebeldes y negro cimarrones: Perfil afroamericano en la historia del Nuevo Mundo durante el siglo XVI* (Buenos Aires, 1961); Miguel Acosta Saignes, *Vida de los esclavos negros en Venezuela* (Caracas, 1967), 249–84; R. K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *Journal of African History*, 6 (1965): 161–75; Carlos Larrazábal Blanco, *Los negros y la esclavitud en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1967).

littoral”—the sparsely populated and inhospitable coastal areas of the Caribbean.<sup>17</sup> Faced with insurmountable problems and lacking the resources to “correct” them, the Spanish bureaucracy proved flexible and adaptable. When maroon communities such as those described by Colin Palmer and William Taylor in Mexico were too remote or intractable to destroy, the Spaniards granted them official sanction.<sup>18</sup> The Spanish governor of Venezuela once chartered a free black town to reward pacification of lands held by hostile Indians.<sup>19</sup> Mose was established as a buffer against foreign encroachment and provides a third model of free black town formation.<sup>20</sup>

The experience of the residents of Mose was in many ways shaped by Caribbean patterns. Declining Indian populations, a Spanish disdain for manual labor, and the defense requirements of an extended empire had created an early demand for additional workers. Blacks cleared land and planted crops, built fortifications and domestic structures, and provided a wide variety of skilled labor for Spanish colonists. By the sixteenth century, they had become the main labor force in Mexican mines and on Caribbean plantations. Also by that time, the Spanish had organized them into militia companies in Hispaniola, Cuba, Mexico, Cartagena, and Puerto Rico.<sup>21</sup> In Florida, too, Spaniards depended on Africans to be their laborers and to supplement their defenses. Black laborers and artisans helped establish St. Augustine, the first successful Spanish settlement in Florida, and a black and mulatto militia was formed there as early as 1683.<sup>22</sup>

Florida held great strategic significance for the Spanish: initially, for its location guarding the route of the treasure fleets, later, to safeguard the mines of Mexico from the French and British. The colony was a critical component in Spain’s Caribbean defense, and, when British colonists established Charles Town in 1670, it represented a serious challenge to Spanish sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> No major response by the weakened Spanish empire was feasible, but, when the British incited their Indian allies to attack Spanish Indian missions along the Atlantic coast, the Spaniards initiated a campaign of harassment against the new British colony. In 1686, a Spanish raiding party including a force of fifty-three Indians and blacks attacked Port Royal and Edisto. From the plantation of Governor Joseph Morton, they carried away “money and plate and thirteen slaves to the value of [£]1500.” In subsequent negotiations, the new governor of Carolina, James Colleton, demanded the return of the stolen slaves as well as those “who run dayly into your towns,” but

<sup>17</sup> Leon Campbell used this term in his article, “The Changing Racial and Administrative Structure of the Peruvian Military under the Later Bourbons,” *The Americas*, 32 (July 1975): 117–33.

<sup>18</sup> Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God-Blacks in Mexico, 1570–1650* (Cambridge, 1976); William Taylor, “The Foundation of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa,” *The Americas*, 26 (April 1970): 442–46.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispano-América, 1493–1810*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1953–58), 2: 118–20.

<sup>20</sup> For a later example of a buffer town, see John Hoyt Williams, “Trevegó on the Paraguayan Frontier: A Chapter in the Black History of the Americas,” *Journal of Negro History*, 56 (October 1971): 272–83; and Germán de Granda, “Origen, función y estructura de un pueblo de negros y mulatos libres en el Paraguay del siglo XVIII (San Agustín de la Emboscada),” *Revista de Indias*, 43 (enero–junio 1983): 229–64.

<sup>21</sup> Klein, “Colored Militia”; Kuethe, “Status of the Free Pardo.”

<sup>22</sup> Roster of Black and Mulatto Militia for St. Augustine, September 20, 1683, Santo Domingo (hereafter cited as SD), 266, Archivo General de Indias: Seville (hereafter cited as AGI).

<sup>23</sup> Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 3–17; John Jay TePaske, *The Governorship of Spanish Florida, 1700–1763* (Durham, N.C., 1964), 3–6; Verne E. Chatelain, *The Defenses of Spanish Florida, 1565–1763* (Washington, D.C., 1941).

the Spaniards refused.<sup>24</sup> These contacts may have suggested the possibility of a refuge among the enemy and directed slaves to St. Augustine, for, the following year, the first recorded fugitive slaves from Carolina arrived there. Governor Diego de Quiroga dutifully reported to Spain that eight men, two women, and a three-year-old nursing child had escaped to his province in a boat. According to the governor, they requested baptism into the "True Faith," and on that basis he refused to return them to the British delegation that came to St. Augustine to reclaim them.<sup>25</sup> The Carolinians claimed that one of Samuel de Bordieu's runaways, Mingo, who escaped with his wife and daughter (the nursing child), had committed murder in the process. Governor Quiroga promised to make monetary restitution for the slaves he retained and to prosecute Mingo, should the charges be proven.<sup>26</sup> Quiroga housed these first runaways in the homes of Spanish townspeople and saw to it that they were instructed in Catholic doctrine, baptized and married in the church. He put the men to work as ironsmiths and laborers on the new stone fort, the Castillo de San Marcos, and employed the women in his own household. All were reportedly paid wages: the men earned a peso a day, the wage paid to male Indian laborers, and the women half as much.<sup>27</sup>

Florida's governors enjoyed considerable autonomy. Their dual military and political appointments, the great distance from the metropolis, and an unwieldy bureaucracy contributed to their ability to make their own decisions. In unforeseen circumstances, they improvised. But, as fugitives continued to filter into the province, the governors and treasury officials repeatedly solicited the king's guidance. Eventually, the Council of the Indies reviewed the matter and recommended approving the sanctuary policy shaped by the governors. On November 7, 1693, Charles II issued the first official position on the runaways, "giving liberty to all . . . the men as well as the women . . . so that by their example and by my liberality others will do the same."<sup>28</sup>

The provocation inherent in this order increasingly threatened the white Carolinians. At least four other groups of runaways reached St. Augustine in the following decade, and, despite an early ambiguity about their legal status, the refugees were returned to their British masters only in one known example.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Mr. Randolph to the Board, June 28, 1699, in A.S. Salley, *Records of the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1698–1700* (Columbia, S.C., 1946), 4: 89; Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 31–33.

<sup>25</sup> "William Dunlop's Mission to St. Augustine in 1688," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 34 (January 1933): 1–30; Diego de Quiroga to the king, February 2, 1688, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 150. Morton's stolen male slaves included Peter, Scipio, Doctor (whose name suggests a specialized function or skill), Cushi, Arro, Emo, Caesar, and Sambo. The women included Frank, Bess, and Mammy. Sambo was the Hausa name for a second son, while in Mende or Vai it meant "disgrace." Cushi may have been "Quashee," the Twi day-name for Sunday, which also came to signify "foolish" or "stupid." For a discussion of slave naming, see Wood, *Black Majority*, 181–86, among others. The men who stole the canoe were named Conano, Jesse, Jacque, Gran Domingo (Big Sunday), Cambo, Mingo, Dicque, and Robi. Wood suggests that forms of the name Jack derived from the African day-name for Wednesday, Quaco. Names of the two women and the little girl were not given. The owners of the fugitives who escaped in the canoe were: Samuel de Bordieu, Mingo, his wife and daughter; John Bird, two men; Joab Howe, one man; John Berresford, one woman; Christopher Smith, one man; Robert Cuthbert, three men. "William Dunlop's Mission," 4, 26, 28.

<sup>26</sup> "William Dunlop's Mission," 25.

<sup>27</sup> Royal officials to the king, March 3, 1689, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 151–52.

<sup>28</sup> Royal edict, November 7, 1693, SD 58–1–26 in the John B. Stetson Collection (hereafter cited as ST), P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville (hereafter cited as PKY). Also see "William Dunlop's Mission," 1–30.

<sup>29</sup> The various petitions of Carolina fugitives gathered together by Governor Manuel de Montiano are found in SD 844, fols. 521–46, microfilm reel 15, PKY. They mention groups arriving in 1688, 1689, 1690, 1697, 1724, and 1725. Governor Joseph de Zuñiga reported that his predecessor, Governor

Carolina's changing racial balance further intensified the planters' concerns. By 1708, blacks outnumbered whites in the colony, and slave revolts erupted in 1711 and 1714. The following year, when many slaves joined the Yamasee Indian war against the British, they almost succeeded in exterminating the badly outnumbered whites. Indians loyal to the British helped defeat the Yamasee, who with their black allies headed for St. Augustine. Although the Carolina Assembly passed harsh legislation designed to prevent further insurrections and control the slaves, these actions and subsequent negotiations with St. Augustine failed to deter the escapes or effect the reciprocal return of slaves. British planters claimed that the Spanish policy, by drawing away their slaves, would ruin their plantation economy. Arthur Middleton, Carolina's acting governor, complained to London that the Spaniards not only harbored their runaways but sent them back in the company of Indians to plunder British plantations. The Carolinians set up patrol systems and placed scout boats on water routes to St. Augustine, but slaves still made good their escapes on stolen horses and in canoes and piraguas.<sup>30</sup>

In 1724, ten more runaway slaves reached St. Augustine, assisted by English-speaking Yamasee Indians. According to their statements, they were aware that the Spanish king had offered freedom to those seeking baptism and conversion.<sup>31</sup> The royal edict of 1693 was still in force, and Governor Antonio de Benavides initially seems to have honored it. In 1729, however, Benavides sold these newcomers at public auction to reimburse their owners, alleging that he feared the British might act on their threats to recover their losses by force. Some of the most important citizens of St. Augustine, including the royal accountant, the royal treasurer, several military officers, and even some religious officials, thus acquired valuable new slaves.<sup>32</sup> Others were sold to owners who took them to Havana. In justifying his actions, Benavides explained that these slaves had arrived during a time of peace with England and, further, that he interpreted the 1693 edict to apply only to the original runaways from the British colony.<sup>33</sup>

Several of the reenslaved men were veterans of the Yamasee war in Carolina, and one of these, Francisco Menéndez, was appointed by Governor Benavides to command a slave militia in 1726. This black militia helped defend St. Augustine against the British invasion led by Colonel John Palmer in 1728, but, despite their loyal service, the Carolina refugees still remained enslaved.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the Spaniards continued to send canoes of Carolina fugitives and Yamasee Indians north in search of British scalps and live slaves. Governor Middleton charged that

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Laureano de Torres y Ayala, on August 8, 1697, returned six blacks and an Indian who had escaped from Charlestown that year, "to avoid conflicts and ruptures between the two governments." Joseph de Zuñiga to the king, October 10, 1699, SD 844, microfilm reel 15, fol. 542, PKY.

<sup>30</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, 304–05. For a new overview of the broader demographic context, see Peter H. Wood, "The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685–1790," in Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, eds., *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln, Neb., 1989), 35–103.

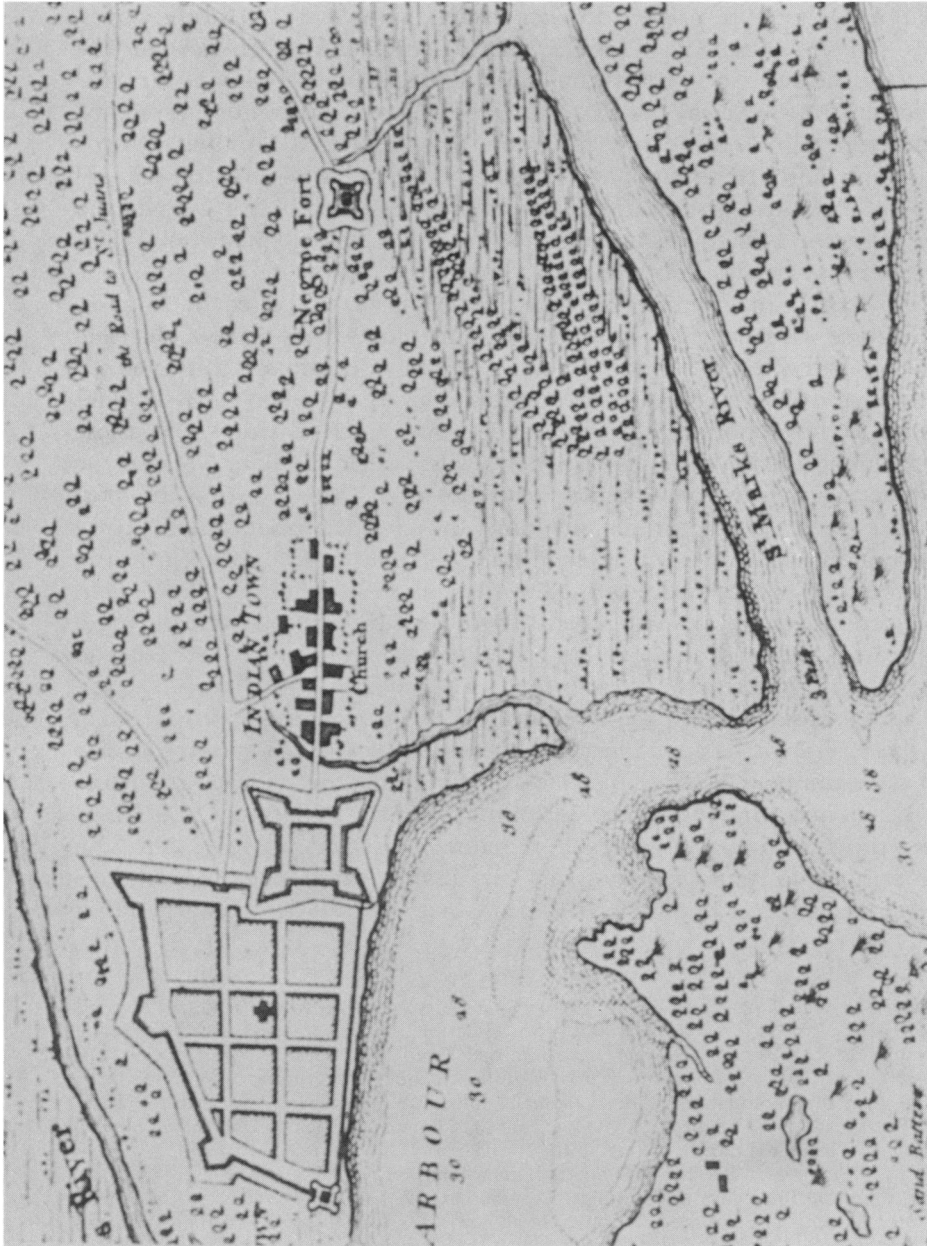
<sup>31</sup> Memorial of the Fugitives, 1724, SD 844, fol. 530, microfilm reel 15, PKY.

<sup>32</sup> Governor Antonio de Benavides to the king, November 11, 1725, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 164–66. The noted citizens who acquired the slaves filed various memorials to record their concerns about British threats to come take the slaves and the fact that British forces outnumbered Spanish. Memorial, August 26, 1729, SD 844, fols. 550–62. Governor Benavides then authorized their auction and gave the proceeds to a British envoy, Arthur Hauk. Accord, June 27, 1730, SD 844, fols. 564–66, microfilm reel 15, PKY.

<sup>33</sup> Consulta by the Council of the Indies, April 12, 1731, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 166–72.

<sup>34</sup> Petition of Francisco Menéndez, November 21, 1740, SD 2658, AGI. On the role of the black militia in 1728, see TePaske, *Fugitive Slave*, 7.





MAP BY Thomas Jefferys (1699–1775), "Plan of the Town and Harbour of St. Augustin," from *A Description of the Spanish Islands and Settlements on the Coast of the West Indies* (London, 1762), plate 6. Courtesy of P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida. The "Negro Fort" is Mose, approximately two miles from the city of St. Augustine. This map shows the strategic location of Mose, exposed as the northernmost outpost of the Spanish empire, and the protected location of the Indian settlement. My thanks to Darci A. MacMahon at the Florida Museum of Natural History for her help with illustrations.

Governor Benavides was profiting by the slaves' sale in Havana, a charge that seems well founded.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps in response to continued reports and diplomatic complaints involving the fugitives, the crown issued two new edicts regarding their treatment. The first, on October 4, 1733, forbade any future compensation to the British, reiterated the offer of freedom, and specifically prohibited the sale of fugitives to private citizens. The second edict, on October 29, 1733, commended the blacks for their bravery against the British in 1728; however, it also stipulated that they would be required to complete four years of royal service prior to being freed. But the runaways had sought liberty, not indenture.<sup>36</sup> Led by Captain Menéndez of the slave militia, the blacks persisted in attempts to secure complete freedom. They presented petitions to the governor and to the auxiliary bishop of Cuba, who toured the province in 1735, but to no avail.<sup>37</sup> When Manuel de Montiano became governor in 1737, their fortunes changed. Captain Menéndez once more solicited his freedom, and this time his petition was supported by that of a Yamasee cacique named Jorge. Jorge related how Menéndez and three others had fought bravely for three years in the Yamasee rebellion, only to be sold back into slavery in Florida by a "heathen" named Mad Dog. Jorge condemned this betrayal of the blacks whom he stated had been patient and "more than loyal," but he did not blame Mad Dog, for he was an "infidel" who knew no better. Rather, he held culpable the Spaniards who had purchased these loyal allies.<sup>38</sup> Governor Montiano ordered an investigation and reviewed the case. On March 15, 1738, he granted unconditional freedom to the petitioners. Montiano also wrote the governor and captain general of Cuba, attempting to retrieve eight Carolinians who had been taken to Havana during the Benavides regime. At least one, Antonio Caravallo, was returned to St. Augustine, against all odds.<sup>39</sup>

GOVERNOR MONTIANO ESTABLISHED THE FREEDMEN IN A NEW TOWN, about two miles north of St. Augustine, which he called Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose.<sup>40</sup> The freedmen built the settlement, a walled fort and shelters described by the Spaniards as resembling thatched Indian huts. Little more is known about it from Spanish sources, but later British reports add that the fort was constructed of stone, "four square with a flanker at each corner, banked with earth, having a ditch without on

<sup>35</sup> Governor Arthur Middleton, June 6, 1728, British Public Record Office Transcripts, 13: 61–67, cited in Wood, *Black Majority*, 305.

<sup>36</sup> Royal edict, October 4, 1733, SD 58–1–24, ST; Royal edict, October 29, 1733, SD 58–1–24, ST.

<sup>37</sup> Memorial of the Fugitives, SD 844, fols. 533–34, included in Manuel de Montiano to the king, March 3, 1738, SD 844, microfilm reel 15, PKY.

<sup>38</sup> Memorial of Chief Jorge, SD 844, fols. 536–37, *ibid.* Jorge claimed to be the chief who had led the Yamasee uprising against the British. Jorge stated that he and the rest of the Yamasee chiefs commonly made treaties with the slaves, and that he now wanted to help Menéndez and the three others who fought along with him become free. Mad Dog sold them into slavery for some casks of honey, corn, and liquor (*aguardiente*).

<sup>39</sup> Decree of Manuel de Montiano, March 3, 1738, SD 844, fols. 566–75, microfilm reel 15, PKY. The eight slaves who were sold to Havana included "Antonio, an English slave from San Jorge [the Spanish name for Charlestown], another of the same name, Clemente, Andres, Bartholome Chino [the term for a mixed-blood], Juan Francisco Borne, Juan (English), Jose, who's other name is Mandingo, all of whom are from San Jorge."

<sup>40</sup> Montiano to the king, February 16, 1739, SD 844, microfilm reel 15, PKY. The name is a composite of an existing Indian place name, Mose, the phrase that indicated that the new town was established by the king, Gracia Real, and the name of the town's patron saint, Teresa of Avilés, who was the patron saint of Spain.

all sides lined round with prickly royal and had a well and house within, and a look-out." They also confirm Spanish reports that the freedmen planted fields nearby.<sup>41</sup> The town site was said to be surrounded by fertile lands and nearby woods that would yield building materials. A river of salt water "running through it" contained an abundance of shellfish and all types of fish.<sup>42</sup> Montiano hoped the people of Mose could cultivate the land to grow food for St. Augustine, but, until crops could be harvested, he provided the people with corn, biscuits, and beef from government stores.<sup>43</sup>

Mose was located at the head of Mose Creek, a tributary of the North River with access to St. Augustine, and lay directly north of St. Augustine, near trails north to San Nicholas and west to Apalache. For all these reasons, it was strategically significant. Governor Montiano surely considered the benefits of a northern outpost against anticipated British attacks. And who better to serve as an advanced warning system than grateful ex-slaves carrying Spanish arms? The freedmen understood their expected role, for, in a declaration to the king, they vowed to be "the most cruel enemies of the English" and to risk their lives and spill their "last drop of blood in defense of the Great Crown of Spain and the Holy Faith."<sup>44</sup> If the new homesteaders were diplomats, they were also pragmatists, and their own interests were clearly served by fighting those who would seek to return them to chattel slavery. Mose also served a vital objective of Spanish imperial policy, and, once Governor Montiano justified its establishment, the Council of the Indies and the king supported his actions.<sup>45</sup>

Since Spanish town settlement implied the extension of *justicia*, the governor assigned a white military officer and royal official to supervise the establishment of Mose. Mose was considered a village of new converts comparable to those of the Christian Indians, so Montiano also posted a student priest at the settlement to instruct the inhabitants in doctrine and "good customs."<sup>46</sup> Although the Franciscan lived at Mose, there is no evidence that the white officer did. It seems rather that Captain Menéndez was responsible for governing the settlement, for, in one document, Governor Montiano referred to the others as the "subjects" of Menéndez. The Spaniards regarded Menéndez as a sort of natural lord, and, like Indian caciques, he probably exercised considerable autonomy over his village.<sup>47</sup> Spanish titles and support may have also reinforced Menéndez's status and authority. Whatever the nature of his authority, Menéndez commanded the Mose militia for over forty years, and his career supports Price's contention that eighteenth-century maroon leaders were military figures well-versed in European ways and equipped to negotiate their followers' best interests.<sup>48</sup>

As new fugitives arrived, the governor placed these in Menéndez's charge as well.

<sup>41</sup> *St. Augustine Expedition of 1740: A Report to the South Carolina General Assembly Reprinted from the Colonial Records of South Carolina with an introduction by John Tate Lanning* (Columbia, S.C., 1954), 25.

<sup>42</sup> Report of Antonio de Benavides, SD 58-2-16/45, bundle 5725, ST.

<sup>43</sup> Purchases and Payments for 1739, Cuba 446, AGI.

<sup>44</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, February 16, 1739, SD 845, fol. 700, SD 845, microfilm reel 16, PKY. Fugitive Negroes of the English plantations to the king, June 10, 1738, SD 844, microfilm reel 15, PKY.

<sup>45</sup> Council of the Indies, October 2, 1739, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 178-80; Council of the Indies, September 28, 1740, SD 845, fol. 708, microfilm reel 16, PKY.

<sup>46</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, February 16, 1739, SD 845, fol. 701, microfilm reel 16, PKY.

<sup>47</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, September 16, 1740, SD 2658, AGI. Montiano's successor also stated that the townspeople of Mose were "under the dominion of their Captain and Lieutenant." Melchor de Navarrete to the Marqués de Ensenada, April 2, 1752, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 185.

<sup>48</sup> Evacuation report of Juan Joseph Eligio de la Puente, January 22, 1764, SD 2595, AGI; Price, *Maroon Societies*, 29-30.

A group of twenty-three men, women, and children arrived from Port Royal on November 21, 1738, and were sent to join the others at the new town. Among the newcomers were the runaway slaves of Captain Caleb Davis of Port Royal. Davis was an English merchant who had been supplying St. Augustine for many years, and it is possible that some of the runaways had even traveled to St. Augustine in the course of Davis's business. Davis went to the Spanish city in December 1738 and spotted his former slaves, whom he reported laughed at his fruitless efforts to recover them.<sup>49</sup> The frustrated Davis eventually submitted a claim against the Spanish for twenty-seven of his slaves "detained" by Montiano, whom he valued at 7,600 pesos, as well as for the launch in which they escaped and supplies they had taken with them. He also listed debts incurred by the citizens of St. Augustine. Among those owing him money were Governors Antonio Benavides, Francisco Moral Sánchez, and Manuel de Montiano, various royal officials and army officers, and Mose townsmen Francisco Menéndez and Pedro de Leon.<sup>50</sup> There is no evidence Davis ever recouped his losses.

In March 1739, envoys from Carolina arrived in St. Augustine to press for the return of their runaway slaves. Governor Montiano treated them with hospitality but referred to the royal edict of 1733, which required that he grant religious sanctuary.<sup>51</sup> In August, an Indian ally in Apalache sent word to Montiano that the British had attempted to build a fort in the vicinity, but that the hundred black laborers had revolted, killed all the whites, and hamstringed their horses before escaping. Several days later, some of the blacks encountered the Indians in the woods and asked directions to reach the Spaniards.<sup>52</sup> The following month, a group of Angola slaves revolted near Stono, South Carolina, and killed more than twenty whites before heading for St. Augustine. They were apprehended before reaching their objective, and retribution was swift and bloody. But officials of South Carolina and Georgia blamed the sanctuary available in nearby St. Augustine for the rebellion, and relations between the colonies reached a breaking point.<sup>53</sup> With the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear, international and local grievances merged. In January 1740, Governor James Oglethorpe of Georgia raided Florida and captured Forts Pupo and Picolata on the St. John's River west of St. Augustine. These initial victories enabled Oglethorpe to mount a major expeditionary force, including Georgia and South Carolina regiments, a vast Indian army, and seven warships for a major offensive against the Spaniards.<sup>54</sup>

The free black militia of Mose worked alongside the other citizenry to fortify provincial defenses. They also provided the Spaniards with critical intelligence reports.<sup>55</sup> In May, one of Oglethorpe's lieutenants happened across five houses

<sup>49</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, February 16, 1739, SD 845, fol. 700, microfilm reel 16, PKY; "Journal of William Stephens," cited in Wood, *Black Majority*, 307.

<sup>50</sup> Claim of Captain Caleb Davis, September 17, 1751, SD 2584, AGI.

<sup>51</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, March 13, 1739, Manuscript 19508, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

<sup>52</sup> Letter of Manuel de Montiano, August 19, 1739, "Letters of Montiano, Siege of St. Augustine," *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, Ga., 1909), 7: 32.

<sup>53</sup> "The Stono Rebellion and Its Consequences," in Wood, *Black Majority*, 308–26.

<sup>54</sup> TePaske, *Governorship*, 140.

<sup>55</sup> On January 8, 1740, Montiano sent Don Pedro Lamberto Horruytiner "with 25 horsemen from his company, 25 infantry and 30 Indians and free Negroes (of those who are fugitives from the English Colonies) to scout the country." Manuel de Montiano to the king, January 31, 1740, SD 2658, AGI. On January 27, 1740, Montiano sent Don Romualdo Ruiz del Moral out on a similar mission accompanied by "25 horsemen, 25 Indians, and 25 free Negroes." Montiano wrote, "The difficulty of getting information in our numerous thickets, lagoons and swamps, is so great as to make the thing almost impossible." Manuel de Montiano to the king, January 31, 1740, "Letters of Montiano," 7: 36.

occupied by the freedmen and was able to capture two of them.<sup>56</sup> Unable to protect the residents of Mose, Governor Montiano was forced to evacuate “all the Negroes who composed that town” to the safety of St. Augustine. Thereafter, the Mose militia continued to conduct dangerous sorties against the enemy and assisted in the surprise attack and recapture of their town in June.<sup>57</sup> The success at Mose was one of the few enjoyed by the Spaniards. It is generally acknowledged to have demoralized the combined British forces and to have been a significant factor in Oglethorpe’s withdrawal. British accounts refer to the event as “Bloody Mose” or “Fatal Mose” and relate with horror the murder and mutilation (decapitation and castration) of two wounded prisoners who were unable to travel. They do not say whether Spaniards, Indians, or blacks did the deed. Although Spanish sources do not even mention this incident, atrocities took place on both sides. Both Spanish and British authorities routinely paid their Indian allies for enemy scalps, and at least one scalp was taken at “Moosa,” according to British reports.<sup>58</sup>

Cuban reinforcements finally relieved St. Augustine in July. Shortly thereafter, Oglethorpe and his troops returned to Georgia and Carolina.<sup>59</sup> Governor Montiano commended all his troops to the king but made the rather unusual gesture of writing a special recommendation for Francisco Menéndez. Montiano extolled the exactitude with which Menéndez had carried out royal service and the valor he had displayed in the battle at Mose. He added that, on another occasion, Menéndez and his men had fired on the enemy until they withdrew from the castle walls and that Menéndez had displayed great zeal during the dangerous reconnaissance missions he undertook against the British and their Indians. Moreover, he acknowledged that Menéndez had “distinguished himself in the establishment, and cultivation of Mose, to improve that settlement, doing all he could so that the rest of his subjects, following his example, would apply themselves to work and learn good customs.”<sup>60</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Menéndez petitioned for remuneration from his king for the “loyalty, zeal and love I have always demonstrated in the royal service, in the encounters with the enemies, as well as in the effort and care with which I have worked to repair two bastions on the defense line of this plaza, being pleased to do it, although it advanced my poverty, and I have been continually at arms, and assisted in the maintenance of the bastions, without the least royal expense, despite the scarcity in which this presidio always exists, especially in this occasion.” He added, “my sole object was to defend the Holy Evangel and sovereignty of the Crown,” and asked for the proprietorship of the free black militia and a salary to enable him to live decently (meaning in the style customary for an official of the militia). He concluded that he hoped to receive “all the consolation of the royal support . . . which Christianity requires and your vassals desire.” Several months

<sup>56</sup> *St. Augustine Expedition*, 23. One was the escaped slave of Mrs. Parker, and the other claimed to have been carried away from Colonel Gibbs by the Indians.

<sup>57</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, January 17, 1740, SD 2658, AGI. For Montiano’s account of Oglethorpe’s siege and the victory at Mose, see Manuel de Montiano to the king, August 9, 1740, SD 845, fols. 11–26, microfilm reel 16, PKY; and “Letters of Montiano,” 7: 54–62.

<sup>58</sup> Mills Lane, ed. *General Oglethorpe’s Georgia: Colonial Letters, 1738–1743*, II (Savannah), 447. For more accounts of atrocities, see *St. Augustine Expedition of 1740*, 47; TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 143; Larry E. Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier, The Military Colonization of Georgia 1733–1749* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1974). This account is written from British sources and therefore is inaccurate on many aspects of the Spanish history. Ivers seriously undercounts St. Augustine’s population, glamorizes Oglethorpe’s role, and fails to recognize the role of blacks at Mose and throughout the Anglo-Spanish conflict.

<sup>59</sup> TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 144.

<sup>60</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, January 31, 1740, SD 2658, AGI.

later, Menéndez filed a second, shorter petition.<sup>61</sup> It was customary for an illiterate person to sign official documents with an X, and for the notary or witnesses to write underneath, “for ———, who does not know how to write.” Both these petitions, however, were written and signed in the same hand and with a flourish, so it would seem that at some point Menéndez learned how to write in Spanish—perhaps when he was the slave of the royal accountant whose name he took.<sup>62</sup> Despite his good services, appropriate behavior and rhetoric, there is no evidence of a response, and the noted royal parsimony made such payment unlikely.

Nevertheless, the runaways from Carolina had been successful in their most important appeal to Spanish justice—their quest for liberty. Over the many years, they persevered, and their leaders learned to use Spanish legal channels and social systems to advantage. They accurately assessed Spain’s intensifying competition with England and exploited the political leverage it offered them. Once free, they understood and adapted to Spanish expectations of their new status. They vowed fealty and armed service, establishing themselves as vassals of the king and deserving of royal protection. Governor Montiano commended their bravery in battle and their industry as they worked to establish and cultivate Mose. They were clearly not the lazy vagabonds feared by Spanish administrators, and the adaptive behavior of Menéndez and his “subjects” gained them at least a limited autonomy.

Such autonomy is evident in both the black and Indian militias that operated on St. Augustine’s frontiers. Their role in the defense of the Spanish colony has not yet been appreciated. They were cavalry units that served in frontier reconnaissance and as guerrilla fighters. They had their own officers and patrolled independently, although Spanish infantry officers also commanded mixed groups of Spanish, free blacks, and Indians on scouting missions.<sup>63</sup> The Florida garrison was never able to maintain a full contingent, and these militias constituted an important asset for the short-handed governors.<sup>64</sup> Because England and Spain were so often at war during his administration, Governor Montiano probably depended on the black troops more than did subsequent Florida governors.

When the Spaniards mounted a major retaliatory offensive against Georgia in 1742, Governor Montiano once again employed his Mose militia. Montiano’s war plans called for sending English-speaking blacks of the Mose militia to range the countryside gathering and arming slave recruits, which suggests that he placed great trust in their loyalty and ability, as well, perhaps, as in their desire to punish their former masters.<sup>65</sup> Bad weather, mishaps, and confusion plagued the operation, and several hundred of the Spanish forces were killed at Bloody Marsh on Saint Simon’s island. By August, the Spaniards had returned to St. Augustine.

<sup>61</sup> Memorial of Francisco Menéndez, November 21, 1740, SD 2658, AGI. Memorial of Francisco Menéndez, December 12, 1740, *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> The proprietary royal accountant for St. Augustine was Don Francisco Menéndez Márquez. The Menéndez Márquez family is the subject of several works by Amy Turner Bushnell. See “The Menéndez Márquez Cattle Barony at La Chua and the Determinants of Economic Expansion in Seventeenth-Century Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 56 (April 1978): 407–31; and *The King’s Coffers, Proprietors of the Spanish Florida Treasury, 1565–1702* (Gainesville, Fla., 1981).

<sup>63</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the king, January 22, 1740, “Letters of Montiano,” 7: 32–42. Indian militias continued to serve Florida’s governors, and in 1759 Cacique Bernardo Lachiche commanded a unit of twenty-eight men, by election of the other caciques. Report of Don Lucas de Palacio on the Spanish, Indian and Free Black Militias, April 30, 1759, SD 2604, AGI.

<sup>64</sup> Although St. Augustine was allotted a troop complement of 350 men, Montiano had only 240 men fit for service in St. Augustine when the siege of 1740 ended. Manuel de Montiano to the king, August 9, 1740, SD 846, fol. 25 V, microfilm reel 16, PKY.

<sup>65</sup> Manuel de Montiano to the captain general of Cuba, Don Juan Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas, March 13, 1742, SD 2593, AGI; TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 146–52.

Oglethorpe mounted two more attacks on St. Augustine in 1742 and 1743, but neither did major damage. An uneasy stalemate developed, punctuated occasionally by Indian and corsair raids.<sup>66</sup>

Corsairing was practiced by both the British and the Spanish during the 1740s and 1750s, and St. Augustine became a convenient base of operations for privateers commissioned by Spain. The capture and sale of prizes provided badly needed specie and supplies for war-torn Florida, which had not received government subsidies in 1739, 1740, 1741, and 1745 and which struggled under the additional burden of maintaining the large number of Cuban reinforcements that had arrived in 1740.<sup>67</sup> Corsairing ships were manned by volunteers, some of whom were drawn from the free black community, for, as Governor García noted, “without those of ‘broken’ color, blacks, and Indians, which abound in our towns in America, I do not know if we could arm a single corsair solely with Spaniards.”<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, when these men were captured, the British presupposed them by their color to be slaves and sold them for profit.

When the British ship *Revenge* captured a Spanish prize in July 1741, found aboard was a black named “Signior Capitan Francisco,” who was “Capt. of a Comp’y of Indians, Mollattoes, and Negroes that was att the Retaking of the Fort [Mose] att St. Augus’ne formerly taken Under the Command of that worthless G—— O——pe who by his treachory suffered so many brave fellows to be mangled by those barbarians.” His captors tied Francisco Menéndez to a gun and ordered the ship’s doctor to pretend to castrate him (as Englishmen at Mose had been castrated), but while Menéndez “frankly owned” that he was Captain of the company that retook Mose, he denied ordering any atrocities, which he said the Florida Indians had committed. Menéndez stated that he had taken the commission as privateer in hopes of getting to Havana, and from there to Spain, to collect a reward for his bravery. Several other mulattoes on board were also interrogated and substantiated Menéndez’s account, as did several of the whites, but “to make Sure and to make him remember that he bore such a Commission,” the British gave him 200 lashes and then “pickled him and left him to the Doctor to take Care of his Sore A—se.” The following month, the *Revenge* landed at New Providence, in the Bahamas, and her commander, Benjamin Norton, who was due the largest share of the prize, vehemently argued before the Admiralty Court that the blacks should be condemned as slaves. “Does not their Complexion and features tell all the world that they are of the blood of Negroes and have suckt Slavery and Cruelty from their Infancy?” He went on to describe Menéndez as “this Francisco that Cursed Seed of Cain, Curst from the foundation of the world, who has the Impudence to Come into this Court and plead that he is free. Slavery is too Good for such a Savage, nay all the Cruelty invented by man . . . the torments of the World to Come will not suffice.” No record of Francisco’s testimony appears in this account, but the Court ordered him sold as a slave, “according to the Laws of the plantation.”<sup>69</sup> However, as we have seen, Menéndez was a man of unusual abilities. Whether he successfully appealed for his freedom in British courts as he had in the Spanish, was ransomed back by the Spanish in Florida, or escaped is unknown, but, by at least 1752, he was

<sup>66</sup> TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 152–55.

<sup>67</sup> TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 100–05.

<sup>68</sup> Fulgencio García de Solís to the king, August 25, 1752, SD 845, fols. 81–112, microfilm reel 17, PKY.

<sup>69</sup> “Account of the Revenge,” in John Franklin Jameson, ed., *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (New York, 1923), 402–11. My thanks to Charles Tingley for providing this source.

once again in command at Mose. This incident illustrates the extreme racial hatred some British felt for Spain's black allies, as well as the grave dangers the freedmen faced in taking up Spanish arms. Other blacks captured as privateers in the same period were never returned.<sup>70</sup>

ALTHOUGH UNSUCCESSFUL, GOVERNOR OGLETHORPE'S invasion in 1740 had wreaked havoc in Spanish Florida. Mose and the other outlying forts had been destroyed, along with many of the crops and animals on which the community subsisted. For the next twelve years, the townspeople of Mose lived among the Spanish in St. Augustine. This interlude was critical to the integration of the Carolina group into the larger and more diverse society in the city. Wage lists in treasury accounts and military reports from this period show that they performed a variety of valuable functions for the community. Free blacks labored on government projects, were sailors and privateers, tracked escaped prisoners, and helped forage food for the city. In the spring, they rounded up wild cattle for slaughter and wild horses for cavalry mounts.<sup>71</sup> They probably led lives much like those of free blacks in other Spanish colonial ports and may have engaged in craft production, artisanry, and the provision of services.<sup>72</sup> Although certain racial restrictions existed, they were rarely enforced in a small frontier settlement such as St. Augustine, where more relaxed personal relations were the norm. Everyone knew everyone else, and this familiarity could be a source of assistance and protection for the free blacks of Mose, who had acquired at least a measure of acceptability.<sup>73</sup>

Parish registers reflect the great ethnic and racial diversity in Spanish Florida in these years. Because there were always fewer female runaways, the males of that group were forced to look to the local possibilities for marriage partners—either Indian women from the two outlying villages of Nuestra Señora de la Leche and Nuestra Señora de Tholomato, or free and slave women from St. Augustine. Interracial relationships were common, and families were restructured frequently when death struck and widowed men and women remarried. The core group of Carolina fugitives formed intricate ties among themselves for at least two generations. They married from within their group and served as witnesses at each other's weddings and as godparents for each other's children, sometimes many times over. They also entered into the same relationships with Indians, free blacks, and slaves from other locations. Some of these slaves eventually became free, which might suggest mutual assistance efforts by the black community. The people of Mose also

<sup>70</sup> Report of Captain Fernando Laguna, October 7, 1752, SD 846, fols. 84–108, microfilm reel 17, PKY.

<sup>71</sup> Michael C. Scardaville and Jesus María Belmonte, "Florida in the Late First Spanish Period: The Griñán Report," *El Escribano*, 16 (1979): 10.

<sup>72</sup> Works that provide information on the life and labor of blacks in colonial Spanish America include: Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, "Eighteenth-Century Spanish American Towns—African and Afro-Hispanic Life and Labor in Cities and Suburbs," in Anne Pescatello, ed., *The African in Latin America* (New York, 1975): 106–11; Greene and Cohen, *Neither Slave nor Free*; and Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow, eds., *Cities and Society in Colonial America* (Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1986).

<sup>73</sup> Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark's work, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York, 1984), demonstrates how personalism might mediate race relations even in a more rigid caste society, but free blacks always had to balance carefully their legal rights against the social limits accepted in their community. For other examples of upwardly mobile slaves from Spanish Florida, see Jane Landers, "Black Society in Spanish St. Augustine, 1784–1821" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1988).



formed ties of reciprocal obligation with important members of both the white and black communities through the mechanism of ritual brotherhood (*compadrazgo*). A few examples should serve to illustrate the complex nature of these frontier relationships.

Francisco Garzía and his wife, Ana, fled together from Carolina and were among the original group freed by Governor Montiano. Francisco was black, and Ana, Indian. As slaves in St. Augustine, they had belonged to the royal treasurer, Don Salvador Garzía. Garzía observed the church requirement to have his slaves baptized and properly married, for the couple's children are listed as legitimate. Francisco and Ana's daughter, Francisca Xaviera, was born and baptized in St. Augustine in 1736, before her parents were freed by the governor. Her godfather was a free mulatto, Francisco Rexidor. This man also served as godfather for Francisco and Ana's son, Calisto, born free two years later. Garzía died sometime before 1759, for in that year his widow, Ana, married a black slave named Diego. Calisto disappeared from the record and presumably died, while Francisca Xaviera married Francisco Díaz, a free black from Carolina. Their two children, Miguel Francisco and María, were born at Mose, and Francisco Díaz served in the Mose militia.<sup>74</sup>

Juan Jacinto Rodríguez and his wife, Ana María Menéndez, were also among the first Carolina homesteaders at Mose. Shortly after the town was founded, their son Juan married Cecilia, a Mandingo from Carolina who was the slave of Juan's former owner, cavalry Captain Don Pedro Lamberto Horruytiner. Cecilia's sister-in-law, María Francisca, had served as godmother at Cecilia's baptism two years earlier. María Francisca married Marcos de Torres, a free and legitimate black from Cartagena, Colombia, during the time the Mose homesteaders lived in St. Augustine. Marcos de Torres and María Francisca had three children born while they lived in town, and María Francisca's brother, Juan, and his wife, Cecilia, served as the children's godparents. After Marcos de Torres died, María Francisca and her three orphaned children lived with her parents at Mose. In 1760, the widowed María Francisca married the widower, Thomas Chrisostomo.<sup>75</sup>

Thomas and his first wife were Congo slaves. Thomas belonged to Don Francisco Chrisostomo, and his wife, Ana María Ronquillo, to Juan Nicolás Ronquillo. The couple married in St. Augustine in 1745. Pedro Graxales, a Congo slave and his legitimate wife, María de la Concepción Hita, a Caravalí slave, were the godparents at the wedding. By 1759, Thomas was a free widower living alone at Mose. The

<sup>74</sup> In 1738, Francisco and Ana were the slaves of Don Salvador Garzía, SD 844, fols. 593–94, microfilm reel 15, PKY. Baptism of Francisca Xaviera, August 30, 1736, and baptism of Calisto, October 23, 1738, Black Baptisms, Cathedral Parish Records, Diocese of St. Augustine Catholic Center, Jacksonville (hereafter cited as CPR), microfilm reel 284 F, PKY. Marriage of the widowed Ana García Pedroso to Diego, the slave of Don Juan Joseph Eligio de la Puente, January 14, 1759, Black Marriages, CPR, microfilm reel 284 C, PKY. Baptism of Miguel Francisco, January 29, 1753, Black Baptisms, CPR, microfilm reel 284 F, PKY. Mose militia list, included in evacuation report of Juan Joseph Eligio de la Puente, January 22, 1764, SD 2595, AGI.

<sup>75</sup> In 1738, Juan Jacinto Rodríguez and Ana María Menéndez were the slaves of Petronila Pérez, SD 844, fol. 594, PKY. They were married as slaves on October 9, 1735, CPR, 284 C, PKY. After Juan Jacinto died, Ana María married the free black, Antonio de Urisa, of the Lara nation on April 26, 1740, *ibid.* Juan Jacinto and Ana María's daughter, María Francisca, was baptized on October 11, 1736, while she was still the slave of Petronila Pérez, CPR, 284 F, PKY. Juan Lamberto Horruytiner married Cecilia Horruytiner on July 12, 1739, CPR, 284 C, PKY. Baptism of Cecilia, September 9, 1737, CPR, 284 F, PKY. Marriage of María Francisca to Marcos de Torres, August 20, 1742, CPR, 284 C, PKY. Baptism of their daughter, María, May 20, 1743, and their son Nicolás de la Concepción, January 10, 1746, CPR, 284 F, PKY. María Francisca and the children were living in her parents' home at the time of the 1759 census. Census of Father Gines Sánchez, February 12, 1759, SD 2604, AGI. Marriage of Thomas Chrisostomo and María Francisca, December 15, 1760, CPR, 284 C, PKY.

next year, he and María Francisca were wed. By that time, Thomas's godfather, Pedro Graxales, was also living at Mose as a free man, but Pedro's wife and at least four children remained slaves in St. Augustine.<sup>76</sup>

A simple bicultural encounter model will not suffice to explain the extent of cultural adaptation at Mose and the formation of this African-Hispanic community.<sup>77</sup> Many of its members were born on the western coast of Africa and then spent at least some time in a British slave society before risking their lives to escape. Some had intimate contact for several years with the Yamassee Indians and fought other non-Christian Indian groups before reaching Spanish Florida. At least thirty-one became slaves of the Spanish prior to achieving free status. Once free, they associated closely with the remnants of the seven different Indian nations aggregated into the two outlying Indian towns. From 1740 until 1752, the Mose group lived within the city of St. Augustine; after that time, they were forcibly removed to a rebuilt settlement. Meanwhile, new infusions of Africans continued to be incorporated into the original Mose community through ties with godparents. Many historians now agree that, although the ex-slaves did not share a single culture, their common values and experiences in the Americas enabled them to form strong communities, as they did in Spanish Florida. Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland have argued that British slaves understood their society "in the idiom of kinship" and that, for slaves, "familial and communal relations were one."<sup>78</sup> The Spaniards also viewed society as an extension of family structures. The institution of the extended kinship group (*parentela*), which included blood relations, fictive kin, and sometimes even household servants and slaves, and the institution of *clientela*, which bound powerful patrons and their personal dependents into a network of mutual obligations, were so deeply rooted in Spain that, according to one scholar, they might have been the "primary structure of Hispanic society." Thus African and Spanish views of family and society were highly compatible, and each group surely recognized the value that the other placed on kinship.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the relationships that developed between people of St. Augustine and the Mose settlers, there were objections to their presence in the Spanish city. Some complaints may have stemmed from racial prejudice or ethnocentrism. To some of the poorer Spanish, the free blacks represented competition in a ravaged economy. Indians allied to the British remained hostile to the Spaniards and raided the countryside with regularity. Plantations were neither safe nor productive. Havana could not provide its dependency with sufficient goods, and the few food shipments that reached St. Augustine were usually ruined. British goods were cheaper and better, and the governor was forced to depend on enemy suppliers for his needs. War and corsair raids on supplies shipped from Havana further strained the colony's ability to sustain its urban population. As new runaways continued to

<sup>76</sup> Marriage of Thomas Chrisostomo and Ana María Ronquillo, February 28, 1745, *ibid.* Baptism of Pedro Graxales, December 9, 1738, CPR, 284 F, PKY. Marriage of Pedro Graxales, Congo slave of Don Francisco Graxales, and María de la Concepción Hita, Caravali slave of Don Pedro de Hita, January 19, 1744, CPR, 284 C, PKY. Baptisms of their children, María, November 4, 1744; Manuela de los Angeles, January 1, 1747; Ysidora de los Angeles, December 22, 1748; Joseph Ynisario, April 4, 1755; and Juana Feliciano, July 13, 1757, CPR, 284 F, PKY.

<sup>77</sup> Mintz and Price, "Anthropological Approach."

<sup>78</sup> Licenses for Slaves Imported into St. Augustine, 1762–1763, Cuba 472, AGI. Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland, "Afro-American Families in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Radical History Review*, 42 (1988): 89.

<sup>79</sup> For a concise description of the importance of the extended family, *parentela*, and the system of personal dependency, *clientela*, in Spain, see McAlister, *Spain and Portugal*, 39–40.

arrive, they only exacerbated the problem.<sup>80</sup> Finally, Melchor de Navarrete, who succeeded Montiano in 1749, decided to reestablish Mose. He reported his achievements in converting the newcomers, remarking that he withheld certificates of freedom until the supplicants had a satisfactory knowledge of doctrine. Navarrete also claimed to have resettled all the free blacks from Carolina at Mose.<sup>81</sup>

Governor Fulgencio García de Solís, who served from 1752 to 1755, refuted his predecessor's claims, stating that persistent illnesses among the blacks had prevented their relocation. When García attempted to remove the freedmen and women to Mose, he faced stubborn resistance. The governor complained that it was not fear of further Indian attacks but the "desire to live in complete liberty" that motivated the rebels. He "lightly" punished the two unnamed leaders of the resistance and threatened worse to those who continued to fight the resettlement. He fortified the town to allay their fears and finally effected the resettlement. In a familiar litany, he alluded to "bad customs," "spiritual backwardness," and "pernicious consequences" and condemned not only the original Mose settlers but also "those who have since fled the English colonies to join them." He was determined that they would have "no pretext which could excuse them" from living at Mose and sought to isolate them from "any dealings or communication with . . . the town within the walls."<sup>82</sup> The Spanish association of urbanization with the advance of civilization traditionally had as its corollary the idea that those living outside a city's boundaries were lacking in cultural and spiritual attainments. In his official papers, García evidenced a much lower opinion of the free blacks than had Governor Montiano, and by removing them "beyond the walls" he made a visible statement about their supposed inferiority.

García was no doubt angered by the rebellion he faced, and he was probably correct in contending that it actually arose from the free black desire to live in "complete liberty." The crown had many times reiterated its commitment to their freedom, and, after living in St. Augustine for thirteen years and repeatedly risking their lives in its defense, the free blacks surely recognized the eviction for the insult it represented. Possibly, after García's interim term ended, there was greater interaction between the peoples of St. Augustine and its satellite, as later governors did not display his antipathy toward the free blacks.<sup>83</sup> Governor García may also have been disturbed by the presence and influence of unacculturated Africans (*bozales*) among the latecomers. The "bad customs" that he alleged had so troubled his predecessors and himself might have been African cultural retentions. In 1744, Father Francisco Xavier Arturo baptized Domingo, a Caravalí slave, in extremis, with the comment that his "crudeness" prevented his understanding Christian doctrine.<sup>84</sup> Four years later, Miguel Domingo, a Congo slave, received a conditional

<sup>80</sup> TePaske, *Governorship*, 227–29. TePaske described the chronic financial shortages of Florida, saying that "poverty and want characterized life in Florida and pervaded all aspects of life." Father Juan Joseph de Solana also described Florida as a destitute colony, impoverished, despite its natural resources, by the continual attack of Indians loyal to the British. Father Juan Joseph de Solana to Bishop Pedro Agustín Morel de Sánchez, April 22, 1759, SD 516, microfilm reel 28 K, PKY.

<sup>81</sup> Melchor de Navarrete to the Marqués de Ensenada, April 2, 1752, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 184–86.

<sup>82</sup> Fulgencio García de Solís to the king, November 29, 1752, SD, microfilm reel 17, PKY. Also, Fulgencio García de Solís to the king, December 7, 1752, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 187–89.

<sup>83</sup> Governors Alonso Fernández de Heredia and Lucas de Palacio both requested special financial assistance for the townspeople of Mose, citing their poverty. Alonso de Heredia to Julian de Arriaga, April 7, 1756, cited in Wright, "Dispatches," 193–94; the king to Lucas de Palacio, April 21, 1759, *ibid.*, 195.

<sup>84</sup> Baptism of Miguel, 1744, CPR, 284 F, PKY.

baptism, because he told the priest that he had been baptized in his homeland, and continued to pray in his native language.<sup>85</sup>

Peter Wood's analysis of slave imports into South Carolina during the late 1730s determined that 70 percent of those arriving during this brief period came from the Congo-Angola region.<sup>86</sup> St. Augustine's church registers suggest a similar preponderance there but within a broader context of considerable ethnic diversity. The Spanish often recorded the nation of origin for the Africans among them, and, although these designations are troublesome and must be used with caution, they offer at least a general approximation of the origins of those recorded. One hundred and forty-seven black marriages were reported from 1735 to 1763, and fifty-two of those married were designated as Congos—twenty-six males and twenty-six females. The next largest group was the Caravalis, including nine males and nineteen females. The Mandingos constituted the third largest group and had nine males and four females. Also represented in the marriage registers were the Minas, Gambas, Lecumis, Sambas, Gangas, Araras, and Guineans.<sup>87</sup>

Governor García was required by royal policy to grant sanctuary to slave refugees, but he was not required to accommodate them in St. Augustine, and he did not. The chastened freedmen built new structures at Mose, including a church and a house for the Franciscan priest within the enclosed fort, as well as twenty-two shelters outside the fort for their own households. A diagram of the new fort, which had one side open on Mose Creek, shows the interior buildings described by Father Juan Joseph de Solana but not the houses of the villagers.<sup>88</sup> The only known census of Mose, from 1759, recorded twenty-two households with a population of sixty-seven individuals. Mose had almost twice as many male as female occupants, and almost a quarter of its population consisted of children under the age of fifteen. Thirteen of the twenty-two households belonged to nuclear or nuclear extended families, and fifty villagers, or 75 percent of the total population, lived with immediate members of their families. There were no female-headed households at this outpost, and nine households were composed solely of males. At the time of the census, four men lived alone, Francisco Roso, Antonio Caravalló, Thomas Chrisostomo, and Antonio Blanco, but at least two of those men, Roso and Chrisostomo, had family members among the slaves in St. Augustine. A third all-male household consisted of a father, Francisco de Torres, and his son, Juan de Arranzate. Francisco's wife and Juan's mother, Ana María, was a slave in St. Augustine. Pedro Graxales was also separated from his slave wife and their children but had a younger man, Manuel Rivera, attached to his household. Three other all-male households included a total of eleven men living together, at least three of whom had slave wives in St. Augustine.<sup>89</sup> Although spouses lived

<sup>85</sup> Baptism of Miguel Domingo, January 26, 1748, CPR, 284 F, PKY.

<sup>86</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, 302.

<sup>87</sup> Dr. Kathleen Deagan, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, provided these figures.

<sup>88</sup> In a map drawn by Pablo Castello, 1763, 833 B, PKY.

<sup>89</sup> Census of Gines Sánchez, February 12, 1759, SD 2604, AGI. Marriage of Francisco Roso, free Caravali and María de la Cruz, Caravali slave of Don Carlos Frison, January 8, 1743, CPR, 284 C, PKY; Baptism of Carlos Roso, November 4, 1743, CPR, 284 F, PKY. Marriage of Francisco Xavier de Torres, Mandingo, to Ana María, Mandingo slave of Josepha de Torres, February 1, 1752, CPR, 284 C, PKY. Others with slave wives in St. Augustine were Joseph de Peña, Caravali, married to Ana María Ysquierdo, Conga slave of Don Juan Ysquierdo, January 29, 1743, *ibid.*; Juan Francisco de Torres, married to María Guillen slave of Joseph Guillen, January 21, 1743, *ibid.*; Joseph Fernández, Mandingo, married to Ana María, Caravali slave, December 1, 1756, *ibid.*; Juan Baptista married to María de Jesus, August 17, 1757, *ibid.*

separately, parish registers record that children continued to be born of these unions and attest that family ties were maintained. Father Solana reported that some members of the Mose community were permitted to live in St. Augustine even though they continued to serve in the Mose militia. Several of those men appear on 1763 evacuation lists for Mose.<sup>90</sup>

THE PEOPLE OF MOSE WERE REMARKABLY ADAPTABLE. They spoke several European and Indian languages, in addition to their own, and were exposed to a variety of subsistence techniques, craft and artistic traditions, labor patterns, and food ways. We know that the freedmen and women of Mose adopted certain elements of Spanish culture. For example, since their sanctuary was based on religious conversion, it was incumbent on them to exhibit their Catholicism. Their baptisms, marriages, and deaths were faithfully recorded in parish registers. But studies of other Hispanic colonies show that religious syncretism was widespread and tolerated by the church. Following centuries-old patterns set in Spain, Cuba's blacks organized religious brotherhoods by nations. They celebrated Catholic feast days dressed in traditional African costumes and with African music and instruments.<sup>91</sup> Because St. Augustine had such intimate contact with Cuba and blacks circulated between the two locations, it would not be surprising to find that Africans in Florida also observed some of their former religious practices.

Kathleen Deagan, of the Florida Museum of Natural History, currently directs an interdisciplinary team investigating Mose. In addition to locating and excavating the site, this group is exploring the process of cultural adaptation at Mose to determine what mixture of customs and material culture its residents adopted and what in their own traditions might have influenced Spanish culture.<sup>92</sup> One suggestive find is a hand-made pewter medal that depicts St. Christopher on one side and a pattern resembling a Kongo star on the other.<sup>93</sup> Other recovered artifacts include military objects such as gunflints, a striker, and musket balls; and domestic articles such as metal buckles, a thimble, and pins, clay pipe bowls—of both local and European design—metal buttons, bone buttons—including one still in the process of manufacture—amber beads (perhaps from a rosary); and a variety of glass bottles and ceramic wares. Many of the latter are of English types, verifying documentary evidence of illicit, but necessary, trade with the enemy.

Preliminary analysis of faunal materials from the site indicates that the diet at Mose approximated that of indigenous villages and supports documentary evidence that the Indian and black villages resembled each other in many respects.

<sup>90</sup> Report of Father Juan Joseph de Solana to Bishop Pedro Agustin Morel de Sánchez, April 22, 1759, SD 516, microfilm reel 28 K, PKY; Evacuation report of Juan Joseph Eligio de la Puente, January 22, 1764, SD 2595, AGI.

<sup>91</sup> Fernando Ortiz, "La Fiesta Afro-Cubana del 'Dia de Reyes,'" *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, 15 (January–June 1920): 5–16.

<sup>92</sup> Kathleen Deagan analyzes elements and patterns of cultural exchange and adaptation in several works. See *Artifacts of the Spanish Colonies of Florida and the Caribbean, 1500–1800* (Washington, D.C., 1987); *Spanish St. Augustine: The Archaeology of a Colonial Creole Community* (New York, 1983); *St. Augustine: First Urban Enclave in the United States* (Farmingdale, N.Y., 1982); and *Sex, Status and Role in the Mestizaje of Spanish Colonial Florida* (Gainesville, Fla., 1974). On African-American archaeology, see Theresa Singleton, *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life* (Orlando, Fla., 1985); and Leland Ferguson, "Looking for the 'Afro' in Colono-Indian Pottery," in Robert L. Schuyler, ed., *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Culture History* (Farmingdale, N.Y., 1980), 14–28.

<sup>93</sup> On Kongo-American connections, see Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 112–15.

Mose's villagers incorporated many estuarine resources and wild foods into their diet. The fish were net-caught, perhaps using African techniques. The people at Mose also caught and consumed deer, raccoon, opossum, and turtle to supplement the corn and beef occasionally provided them from government stores.<sup>94</sup>

Although noted for its poverty and the misery of its people, Mose survived as a free town and military outpost for St. Augustine until 1763, when, through the fortunes of war, Spain lost the province to the British. The Spanish evacuated St. Augustine and its dependent black and Indian towns, and the occupants were resettled in Cuba. The people of Mose left behind their meager homes and belongings and followed their hosts into exile to become homesteaders in Matanzas, Cuba—consigned once more to a rough frontier. The crown granted them new lands, a few tools, and a minimal subsidy, as well as an African slave to each of the leaders of the community; however, Spanish support was never sufficient, and the people from Mose suffered terrible privations at Matanzas. Some of them, including Francisco Menéndez, eventually relocated in Havana, which offered at least the possibility of a better life, and this last diaspora scattered the black community of Mose.<sup>95</sup>

Located on the periphery of St. Augustine, between the Spanish settlement and its aggressive neighbors, Mose's interstitial location paralleled the social position of its inhabitants—people who straddled cultures, pursued their own advantage, and in the process helped shape the colonial history of the Caribbean as well as an African-American culture. In 1784, Spain recovered Florida, and many Floridanos, or first-period colonists, returned from Cuba. It is possible that among these were some of the residents of Mose. During its second regime, however, the weakened Spanish government made no effort to reestablish either Indian missions or the free black town of Mose. Free blacks took pivotal roles on interethnic frontiers of Spanish America such as Florida, serving as interpreters, craftsmen, traders, scouts, cowboys, pilots, and militiamen. The towns they established made important contributions to Spanish settlement. They populated areas the Spaniards found too difficult or unpleasant, thereby extending or maintaining Spanish dominion. They buffered Spanish towns from the attacks of their enemies and provided them with effective military reserves.

Although there were other towns like Mose in Latin America, it was the only example of a free black town in the colonial South. It provides an important, and heretofore unstudied, variant in the experience of African-born peoples in what was to become the United States. Mose's inhabitants were able to parlay their initiative, determination, and military and economic skills into free status, an autonomy at least equivalent to that of Spain's Indian allies in Florida, and a town of their own. These gains were partially offset by the constant danger and deprivation to which the townspeople of Mose were subjected, but they remained in Mose, perhaps believing it their best possible option. Despite the adversities of slavery, flight, wars, and repeated displacements, the freedmen and women of Mose managed to maintain intricate family relationships over time and shape a viable community under extremely difficult conditions. They became an example

<sup>94</sup> Personal communication from Kathleen Deagan, October 1989. On African fishing techniques in the colonial southeast, see Peter H. Wood, "It Was a Negro Taught Them': A New Look at African Labor in Early South Carolina," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 9 (July and October 1974): 167–68.

<sup>95</sup> Evacuation Report of Juan Joseph Eligio de la Puente, January 22, 1764, SD 2595, AGI. Accounts of the royal treasury of Matanzas, 1761–82, SD 1882, AGI. At least one family attempted to recover the losses of the evacuation, but they were denied on the basis of their color. Petition of María Gertrudis Roso, September 25, 1792, SD 2577, AGI.

and possibly a source of assistance to unfree blacks from neighboring British colonies, as well as those within Spanish Florida. The Spanish subsequently extended the religious sanctuary policy confirmed at Mose to other areas of the Caribbean and applied it to the disadvantage of Dutch and French slaveholders, as well as the British.<sup>96</sup> The lives and efforts of the people of Mose thus took on international significance. Moreover, their accomplishments outlived them. The second Spanish government recognized religious sanctuary from 1784 until it bowed to the pressures of the new U.S. government and its persuasive secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, and abrogated the policy in 1790. Before that escape hatch closed, several hundred slaves belonging to British Loyalists followed the example of the people of Mose to achieve emancipation in Florida.<sup>97</sup> Thus the determined fugitives who struggled so hard to win their own freedom inadvertently furthered the cause of freedom for others whom they never knew.

<sup>96</sup> Slaves escaped from Guadeloupe to Puerto Rico in 1752, and the case was still before the Council of the Indies twenty years later; Consulta, July 19, 1772. Slaves from the Danish colonies of Santa Cruz and Santo Thomas also fled to Puerto Rico in 1767, and eventually the governments signed a convention; Consulta, July 21, 1777. Slaves from the Dutch settlement at Esquibo fled to Guyana, October 22, 1802; Documents relating to fugitive slaves, Indiferente General 2787, AGI.

<sup>97</sup> See Landers, "Spanish Sanctuary." Upon registering themselves and obtaining work contracts, slaves escaped from British colonists were freed by the second Spanish government; Census Returns, 1784–1814, East Florida Papers, PKY, microfilm reel 323 A; Royal decree, included in Captain General Luis de las Casas to Governor Manuel Vicente de Zéspedes, July 21, 1790, East Florida Papers, PKY, microfilm reel 1.