British East Florida
1763 - 1783

Spanish Florida became a British colony as a term of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years' War. Due to the difficulty of administering a colony of this size, British authorities divided it into two colonies (East and West) separated by the Apalachicola River. St. Augustine was the capital of East Florida, the larger of the two. Many residents of St. Augustine migrated to Cuba before the British assumed control of its new colony from the Spanish.

The East Florida Society of London, made up of powerful British merchants and entrepreneurs, worked closely with the Privy Council, which often followed its recommendations regarding land apportionment. The Florida real estate boom hit the colony early. According to one author, during the great speculation in American lands the preceded the American Revolution, there was more interest in East Florida real estate than property in any other region of British America. The Privy Council in London issued orders for 2,856,000 acres of land in East Florida between 1764 and 1770, while issuing orders for "only" 2,108,000 acres in Nova Scotia, New York, Quebec, and West Florida combined.

Rogers, Jr., George C. (1975) "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767," *Florida Historical Quarterly*: Vol. 54: No. 4, Article 7.
Available at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol54/iss4/7

Colonial leaders invited East Florida to attend the Continental Congress, but – like its sister colony to the West -- it declined. The loyalties of East Florida rested with Britain during the ensuing American Revolution, and the colony became a loyalist haven. As part of the 1783 Peace of Paris, Britain ceded both Florida colonies back to Spain. Many of the Loyalists subsequently left Florida for the Bahamas, the West Indies, Canada, and Britain.