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Population Change as an Element in the Historical Geography of St. Augustine

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POPULATION CHANGE AS AN ELEMENT IN THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

by JOHN R. DUNKLE

THE HISTORY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, like the history of every place, is an intricate drama of personalities and events set against a backdrop of the physical and cultural environment. This paper attempts to outline the pattern of one facet of the cultural background: population. It is believed that this may be justified by the fact that population changes correlate with events and shed light on those events. Further, population changes serve as an index to changes in economy.

If the national census were not such a recent invention this attempt to trace a pattern would be considerably more accurate. However, enough data is available to make some comparisons and draw some conclusions. As new documents are brought to light these are subject to change.

THE FIRST SPANISH PERIOD

Pedro Menendez de Aviles organized a great expeditionary force for his attempt to gain control of Florida and hold it against French attack.¹ He sailed from Spain with some 2,000 people. About half were soldiers, some 200 were sailors. Apparently there were about 100 married men, which presupposes 100 women and perhaps 150 children, although there is no record of the latter. Among the men there were tailors, carpenters, shoemakers, farmers, priests, tanners, locksmiths and silversmiths, most of whom also served as soldiers. Various landfalls were made in the Caribbean before reaching Florida. Upon touching at Hispaniola some 500 people deserted. Later 500 were to desert

1. Information about this period is of two types. The first is documentary, consisting of scattered references to numbers of people found by searching published sources and documents such as the Stetson Collection. Such a search is endless for often data is to be found only amidst totally unrelated material. It is therefore more than probable that there exist listings and accounts more specific than the ones herein brought to light. A second source of information is statistical, resulting from a study of the Parish Records. An assessment of this data will follow the analysis of the documentary information.

directly from Florida. Menendez utilized some of his force in military operations in the Caribbean after attacking the French in Florida. Thus in spite of the original size of the expedition Menendez could leave a complement of only seventy men at St. Augustine. As is the case in most records, the number of women and children is not given.

In 1569, the towns established along the Atlantic were strengthened and eighty men were added to St. Augustine. Some fourteen women were brought and no doubt some of these remained at St. Augustine. By 1572 it seems fairly certain that there were about ten married farmers in St. Augustine and about twenty-five single soldiers. By 1577 there seem to be about one hundred officers and men. In this ten year period since the founding it is probable that more girls were available for marriage and child-bearing and that a more normal sex-ratio was becoming established. In 1578 it is reported that there were 186 men in the port of whom twenty-seven were seamen, 157 were soldiers, and "two Frenchmen." The following year the governor requested that fifty men be sent which would complete the 300 place *dotacion*, that as many as possible be married and that a half-dozen unmarried women be sent. One wonders at this small request! It perhaps indicates the availability of Indian wives. In this same year the Council of the Indies recommended that thirty Negro slaves be sent to Florida. It is not certain that this plan was carried out.

The great event of the 1580's was the raid by Sir Frances Drake. The fort was held by 150 men at that time and the town was significant enough for mention. After the raid men were added to the garrison increasing it to 200. In 1592 twelve priests were brought to St. Augustine.

The picture for the year 1600 is fairly clear. Two separate reports indicate 250 men in the garrison. One report comments that they were mostly married. Yet in a record of monies apportioned to married men (perhaps not *all* married men benefited) there were thirty-seven men having a total of 103 children, fourteen men with no children and six men listed as "not sharing." This would give a total of only fifty-seven men. Several men had five or six children and one had seven. This document leads one to believe that other such lists might be extant.

In 1604 there were 190 effective troops. There were some thirty Negroes of whom eighteen were fit for work, seven were men too old to work and nine were women. The following year there was a request for a dozen more Negroes and three or four Negro women with an appended note that the other Negroes had been there some forty years and were dying off. A request was also made for extra rations for married men, indicating that this was not standard practice. A great event in the years 1605 and 1606 was the visit of Bishop Altamiro. On this trip he baptized many Indians and confirmed many former baptisms. Since he traveled far northward his account of baptizing 370 whites is hard to use with reference to St. Augustine.

The mercenary character of the military forces of the period is illustrated by a listing of foreign persons made in 1607. There were twenty-eight Portuguese, six Germans, twenty Frenchmen and two Flemish. The eleven who were married had a total of fifty children, an average of five per family.

It is worth noting that in 1607 when Jamestown was founded St. Augustine was already forty-two years old. After considering all of the evidence it seems that there were from three to five hundred persons in and around St. Augustine. At about this time there seems to have been some effort to strengthen the garrison. In 1609 some sixty men were sent as soldiers. In 1619, 186 men were listed in an accounting of active personnel. A note in 1621 indicates 250 people on the payroll including thirty-five priests, eighteen sailors, twenty "petitioners" (soldiers too old to be of active assistance) and three widows of soldiers. There were thirty-six Negroes. In 1638 there were 300 in the *dotacion* but of these forty were priests and only 100 effective infantry were stationed in St. Augustine. At about this time Indians were brought as forced labor to work on the fort. Just how many is unknown as well as how they were quartered.

In 1647 a document states the number of "residents" as over three hundred. It seems a very conservative estimate. In 1655 a smallpox plague swept through the Florida Indian population and probably struck the town also. A note this same year requests twelve Negroes for work on the fort. In 1662 it was reported that there were 180 soldiers in St. Augustine and thirty sons of soldiers who would help defend the fort. In 1662 there again

appears the statement that there were "more than 300 inhabitants, soldiers and married people." At the time of the British attack in 1669 there were only 200 effective soldiers.

The *dotacion* was increased in this year to 350 and forty-three new men were ordered to Florida. One wonders why the local youths were not enlisted. In 1674 it was noted that the fort had twenty guns and that a governor, a sergeant-major, a treasurer, an auditor, two captains and three hundred enlisted men were in the town. Yet a note in 1675 states that when ships left for the Caribbean or on patrol duty there were only eighty who remained to defend the town. In 1676 a letter indicates that three hundred Indians were brought yearly from Apalachee, Guale and Timucua to work on the fort and that such was their hardship that very few lived to return. This information may well be exaggerated for it is contained in a clerical letter which condemns the governor on various other counts as well. In 1679 a roll indicates 288 places on the *dotacion* of which 198 were effective, seven were paid to widows, nineteen were old and sick, twenty-nine were officers and thirty-one were in Apalachee. In addition there were perhaps fifty clergy. The following year fifty foot soldiers were sent to Florida. A comment the next year indicates a total of one hundred families in the town. If each family included four children this would give a total of 600 relatively permanent residents. In any event there were enough "civilians" so that in 1683 two companies of militia could be formed.

In 1685 the first really good clue to the total population comes to light in the statement that during the English attack "our 1400 persons found shelter inside the fort, including women and children." As English pressure increased runaway Negro slaves found refuge in the city. One hundred criminals and political prisoners were brought from New Spain for labor. At about this time English Catholics were allowed to settle in Florida. Accordingly Dickinson notes in his journal of 1696 that he visited with an Englishman married to a Spanish woman. They had seven children. He also stated that the garrison held about 300 soldiers. That same year the governor reported a *dotacion* of 350 places of which 111 were infantry, eight or ten were ill, thirty-seven were "false muster," eleven were women and children, twenty-eight were petitioners and four were infants.

At the time of Moore's raid in 1702 it is noted that over 1,000 people entered the fort for refuge. As a result the governor requested that the *dotacion* be increased to five hundred since there were only 130 men active in the garrison.

In 1746 the Bishop of Tricale reported that there were 1509 inhabitants and that he had confirmed 630 Spanish and 403 free Negroes and slaves. During the preceding years a long-standing plan to send colonists from the Canary Islands had apparently been carried out. Extra reinforcements were also brought so that in 1743 there were more than 700 men over and above the normal complement. Criminal labor from New Spain in the number of 250 men were also brought to Florida.

Since the First Spanish period closed with the evacuation of the people we have an excellent record whereby the final population can be established. One report fixes the number at 3,104; another at 3,005. Of this number 551 were military. Of the free Negro community which had been established north of the fort, there were 87: thirty-one men, thirty-four women and twenty-two children. There were 246 Canary Islanders. There were twenty-four Germans. Eighty-three Indians elected to leave Florida. Slaves numbered 303, men, women, boys and girls being totaled separately since their value differed. The military families included 582 women, 438 boys and 447 girls. The King paid expences of 895 men, 760 women, 659 boys and 608 girls. The Bishop of Cuba paid the expenses of twenty-five women and forty-nine children. Only a very few people, three to eight, stayed in St. Augustine.

While no census exists for this period, the parish records of births, deaths and marriages offer a method of statistical analysis which gives considerable information. With enough time one could obtain a running census via an actual listing of the names. The method used here involves a counting of the number of baptisms. Again this is time consuming so that this study was confined to a count of pairs of years at decade intervals. The birds of each of the pairs was averaged so that "calendar accident" would be reduced. The result (see Table I) shows an increase from seven births in the 1595 period to one hundred ten in the 1760 period. From the birth figures one can obtain the number of people if one makes an assumption concerning the birth-rate.

No doubt the rate itself changed during the whole of the Spanish period so that any assumed figure would be at best a gross estimate. Based on birth-rate in other times and places it would seem reason-

TABLE I
St. Augustine, Florida
Survey of Baptisms from Parish Records

Year	Number	Baptisms Two Year Average	Population computed from 40/1000 birthrate
1595	8		
1596	6	7	175
1600	3		
1601	19	11	275
1610	21		
1611	15	18	450
1620	14		
1621	22	18	450
1630	26		
1631	17	21.5	538
1640	22		
1641	24	23	575
1650	26		
1651	21	23.5	588
1660	22		
1661	36	29	725
1670	29		
1671	29	29	725
1680	44		
1681	35	39.5	988
1690	55		
1691	39	47	1,175
1700	37		
1701	36	36.5	912
1710	31		
1711	33	32	800
1720	44		
1721	30	37	925
1730	47		
1731	61	54	1,350
1740	58		
1741	48	53	1,325
1750	74		
1751	65	68	1,700
1760	105		
1761	115	110	2,750

Dunkle: Population Change as an Element in the Historical Geography of St

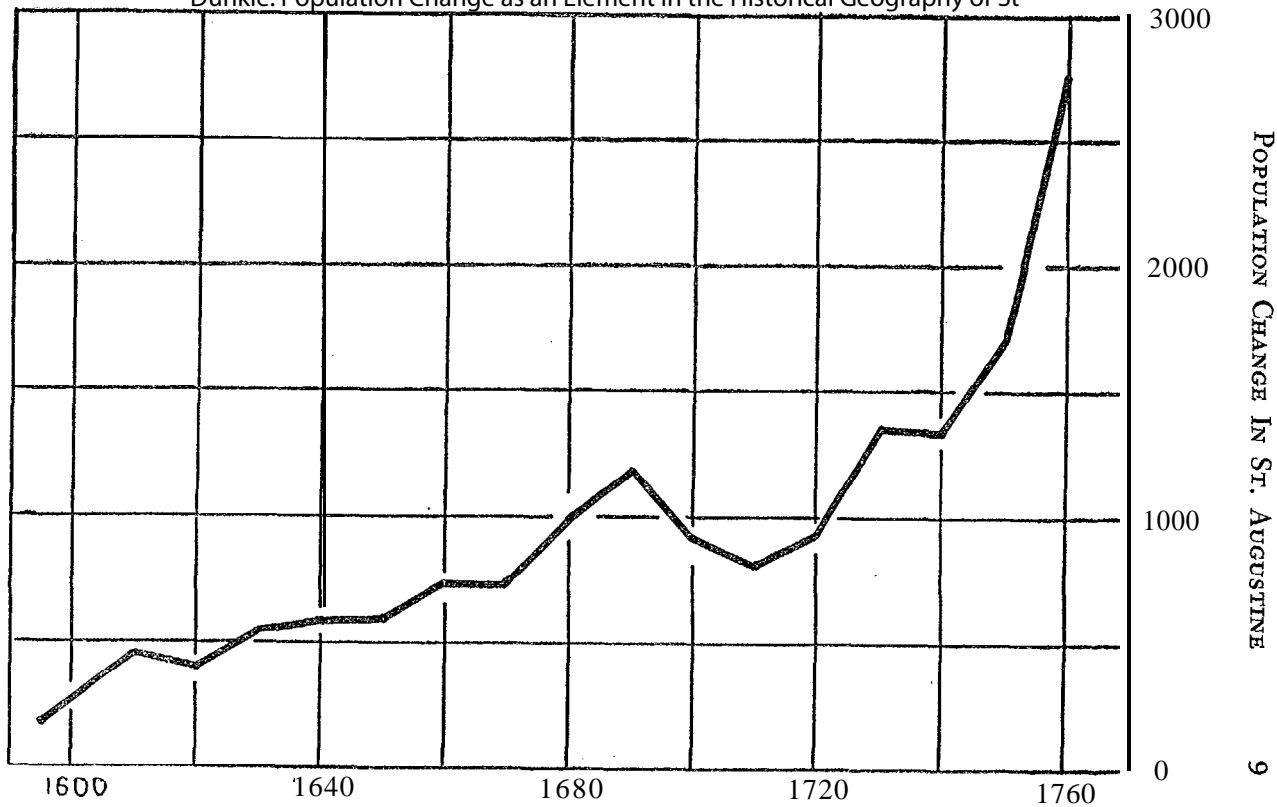


Figure 1. St. Augustine, Florida. Number of people. 1595 to 1760 computed for Baptismal Records.

able that a rate of forty per thousand (40/1000) would not be far from wrong. Application of this rate produces a population of 175 for 1595, and 2,750 for 1760. The latter figure is of the right order of magnitude in terms of the documentary record. It must always be remembered that these figures derived from the birth rate reflect families and not de unmarried clergyman and soldier. Further they account only for the white population.

In spite of the obvious pitfalls involved in the application of this method the resulting curve (See Figure 1) fits the known facts about the history of St. Augustine. Thus the population rose rather steadily to a peak of 1,175 in 1690. It then declined for two decades reaching a low of 800 in 1710. By 1730 the population had increased to 1350 at which figure is leveled for a decade. A sharp increase from 1700 to 2,750 was experienced in the decade of tension prior to the end of the period. While the city may not actually have decreased in the amounts shown on the graphs certainly the interval from 1690 to 1710 was one in which the city failed to prosper.

THE ENGLISH PERIOD

Although the period of British occupation was very short changes were so numerous that only an annual census could have provided us with a truly realistic picture. Lacking this it is useful to distinguish three categories of population: the permanent group, the Minorcan group and the Loyalist group.

De Brahm in his *History of the Three Provinces* provides a list which is indicative of the permanent population. It is essentially a listing by occupation. Although he states that between 1763 and 1771 there were some 3,000 people in East Florida, the list itself enumerates only 144 married men and 144 single men plus 1400 Minorcans and over 900 slaves. A close analysis of the listing indicates a non-Minorcan white population for the town of St. Augustine of about five hundred. In another place he notes "The inhabitants (Garrison excepted) consisted anno 1770 of 124 persons, of whom 50 were married and 74 unmarried. N. B. Women and Children were not Comprehended in this number." This latter note illustrates the common failing of most censuses prior to the pattern set by the United States

census. A further interesting commentary on the character of the community in this period is a note that while only two men were hanged, four men died in the line of duty as constables.

During the first years of the period only the 14th Regiment, consisting of some 200 men, was stationed in the town. From time to time the number was increased as in 1770 when 641 men of the 21st Regiment and six companies (number of men unspecified) were encamped north of the town enroute from West Florida.

The Minorcan group, which forms the major connecting link between the population of eighteenth century St. Augustine and the present, may be treated as a unit. The total number brought to Florida by Turnbull was close to 1,400. Church registers give a graphic account of their misfortunes. The deaths during the first year numbered 450, and 170 died in the second year. By 1772 the deaths had dropped to ten per year but increased to eighty per year in 1777 at which time the group removed to St. Augustine. The number of births per year is recorded from 1768 to 1784 and ranged from a low of ten in 1769 to a high of fifty-one in 1773. After the move to St. Augustine the number leveled to about thirty-five per year. If the birth rate is assumed to be forty per thousand a total of about 890 persons is indicated. This number seems consistent with the total of 409 recorded as having come to St. Augustine in 1777.² Yet a census made in 1786 specified that there were 86 females and 103 males born in Minorca and fifteen females and seven males born in "Mosquitos." This number totals only 211. This latter figure probably represents the degree to which the original group had disappeared.³

A third segment, the Loyalist Group, has been studied exhaustively by Siebert in his *Loyalists in East Florida*. Unfortunately it is difficult to decide from his work just how many people came to St. Augustine itself. However, he concludes that some 13,000 persons entered East Florida. In 1778 Governor Tonyn estimated a "permanent" population of 1,000 whites and 3,000 Negroes for the colony. In March of 1783 he estimated that 8,000 persons had come to Florida giving it a total of 11,000.

While no figure has been found for St. Augustine it would

2. British Colonial Office Records. "Number of Mahonese, Italians and Greeks." CO 5-558. January 15, 1778.

3. Father Hassett's Census of 1786. East Florida Papers.

seem reasonable to suppose that a very large fraction, at least one-third, of the influx settled in or near the town. In any event it was large enough to create an emergency, for regulations governing sanitation, slaves, traffic and food rationing were for the first time deemed necessary.

TABLE II
 St. Augustine, Florida
 General Census Summary
 1784
 Number According to Future Plans

Intent	Religious Plan	Number	Slaves
To remain	Already catholic	25	29
	To be converted	37	203
	To not be converted	80	32
	Minorcans (Catholic)	<u>445</u>	<u>?</u>
		587	264 (?)
Undecided	-	155	?
To leave	-	1181	?
TOTAL		1923	264 (?)

Source: *East Florida Papers*

Number According to Nativity of the Group
 Which Desired to Remain or Was Undecided

<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Number</i>
Minorca	445
Ireland	23
England	11
America	9
Scotland	7
Germany	6
France	2
Switzerland	2
Florida	1

Yet when the period ended very few of these new immigrants remained. As a result the English by bringing the Minorcans made St. Augustine more of a Spanish city than it had ever been before.

THE SECOND SPANISH PERIOD

This period provides the most intensive census record up to and including the present era. There is some sort of enumeration for each of the following dates: 1784, 1786, 1793, 1797 and 1815. Further, a census dated 1813 includes St. Augustine and adjacent areas.⁴

As of 1784, the eve of the British withdrawal, there was a total of 1,992 persons (654 families) in St. Augustine. Of these, 445 were Minorcans, thirty-six were British Catholics, thirty-seven persons desired to remain and become Catholics, eighty desired to remain but not conform, 155 were undecided about remaining and 1,181 persons wanted to leave (See Table II). This number does not include the slave population. The Minorcan group was the largest single element of the population inclined toward remaining, but of the group who either wanted to remain or were undecided there were twenty-three Irish, eleven English, seven Scots, six Germans and nine from the United States. Most of the essential trades were represented from planter to laborer, merchant to doctor.

The second available census seems to be dated about 1785. It is certainly prior to 1786 and seems to have been made soon after the British evacuation in an attempt to settle land distribution. The tabulation specifically lists the acreage held by land owners and it is clear that nearly the whole group wanted more land. The Minorcans held on the average about three to five acres although some few had fifty to 100 acres. The British, on the other hand, claimed large tracts, one claim being over 17,000 acres and another over 7,200 acres. These large acreages were not adjacent to St. Augustine and do not represent farm-

4. These documents are a part of the collection known as the "East Florida Papers." The writer is indebted to J. B. Lockey who made transcripts of the data giving them upon his death to the Yonge Library of Florida History. His article, "The St. Augustine Census of 1786", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Volume 18, 1939, pp. 11-31, is an analysis of one of these censuses.

steads or cultivated plots. The cosmopolitan nature of the population continued. In this census, however, a distinction is made between those from "Minorca" and those from "Majorca" and a great number of the returns state a specific town such as Liorna or Naples. Nine people claimed Florida as their home. The Irish group had declined to five. Those from the United States listed Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland and North Carolina as birth places. Significantly, the British were the largest slave holders. The three largest groups according to occupation were laborers, marines and carpenters in that order, with forty-eight people being listed as laborers. The total population stands at 881 people. Of these 606 are white of whom 431 are Minorcans. Of the adults there were 169 males to 114 females and of the children 176 males to 147 females. This disproportion of males is not great considering the newness of the population. The Minorcan group had been established for some years but of the twenty-two new Spanish adults there were seventeen males to five females. (See Table III)

The census of 1786 taken by the parish priest, Father Hassett, for school purposes "provides additional information of value in picturing these early years of Spanish occupancy. The total

TABLE III
 St. Augustine, Florida
 General Census Summary
 C. 1785
 Number According to Nativity, Race, Sex and Age

Nativity	White		Negro (slaves) by		Total	Nativity of Owner	
	Adults	Children	Male	Female		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female			
Florida and Cuba	14	6	24	15	59	52	13
Spain	17	5	4	5	31	9	6
"Mahonese"	119	85	119	108	431	35	35
Britain	29	18	29	19	95		125
Total	179	114	176	147	616		275

Source: *East Florida Papers*

resident population is now 953, a fairly large increase. In addition he lists 300 persons as being sub-urban and notes that there are 450 troops stationed in the garrison bringing the grand total for the locality up to 1,703. By classes the distribution remains about the same, the Minorcan group being by far the largest. There has been some addition of Spanish officials but a decrease in the foreign (non-Spanish speaking) group. The number of slaves has increased only slightly. Altogether it strengthens the picture presented as of 1785 and serves to augment it. There were 119 married men and 101 single men. For the female population there were 125 married or widowed and only twenty-seven single. It has been possible to tabulate also the size of households. By far the largest number of households had from three to five people but there were a significant number of single person households and a few households with eight to ten persons exclusive of slaves. With respect to slave holding the most usual situation was for a household to own only one slave although a significant number owned from two to four slaves. Only a very few households owned more than four and the maximum number was eleven. (See Table IV)

By 1793 the population had increased considerably. The community now contained 927 white people and 412 slaves, a total of 1,339 people. A note appended to the listing states that there were 1,291 persons to which could be added 438 soldiers.

TABLE IV
St. Augustine, Florida
Census Summary
1786

Number by Nativity, Race and Sex

Nativity	white		Total	Negro (slave and free)		
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Total
Foreigners	47	41	88	72	56	128
Minorcans	243	231	474	45	37	71
Floridians	30	21	51	42	40	82
Spanish	28	19	47	8	4	12
Total	348	312	660	156	137	293

Source: *East Florida Papers*

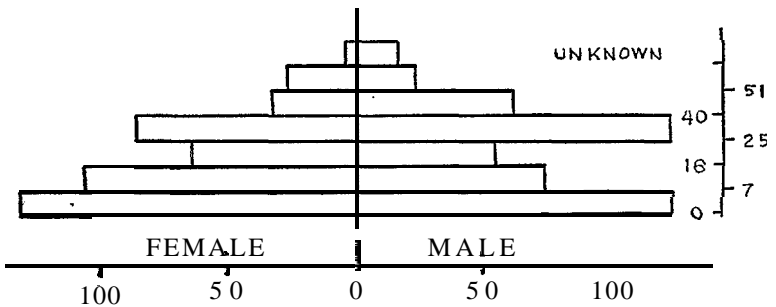


FIGURE 2. St. Augustine, Florida. 1793. White Population. Age-Sex Distribution.

Whichever total is correct an increase in indicated. Certain other features of this census serve to round out the picture. For the first time the age-sex data is complete. (See Figure 2) This population pyramid shows the preponderance of men in the productive age range from twenty-six to forty, there being 122 men to 86 women. At all lower ages, however, there are more females than males, indicating that the sex ratio was becoming more normal. The same thing cannot be said of the Negro group where there were 383 males to only twenty-nine females. It is entirely probable that this latter figure is somewhat exaggerated for almost certainly many children of both sexes were not listed. This particular census lists names of persons by streets and if a base map were available a population distribution picture could be presented. Lacking such a map one may say that there seems to be little change from the British period except that a considerable number of people are listed as living on "el camino de la Feria" (the Ferry Road), on "las Orillas del Rio Matanzas" (the banks of the Matanzas River) and on "Las Orillas del Rio Norte" (the banks of the North River) indicating that the community had spread beyond the walls of the old city. We are again able to ascertain with considerable accuracy the number of slaves per household. Of 145 households listed, ninety-five owned no male slave. Twenty-eight households owned one male slave. Nine owned two slaves. Only one household owned as many as nine male slaves. Eighty-five households owned no female slaves, twenty-eight owned one female, eighteen owned two and only twelve households owned more than two females. Thus while

slavery was very much a part of the community there were a large number of households which could not afford this luxury.

The racial question is given still further clarification in a census dated 1797. (See Table V) As of this date there were in the town 851 white people, thirty-three free mulattoes, fifty-two free Negroes, twenty-four slave mulattoes and 288 slave Negroes: a total of 1,248 persons. To this number may be added 202 persons living along Rio del Norte and 143 persons living along Rio Matanzas bringing the community as a whole up to 1,592 persons. It is significant that the free mulattoes and Negroes lived almost exclusively in the town. Interesting too is the fact that there were twenty-one free mulatto women to only twelve free mulatto men. The sex ratio among the white group had become practically equated for there were 512 females to 490 males. More startling is the equating of the sex ratio for the slave group.

The date of the next census is uncertain. A cross-check of names and ages with other census leads one to venture that it dates between 1810 and 1812. The listings are arranged according to *barrios* (wards) and interestingly enough these areas are retained in the ward divisions of the United States census of 1830. Unfortunately no base map is available for delimiting the boundaries of the wards, although their names give some

TABLE V
St. Augustine, Florida
Census Summary
1797

Number By Race, Sex and Social Status

Status	St. Augustine		Rio Norte		Rio Matanzas		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
White	411	440	57	53	22	24	1007
Free mulatto	12	21	1	0	1	4	39
Free negro	26	26	6	4	1	0	63
Slave mulatto	14	10	1	0	1	3	29
Slave negro	144	144	48	30	52	36	454
Totals	607	641	113	87	77	67	1592

Source: *East Florida Papers*

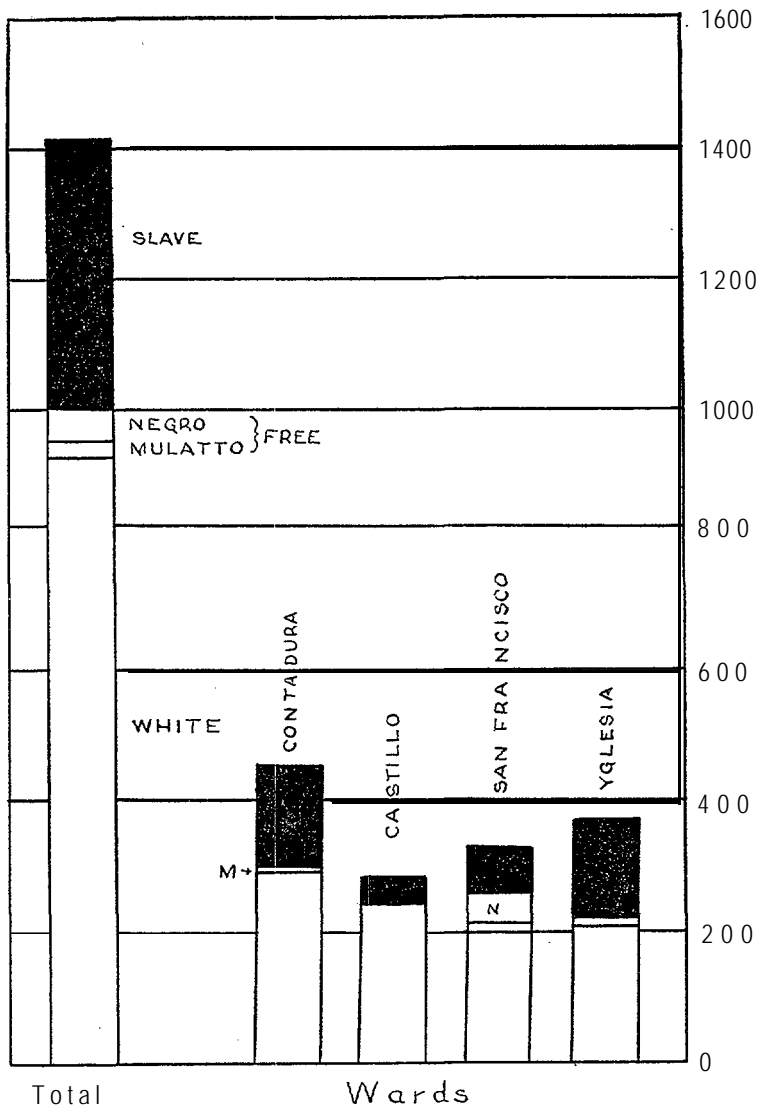


FIGURE 3. St. Augustine, Florida. c. 1810-1812. Population by race and by wards within the city.

indication of their general location. (See Figure 3) Roughly one-fourth of the population of just over 1,400 lived in each ward. There were 471 white males and 452 white females, 230 slave Negro males and 194 slave Negro females. This census is especially valuable because it gives the age-sex pattern for both the free and the slave groups. With respect to the white group there is a much larger number of females over sixteen than males. The cause of this is uncertain and it may reflect only a lack of inclusion of garrison personnel. The contrast between the white and the slave group is striking. Nearly all of the slave group lies between age sixteen and twenty-five, the laboring age, with a very small number of persons over fifty. (See Figure 4)

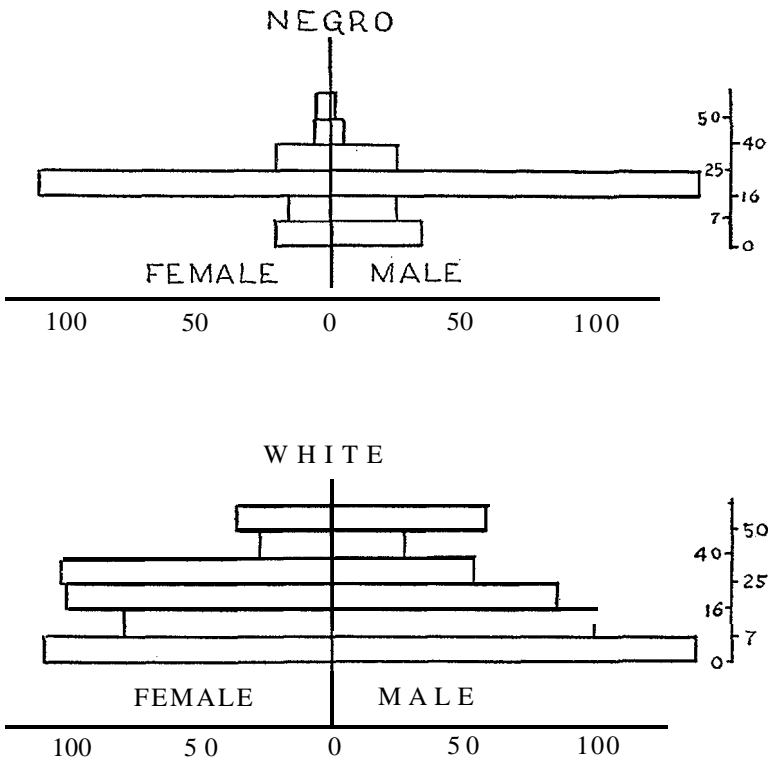


FIGURE 4. St. Augustine, Florida. c. 1810-1812. Population by race, age and sex.

The final census for the period is dated 1815. Its validity is somewhat in question for the under-seven age group seems very small in the white group. The extent of the populated area is indicated by the listing which includes the four wards within the city as well as listings for Matanzas, San Sebastian, San Pablo, Rio Mosquitos, Puerta Sur, Rio San Juan, Puerto de la Ysla Amalis and San Nicolas. The total for the four wards within the city was 1,383 persons of whom 840 were white. The total for all the areas was 3,729 persons, Amelia Island alone having 1,491. In short, St. Augustine was becoming just a part of a populated area extending from the St. Marys River southward. An interesting feature of this census is an indication of marital status for the St. Augustine wards. In the group aged over sixteen in the white group there were 215 single, 266 married and 54 widowed. Of this widowed group forty-one were women. In the Negro slave group there were 205 single and only twenty-four married. Apparently the sacrament of marriage was not pressed upon the slave group. (See Table VI)

In summary we may say that the population of St. Augustine grew only slowly during the period although settlement outside the town proceeded at a more rapid rate. The slave group increased gradually but never equalled the white group. The abnormal sex ratio of the early years was gradually readjusted under normal birth conditions although the varying number of garrison troops created periodic imbalances. The community regarded the city walls with less concern than in the first Spanish period and

TABLE VI
St. Augustine, Florida
Marital Status of Population
Over Sixteen Years of Age
1815

Single Male	Free White				Negro Slave						
	Single Female	Married M	Married F	Widowed M	Widowed F	Single M	Single F	Married M	Married F	Widowed M	Widowed F
101	114	131	135	13	41	100	105	12	12	6	6
215		266		54 (Totals)		205		24		112	

Source: *East Florida Papers*

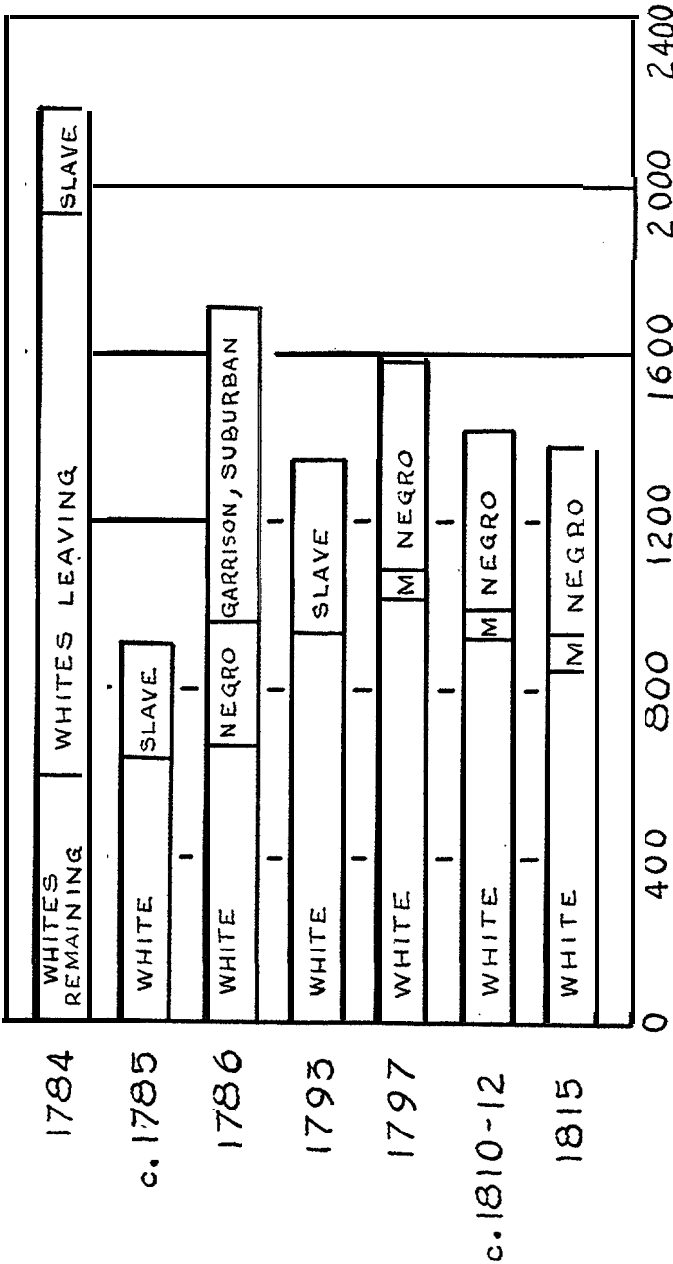


FIGURE 5. St. Augustine, Florida, Second Spanish Period. Summary of Census data.

therefore de town limits were less fixed. Throughout most of the period the community held a size of between 1,200 and 1,500 persons. (See Figure 5)

THE AMERICAN PERIOD

There is a most unfortunate gap in data between 1815 and 1830. Because of the newness of Florida as a territory the United

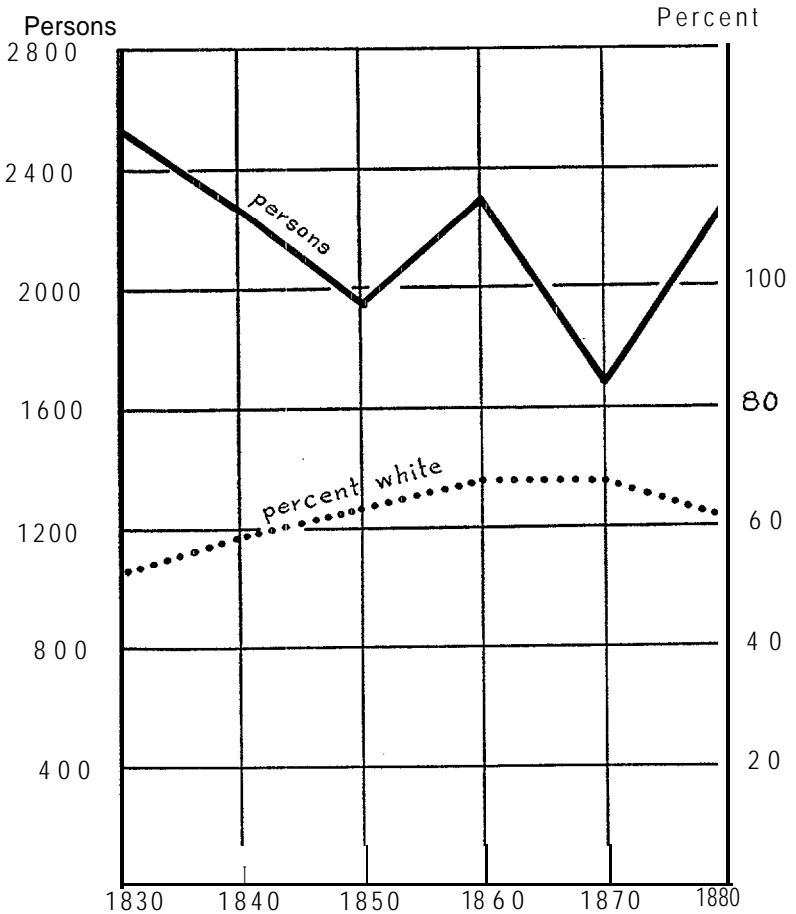


FIGURE 6. St. Augustine, Florida. 1830 to 1880. Population Change.

States Census of 1820 did not apply. No other record of the population has come to light thus far. Thus we must pick up the thread with the 1830 census.⁵

As of 1830 St. Augustine included 1,335 white persons, 172 free colored persons and 1,037 slaves, making a total of 2,544 persons. (See Figure 6 for changes from 1830 to 1880) The frontier nature of the community is evidenced by the unusually large percentage of white males of ages twenty to forty and the corresponding low proportion of females. Eleven percent of the males were age thirty to thirty-nine while only 4.9 per cent of the females were in this group. The years of upheaval toward the end of the Spanish period produced a lowering in the usually large number of persons fifteen to nineteen among the white group. As in later years there are more female (52.9 per cent) Negro slaves than male reflecting the use of slaves for household help.

The census of 1840 shows a slight overall decline from 2,544 to 2,352, but this decline was entirely due to a drop in the non-white group. The white group actually increased to 1,369. However, the picture is one of stagnation for in a decade a town should increase some by natural increase. The normalization of the sex ratio indicates an emigration of surplus white males, the difference being made up by locally born females. In both the free and the slave group there is a decrease in the number of children under ten.

In spite of increased tourist movement the resident population continued to decline. In a state where plantations were having a real boom in the north and in which political activity and economic activity were moving in hand, St. Augustine, off the beaten track and having a poor hinterland, was rapidly falling by the wayside. By 1850 there were only 1,217 white persons and the number of slaves had declined to the point where the total population was only 1,938 persons. The free colored population

5. The discussion of this period is based both on the published data of the U. S. Census and, more importantly, on examination of microfilms of the original census tracts available in the Yonge Library of Florida History. These tracts made possible tabulations which are not included in the published data and in certain instances indicated necessary revisions as in the case of the 1830 census where the published figure of 1,709 for the total population apparently included only the free population.

had declined to ninety. In short there were seven hundred fewer people in 1850 than in 1830. In both the white and the non-white groups there were about forty-three per cent males. In the white group especially there were very few in the fifteen to nineteen age bracket. The young men were leaving town.

From the census of 1850 it has been possible to tabulate the occupations of the white population. (See Figure 7) Some eighteen per cent of the group are laborers and about seventeen per cent are engaged in agriculture, forestry or fisheries. Significantly

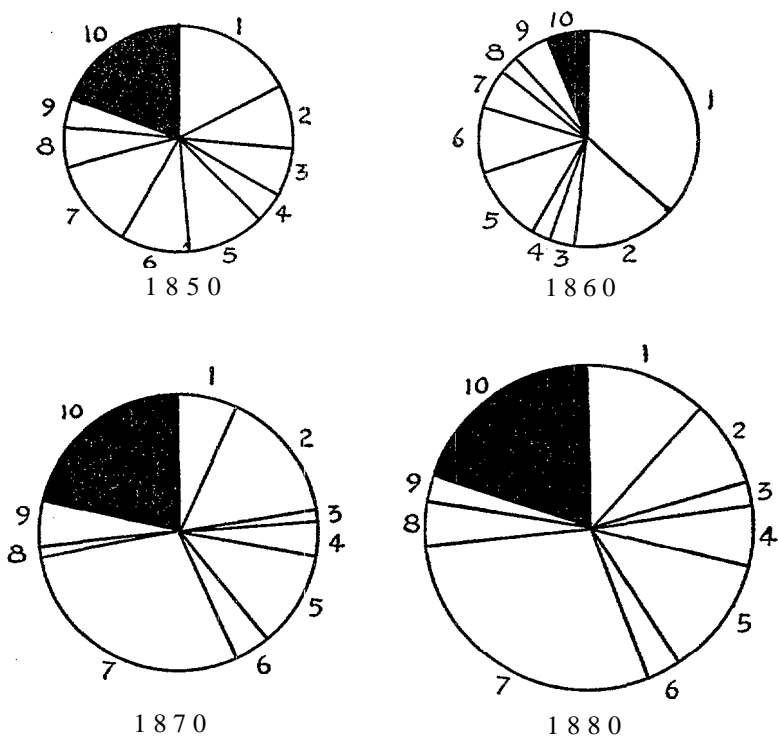


FIGURE 7. St. Augustine, Florida. 1850 to 1880. The Labor Force by Major Industry Groups.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery | 6. Business and Repair |
| 2. Construction | 7. Personal Services |
| 3. Manufacturing | 8. Public Administration |
| 4. Transportation and Commerce | 9. Professions |
| 5. Wholesale and Retail | 10. Labor |

some nine per cent are engaged in construction and about twenty per cent in commerce. Personal service occupations include only thirteen per cent but it must be remembered that most personal services were performed by slaves. The 1870 figure, taken after emancipation, is almost doubled. There was in 1850 a small cigar factory employing fifteen people.

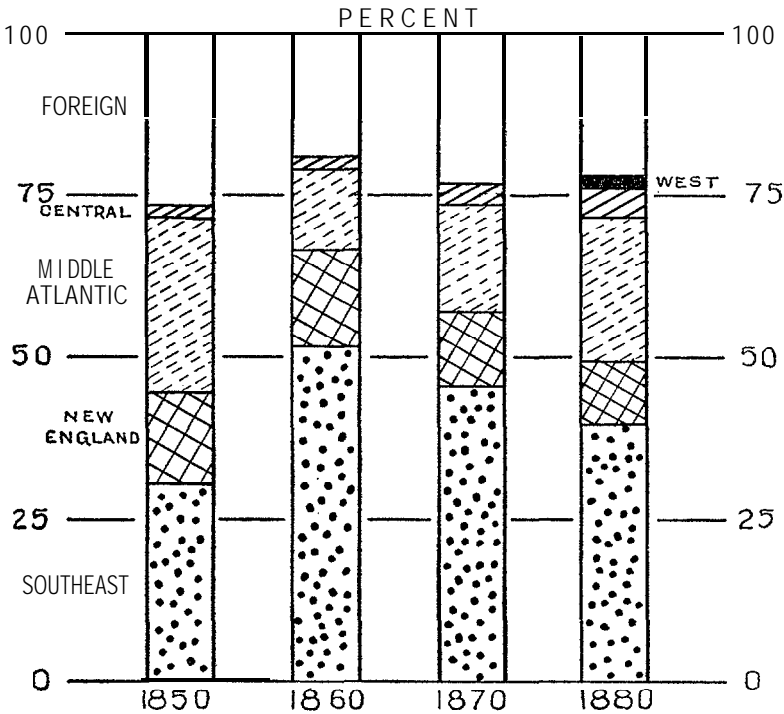


FIGURE 8. St. Augustine, Florida. 1850 to 1880. Nativity: Percentage of the Out-of-State population from the several sections of the United States.

For the first time there is an indication in 1850 of the nativity of the population (See Figure 8). Of the total free population 84.6 per cent was born in Florida. This is probably a rather low figure as compared with the South as a whole. Of the out-of-state group thirty per cent were born in the South, twenty-seven per cent in the Middle Atlantic States, fourteen per cent in New Eng-

land and twenty-nine per cent were born outside the United States. Of the individual states New York and Georgia led. Of the foreign nations the British Isles, France and Germany in that order were major suppliers of immigrants. For the South it was a very cosmopolitan population, especially when one recognizes that the Minorcan group has retained something of its identity up to the present.

By 1860 the population had increased considerably and of this population a larger percentage was born in the South. The increase came among the white group which rose to 1,568 bringing the total to 2,307. There was still a female majority but the male percentage had increased to 47.9 per cent. The white sex ratio in the twenty to twenty-nine age bracket was nearly balanced. The net immigration is indicated by the fact that only seventy-five per cent of this 1860 population was born in Florida. Of the out-of-state group, fifty-one per cent was born in the South, fifteen per cent in New England and thirteen per cent in the Middle Atlantic States. Only nineteen per cent was foreign-born. Again Georgia and New York among the states and the British Isles among the nations were leading suppliers.

The picture of occupations is complicated by the fact that almost twice the number of persons list themselves as farmers than a decade earlier. It is impossible to ascertain whether this represents an extension of the census area to the city margins or a bonafide change in the character of the community, but probably the former. The significant increase in the percentage engaged in construction represents the building boom which accompanied the increase in population as St. Augustine boomed as a tourist center.

The first available information concerning the school population comes in the 1860 census. (See Figure 9). Thus we find that in the age five to fourteen bracket seventy-one per cent of the white boys and seventy-seven per cent of the white girls were in school. No figures are given for the slave population. At a guess this would seem to be a fairly high figure in terms of the national average at that period and matches well the comments of travelers of that era who commented of the high "cultural" level of St. Augustine.

Although the War Between the States inflicted no physical

damage on St. Augustine it interrupted the budding tourist industry and caused a great exodus of people. Although after the war tourists again moved toward the "ancient city" the census of 1870 shows that the population totaled only 1,700 persons. This decline was produced by a removal of both white and Negro groups with the result that there were listed only 1,123 whites, 177 mulattoes and 373 Negroes. It is interesting to note that at this date three classes were distinguished while the most recent census distinguished only white and non-white categories. The male percentage stood at 45.7 for the white group and a new low of 41.0 per cent for the non-white group. This latter figure illustrates the extent to which the freedman was more mobile than the freedwoman. This is illustrated also in the age-sex pattern for there were twelve per cent of the females in the twenty to twenty-nine age bracket while only five per cent of the males were thus encompassed. Another effect of the war shows up in the birth picture where only ten per cent of the white population lies

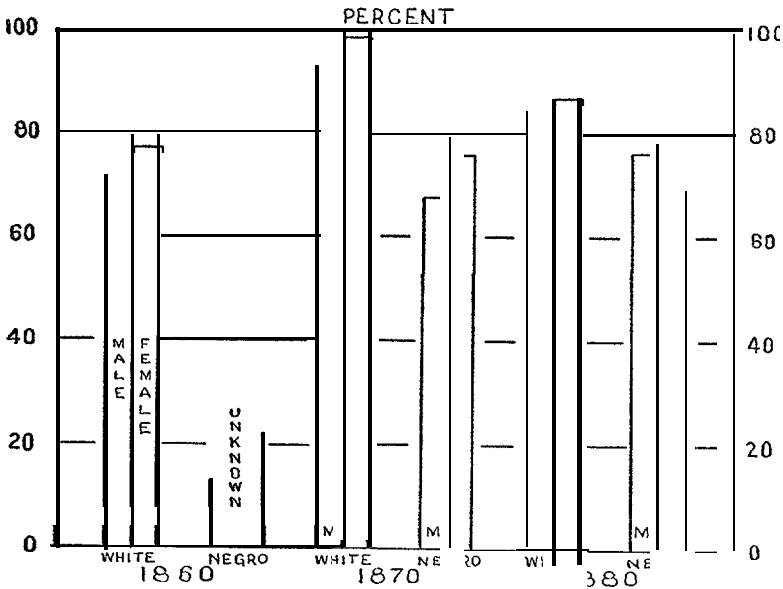


FIGURE 9. St. Augustine, Florida. 1860 to 1880. School Attendance of children age 5-14.

in the group age five through nine where fifteen per cent were in that bracket in the 1860 census.

Since there was a reduction in the population after 1860 the nativity of the population is significant only as shifts in emphasis occur. Of the total group 76.2 per cent were born in Florida. Of the out-of-state group, five per cent were born in the South, sixteen per cent in the Middle Atlantic States and twelve per cent in New England. The number of persons born in South Carolina increased as did the number from Virginia, Louisiana and Kentucky. Some twenty-six per cent of the out-of-state group was foreign-born, many of them being soldiers stationed in the town. Ireland and France head the list.

The picture of occupations for 1870 is not comparable to that for 1860 because of the inclusion of the now freed slaves. As a result twenty-nine per cent were engaged in personal services and eighteen per cent were classed as laborers. The greatest decrease is in the agriculture category, probably as a result of distinguishing farm laborer from farmer. It is interesting to note that while forty-eight non-whites were listed as laborers there were also thirty-four white laborers. While there were no Negroes in the professions or in commerce there was a small number of Negro carpenters and masons.

By 1870 educational opportunities had increased. For the first time the Negro situation can be assessed. Again percentages are based on a tabulation of the children age five through fourteen. Thus there were 71.6 per cent of these Negro children in school and 96.2 per cent of the white children. In each case the percentage of females was greater than that of males.

By 1880 St. Augustine was out of the doldrums and had increased to 2,295 people (although this was still lower than 1830) of whom 1,414 were white, 361 mulatto and 521 Negro. It is noteworthy that the increase of the non-white group was proportionately greater as the need for service personnel grew with the tourist trade. The Florida-born percentage had declined to 74.6 for the white population. Of the out-of-state group the south supplied forty per cent, the Middle Atlantic States twenty-two per cent and New England ten per cent. For the first time Illinois, Ohio and Wisconsin assumed some importance. Among the foreign-born several new nations were represented.

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The pattern of occupations remained much the same as in 1870. One indicator of the increasing importance of tourism is a listing of a sizeable number of saloon and liquor dealers. There were also a number of railway employees.

With respect to education conditions were not quite so good. The white attendance was down to 85.3 per cent while the Negro attendance had increased only one per cent. For the first time there were slightly more Negro boys attending than Negro girls.

Census data for the decades from 1880 to 1950 is so readily

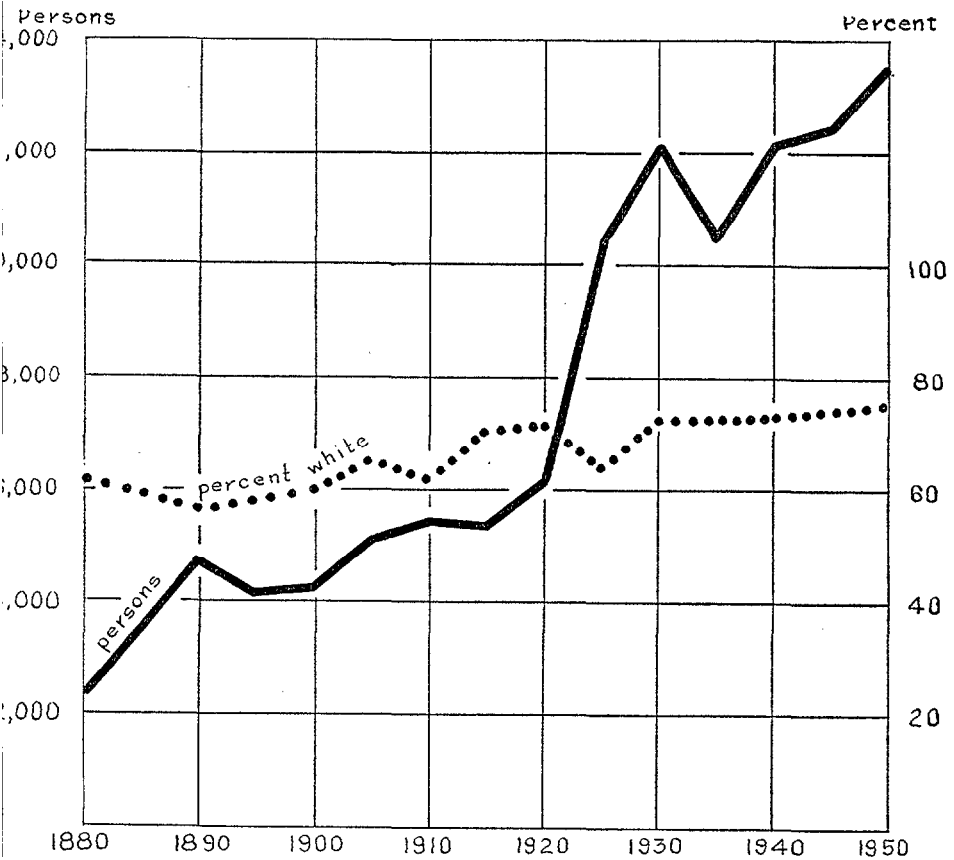


Figure 10. St. Augustine, Florida. 1880 to 1950. Population Change.

available that only the broad pattern will be considered. (See Figure 10) St. Augustine grew from the 2,300 of 1880 to almost 14,000 in 1950. This growth was far from regular, however. While the population more than doubled between 1880 and 1890 under the impetus of the Florida East Coast rail enterprise it then declined to a low of about 4,100 in the following five years as the rail line was extended farther south. Growth was steady but gradual to a number of 6,200 in 1920 at which time the Florida boom again brought a doubling such that by 1930 the population reached 12,000. While there was an actual decrease during the first five years of the depression there was a later increase so that the total for 1940 equaled that of 1930. During the post-war boom population has again risen and it may be that the 1960 census will show an increase of a size comparable to the 1920's.

The percentage of the population which is white has been rising rather steadily from sixty-one per cent in 1880 to seventy-six per cent in 1950. The percentage of the population which is male has remained slightly below fifty per cent. In common with all of America the percentage of foreign born has been slowly declining, reaching a low of three per cent in 1950.

The nativity pattern of the modern population is available only from the mid-seasonal census taken by the state of Florida. Unfortunately this data is obtainable only for the county as a whole, since 1920 the county has been increasing at an even faster rate than the city. In 1925 some seventy per cent of the white population and fifty-three per cent of the Negro population of the county lived in St. Augustine. By 1945 these figures were reduced to sixty-three and forty-five per cent respectively. Some of this change is produced by growth just outside the city limits of St. Augustine and represents a growth of the city itself. Recognizing the pitfalls it is still useful to analyze the nativity for the county. (See Figure 11)

With respect to the Negro group fifty-five per cent were born in Florida as of 1925. This number has risen to sixty-four per cent by 1945. In each year all but about two per cent were born in the southeast. Georgia and South Carolina were second only to Florida as suppliers.

Among the white group something over fifty per cent were born in Florida and about twenty per cent were born in other

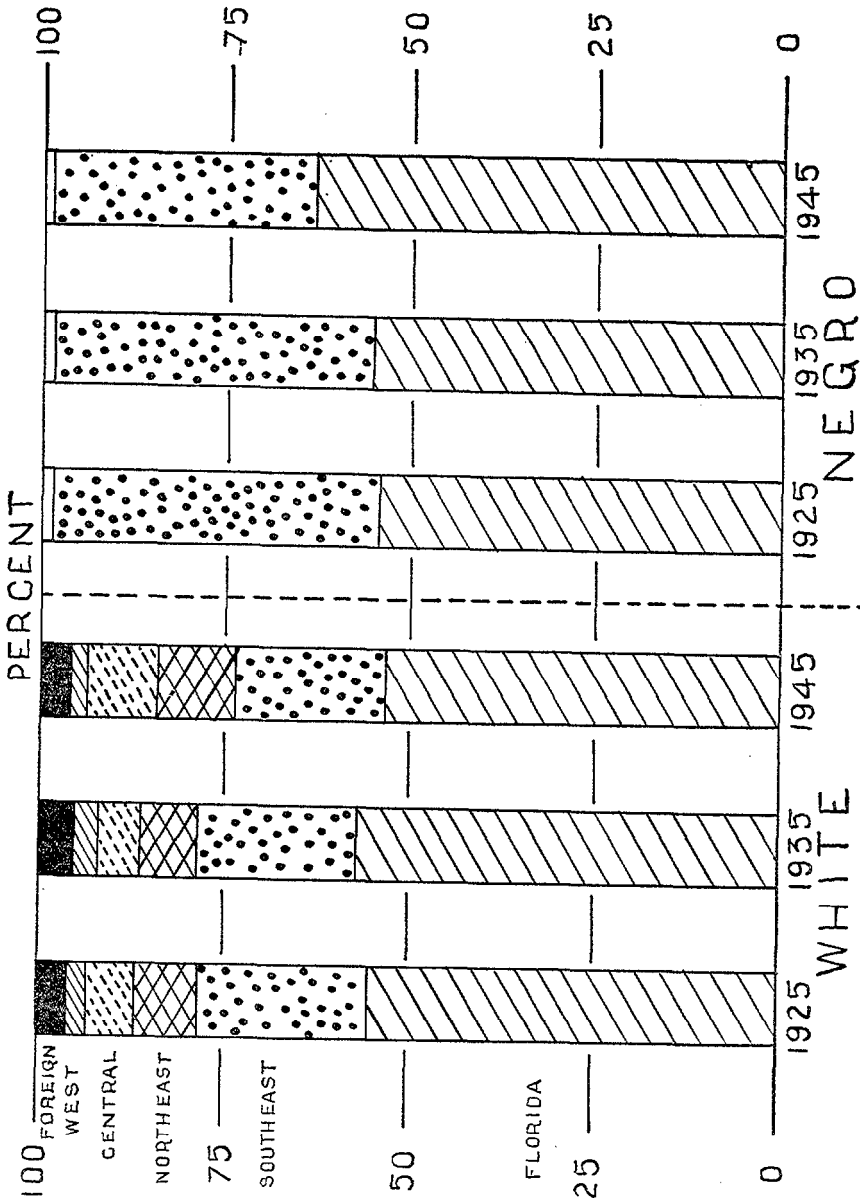


FIGURE 11. St. Johns County, Florida, 1925 to 1945. Nativity.

southeastern states for each of the census years 1925 to 1945. In each census the eastern states led the central states, slightly, as suppliers. Among the individual states the largest supplier was Georgia with 10.9 per cent. New York and Pennsylvania followed with 5.9 per cent each. Other states in order included South Carolina, North Carolina, Illinois and Alabama. Even supposing that all of these non-southeastern people lived in St. Augustine itself the number would not be large enough to account for the rapid growth of the town in the last thirty years. Rather it must be said that the city grew as Floridians and other Southerners moved to the city to service the needs of the tourist.

The three to four per cent of the population which is foreign born is primarily of British stock. From 1905 to 1915 there was some increase of German and Russian born. After 1915 there was an increased number of south and east Europeans. While the number has always been small (only 470 persons in the peak year of 1920) the proportion has been higher than the typical city of the "Old South."

In conclusion it may be hoped that this survey of the population of St. Augustine may serve to augment the picture of the cultural setting in which the events which produce Florida's history have taken place. More study is needed to fill out the population story. Especially it would be helpful to fill in the gap of the early territorial days when things were much in a state of flux.