

British West Florida 1763-1783

On October 7, 1763, King George III issued a Proclamation prohibiting colonists from settling on western lands acquired by the British from the French in the Seven Years' War. To protect mercantile interests concerned about the apparent loss of opportunities West of the Proclamation Line, the British government encouraged growth in its two newly formed southern colonies, East and West Florida.

That same year, British forces took control of Pensacola, the designated capital of West Florida. An appointed governor, aided by a Lieutenant Governor and a twelve-member advisory council, administered the colony. The following year saw the establishment of a colonial assembly with upper and lower houses, and the beginning of a wave of arrivals seeking to take advantage of this new opportunity.

Like its sister colony East Florida, West Florida declined to send delegates to the first Continental Congress. Colonists there remained loyal to the Crown during the American Revolution. Great Britain ceded West Florida back to Spain after the American Revolution as a term of the 1783 Peace of Paris.

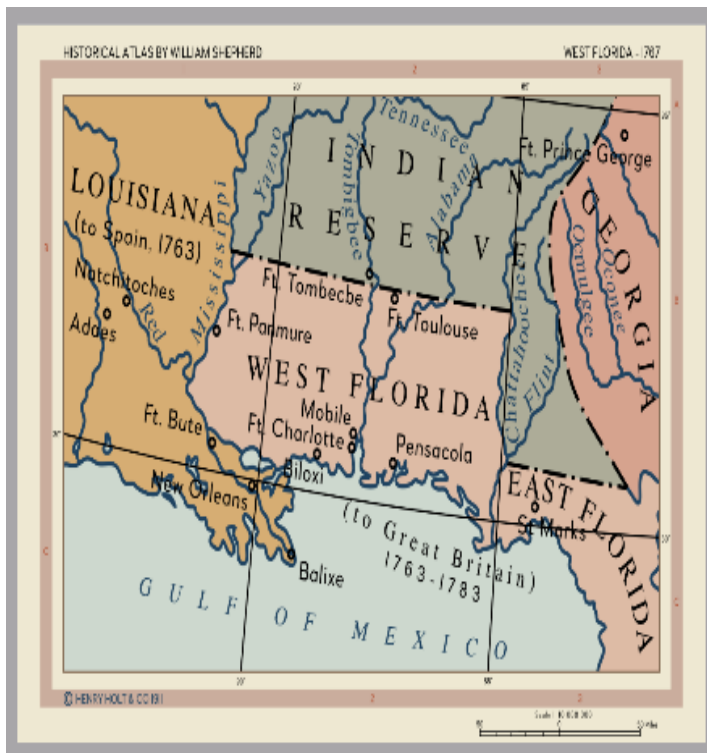


Image cropped from the map 'The British Colonies in North America, 1763-1775' from the Historical Atlas by William Shepherd (1911) - available from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection

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