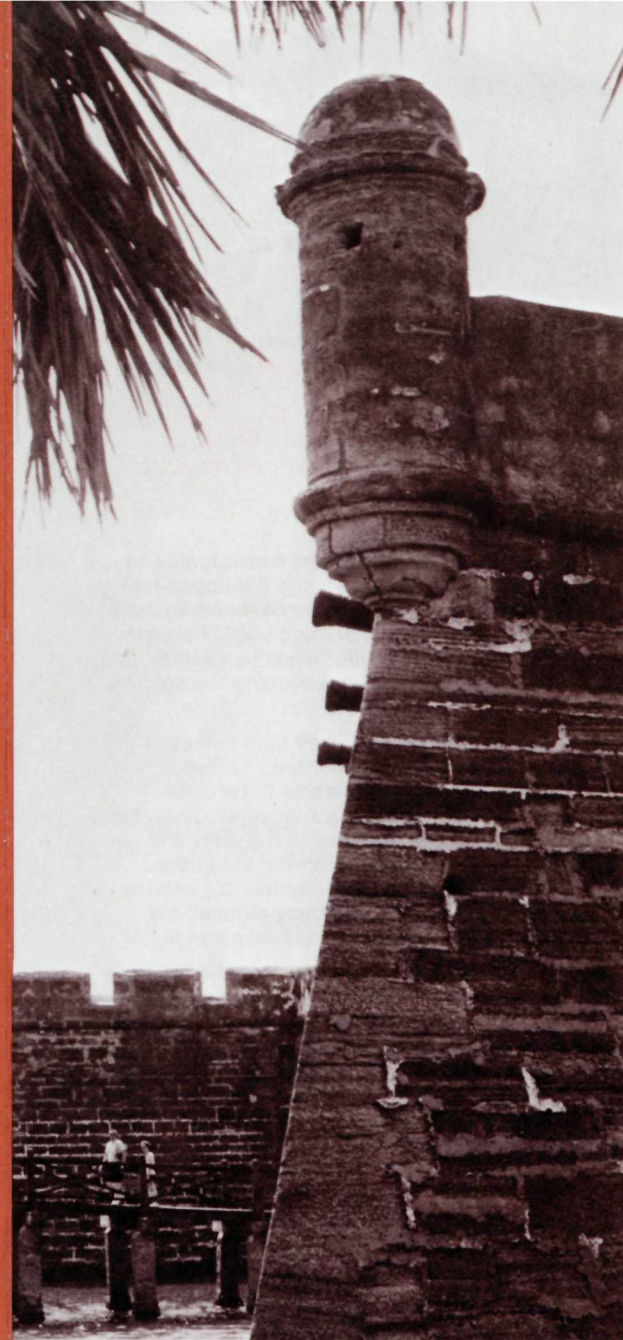# castillo de san marcos

Chronology of the Fort

1565-1675
Nine wooden forts follow one another in succession falling victim to fire, the humid climate, and shoddy construction. Queen Regent Mariana orders construction of the Castillo de San Marcos in 1669. The Viceroy of Mexico resolves in 1670 to give 12,000 pesos to St. Augustine immediately and 10,000 pesos annually until construction of the Castillo is finished.

1672
Ground broken for the Castillo de San Marcos on October 2.

1695
The basic fortress (curtain walls, bastions, and living quarters) is completed.

1704-5
Cubo Line earthwork built on north city limit to protect against invasion.

1718-19
Rosario Line earthwork built on west and south.

1738
Casemate work begun but halted by war.

1743
Hornabeque Line, an additional earthwork, constructed to the north of the city.

1752-56
Casemate work begun in 1738 finished. Royal coat of arms placed over gate to signify completion. Inscription gives credit to Gov. Alonso Fernández de Heredia and Engineer Pedro de Brozas y Garay.

1762
Fort Mose Line, an earthwork, built as the city's outermost defense. Work to enlarge the Castillo's ravelin never completed.

1776
Second floor in the casemates added by British.

1825
Castillo renamed Fort Marion.

1842-44
Few changes made by the Americans: moat on east side filled, water battery constructed, some modern artillery added.
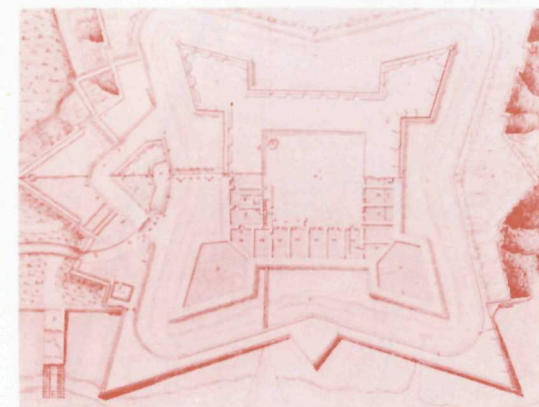
1900
Post of St. Augustine deactivated.

1924
Declared a National Monument.

1935
National Park Service begins administration.

1942
Original name, Castillo de San Marcos, restored.

A drawing of the Castillo in 1763

Establishing and Maintaining a Foothold of Empire

France had always envied Spain her rich colonies and in 1562 set out to break Spain's monopoly. This first attempt failed, but two years later a second expedition built Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River. Thus France encroached on land claimed by Spain. A raid into the Caribbean by the French showed the harm that an enemy base in Florida could inflict on ships returning to Spain via the Gulf Stream route. The threat of danger was compounded in 1565 when Jean Ribault, a very capable leader, sailed with reinforcements for Fort Caroline.

To counter the French, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, an able Spanish tactician, sailed for Florida to establish a Spanish settlement and to remove Fort Caroline. But the French reinforcements arrived first. Having lost the race across the sea, Menéndez founded St. Augustine. But for both men dislodging the other remained the uppermost objective.

Once the settlement at Fort Caroline appeared secure, Ribault gathered his forces and set out by sea to seek Menéndez. His well-laid plans ended in a shambles, for a hurricane struck his fleet off St. Augustine and the ships were blown far down the coast and wrecked.

This was the opportunity Menéndez needed. Under cover of the hurricane he quickly marched to and captured Fort Caroline. Back in St. Augustine, he received word that two bands of survivors were marching up the coast. He met the French on separate occasions at Matanzas Inlet, south of St. Augustine, and massacred them. Menéndez had accomplished his mission.

The absence of a rival in Florida enabled the Spaniards to consolidate their dominion. Missionaries went out to the north and west from St. Augustine to convert Indians. The military organization that was established remained basically unchanged for almost 200 years. And the occasional Indian uprisings were quickly suppressed.

England became Spain's next contender for Florida. The Spaniards had watched the English warily since their first permanent settlement at Jamestown in 1607. But it was not until the founding of Charleston in 1670 that the English actually trespassed on land that the Spaniards considered their own. By treaty that same year each nation recognized the territories of the other, although eventually England showed a total disregard for the treaty.

From then on constant friction between the two nations was the order of the day. Black slaves in the Carolinas early learned that if they could escape to Spanish territory they would not be returned to their masters, and all who became Catholics would be given their freedom. The number of slaves escaping to Florida was never large, but there was always a trickle. Eventually a small settlement, Fort Mose, grew up outside St. Augustine for the escaped slaves.

The English encouraged their Indian allies to harass and raid the small outlying Spanish settlements and missions. In the siege of 1702, the Carolinians destroyed the northern missions on their march to St. Augustine. Stymied by the thick walls of the Castillo and the approach of a Spanish relief force, the Carolinians withdrew after 50 days. They burned the entire city; only the Castillo was left standing. The Carolinians also destroyed the missions to the west. Before peace came the Spaniards rebuilt their settlement and strengthened it by erecting a defensive earthwork on its northern limit.

In 1740 the British returned. While British ships blockaded the coastline, the army besieged St. Augustine. This attack failed, too, for the Spaniards broke the blockade at Matanzas Inlet and brought much-needed supplies to the garrison. The approaching hurricane season forced the blockading ships to retire, whereupon the army also withdrew.

Toward the end of the French and Indian War, Spain allied herself with France against Britain. Spain's brief participation in the war was disastrous, for Britain had already defeated France in Canada and could exert tremendous pressure on the ill-prepared Spanish forces in the Caribbean. The result was that Habana was besieged and captured. To recover this vital port Spain ceded Florida to Britain at the end of the war.

In the 21 years that St. Augustine belonged to Britain the city served as a base of operations against Georgia and South Carolina during the American Revolution and as a prison for Americans. Lt. Gov. Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina was confined in the Castillo, and three of that colony's Signers of the Declaration of Independence—Thomas Heyward, Jr., Arthur Middleton, and Edward Rutledge—were held in the State House.

In 1784, Florida reverted to Spain. The Spaniards, hoping to build up the population, allowed emigrants from the United States to enter. Spain's involvements in the Napoleonic Wars sapped her wealth and energy, and Spain could only maintain a small garrison at St. Augustine. As it was, the Castillo itself steadily fell into disrepair. By 1821 Spain's weakness and the strength of the United States were both apparent, and Spain, under U.S. pressure, ceded Florida for the last time.

Grim, vital, defiant of time, this monument of Spain's hours of greatness seems still to be peering defensively out upon the Gulf Stream, seems still to be guarding the homegoing galleons from the corsair. To touch its gray outer walls, to wander among its rooms, to climb its ramp and to look out upon the blue waters of Matanzas Bay, is to wish to know the story of Spain in America; and here a part of it is beautifully told.

Freeman Tilden
The National Parks Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

The Private

A prospective soldier usually enlisted at about age 18 as a private. In that rank he performed a variety of tasks with guard duty at the Castillo or Matanzas Inlet predominating. Whenever a naval vessel went to Habana or México, a contingent of soldiers was taken along for added protection. At St. Augustine a soldier could often

be detailed to an outlying provincial post to support the missionary work among the Indians; he would help protect the Christianized Indians from the unconverted, help arbitrate disputes between chiefs, and make sure the Indians obeyed the missionaries. And he fought to defend Florida from enemy attack.

Hope for advancement through the ranks was extremely limited. It was possible to become a corporal and many did. But to go higher, a man had to be able to read and write and to have important social connections. For the vast majority, though, life consisted of observing the routines of the garrison and going about their lives as ordinary citizens when off duty.

For his work, the infantry private received the lowest pay in the garrison, $75 annually and a daily ration of 53¢. By comparison a gunner earned $112 and a seaman, $140. All got the same daily ration.

The private saw little of his pay, for deductions were taken from it for

the monthly issues of corn, beef, salt pork, salt, uniforms, weapons repair, and medical and hospital care. He was also expected to make a charitable contribution to a religious brotherhood. Often the total deductions exceeded actual pay, in which case the excess was deducted from previous years' pay that was still in arrears. Unable to get back or current pay, the private was ever in debt to the crown.

For married soldiers, family and community life filled their time and provided an outside interest. For the private, military life was hard and the pay was meager. Boredom and isolation alternated with the dangers inherent in soldiering.
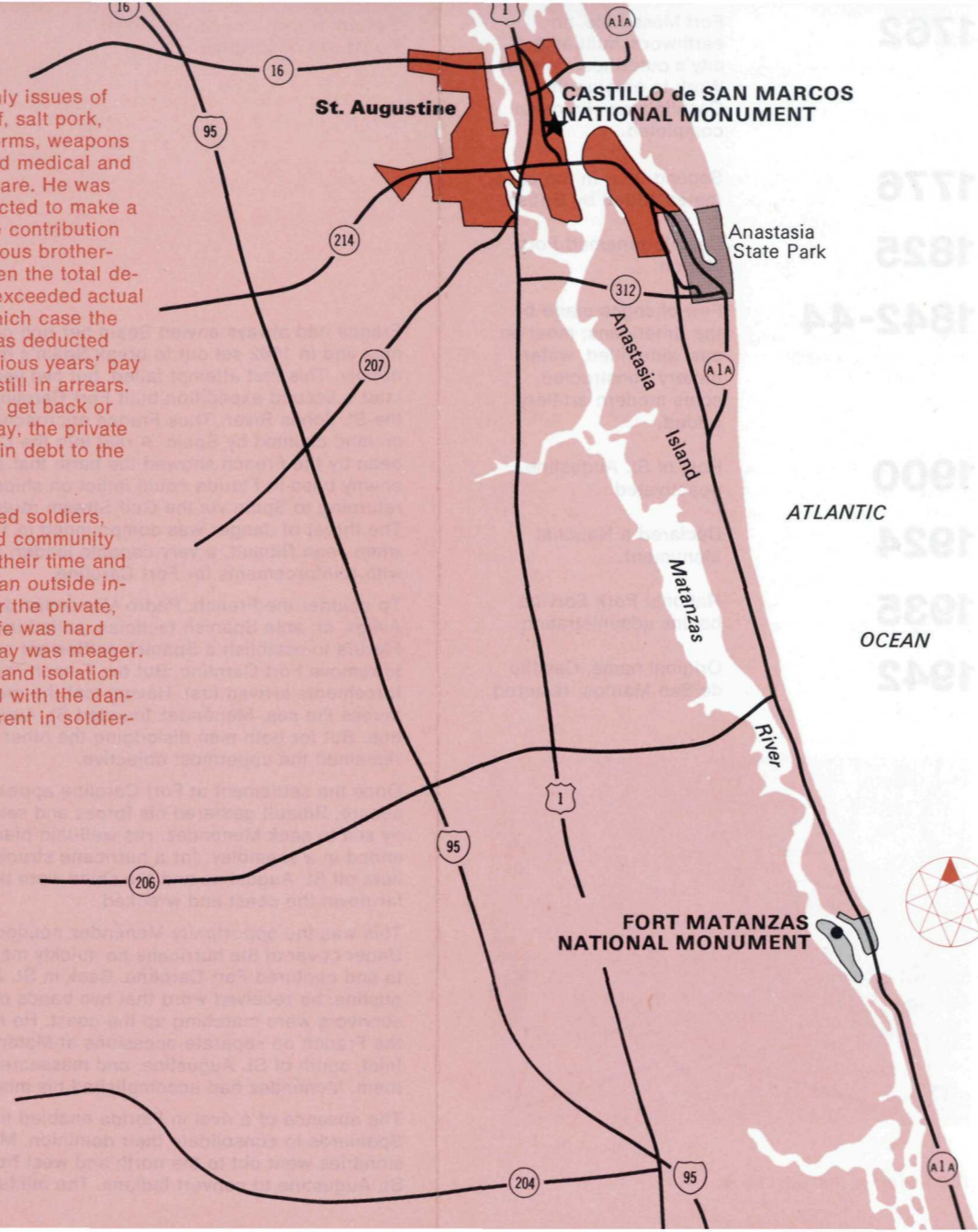
The Community
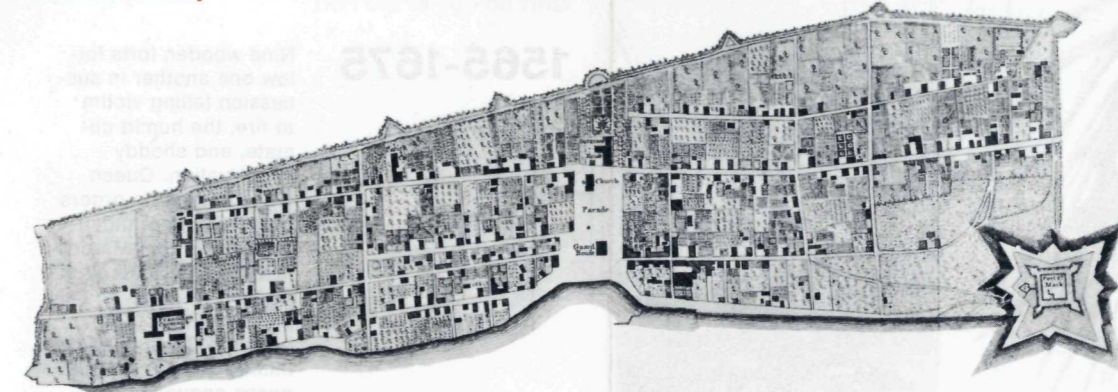
This map of St. Augustine was drawn in 1764, one year after the British took control of Florida. It was based upon the surveys of Juan de Solís, a longtime resident of St. Augustine. At the extreme right, dominating the little settlement, is the Castillo, renamed Fort St. Mark by the British. On the large parade ground in the center stand an unfinished Spanish church and a guardhouse. At the top of the parade ground is the large Governor's House with its formal gardens at the rear. The cluster of buildings at the far left are the Franciscan Convent and Church. Almost all of the other buildings are the homes and shops of the St. Augustinians. Close examination of the map will reveal that the area around these buildings are filled with gardens, small orchards, and yards, just like any other small village of that time.

To the fanfare of trumpets, the firing of cannon, and the shouts of 700 colonists, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés stepped ashore on September 8, 1565. As the flags flapped briskly in the breeze, Father Francisco López celebrated a solemn mass of thanksgiving and Menéndez and his company knelt to kiss the cross and receive the priest's blessing. Menéndez then proclaimed that the land belonged to King Philip II of Spain. St. Augustine was established.

St. Augustine was not to be just another military outpost. Its existence and future were intimately tied to the Castillo, yet it developed its own identity. Menéndez had brought artisans and

craftsmen with him, but many had returned to Spain or gone to Habana when the hoped-for riches did not materialize. Some, however, had stayed. Slowly the military and civilian populations blended. The soldier became a settler, and the settler saw his daughters marry the soldiers and his sons become soldiers.

As the soldiers married, they built homes, and raised families. Within three or four generations, the military came to be dominated by the natives of St. Augustine. They, their sons and grandsons served in the army and, as local citizens, contributed to the life of the community. For the soldier-settler, his service in the army was not just at any outpost, his service was in defense of his home and family.

A major furor arose in 1755 when, after a reorganization of the military structure, the companies in St. Augustine were alerted that they would be reassigned to Habana. Since 59 percent of the soldiers were married men, many feared that the resulting liquidation of property would be so disruptive that St. Augustine would permanently lose its civilian character and become just another military station. The order was changed so that just the unmarried men were sent to Habana. The character of the city was preserved, and it continues today, a living, vibrant city reflecting its Spanish heritage.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

For Your Safety

In this historic area are many inherent dangers: rough and uneven floors and steep drops. Besides caring for your safety and that of your children, help us protect this historic structure by not climbing on either the walls or the cannon.

Map labels

CASTILLO de SAN MARCOS NATIONAL MONUMENT

St. Augustine

Anastasia State Park

Anastasia Island

Matanzas River

ATLANTIC OCEAN

FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT