

The seventh fort, the first one to bear the name San Marcos, was begun in July 1586. It was a four-sided structure with two bastions, one in the northeast corner and the other in the southwest corner. It was not a perfect square because its south side was shorter than its north side. In the third year of its existence, it was reported as being completely rotted and threatening collapse. However, in 1593 it was still struggling along, propped up by thirty two braces, and it managed to survive eleven more years by dint of frequent repairs.

The eighth fort, the second one named San Marcos, was begun in 1604. In the years prior to its construction, there was extensive discussion about building portions of it of stone but nothing was done. The second San Marcos lasted fifty years though chronically characterized as dropping to pieces despite frequent repairs and even partial rebuilding.

The seventh and eighth forts were located on the west shore of Matanzas Bay, probably between the present Castillo and the Mission of Nombre de Dios.

The ninth fort, the third San Marcos was built in 1653. It was a wooden square-shaped structure with four square bastions. In 1668 it repulsed the assault of the English pirates. By 1671 it was a large, rickety building with two massive round towers, a mission bastion, and many props buttressing its wooden walls. It was located south of the present Castillo, on what is now the parking area. The ninth and last wooden fort lasted twenty two years. Its razing in 1675, after the Castillo de San Marcos was begun in 1672 and became defensible, ended an era of Florida history and began a new one.

The era that ended had originated with the founding of St. Augustine in 1565, and evolved in a 100-year-long setting of peace excepting internal Indian revolts. Florida did not face any

serious European threat. Spain used those years of tranquillity to establish some of her colonial institutions in St. Augustine and in a few Indian-populated areas of Florida. For protection to St. Augustine, the nine successive wooden forts met the requirements of the times.

The English pirate attack of 1668 and the settlement of Charles Town in 1670 portended the new era. When it blossomed, it was an era of keen international rivalry between Spain and England. The bone of contention was dominion over the Southeastern part of the present United States.



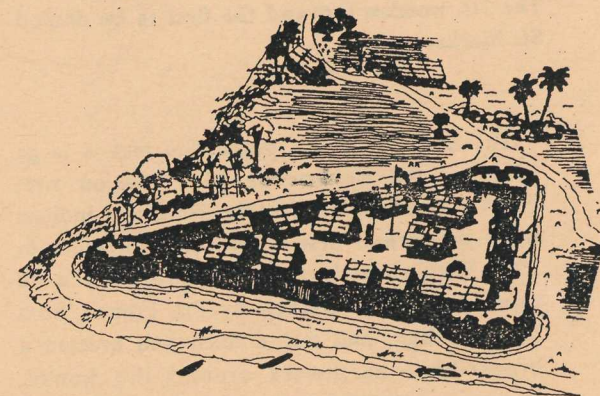
Laying out the first wooden Fort.

Drawing from Bryant's *Popular History of the United States*, Vol. 1, N.Y., 1881

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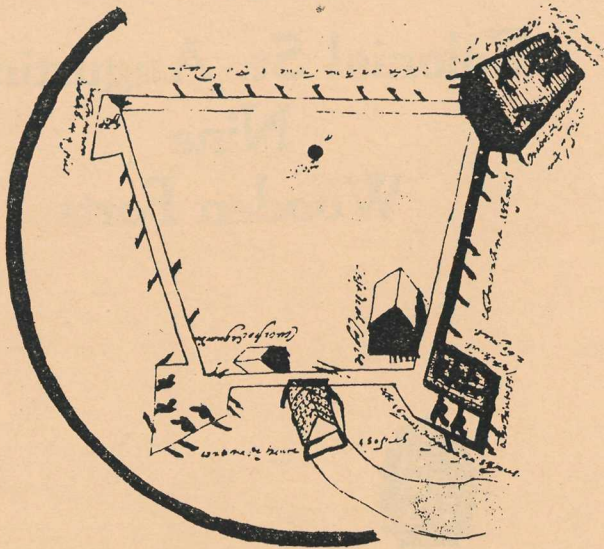
Colonial St. Augustine's Nine Wooden Forts



By Frank Suddeth
St. Augustine, Florida



1586 - 1603



The 7th wooden fort and the first to be named St. Marks.

The first fort of St. Augustine was a large house at the Nombre de Dios Mission site, given to the Spaniards by the Timucuan Indians when the former first landed on September 6, 1565. Within two days the Spaniards, who were expecting to be attacked by the French from Fort Caroline, had dug a ditch and erected a breast-high earthwork around the house. During eight months, the fort and St. Augustine were synonymous, a description that also applies to the life-span of the two other forts that followed in succession.

But Spanish-Indian friendship had become strained, and in May 1566 Don Pedro Menendez transferred his soldiers and settlers to Anastasia Island, to put Matanzas Bay between them and the Timucuan Indians. A second fort, probably triangular in shape, enclosed within a palisade encircled by a ditch was erected in ten days. This fort lasted no longer than three months because the sea was washing away the land on which it stood.

In July 1566 therefore the third fort was built in three days of frantic work. It was a short distance inland from the previous structure. Very likely this third fort had the same design as the previous one, and it lasted six years until 1572, when it was destroyed in a mutiny of unpaid and hungry soldiers.

The location of the second and third forts on Anastasia Island is unknown. But they must have been on the high ground at the eastern shore of north Anastasia.

The destruction of the third fort brought soldiers and settlers away from Anastasia Island to the present site of St. Augustine, on the west shore of Matanzas Bay. More than that, it made the soldiers build houses for their families outside of the confines of the next fort.

The fourth fort was built in 1572 just west of where Potter's Wax Museum is today. It had a rectangular shape on a north-south orientation,

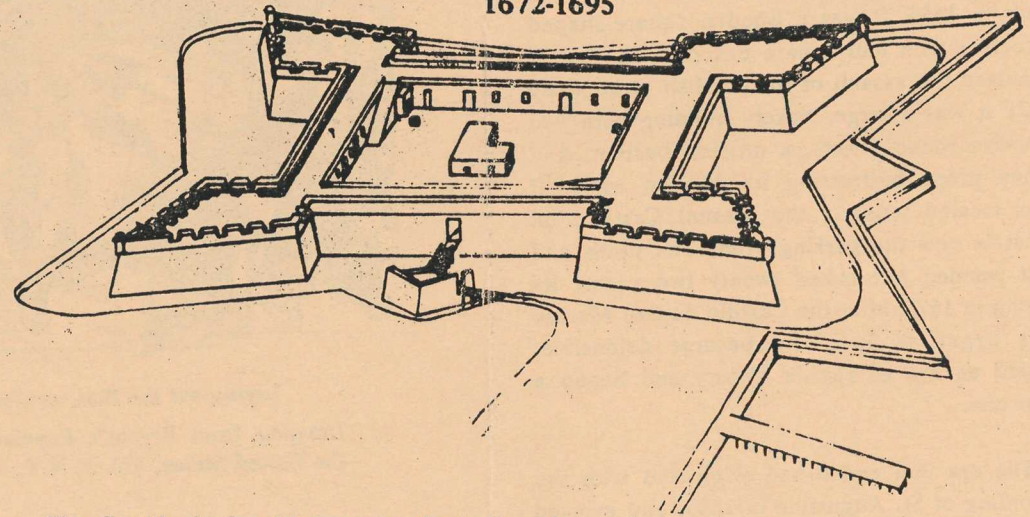
a bastion at each of the southeast and northwest corners, and a wood palisade enclosure. It lasted seven years, to 1579.

That year the fifth fort was begun. Very little is known about it, but it probably had the same rectangular shape of the previous structure. By the summer of 1585 this fifth fort was so deteriorated that it was apt to crumble at any time.

The sixth fort, named San Juan de Pinos or Pinillos, was begun early in 1586. It was an irregular six-sided structure facing southward overlooking the harbor entrance. It did not yet have a complete moat when Sir Francis Drake burned St. Augustine and this new fort at the end of May.

The sixth fort of St. Augustine was probably located somewhere on the marshy peninsula between the present-day Hospital Creek and North River.

1672-1695



The Castillo de San Marcos was the tenth and last fort built by the Spanish to protect their small settlement of St. Augustine.