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## Cathedral of St. Augustine: Taking Another Look

Mark R. Barnes

The parish church of St. Augustine was the last colonial religious edifice built in the colony of Spanish East Florida. Begun in early 1793 the *coquina* stone church was completed in late 1797. In 1870, the parish church of St. Augustine became the Cathedral of St. Augustine, when the Diocese of St. Augustine was created. The Roman Catholic parish congregation of St. Augustine is the oldest in the continental United States with surviving records of the parishioners dating from 1594. But the parish was more than two centuries old before the church was completed at its current site.

The church structure of the 1790s was about two stories in height with a rectangular, single nave floor plan. The ornamented façade--twice the height of the church--masked the timber framed, wood-shingled gabled roof. The lower half of the façade has retained most of its original Spanish colonial interpretation of Classical architectural elements, particularly those surrounding the entrance. Above the cornice on the façade was an ornamental false front, sometimes referred to as an *espadaña*. Above the *espadaña*, was a *campanario* or belfry containing four arched bell openings.

On April 15, 1970, for the architectural and historical aspects noted above, the Cathedral of St. Augustine was designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark on the recommendation of the National Park Service. However, research performed in the years since the designation has shown that the façade of the Cathedral of St. Augustine is distinct among all of the extant Spanish colonial religious buildings in the continental United States and Puerto Rico for its nearly four-story tall

## CATHEDRAL OF ST. AUGUSTINE

façade which has both the *espadaña* and belfry (*campanario*) architectural elements added to the top of an ornamental two-story façade.<sup>1</sup>

### The Parish Church in Historic Drawings and Photographs

The Spanish colonial parish church of St. Augustine was designed in 1789 (figs. 1 and 2) and built between 1793 and 1797 of *coquina*, a porous native shell stone quarried on nearby Anastasia Island. The floor plan of the church was rectangular, approximately 42 feet by 120 feet, with the entrance or south façade fronting on the north side of the town's plaza. The east and west side and rear (north) walls of the church stood about 30 feet in height. From ground level to the cornice the walls were some three feet thick and plastered inside and out with lime plaster. The front façade (south wall) would be over twice the height of these other walls and stand nearly 70 feet in height.<sup>2</sup> The earliest known engravings of the parish church, dating from 1835 to 1848 (figs. 3-5), show that the façade as completed in 1797 was actually a full story higher than designed in the 1789 plan (fig. 1).

Three engravings of the parish church from 1852 to *circa* (c.) 1862 (figs. 7-9) and two stereoscopic views of the 1860s (figs. 10-11), show that the long east and west walls contained seven rectangular window openings on the upper level of the church that are original to the 1789 Mariano de la Rocque design, and served to admit light into the structure. A stereoscopic view from the 1870s shows the windows on the west side of the church as having twelve-over-eight glass panes, although these window treatments were probably not original to the church (fig. 12), as the 1789 plans show twelve-over-twelve glass panes (fig. 2).

Another stereoscopic view from the 1870s of the rear (north) wall of the church (removed in the 1887 renovation) shows a window with twelve-over-twelve glass panes (fig. 13), which may be original to the 1789 plans. This same view (fig. 13) shows pilasters running the height of the rear church wall at the corners of the structure. On the long east and west

<sup>1</sup> The information in this article was compiled by the National Park Service in cooperation with numerous professionals in an effort to revise and update the documentation for the St. Augustine Cathedral National Historic Landmark Study.

<sup>2</sup> James Early, *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo: Spanish Architecture and Urbanism in the United States* (Dallas: Southern Methodist Press, 2004), 24.

exterior walls there are eight pilasters running the height of the church walls between the seven windows and at the edges of both walls (figs. 10-13). In addition to these pilasters there appear to be side entrances on the long east and west exterior walls of the church, possibly original to the 1789 design of the church (fig. 10).

The engravings of the parish church from 1852 and 1858 (figs. 7-8) and stereoscopic views of the 1860s (figs. 10-11) show the structure covered with a gabled roof and with a dormer about midway along the roof on the east (figs. 7-10) and west sides of the roof (fig. 11). These dormer features were possibly added after 1821. The 1852 engraving (fig. 7) and the stereoscopic views of the 1860s (figs. 10-11) show a gabled roof covered with what appears to be wood shingles. The 1852 engraving (fig. 7) shows the north or rear end of the roof was hipped. Two stereoscopic views dating from the 1870s (figs. 12-13) also show that the north end of the roof was hipped, but by this time the entire roof was covered with a metal roof, and the dormers had been removed.

The 1789 design plan of the front of the parish church executed by de la Rocque (fig. 1), depicted many of the decorative elements, originally planned for the lower half of the façade of the church, which still exist. The earliest engravings of the parish church, from 1835 (fig. 3), 1847 (fig. 4), and 1848 (fig. 5) all show a generally accurate entrance façade, although some decorative elements are not in situ as designed in 1789.

As noted above, the greatest difference between the de la Rocque 1789 plan and the church façade as completed (1797) and shown in the three engravings is the addition of an espadaña between the cornice of the front façade and the belfry. Historic documentation indicates that shortly after ground was broken for the parish church, de la Rocque was reassigned and a civilian contractor Miguel Ysnardy (or Iznardi), continued construction under the direction of a new Royal Engineer, Pedro Díaz Berriño.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that Díaz Berriño, who completed the church construction, was responsible for increasing the height of the church façade, although no historic documentation has yet been located to account for the change in de la Rocque's plans for the façade of the St. Augustine parish church.

The most ornate decorative features are on the lower half of the south or front façade of the church. Paul C. Johnson observed that "following an architectural custom introduced by the Moors, Spanish public buildings for

<sup>3</sup> Luis R. Arana, ed., "The New National Historic Landmarks," *El Escribano* 7 (1970): 105.

centuries had been mainly ornamented around openings."<sup>4</sup> A full frontispiece arched main entrance is flanked on both sides with two fluted Doric columns. The 1789 plans (fig. 1) show the church entrance was to be flanked only by one set of fluted Doric columns, but the 1835, 1847, and 1848 engravings (figs. 3-5), and all later images show the church entrance was flanked by two columns on each side. Perhaps this was another departure from the original design by Royal Engineer Díaz Berriño. James Early described the façade of the church in *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo, Spanish Architecture and Urbanism in the United States*.

The principle feature of the ground story is a neoclassical porch with paired Doric columns at the sides, and a frieze of triglyphs and plain metopes and a layered pediment above. The upper face, rising into a false front above the gabled roof, contains a plain niche set over the portal and enclosed by the swinging baroque double curves on the outer edges of the wall, which come together to support a belfry at the top. The belfry has four small niches for bells, three below and one above, an ensemble more complicated than de la Rocque's conception.<sup>5</sup>

Early's description, however, does not make note of the windows or pilasters on the lower half of the façade. Flanking the triangular pediment were two circular windows, or oculi, probably intended to admit light into the choir loft, and at the edges of the front façade were pilasters similar to those found on the east and side walls and north rear wall. These ornamental elements appear to be original to the parish church as completed in 1797, as they are included in de la Rocque's 1789 plan (fig. 1). Small arched windows, located directly below the circular windows, appear to date from the mid-nineteenth century, as they do not appear on engravings, dating from 1835 to 1862 (figs. 3-5, 7-9), but these windows do appear on stereoscopic views of the church from the latter part of the 1860s (figs. 10 and 11).

Espadañas could serve two purposes: they heightened the church façade to make it more imposing and hid the roof line of the gabled roof behind the false front, as was intended in de la Rocque's design of 1789 (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Located in the center of the espadaña was a niche, possibly intended

<sup>4</sup> Paul C. Johnson, Supervising Ed., *The California Missions: a Pictorial History* (Menlo Park, CA: Lane Book Co., 1964), 46. "The embellishments in Spain and Mexico, often lavish, were echoed faintly in decorations around doors and windows in California missions. Deep-set openings in thick walls permitted decorative shaping."

<sup>5</sup> Early, *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, *The California Missions*, 46.

to hold religious statuary (figs. 3-5, 7-8). By c. 1860, a clock had been installed below the niche (fig. 9), and later the niche was converted into a window (figs. 11-13).

Surmounting the espadaña was a triangular-shaped belfry to hold bells. The belfry contained four arched openings (three below and one above), which pierced the wall of the façade.<sup>7</sup> Behind the belfry façade was a small roofed balcony of wood for the bell ringers, which may be seen in stereoscopic views of the 1860s and 1870s (figs. 10-12). A metal cross rose from the topmost point of the belfry from the 1830s to the early 1860s (figs. 3-5, 6-9), but was missing in some of the stereoscopic views of the 1860s (figs. 10 and 11). In images of the 1870s the simple metal cross is replaced with a combination metal cross and weather vane (figs. 12 and 13).

The original wood-shingle gabled roof appears to have been replaced with a slate roof in the mid-nineteenth century although problems with leaks after only a few years brought about re-roofing with wooden shingles. Between 1870 and 1872, shortly after the parish church became a cathedral (1870), a metal roof replaced the wood-shingle covering (figs. 12 and 13).

The roof of the Cathedral of St. Augustine burned on April 12, 1887, leaving only the four stone walls standing. The noted late nineteenth-century American architect James Renwick (1818-1895) designed the renovation. He retained the ornamental facade and 75 feet of the east and west walls in a design which extended the Cathedral to the north end and added transepts perpendicular to the nave to the east and west to give the Cathedral a cruciform floor plan (fig. 6). Renwick also designed the six-story campanile, or bell tower, on the southwest corner of the Cathedral (photos 1-3). Renwick's additions were made of poured concrete which remained exposed in the technique that John M. Carrere (1858-1911) and Thomas Hastings (1860-1929) used for the Hotel Ponce de Leon, and the entire church received a clay tile roof: two hallmarks of the great buildings then being built in St. Augustine by Henry M. Flagler.<sup>8</sup>

Today it is believed that more than three-quarters of the original 1797 stone church, as designed by Mariano de la Rocque, and executed by

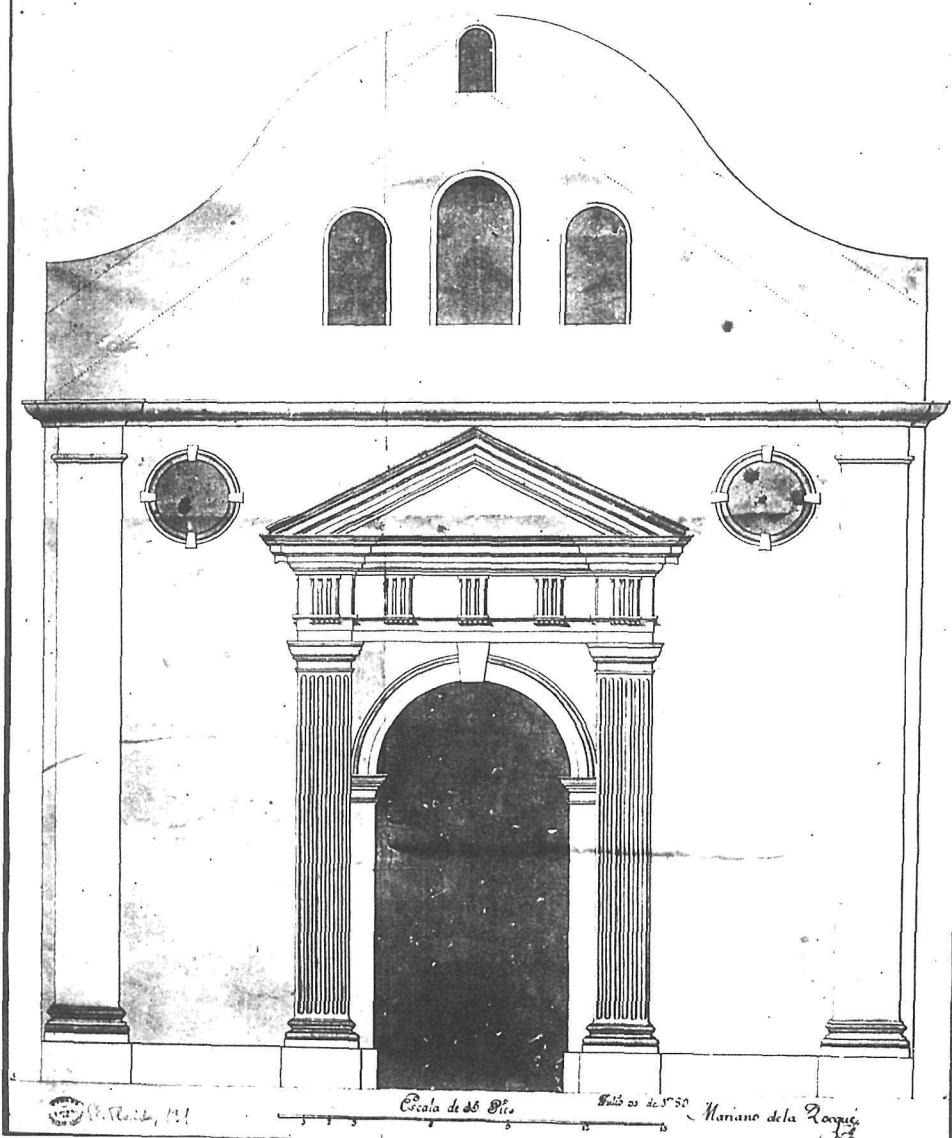
<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 47. "Of the various ways of hanging church bells, the campanario is unique to Spain and Mexico. Distinct from a campanile, or bell tower, the campanario was simply a wall, pierced for the bells. Sometimes the wall would be freestanding . . . sometimes it was an extension of the mission wall itself . . . ."

<sup>8</sup> Charles S. Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine, Florida and its History," *El Escribano* 20 (1983): 38.

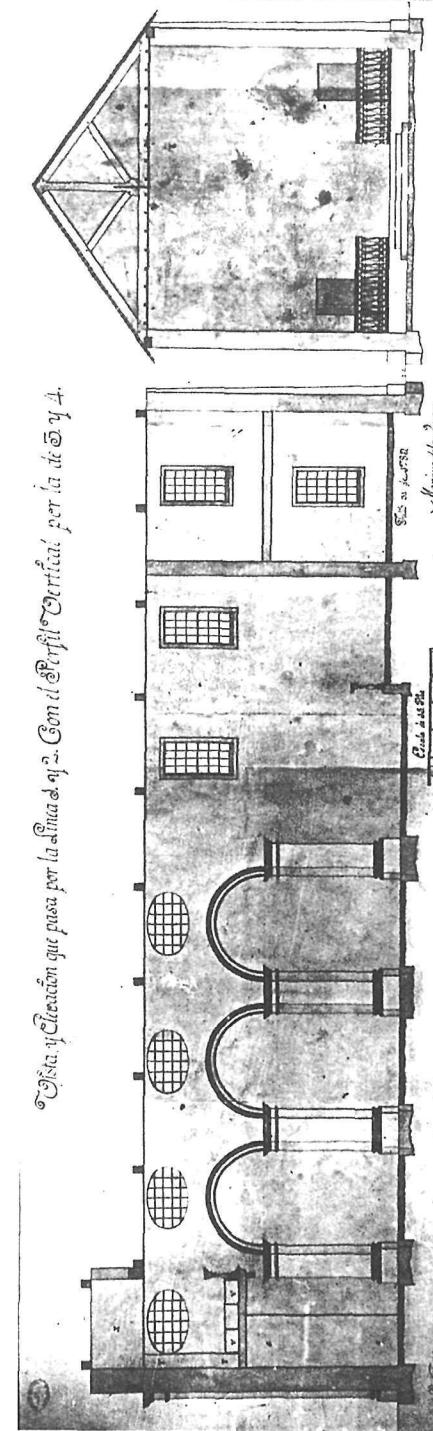
Pedro Díaz Berrio is extant. More than three-quarters of the east and west walls of the current building as completed in 1797 still contain decorative pilasters and window openings as originally designed by de la Rocque in 1789. The renovation of the Cathedral in 1887 and 1888, as designed by James Renwick, served to expand the religious structure.<sup>9</sup> The ornamental façade with its distinctive Spanish colonial decorative elements is in place with minimal changes that mostly date to the mid-nineteenth century.

<sup>9</sup> The main change to the original 1797 structure was to extend the rear of the church and add transepts perpendicular to the east and west sides of the cathedral, changing the floor plan from a simple rectangle to a cruciform shape (fig. 5). Renwick's bell tower flanks the southwest corner of the 1797 structure, and is joined to it by a small access structure.

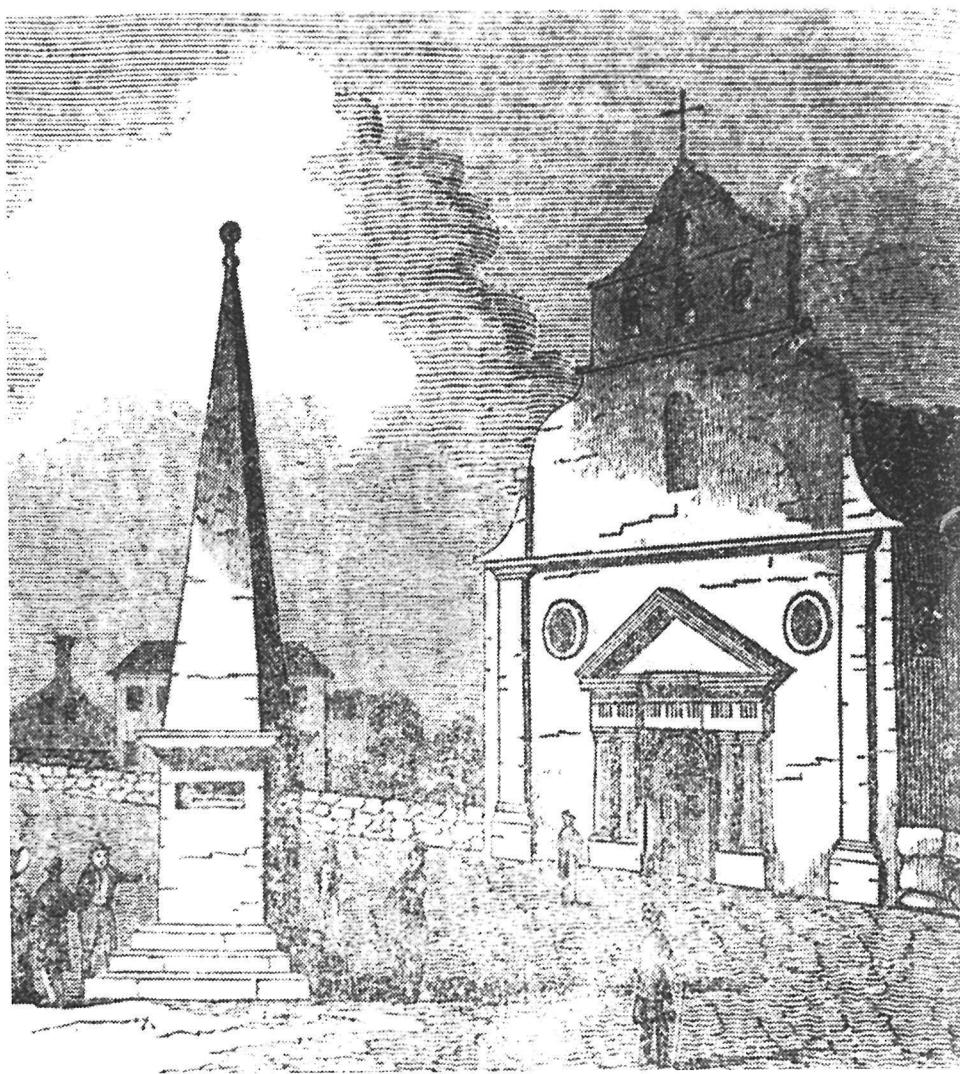
*Vista del Frente principal que pasa por la linea 5 y 6*



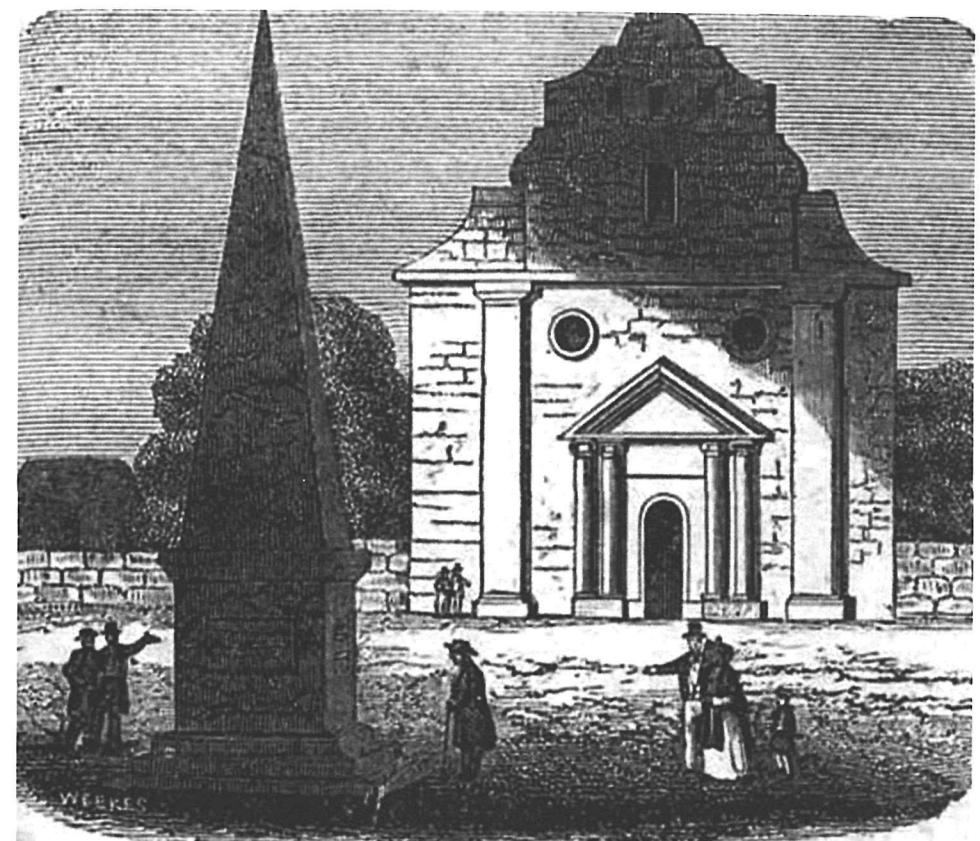
**Figure 1.** Plan executed in 1789, by Mariano de la Rocque, Royal Engineer for St. Augustine, showing the proposed approximately three-story high front facade of the parish church of St. Augustine, consisting of an ornamental facade, topped with a campanario, or belfry. Although this plan was approved by the Governor of Spanish Florida, during construction (1793-1797), an additional set of columns was added to flank the main entrance and an espadaña, or false front, was inserted between the facade cornice and the belfry. Close examination of the image shows a dotted outline of the gable roof intended to be concealed by the belfry. Original in *East Florida Papers*, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.



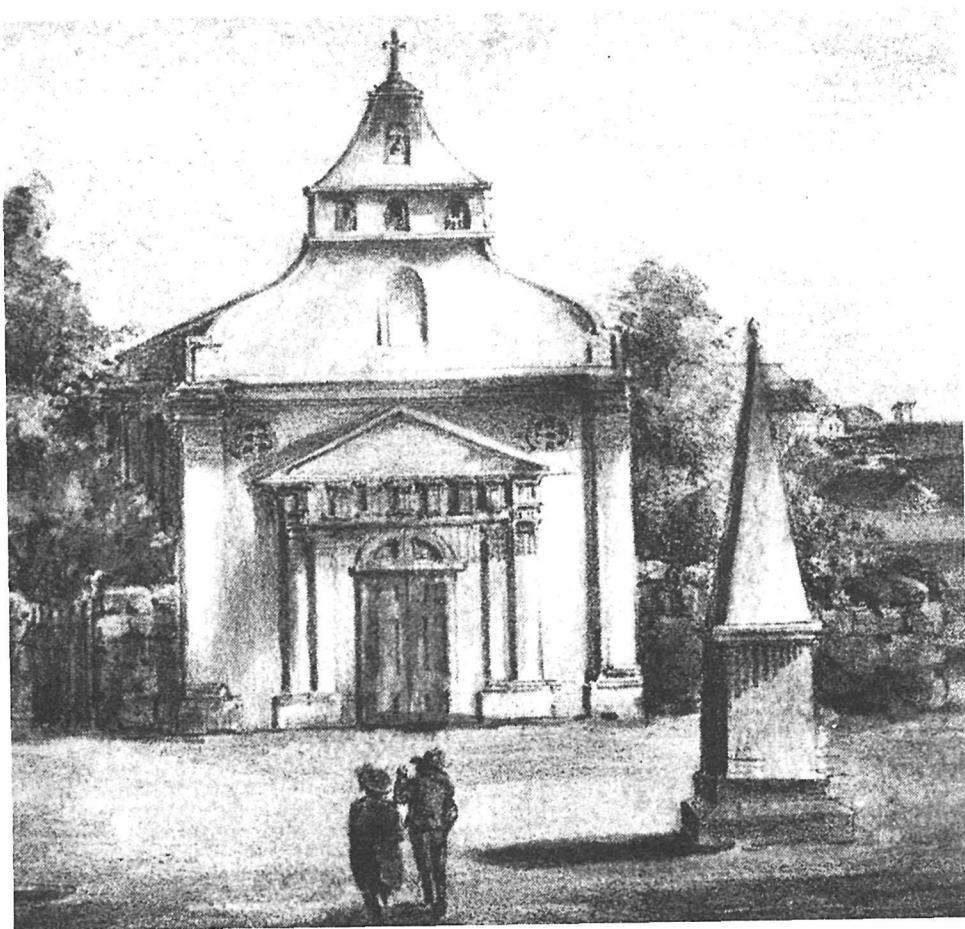
**Figure 2.** Plan executed in 1789 by Mariano de la Rocque, Royal Engineer for St. Augustine, showing a north-south cross-section of the proposed interior of the east nave wall of the parish church of St. Augustine, and a west-east cross-section of the church at the entrance to the altar area. Although this plan was approved by the Governor of Spanish Florida, during construction (1793-1797), the ornamental blind arcade and oval windows were eliminated, along the southern section of the nave wall as a cost saving measure. Original in *East Florida Papers*.



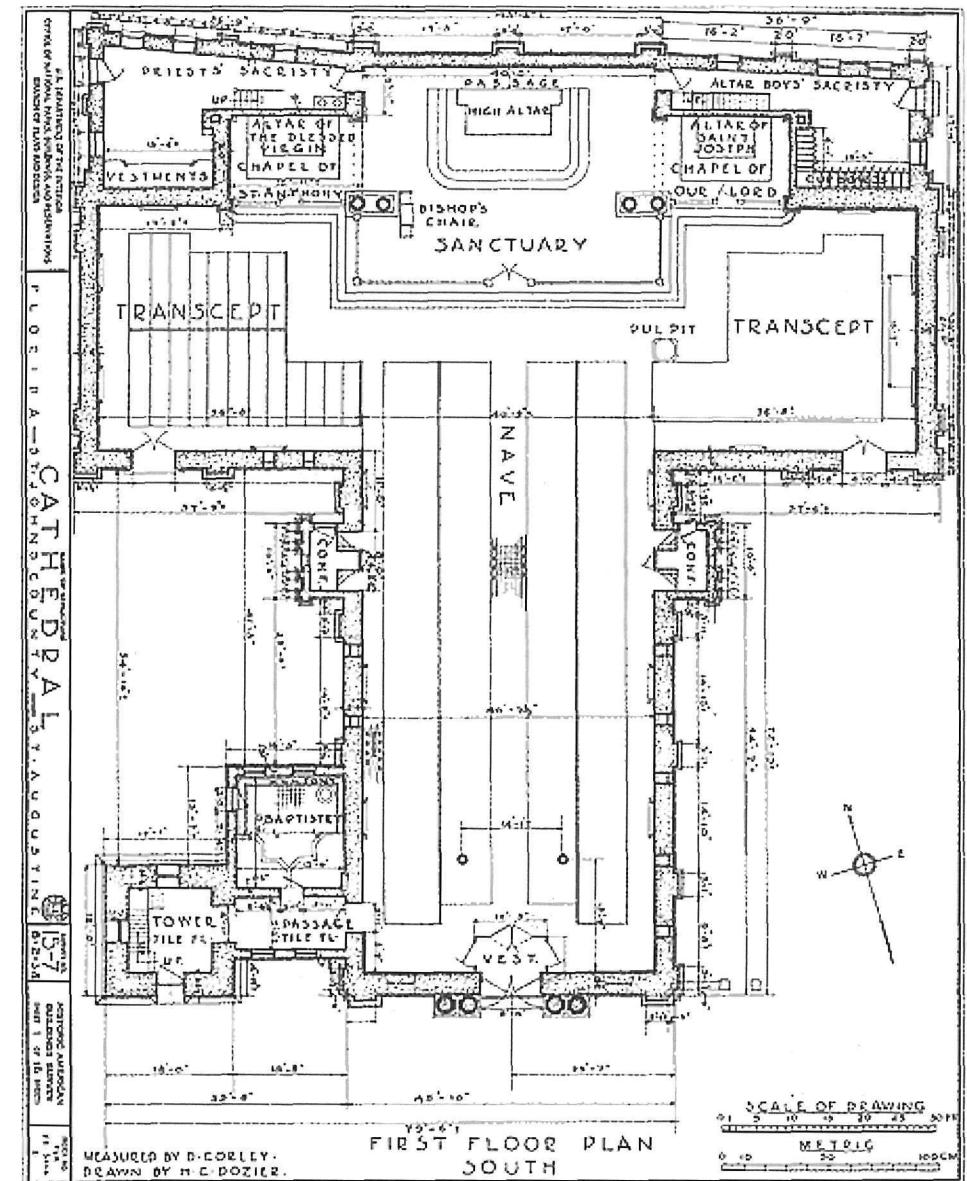
**Figure 3.** Detail from a reprinted engraving of St. Augustine, entitled *View of the Publick Square in St. Augustine, Florida*, which was published in 1835 in the *American Magazine of Useful Knowledge*. This engraving shows the facade of the St. Augustine Cathedral as completed in 1797 by Royal Engineer Pedro Díaz Berrio. A comparison of this engraving with the 1789 facade plan by Royal Engineer Mariano de la Rocque (fig. 1) shows Berrio increased the height of the facade by constructing an espadaña, or false front, between the facade cornice and the belfry and added a second set of columns to flank the main entrance.



**Figure 4.** Copy of an engraving of the facade of the Spanish colonial parish church of St. Augustine, from page 130 of the 1847 edition of *Sears New Pictorial Family Magazine*. A generally accurate rendering of the facade of the parish church, although this engraving places the pilasters and circular windows on the front facade of the church in the wrong positions. The engraving shows a statuary niche where a clock would be located just before the Civil War, in the espadaña, and it does not show the topmost arched church bell opening in the belfry, or campanario. Original in the author's private collection.



**Figure 5.** Copy of a drawing from Robert K. Sewall's *Sketches of St. Augustine, with a View of the History and Advantages as a Resort for Invalids* (1848). Image is probably the earliest accurate rendering of the facade of the parish church of St. Augustine.



**Figure 6.** Floor plan of the Cathedral of St. Augustine, Florida, drawn by the Historic American Buildings Survey #15-7 (1934). It shows the 1797 parish church and the 1887 additions.



**Figure 7.** Copy of a portion of an 1852 engraving of a panorama of the town of St. Augustine. This engraving shows the eastern and front facades of the parish church. The engraving shows a dormer midway on the roof of the parish church, possibly a post-1840s addition, and the northern (or rear) part of the roof is hipped. Original in author's private collection.



**Figure 8.** Copy of a portion of an 1858 engraving of the parish church of St. Augustine, and Constitution Obelisk (1812), located in the plaza in front on the church. View is slightly back from the southwest corner of the plaza, on St. George Street, looking northeast across the St. Augustine Plaza. This engraving appears as a frontispiece illustration in *The History and Antiquities of St. Augustine, Florida*, by George R. Fairbanks (1858). The engraving was done from a painting by George Harvey of Westchester County, New York, in 1854.



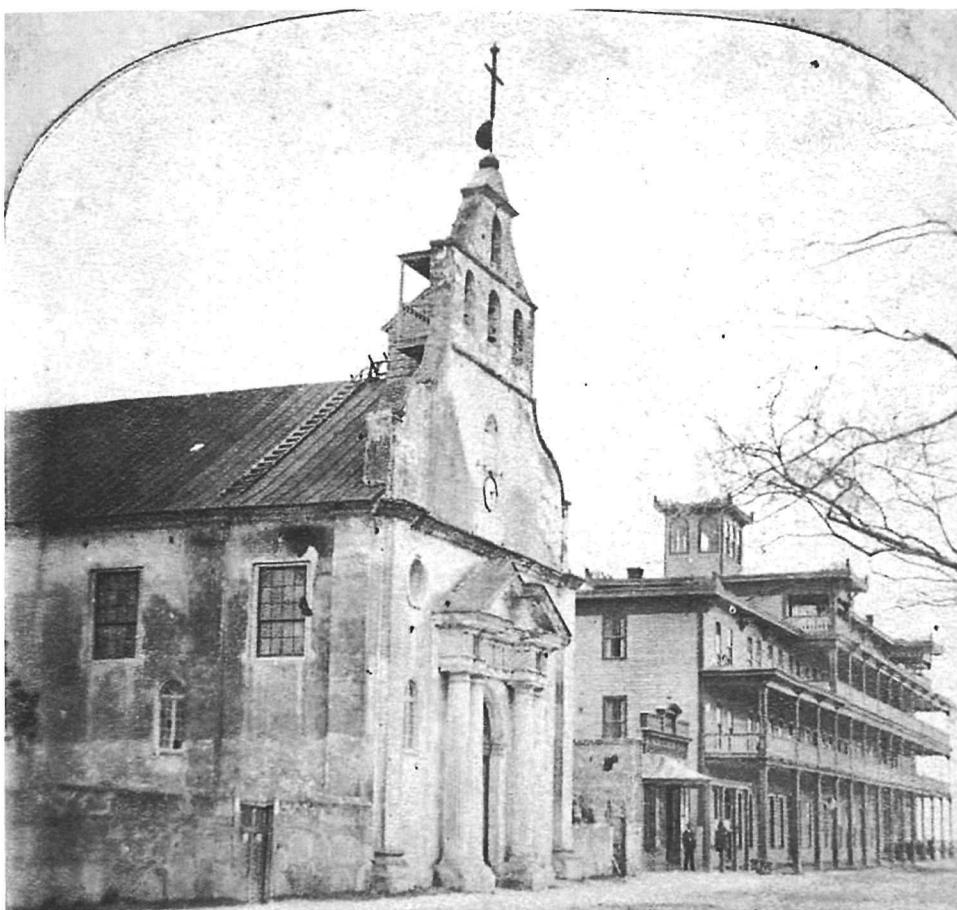
**Figure 9.** Engraving showing Union troops drawn up in the St. Augustine plaza in front of the Cathedral of St. Augustine, copied from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 13, 1862. The topmost arched bell opening in the belfry is not shown.



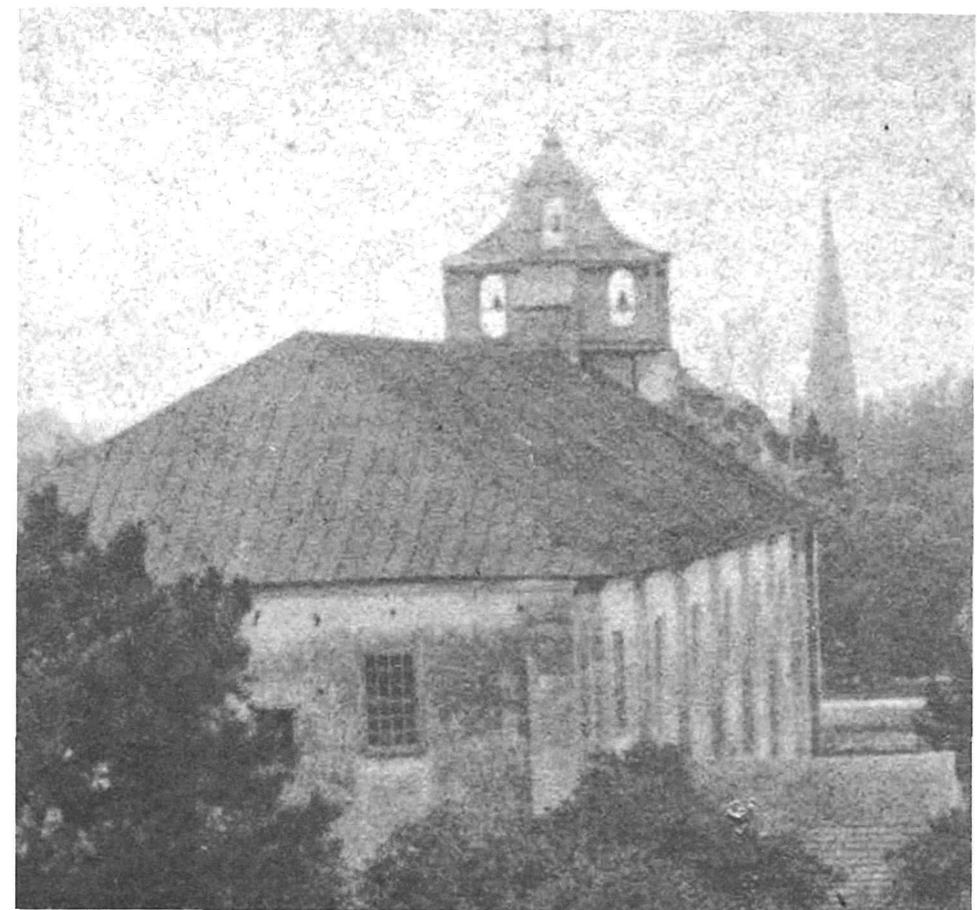
**Figure 10.** Stereoscopic image of the parish church of St. Augustine, probably taken shortly after the Union occupation of the town in March 1862. This is the first image showing the arched windows below the original circular windows on the front facade. This image also shows a dormer on the east side of the wooden shingle gabled roof, part of the bell ringer's platform behind the belfry, and the loss of the cross on top of the belfry. Stereoscopic view in author's private collection.



**Figure 11.** Stereoscopic image of the parish church of St. Augustine, by A. F. Styles', *Scenes of Florida* series, of Middleburg, Vermont, probably dating to the period just after the Civil War in the late 1860s. This image shows a dormer midway along the west side of the wooden shingle gabled roof, part of the bell ringer's platform behind the belfry, and the lack of a cross on top of the belfry. In an 1870s stereoscopic view of the now-Cathedral of St. Augustine (fig. 12), the dormers have been removed and the wooden shingles are replaced with a metal gabled roof, and a combination metal cross and weather vane is located on the top of the front facade. Stereoscopic view in author's private collection.



**Figure 12.** Stereoscopic image of the Cathedral of St. Augustine, showing the front facade, and the southern third of the west facade. The image probably dates to the 1870s after the addition of a combination cross and weather vane to the top of the belfry, and the change from a wooden shingle to metal roof. Note the ladder on the metal roof and wooden structure behind the belfry, by which the bells could be reached and rung by hand. Also, note the wooden St. Augustine Hotel to the east of the cathedral. A fire on April 12, 1887, which started in the St. Augustine Hotel, burned the roof of the cathedral, leaving just the four stone walls standing, and destroyed numerous buildings to the north along Charlotte Street. Stereoscopic view in author's private collection.



**Figure 13.** Detail of a stereoscopic image of St. Augustine, showing the St. Augustine Cathedral, taken from the rear and probably dating to the 1870s. View shows the northern or hipped part of the metal roof. One of the *Florida, the Land of Flowers and Tropical Scenery* stereoscopic views issued in the 1870s, in author's private collection.



Figure 14. Stereoscopic image of the interior of St. Augustine Cathedral, prior to the fire of 1887. Image shows a wooden ceiling, two side altars, main altar, and pews. Produced by *The World Illustrated Subscription Series*, the image probably dates to the 1870s. From the author's private collection.

### The History of the Parish Churches of St. Augustine

Spanish colonists initially settled at the Timucua village of Seloy, located about a mile north of the present St. Augustine historic downtown. Archaeological investigations conducted in the 1990s by Dr. Kathleen A. Deagan, identified the initial settlement's location in the area of the Fountain of Youth Park and the Mission of Nombre de Dios and the La Leche Shrine. Sub-surface archaeological remnants and mid-16<sup>th</sup> century artifacts confirmed lore and old maps.<sup>10</sup> Strained relations between the local Timucuan population and the Spanish settlers forced a relocation of the Spanish settlement across the St. Augustine Sound to nearby Anastasia Island in 1566. However, by the early 1570s, the town of St. Augustine had been established in its present location. In accordance with the Laws of the Indies (1573),

the Spanish sited Saint Augustine on the western bank of the [Matanzas] river to catch the morning sun, placed its main plaza at the port landing in the center of the town, and made the plaza rectangular in shape. This plaza was an all-purpose public gathering space, used by merchants for markets and by the military for parades. The Spanish planned civic and religious buildings to surround the plaza, with shops and dwellings filling in to complete the central space. Principal streets led out from each corner of the plaza.<sup>11</sup>

The town's early forts were built in the general area of today's Castillo de San Marcos. The siting of St. Augustine on a linear peninsula of land, and the need for a fortification on the northern end of town caused a modification to the town plan. Warren Boeschenstien observed

Saint Augustine's peninsula location, coupled with the necessity for the fort at one end and the existence of a monastery [for missionaries to the tribes of Spanish Florida] at the other, constrained its growth . . . . The settlement of Saint Augustine began south of the planned plaza, on the highest ground available . . . . In the early seventeenth century, most development remained south of the plaza. In the late seventeenth century, building activity shifted to the northern areas between the plaza and the Castillo.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Albert Manucy, *Sixteenth-Century St. Augustine, The People and Their Homes* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Warren Boeschenstien, *Historic American Towns along the Atlantic Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 262.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 263.

Expeditionary forces from English South Carolina arrived in St. Augustine on November 10, 1702 in an attempt to capture the Spanish town during the War of the Spanish Succession.<sup>13</sup> They attacked St. Augustine and laid siege to the town. After six weeks the unsuccessful and frustrated invaders withdrew. They burned the parish church, the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Leche, the friary and chapel of the Franciscans, and most of the rest of the town as they retreated on December 29. Only the hospital of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad and about twenty houses escaped the flames. The chapel at the La Soledad hospital was taken over for daily and Sunday Mass, and served as the parish church until the Spanish turned Florida over to Great Britain in 1763.<sup>14</sup>

Charles W. Arnade aptly summed up the attempts to rebuild the parish church: “[The main church] was never rebuilt in the first Spanish period although construction was planned, started, abandoned restarted, again abandoned.” In December 1707, 26,000 pesos arrived from the Spanish crown for rebuilding the parish church, however, just three months earlier, on September 30, a terrific hurricane had struck the city, undoing the St. Augustinians’ efforts at building some kind of decent housing. With 26,000 pesos at his disposal, Governor Francisco Córcoles y Martínez decided that the community had more pressing needs than a parish church and distributed the first 20,000 pesos in goods, food and clothing to the

<sup>13</sup> The War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713), known as Queen Anne’s War in the New World, was caused by the efforts of the French King, Louis XIV, to extend his country’s influence and power by placing his grandson Philip, Duke of Anjou, on the Spanish throne, after the death of the last Hapsburg Spanish King (Carlos II, 1665-1700). England and Holland were opposed to the union of French and Spanish dominions, which would have made France the leading European power and diverted Spanish New World trade from England and Holland to France. Queen Anne’s War, the second of four major colonial wars to occur on the North American continent, saw the South Carolina militia seize, burn, and pillage the town of St. Augustine, but failed to take the Castillo de San Marcos, in 1702. Two years later (1704), the Carolinians returned to Spanish Florida destroying the Apalachee missions in the panhandle of Florida, effectively limiting Spanish authority to northeast Florida. The War of Spanish Succession ended with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (April 11, 1713), but really only set the stage for further conflicts between the colonies of England, France, and Spain in North America, which ended only with the conclusion of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), at which time the British occupied Florida and established St. Augustine as the capital of East Florida ([www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)).

<sup>14</sup> Charles W. Arnade, “The Architecture of Spanish St. Augustine,” *The Americas* 18 (1961): 156.

residents and supplies to the soldiers. He also paid salaries owed to the men under his command.<sup>15</sup>

In 1716, the Spanish government sent another 19,000 pesos to “work on the erection of a new parish church.” Some 4,000 pesos were spent to acquire coquina and supplies for the building of the church, but the rest of the funds were “diverted to supplies, armament, and other secular uses.” In 1724, “it was reported that the parish church, sitting on the [north side] of the plaza across from the governor’s residence, was no more than half-finished, with walls made of rock [*coquina*].”<sup>16</sup>

As late as 1759 Father Juan José de Solana complained that the Chapel of Nuestra Señora de La Soledad could not accommodate St. Augustine’s parish worshipers and many had “to hear mass from the street getting wet . . . or suffering the heat of the sun.”<sup>17</sup> Despite crown allocations and plans, for the remainder of Spain’s first possession of its Florida colony--until 1764--all the local non-Indian Catholics almost always attended church at the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad.<sup>18</sup> St. Augustine’s Spanish residents made charitable donations to the churches in the Indian mission towns around St. Augustine and probably attended services at the mission churches from time to time.<sup>19</sup>

Priests and parishioners departed Florida between June 1763 and January 1764 as Great Britain took over the colony that had been Spanish Florida. In 1768 the practice of Roman Catholicism returned to Florida with the arrival of the Mediterranean laborers from Greece, today’s Italy, and the then-British island of Minorca. The workers resided in today’s New Smyrna

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 152, 156, quote on 156; Robert L. Kapitzke, *Religion, Power, and Politics in Colonial St. Augustine* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 149.

<sup>16</sup> Kapitzke, *Religion, Power and Politics*, 149-50.

<sup>17</sup> Juan José de Solana, “Report on Condition of St. Augustine,” in Kathleen A. Deagan, ed., *America’s Ancient City: Spanish St. Augustine, 1565-1763* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1991), 556.

<sup>18</sup> A sizeable structure on St. George Street south of the Plaza, it was used as the Anglican Church during the British occupation [1763-1784]. By the time the Spanish returned in 1784, it was, they found, a “useless pile of masonry.” The pastor, Father Thomas Hassett, chose the upper floor of the old bishop’s house as the best location for a temporary [parish] church. This 50’ x 90’ masonry building, located where the Trinity Episcopal Church now stands, had been used during the British period as a statehouse. Coomes, “The Basilica-Cathedral and Its History,” 32.

<sup>19</sup> Kapitzke, *Religion, Power, and Politics*, 149-50; Susan R. Parker, “The Second Century of Settlement in Spanish St. Augustine, 1670-1763” (PhD. Diss., University of Florida, 1999), 233-36.

until most of them simply walked away to St. Augustine in 1777. Once in the town they set up a Catholic chapel in a private building. Sacramental supplies were acquired surreptitiously from Spanish Cuba.<sup>20</sup>

Great Britain returned the Florida colonies to Spain in 1784 under stipulations of the Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution. In October of that year Father Thomas Hassett began talking to Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes, governor of Spanish East Florida, about building a new church. Not until early 1793 was the cornerstone laid, three years after Zéspedes' departure from St. Augustine. Finally the parish church would be located on the plaza. The concept of a plaza or public square has been central to Spanish urban planning in the New World since the early sixteenth century. Although royal ordinances required that the most important governmental and ecclesiastical buildings adjoin a town's plaza, only one of the stipulated buildings, Government House, the governor's executive office and residence, actually fronted the plaza (on the west side) before the English attack of 1702.<sup>21</sup>

The king of Spain authorized the construction of a new parish church in 1786, and on February 13, 1788, Governor Zéspedes asked the resident Royal Engineer, Mariano de la Rocque, to submit plans for a "structure, capable of holding 500 persons along with estimates of cost."<sup>22</sup> Thirteen days later de la Rocque submitted specifications and a cost estimate for a stone church. He proposed a Tuscan architectural style building with a frontage of 40 *varas*, a depth of 22 *varas*, and a height of 17 *varas*. (A *vara* equals about 32.8 inches.) However, the front and rear walls would be seven *varas* higher in order to hide the roof ridge. The façade would include double Tuscan columns at the sides of the main door. The church would have a main and two aisle naves, transept, and presbytery. Each aisle nave would contain four chapels and a side door. On one side of the presbytery, there would be a sacristy and on the other side a store room for ecclesiastical objects. A second story above the sacristy would lodge the priest on weekly duty, and another story above the store room would house the sexton. The belfry would be five *varas* square. The domes of the main nave, transept, and chapels, as well as the arch openings to the chapels, would be *medio*

<sup>20</sup> Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), 84-90.

<sup>21</sup> "Real Ordenanzas para nuevas poblaciones," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 4 (1921): 743-53.

<sup>22</sup> Arana, ed., "The New National Historic Landmarks," 100.

*punto* (rounded) and supported by pilasters. De la Rocque estimated that the building would cost 40,998 pesos. About 500 pesos, the value of the usable stone in the old church, could be credited to the estimate.<sup>23</sup>

More than a year was spent considering de la Rocque's plan, before it was rejected as being too grandiose and costly. On June 25, 1789, Governor Zéspedes requested that the Royal Engineer prepare new specifications and cost estimate for a simpler design, and taking into consideration cost savings such as choosing a different lot and using available stone from other older religious structures. On September 1, 1789, de la Rocque submitted new plans for a simpler design (figs. 1 and 2). He had eliminated a number of decorative elements from his first design, such as the aisle naves, side chapels, transepts, presbytery, and domes. The second set of plans shows a simple, single nave church, which met the cost-saving needs of the governor, who approved the design on March 17, 1790. On April 11, 1791, a council convened to implement the royal order to begin construction and ordered that materials for the church, stone, lumber, and ironwork be collected and deposited at the building site.<sup>24</sup> Still, construction would not commence for another two years, awaiting the decision to begin the project by a new governor, Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada.

In 1792, Governor Quesada finally chose the present location, called *El Naranjal* (the orange orchard), for the construction of the parish church along the north central side of the plaza and recommended one additional cost-cutting measure. Before the commencement of construction, the new governor reexamined de la Rocque's 1789 plans and "suggested the elimination of the blind arches and pilasters on the side walls inside (fig. 2), since the church would have one nave only." By early 1793, when workers began the trenches for the foundation stones, St. Augustine residents saw the dimensions revealed in the ground and complained the building would be too small to accommodate them and expected new residents. Sympathetically, Governor Quesada laid the complaint before a council on March 26, 1793. The council resolved to enlarge the structure by increasing the length 19 feet [about 7 *varas*] and the width 5 feet [about 2 *varas*], a modification that would not alter architectural principles.<sup>25</sup>

Engineer de la Rocque left St. Augustine just as the church project began. A new Royal Engineer, Pedro Díaz Berrió, arrived in St. Augustine

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 101, 102, 104.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 104.

to superintend the church construction as well as other royal projects. According to local tradition the administration for the project was turned over to Miguel Ysnardy, a local civilian contractor, who is usually credited with completing the parish church without professional oversight. In fact, Díaz Berrió immediately scrutinized the plans and information on the parish church, then suspended work on the project on June 17, 1793, until he could familiarize himself with the plans that the departing de la Rocque provided. It was Díaz Berrió who officially informed Florida Governor Enrique White on August 18, 1798, that the church project was finished. On October 22, 1799, the governor notified Díaz Berrió that the crown acknowledged notice of the completion of the parish church.<sup>26</sup>

Coquina for the church came from ruins of the missions chapel of Nombre de Dios (the Shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Leche), from an unspecified building (possibly the four-story bell tower at the former Indian village of Tolomato or the ‘useless pile of masonry’ that remained from the old parish church, and from the stone quarries about three miles away on Anastasia Island. Construction took a little over four years. The church was completed in August of 1797, and dedicated at the first celebrated Mass on December 8, 1797, with the finishing touches completed in late 1797. Parishioners’ contributions of money, lumber, maize, chickens, and labor, helped keep down the cost of construction, as did the reuse of *coquina* salvaged from the ruins of other buildings. Total cost to the Spanish crown was nearly 17,000 pesos, or about forty percent of what de la Rocque had originally estimated.<sup>27</sup>

Both Díaz Berrió and Ysnardy appear to have maintained good control over the construction costs. They were able to add a second set of stone columns next to the main entrance and construct an *espadaña* to the front of the church, which were not in de la Rocque’s approved plans of 1789 (figs. 1 and 2) raising the façade to nearly four stories in height. In 1800 the remains of two priests, Father Pedro Camps (or Campos), the spiritual leader of the St. Augustine Minorcan colony, and his successor, Father Narciso Font, were reinterred from their graves in Tolomato Cemetery and buried in

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 104-05; East Florida Papers (Library of Congress Manuscript Collection, microfilm copies at SAHS) Bundle 171, document number 286.

<sup>27</sup> Coomes, “The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine,” 32-44; Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 104-09; Arana, ed., “The New National Historical Landmarks,” 100-06; Albert Manucy, “The Cathedral of St. Augustine” (National Park Service mimeographed report, 1946, copy on file with Southeast Region of NPS, Atlanta).

a brick vault beneath the church. In 1803, six years after he completed work on the structure, the building contractor Miguel Ysnardy died and was also buried in the church.<sup>28</sup>

### St. Augustine’s Parish Church Becomes a Cathedral

In 1821, when Spanish Florida became part of the United States, a controversy developed over the ownership of church properties in St. Augustine. Alexander Hamilton, Jr., the first U. S. Attorney for East Florida, contended that all religious properties had belonged to the king of Spain and were, therefore, with the transfer of power, the property of the United States government. In 1823, through the intercession of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, and the later passage of two acts by Congress, the parish church of St. Augustine and Tolomato Cemetery, on the northwest corner of town, were returned to the Catholic Church. Other properties, such as St. Francis Barracks and the old Bishop’s residence on the southwest corner of the plaza were not returned to church ownership.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the problems about ownership of the parish church, by 1822 the Bishop of Havana turned over all matters relative to the Catholic residents of St. Augustine to the Diocese of Charleston. Both of the priests who remained in St. Augustine died within two years of the transfer to the United States. “East Florida was without a single priest”; there were no churchmen to minister to the local parishioners. On July 23, 1823, the parishioners established a Board of Wardens of the Catholic Congregation of St. Augustine to ensure the church would be maintained and open for worship.

In November 1828, the Diocese of Mobile, which had recently assumed oversight of St. Augustine from the Diocese of Charleston, sent Father Edward Francis Mayne to St. Augustine, to serve as priest for the parish church. Unfortunately, within just a few months the wardens, who had controlled all church matters for the last five years, and Father Mayne became involved in a series of disputes. The wardens barred Father Mayne from the church and refused to provide an income for the pastor. At this point Bishop Michael Portier of Mobile decided that the schism had to be resolved. He arrived in St. Augustine on February 14, 1832, called a meeting

<sup>28</sup> Arana, ed., “Burials in the Cathedral,” *El Escribano* 3 (1966): 15-19.

<sup>29</sup> Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 122-24.

of the parishioners and wardens, and demanded to know the nature of the charges against their pastor. All admitted that there was no good reason for opposing Father Mayne; they just disliked him. Then they agreed that the church would never again be closed against a priest sent by diocesan authority, that their bishop's decision would be final, and that the income of the parish would be given to the regularly appointed pastor.<sup>30</sup>

In 1850, Father Felix Varela (or Varella) (1788-1853) replaced Father Mayne and served the St. Augustine parish church until his death. In 1853, Father Varela, gave this description of the church's interior, which is similar to a stereoscopic view of the church interior of the 1870s (fig. 14).

The church is a venerable looking building, large, but without much internal architectural beauty. Much of its ancient arrangement has been removed by erecting pews on a concrete long floor which was common to all without distinction of class or cast. It has a high altar and two side ones. The principal one (high) is dedicated under the patronage of the Sainted Bishop of Hippo, of whom there is a marble statue in a niche over the altar. The lateral altar on the Epistle side is that of our Blessed Mother, and the one at the Gospel side, a privileged erection for the dead. By this altar is a pulpit, close to the wall, elevated above the floor to the height of about six feet, overhung by a plain canopy from the center of which hangs the emblematic Dove.<sup>31</sup>

Father Varela, considered one of the early heroes of the Cuban liberation struggle, spent part of his youth in St. Augustine and returned to St. Augustine to be as close as possible to the Cuban homeland from which he was exiled by the Spanish government. He was buried in Tolomato Cemetery. In 1911, Varela's remains were reinterred in Cuba.<sup>32</sup>

In 1857 in response to the growing numbers of Catholic parishioners in Florida, the Holy See declared the area east of the Apalachicola River a Vicariate Apostolic. For the first time since the end of Spanish occupation of Florida in 1821, a Catholic bishop, was installed in St. Augustine. Father Augustin Verot of Baltimore, Maryland, was consecrated a bishop on April 25, 1858, and arrived in St. Augustine on June 1 of the following year.<sup>33</sup>

The parish church of St. Augustine had been subordinate over the years to ecclesiastical authorities in Havana, Charleston, Mobile, and Savannah.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 139-47; Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 35-36.

<sup>31</sup> Letter, J. F. O'Neill to Sister Agnes, 1853, copy in St. Augustine Historical Society Cathedral file.

<sup>32</sup> Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 157-59; *St. Augustine Record*, November 6, 1911, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 163-66.

In 1870 the Diocese of St. Augustine was created with Augustin Verot as bishop, and the Spanish colonial parish church became a Cathedral.<sup>34</sup>

### The James Renwick Renovation

On the morning of April 12, 1887, a fire began at the St. Augustine Hotel, a three story wooden building just east of the church (fig. 12). The fire spread and destroyed a two-block area of the downtown, north of the plaza. The fire also destroyed the roof and the interior of the Cathedral, leaving only the stone walls standing. James Renwick, the architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, and the Renwick and Corcoran Galleries in Washington, D.C.,<sup>35</sup> was a guest at the St. Augustine Hotel at the time of the fire, and was entrusted with the task of renovating the Cathedral. Financial assistance to renovate the structure was provided by Bishop John Moore, and by former Standard Oil partner Henry M. Flagler, who was then building the grand hotels designed to turn St. Augustine into the "Winter Newport." Working with Renwick was architect and builder William T. Cotter of Sanford, Florida.<sup>36</sup>

The original parish church was rectangular in its floor plan, and while Renwick would retain the original facade and most of the side walls, he removed the rear wall and about twenty feet of the northern end's original east and west side walls to expand the structure an additional twelve feet at the back and add large east and west wings, or transepts, thus giving the cathedral a cruciform floor plan (fig. 6). Where the earlier side doors had been, now small gabled-roof extensions (miniature versions of the transepts) containing confessionals projected out of the east and west walls. Renwick's additions used poured concrete, the building material used for the Flagler hotels. A six-story concrete bell tower was added to the west, with a two-story connection to the main building (photos 1-3). Renwick installed a clay tile roof with the work being done by J. K. Smith of Waterbury,

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>35</sup> James Renwick's St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City and the Smithsonian Institution Building, Renwick Gallery, and Corcoran Gallery in the District of Columbia were designated as National Historic Landmarks, on December 8, 1976, January 12, 1965, November 11, 1971, and April 27, 1992, respectively.

<sup>36</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 38; *St. Augustine Press*, April 16, 1887. See correspondence between Renwick and Cotter in the Block and Lot files, Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board.



**Photo 1:** Cathedral, southeast view, 1997. Mark R. Barnes.



**Photo 2:** Cathedral and bell tower, southwest view, 1997. Mark R. Barnes.



**Photo 3:** Cathedral, northwest view, 1997. Mark R. Barnes.

Connecticut, who was then installing similar roofs on the Flagler hotels.<sup>37</sup> After the 1887 expansion the east transept was used by black worshippers. In 1909 St. Benedict the Moor Church was built in the African-American neighborhood of Lincolnville to serve blacks.<sup>38</sup>

The resulting Cathedral, larger and grander than the original, took its place alongside the other major buildings of the Flagler era. It was also more expensive than planned. Original estimates were \$50,000 with final costs closer to \$70,000.<sup>39</sup> The property was surrounded with a cast concrete fence of curving patterns designed by Renwick. (Part of this fence is now installed at 262 St. George St. along the front of the property.) The work proceeded rapidly, and Easter services were conducted in the nearly completed building on April 1, 1888. The only change Renwick made to the facade of the old church was to create a niche where earlier the town

<sup>37</sup> Michael V. Gannon, *Rebel Bishop: Augustin Verot: Florida's Civil War Prelate* (1964; repr. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 234; Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 38.

<sup>38</sup> *St. Augustine Examiner*, October 20, 1866; "100 Years Ago," *El Escribano* 4, no. 3 (1967): 3.

<sup>39</sup> Renwick-Cotter correspondence.

clock and small fanlight window had been. In this niche was placed a statue of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and the patron saint of the town.<sup>40</sup>

In 1894, John L. Wilson of Framingham, Massachusetts, a wealthy winter resident who donated the old public library building in St. Augustine, made a gift of a new town clock to replace the earlier one that had burned in 1887, and removed during the Renwick renovation. The new clock was an eight-day clock with four faces, striking on the hour and the half hour. Bishop Moore consented to have it placed in the south facade of the concrete cathedral bell tower while the city agreed to maintain it.<sup>41</sup>

About the same time, Reverend Clarence E. Woodman, of the Paulist Order in New York, donated a sundial, copied from one at Oxford University with the Latin inscription *Pereunt et Imputantur* (The hours perish and we must account for them). It was placed above the street door on the concrete bell tower.<sup>42</sup> In 1909, the present stained glass windows for the Cathedral arrived and were installed. Depicting scenes in the life of the diocese's patron saint, St. Augustine of Hippo, they took a year to produce and cost about \$7,000. They were executed by Mayer and Company of Munich, Germany. In 1922 the flagstones in front of the Cathedral were replaced by a cement sidewalk. In 1931 Mrs. Martin D. Hardin presented the marble communion rail to the Cathedral. A few years earlier she had sponsored the reconstruction of the La Leche Chapel, located north of St. Augustine, as a memorial to her husband, a Union General in the Civil War and protégé of Abraham Lincoln. General Hardin spent his final years in St. Augustine.<sup>43</sup>

The historic importance of the Cathedral was recognized in 1934 when it became one of the early subjects for measured drawings by the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey.<sup>44</sup> Minor renovation work was done on the Cathedral in 1939, but nothing on the scale of the Renwick changes of half a century earlier. In 1953 the I. T. Verdin Machine Company of Cleveland, Ohio, installed electric controls

<sup>40</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 38.

<sup>41</sup> John L. Wilson to Mayor and Aldermen, March 14, 1894, copy in St. Augustine Historical Society Cathedral file; *The Tatler of Society in Florida* (St. Augustine), March 10, 1894, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> *St. Augustine Observer*, February 22, 1934.

<sup>43</sup> *St. Augustine Record*, December 28, 1908; January 7, 1909, January 9, 1909; March 21, 1922, p.4; March 23, 1922, p.4; April 22, 1931, p.1

<sup>44</sup> Historic American Buildings Survey #15-7, August 2, 1934, measured by D. Corley, drawn by H.C. Dozier.

for ringing the bells in the concrete bell tower and removed about 2,000 pounds of massive weights that had previously powered the 1894 town clock, electrifying that as well.<sup>45</sup>

In 1965-1966, at the time of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of St. Augustine, Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley planned a renovation of the Cathedral, which included the creation of a statuary niche in the center of the original espadaña façade, adding an extension to the rear, remodeling the interior, and covering the entire exterior with Kenatex spray. In the statuary niche was placed a figure of St. Augustine of Hippo, the patron saint of the town since its founding in 1565.<sup>46</sup> The architect for the project was George Wesley Stickle of Cleveland and St. Augustine (who also designed Cathedral Parish School and remodeled the Cordova Hotel into the St. Johns County Courthouse), with Eugene F. Kennedy, Jr., of Boston as consultant. Demetree Builders of Orlando was the general contractor. Work was begun in January 1965 and completed in March 1966.<sup>47</sup>

As part of this work, the Cathedral was enlarged by almost 4,000 square feet, with an extension to the rear. Interior proportions were altered by removing the wooden ceiling, jacking up the roof intact and installing a new open-truss system to give a loftier appearance. The old choir loft above the entry was also removed. Wooden trusses were painted with decorations in the Spanish style; at the center of each is the coat of arms of the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine.<sup>48</sup> Murals by Hugo Ohlms of St. Augustine (formerly with the Rambusch Studios in New York) depict the history of Florida and its important religious events. Shrines to St. Patrick and St. Joseph (where the earlier confessionals designed by Renwick had been) were created by Lee Burnham Studios of Hawthorne, Florida, with

<sup>45</sup> *St. Augustine Record*, December 10, 1939, p. 8; August 23, 1953; December 6, 1953.

<sup>46</sup> St. Augustine was the fourth century Catholic Bishop of Hippo, a city in North Africa. The patron saint of brewers and printers, St. Augustine published numerous books on religious theology which are still the basis for church doctrine on subjects such as original sin, predestination, and birth control. The Spanish having arrived in this area of Florida on St. Augustine's saint's feast day (August 28, 1565), named the community after this individual. Sean Kelly and Rosemary Rogers, *Saints Preserve Us! Everything You Need to Know About Every Saint You'll Ever Need*, (New York: Random House, 1993), 27.

<sup>47</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 39; *Florida Catholic* (Miami), March 18, 1966; January 8, 1965.

<sup>48</sup> *St. Augustine Record*, March 8, 1966; Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 40.

wooden statues carved by Ricardo Morador of Ortisei, Italy.<sup>49</sup> The floor was covered with cement-based tile formed under hydraulic pressure and hardened for 28 days. More than 10,000 of them were supplied by the Cuban Tile Corporation of Miami.<sup>50</sup>

The walls added in the rear section were of concrete block, giving the Cathedral a third building material in addition to the original coquina and Renwick's poured concrete. To provide visual unity to the exterior, the walls were covered with a waterproofing spray called Kenatex which gave a uniform pigment throughout.<sup>51</sup>

A blind arch was added to the façade on the eastern front of the Cathedral that encloses a restroom addition (photo 1). Two tile-roofed additions from the south side of the east and west transepts housed the new confessionals (photo 3). The bells in the original belfry, or *campanario*, (one dating from the late 1600s and believed to have come from an earlier St. Augustine church) had lost their tone in the 1887 fire, while one of the bells in the tower had cracked. Under the supervision of the I. T. Verdin Company, they were sent to Holland for repair and recasting, and subsequently reinstalled. The four faces of the clock in the concrete bell tower were replaced with cast aluminum hands and frames, and numerals painted black against a background of white vitro-lite glass.

The lower part of the façade of the original building was altered with the filling in of the two round windows on either side of the pediment, which were part of the original 1789 de la Rocque design (photo 1). The setback triangular point of the top pediment over the entrance was removed and the wall around it decorated with bas-relief swirls and flowers, in the center of which are the bishop's mitre and the date 1965 in Roman numerals (photo 1). Cast concrete representations of the seal of the United States and the royal coat-of-arms of Spain were added at either side of the statue of St. Augustine in the niche over the entrance. Metal window grilles were added to the two arched windows on the front of the Cathedral, dating from the mid-nineteenth century. The renovated Cathedral was dedicated on March 9, 1966, by Cardinal William Conway, Primate of Ireland.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Florida Catholic*, March 11 and March 18, 1966.

<sup>50</sup> *Miami News*, July 5, 1965.

<sup>51</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 40; *Florida Catholic*, March 18, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica Cathedral of St. Augustine," 44. *St. Augustine Record*, March 14, 1972.

As previously noted, on April 15, 1970, the Cathedral of St. Augustine was designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior. A bronze landmark plaque was placed on a concrete pedestal on the lawn west of the building in 1972.<sup>53</sup> In the early 1970s, the circa-1880, two-story Bishop's House immediately west of the Cathedral was demolished to create an open space. A new rectory was also built on Treasury Street, linked to the back of the Cathedral by a covered walkway. The Renwick fence was removed at this time.

In 1975 a statue in memory of Father Pedro Camps was presented by Dr. Fernando Rubio of Minorca and X. L. Pellicer of St. Augustine to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Minorcans in St. Augustine. The sculptor was Josef Viladomat of Barcelona, Spain. The statue, whose base includes the names of Minorcan families in St. Augustine, is the centerpiece of the park west of the Cathedral.<sup>54</sup> On December 4, 1976, Pope Paul VI proclaimed the Cathedral a Minor Basilica in recognition of its historic significance. Only 24 churches in the United States had been so honored at that time. A white marble carving of the papal tiara and crossed keys was placed in the arch above the main door to the Cathedral.<sup>55</sup>

### The Singularity of the Cathedral's Façade

Within the continental United States there are other extant Spanish colonial parish churches and missions that are similar in some architectural aspects to the Cathedral of St. Augustine. All of these structures, built in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, have a rectangular floor plan and, whether constructed of local stone or adobe, all have two-story rear, side, and front façades, similar to the Cathedral of St. Augustine. All of these structures incorporate the espadaña or campanario architectural elements above their two-story ornamental or plain front façade. A good example of a similar style of a religious structure is the stone Mission San Francisco de la Espada (1770s). Located outside of San Antonio, Texas, the mission building has a rectangular floor plan and, although lacking a formal

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Jane Quinn, *Minorcans in Florida* (St. Augustine: Mission Press, 1975), 238-39.

<sup>55</sup> Coomes, "The Basilica-Cathedral of St. Augustine," 39; *St. Augustine Record*, September 17-18, 1977

espadaña, it does have a belfry above its two-story ornamental facade, which also conceals the gabled roof line.<sup>56</sup>

Another similar example is the adobe Mission San Diego de Alcalá, located east of San Diego, California, constructed in 1813. Mission San Diego has an espadaña above its two-story ornamental façade, which looks very much like the 1789 original de la Rocque design for the façade of the parish church of St. Augustine. Mission San Diego also has a belfry, but it is attached to the west side of the mission and is not part of the façade.<sup>57</sup>

Of all the extant New Mexican colonial religious structures, two late eighteenth-century adobe pueblo missions, San José de Laguna and San Lorenzo de Picuris on the Laguna and Picuris reservations, located west of Albuquerque and north of Santa Fe, respectively, are the most similar in design to the Cathedral of St. Augustine. Both missions have plain adobe façades, about two stories in height, topped with an adobe belfry. Both missions have flat rather than gabled roof so neither structure has an espadaña, possibly because the unfired adobe façade would not support the weight of such a decorative element to heighten the façade.<sup>58</sup>

On the island of Puerto Rico, a former Spanish colony, there are a number of Neo-Classical inspired, single nave, rectangular floor-plan parish churches that were constructed between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. Like the St. Augustine Cathedral, these religious structures were masonry, generally two stories in height, with an elevated ornamented façade that includes any number of decorative elements, such as columns, pilasters, circular windows, and triangular pediments. Usually, the facade was surmounted by an espadaña. Examples of parish churches displaying these architectural features include Toa Alta (c. 1752, espadaña added in 1861), Manatí (c. 1775), Arecibo (c. 1846), Utuado (c. 1875), Sabana Grande (c. 1844), Ponce (c. 1835), Vega Alta (c. 1831), Guaynabo (1775-1820, espadaña added in 1828), San Lorenzo (c. 1811), Cabo Rojo

<sup>56</sup> Mission San Francisco de la Espada was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 6, 1972, and was incorporated into San Antonio Missions National Historical Park in 1983.

<sup>57</sup> San Diego Mission Church was designated a National Historic Landmark on April 15, 1970, under the same colonial architecture theme study as the St. Augustine Cathedral.

<sup>58</sup> San José de Laguna and San Lorenzo de Picuris, New Mexico were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 29, 1973, and August 13, 1974, respectively.

(c. 1785).<sup>59</sup> The island's parish church most similar to the Cathedral of St. Augustine appears to be Coamo (c. 1750), because of the pediment on the façade and overall proportions.<sup>60</sup>

None of the above-noted parish churches have a façade approaching the height of the Cathedral of St. Augustine. Mariano de la Rocque designed the parish church in 1789 without an espadaña, a design which was approved by the crown in 1791, however, the civilian contractor Miguel Ysnardy added this architectural element, between the ornamental front façade and the belfry, probably under the direction of Royal Engineer Pedro Díaz Berrio,<sup>61</sup> thereby attaining an unprecedented almost 70 foot or nearly four-story tall ornamental façade to give the Cathedral of St. Augustine an architectural design that is singular among all of the religious structures extant from the Spanish colonial period in the United States.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas S. Marvel and María Luisa Moreno, *Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico*, (Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1994).

<sup>60</sup> Javier Gala Aguilera Santiago to author, personal communication, 2006.

<sup>61</sup> Susan R. Parker to author, personal communication, 2006.

<sup>62</sup>This engineering feat is all the more interesting as the stone structure was built on sandy soil often inundated with water which previous builders had rejected for the construction of ordinary masonry dwellings.