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THE "CALAMITIES OF FLORIDA":
FATHER SOLANA, GOVERNOR PALACIO Y
VALENZUELA, AND THE DESERTIONS OF 1758

by ROBERT KAPITZKE

IN the past, studies of St. Augustine in the First Spanish Period (1565-1763) portrayed the settlement's jurisdictional division of power as a series of two-way struggles between the Franciscans and the governors, the governors and the secular clergy, or the secular clergy and the Franciscans.¹ More recent investigations, however, have shown that to appreciate the complexities of St. Augustine society fully it is necessary to look beyond this narrow, two-dimensional interpretation.² St. Augustine, like all communities, was composed of an ever-changing web of interrelations involving all segments of society. Alliances were formed, and sides were taken. Often the struggle for

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1. The secular clergy comprise parish, or diocesan, priests and other members of the clergy not restricted by the vows or rules of a religious order. They are called secular because they live "in the world" (saeculum), as opposed to regular clergy— Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, and other orders— who live by rule (regula). In St. Augustine secular clergy served as parish priests and were charged with pastoral care of the town's inhabitants and organization of its Catholic life.
2. A few of the more recent studies include: Amy Bushnell, *The King's Coffers: Proprietors of the Spanish Florida Treasury, 1565-1702* (Gainesville, 1981); Kathleen Deagan, "Spanish St. Augustine: America's First Melting Pot," *Archaeology* (September 1980), 22-30; Deagan, "St. Augustine: First Urban Enclave in the United States," *North American Archaeologist* 3 (1982), 183-205. Also, although he does not deal primarily with St. Augustine, John H. Hann's *Apalachee: The Land Between the Rivers* (Gainesville, 1988) offers a look at the Franciscan mission system that concentrates on the Franciscan-Native American relationship rather than the Franciscan-governor relationship.

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power took place not between opposing institutions but between individuals. These conflicts in turn had a profound effect on St. Augustine, as personal feuds escalated and engulfed the wider community. These social dynamics can be viewed in the feud that occurred between Father Juan Joseph Solana and Governor Palacio y Valenzuela during the waning years of the First Spanish Period.

In January 1754 there were two secular priests serving in St. Augustine: Juan de Paredes and an elderly organist, Buenaventura de Ortega. These two were soon joined by Juan Joseph Solana who returned to St. Augustine after a four-year stay in Havana. All three clergymen had labored in Florida for a considerable number of years; both Solana and Ortega had served as priests since 1724, Paredes since 1728. Father Francisco Xavier Arturo, the last vicar of St. Augustine, departed for Havana in 1751.³ Since his departure Paredes had held the title of interim vicar and was responsible for directing the ecclesiastical activities of the city.

On April 8, 1754, the auxiliary bishop of Santiago de Cuba to Florida, Don Pedro Ponce y Carrazco, arrived in St. Augustine.⁴ He carried with him a dispatch from the bishop of Santiago de Cuba, whose see was in the city of Havana, listing three candidates for the office of beneficed vicar of the parish of St. Augustine: Francisco de la Torre y Quesada, Manuel Joseph Benitez de Lara, and Juan Joseph Solana.⁵ Solana had traveled to Havana from St. Augustine in September 1750 to compete for the position of chief sacristan of the parish of Guanabacoa.⁶ He did not receive that post, but he remained in Cuba and

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3. The vicar (vicario) is a local ecclesiastical judge appointed by the bishop (usually following nomination and election). The title of vicar carries certain powers, such as the power to grant dispensation and the power to absolve penalties. In St. Augustine the title of vicar was reserved for the parish priest (though not all parish priests were appointed vicar).
 4. Proceedings against Auxiliary Bishop Ponce y Carrazco, June 27, 1760, Archivo General de Indias, Santo Domingo 2242, Seville, Spain (hereinafter, AGI, SD).
 5. Governor García de Solís to king, June 15, 1754, AGI, SD 846.
 6. The chief sacristan (sacristán mayor) was charged with care of the sacristy and the church as well as with maintenance of ecclesiastical supplies within the parish. When possible, the position was filled by an ordained priest, as was the case in St. Augustine after 1666.

eventually became a finalist for the office of vicar of his old parish. In addition to listing the three candidates, the dispatch carried by the auxiliary bishop instructed the interim governor of Florida, Fulgencio García de Solís, to choose which candidate would best serve the needs of the parishioners of St. Augustine. On June 3 García de Solís held an auto to gather testimony in Solana's favor.⁷ On the fifteenth of that month the governor informed the king and the bishop of his decision: "After the death of Don Pedro Lorenzo de Acevedo [1741] he [Solana] exercised the duties of interim beneficed curate more than one year with special zeal and love in the administration of the obligations of said beneficed position, as well as in the confessional and the pulpit, all of which has been to the relief and spiritual counsel of his parishioners. These circumstances, and others of equal estimation, have moved me, using the faculties that Your Majesty has conferred on me in this case, and by the sovereignties of your Patronato Real, to present him to the referred Auxiliary Bishop so that in the royal name of Your Majesty it is served to command that the conferring and canonical institution of the beneficed curate of this parish be given to the cited Don Juan Joseph Solana."⁸

Solana's appointment meant that Paredes had to step down as interim vicar and return to his position as chief sacristan. The auxiliary bishop, meanwhile, found little to occupy his time. The few remaining Franciscans did not need his help or supervision, and Father Solana attended to the administration of all other ecclesiastical affairs. Rather than idly suffer the poverty of Florida, Ponce y Carrasco returned to Havana in the spring of 1755.

The year 1755 also witnessed the departure of interim governor García de Solís. His replacement, Alonso Fernández de Heredia, stayed in office a little less than three years. In 1758 he was appointed governor of Yucatan and was succeeded as governor of Florida by Lucas Fernando de Palacio y Valenzuela.⁹ Prior to his appointment as governor, Palacio y Valen-

7. An auto was an investigative or judicial proceeding, decree, writ, or order used to gather or present testimony and evidence. Any number of officials including the governor, parish priest, president of the convent of San Francisco, and various royal officials could initiate an auto.

8. Solís to king, June 15, 1754, AGI, SD 846.

9. John Jay TePaske, *The Governorship of Spanish Florida, 1700-1763* (Durham, NC, 1964), 32.

zuela had distinguished himself through thirty-six years of service as an officer in the Spanish army. His previous assignments included tours in Gibraltar, Navarre, Cueta, Oran, and Italy.¹⁰

One of Palacio y Valenzuela's first actions upon assuming office was to send a letter to the bishop of Cuba, dated August 1, 1758, requesting the withdrawal of Father Solana to Havana. He gave no specific reasons for this request, only that Solana should be called before the bishop for "excesses of office."¹¹ On November 6 Bishop Pedro Agustín Morell responded that the governor had presented insufficient justification for Solana's removal. In the same letter to the governor the bishop wrote, "In your sight I should say to you that until now I have not had the slightest complaint or information against the operations of the referred Don Juan."¹² To be fair to the governor, however, Morell authorized that a secret auto be held to gather information concerning Solana. This auto was to be conducted by Father Paredes to secure any discriminatory testimony that might be found in St. Augustine.

In the time between Palacio y Valenzuela's request for Solana's removal and the bishop's response, there occurred in St. Augustine an incident that would cause considerable turmoil and solidify the animosity between Solana and the governor. Every day at 4:00 P.M. in St. Augustine the mounting, or changing, of the guard took place. At the mounting of the guard on August 6, 1758, the officer in charge found that he was missing six men. When the officer went to look for his men, he discovered that they had deserted their posts and taken refuge in the parish church. In the next two days seventy-eight more soldiers deserted and sought ecclesiastical asylum.¹³ The original six remained in the parish church of St. Augustine, two went to the church in the Franciscan doctrina of Tolomato, and the other seventy-six lodged in the convent of San Francisco.¹⁴

10. Ibid.

11. Governor Palacio y Valenzuela to bishop, August 1, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

12. Bishop Morell to Palacio y Valenzuela, November 6, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

13. Auto by Governor Palacio y Valenzuela concerning the desertion of soldiers, August 22, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

14. A doctrina was a parish, usually administered by regular clergy, although the word was often used as a generic term for an Indian rural parish. In Florida Franciscans administered the doctrinas. Palacio y Valenzuela to king, August 20, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

In late August Palacio y Valenzuela convened an auto to gather testimony in an attempt to determine the cause of the mass desertion. The first five soldiers to testify were all captains of the Spanish army— commanders of squads of infantry and artillery. Each of the five stated that they had no information to offer, only that the soldiers had deserted “without motive or foundation or reason.”¹⁵

Finally, a lieutenant of the infantry, Francisco Xavier Diez, offered an explanation.¹⁶ In his testimony Diez stated that the soldiers were revolting against the policy of twenty-four-hour guard duty that the new governor had recently initiated. During the twenty-four consecutive hours that they served on the guard the soldiers were not allowed any breaks for meals. Most of those who deserted were reinforcements from Havana who, as recent arrivals, did not know anyone in town who could bring them food while they were on duty. Diez then said that when men from his squad had deserted he went to them personally and explained the seriousness of their action. He also offered to make sure that meals were cooked for them, even if it meant that he had to prepare the food himself. The soldiers’ only reply, however, was a plea to the lieutenant that they not be executed for what they had done.

While the governor was conducting his investigation, Father Solana also tried to ascertain the motives for the desertions. In his own testimony Solana stated that when he asked the soldiers why they had abandoned their service to the king, they responded that “they were not able to be on duty the some twenty-four hours that the guard lasts, and other reasons. They explained that notable scandals have followed in this city, in disposition of spirit, and in dangers which originate and cause some consternation in the local troops.”¹⁷

Immediately after the desertions Solana and three Franciscans, including the president of the convent of San Francisco, Fray Alonso de Cardenas, went to the governor’s house to plead

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15. Testimony of Captain Joseph Lleane, August 23, 1758, AGI, SD 846. Others giving testimony were Captain Albaro Lopez de Toledo, Captain Diaz, Captain Manuel de Banas, and Captain Lorenzo Joseph de León.
 16. Testimony of Lieutenant Francisco Xavier Diez, August 23, 1758, AGI, SD 846.
 17. Testimony of Father Solana, August 14, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

the case of the soldiers and to ask for leniency. Palacio y Valenzuela, however, refused them entrance and would not speak with them.¹⁸ That same night, August 10, the sergeant major of St. Augustine came to Solana's house. He told Solana that the governor had ordered the priest to go personally to the convent of San Francisco and deliver to the sergeant major all of the soldiers that had taken refuge there. Solana's response was that he wanted to see the order in writing.¹⁹

Nine days later, on August 19, Palacio y Valenzuela wrote a letter to Father Solana. In the letter the governor accused the soldiers of "committing the major crimes of tumult, of sedition, and of disobedience in the occasion of the mounting of the Guard, taking refuge in the Church without even the most trivial motive."²⁰ Palacio y Valenzuela then informed Solana that he would be forwarding all of the information to both the king and the bishop.

The next day the governor made good his claims and wrote a long letter to the bishop. Palacio y Valenzuela told the bishop that the ecclesiastics in the city had conspired against him in secret meetings. They were led, according to the governor, by Solana, who "deserves not one but one hundred gallows for his crime." As for the soldiers, Palacio y Valenzuela contended that they were seduced by the clergy and had been granted "the shelter and mercy of the church, where they refutably have asylum, those greatest and most enormous offenders. And from there they leave, like a fortitude or a den of thieves, to commit other new crimes with the same security, not ever having warning to give anyone, nor even one-fourth of the punishment that their crimes merit."²¹

On August 21 the sergeant major returned to Solana's house accompanied by the governor's escribano. Giving Solana the governor's letter, the sergeant major once again ordered that Solana proceed with him to the convent of San Francisco and deliver up the soldiers who were still being sheltered there. Solana examined the letter and replied that he still was not ready

18. *Ibid.*

19. Testimony of Juan Chrisostomo de Acosta, August 14, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

20. Palacio y Valenzuela to Solana, August 19, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

21. Palacio y Valenzuela to bishop, August 20, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

to hand over the soldiers without some written guarantee of their safety from the governor. He then drafted a letter to be delivered to Palacio y Valenzuela, which read in part: "Not by chance, Señor, but rather by special providence of the Divine Mercy, you directed to me your letter as priest of the parish of this Presidio; since the performance of this charge, the paternal love and charitable care with which I should pasture, shelter, and direct my entrusted flock is, to me, everything. Because of this I personally (in the company of Fray Alonso de Cardenas, President of the convent of San Francisco) went to place myself with all humility at your feet, to supplicate to you for these poor little ones, pledging my compassion as Chief Judge, and the station of Caballero, so that they might be pardoned. Now I repeat this same supplication, and I presently put it to you according to my own small understanding, that those marked, and the crimes imputed to them, will not have been the result of disobedience to the Royal service nor of intended grievance to your person. Rather, that perhaps the affliction of their many miseries might obfuscate their reason, so that they do not realize what they have done."²² Solana then added that "between the great miseries and nakedness that this country offers," it is easy to see how some might lose the "lights of reason."²³ His supplication received no response from the governor.

When the soldiers deserted to the safety of the Church, very few of them brought any weapons. Although most of them were unarmed, it appears that the governor had no intention of storming the church or the convent of San Francisco and removing the soldiers by force. For two weeks following transmittal of Solana's letter to the governor the soldiers remained in their asylum, while the governor remained uncompromising in his position. Then, on September 3, the soldiers surrendered. There is no record to indicate what motivated their departure from the shelter of the Church. In a brief letter to the king, Palacio y Valenzuela simply stated: "Today, the third of September, after leaving Mass, the refugees came to me . . . and very regretful and repentant of their crimes, they asked that I

22. Solana to Palacio y Valenzuela, August 21, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

23. *Ibid.*

pardon them. And after I had blamed them much, I condescended to their demand in the name of the King."²⁴

The governor pardoned the soldiers of the charge of desertion pending approval of the king and the Council of the Indies. With Solana, however, Palacio y Valenzuela was not as lenient. The governor had Solana removed from his parish and placed under arrest in the convent of San Francisco. He then turned over the administration of all ecclesiastical matters to Father Paredes.²⁵

In November Paredes received his instructions from the bishop concerning the secret investigation he was to conduct on Solana. As a result of this, on December 13, 1758, Paredes began gathering testimony about the "life and customs" of the now-imprisoned vicar. In selecting witnesses Paredes had to ensure that he avoided Solana's relatives; this was not an easy task considering that Solana was a fourth-generation Floridian.²⁶ Paredes explained, for example, that he had to use a visitor from Havana as a notary during the taking of statements because "Don Gregorio Gonzalez, the other notary is married to Doña Maria Anna Cordero, niece and blood relation of the mentioned Señor vicar."²⁷

Paredes collected statements from seven witnesses, including Don Simon de Hita Salazar, the auxiliary sacristan of the parish church, and Father Buenaventura de Ortega. Of the seven witnesses four stated that in 1724 Solana had an illicit relationship with a recently widowed young woman. The woman subsequently moved to Havana where she lived with her son who was now fifteen or sixteen years old. Solana, they reported, had maintained his relationship with this woman during numerous

24. Palacio y Valenzuela to king, September 3, 1758, AGI, SD 846.

25. The exact date and terms of Father Solana's arrest are not known. Solana appears to have enjoyed a limited freedom even while under a type of house arrest in the convent of San Francisco. His possessions were confiscated, and he was prevented from fulfilling his obligations as parish priest. There were, however, no constraints placed on his writing, as he continued to file petitions and complaints with the king.

26. Both Solana's father and grandfather were public scribes in St. Augustine. The role of specific kinship ties in St. Augustine's early history has yet to be fully explored.

27. Auto of testimony against Father Solana, December 13, 1758, AGI, SD 2242.

visits to Havana and was reportedly the father of the boy. They also stated that when Solana had been in Havana from 1750-1754 he had lived with the woman and her son. The same four witnesses then testified that Solana was currently having an illicit relationship with the twenty-five-year-old woman who cleaned his house.

Solana was further accused of dereliction in his obligations as a priest. Father Ortega and others testified that Solana had allowed a number of children in St. Augustine to die without receiving the sacraments. In one account given by Ortega, a new-born infant on the verge of death had been brought to the parish church one Sunday to receive the application of the holy oils from Father Solana. Solana, however, was not in the church at the time, and when he did arrive he quickly dressed and went to say Mass, refusing to pause to give the sacraments to the child. The child died during the Mass while still in the church. When Solana was informed of the infant's death, his response was simply, "God give us patience."²⁸

Testimony concerning Solana's role in the recent mass desertion claimed that Solana and the Franciscans had held secret meetings to form a conspiracy against the governor. Though not a single witness testified that Solana had led the soldiers in their desertion, there were implications that he and the Franciscans had suggested the idea to the soldiers by assuring them of the Church's immunity. Don Simon de Hita Salazar testified that he had been at one of these meetings and had heard Solana make "inflammatory and satirical remarks against the procedures of Señor Don Lucas Palacio y Valenzuela." These remarks included statements such as, "We see that in Florida is the Palace of Herod," and "Poor Florida, governed by Herod."²⁹

The most damaging testimony offered against Solana came from Paredes himself. Father Paredes noted that Solana had engaged in numerous affairs with both married and single women. On a trip to Havana in 1730 Paredes had even met a mulatto woman who claimed to be Father Solana's fiancée. In 1742 another woman who had known Solana in Havana came

28. Testimony of Father Buenaventura de Ortega, January 4, 1759, AGI, SD 2242.

29. Testimony of Simon de Hita Salazar, February 7, 1759, AGI, SD 2242.

to St. Augustine with her husband, a captain of the infantry. According to Paredes the auxiliary bishop at that time, Don Buenaventura y Tejada, warned him, "Take care with Father Solana and this woman because, after having had a difficult childbirth, she has returned to become impregnated a second time by him."³⁰

Paredes further testified that the last vicar of St. Augustine, Father Arturo, had not trusted Solana either. While Arturo was in Florida he was very suspicious of Solana's activities and had asked Paredes to watch Solana and make a note of "his comings and goings." Paredes claimed that Arturo had taken notice of the fact that Solana was going to the house of the same woman every night. Arturo had unsuccessfully tried to get Solana to repent of his scandalous lifestyle and, in frustration, had said to Paredes that "this Father does not want to understand that he will be lost."³¹

In corroborating the charges that Solana was remiss in his duties as a priest, Paredes stated that such information was well known. "As to the obligations of his office, it is shown to me by reports of the young servants of the said church and other people, that two or three parishioners have died without the administration of the Holy Sacraments although there was sufficient time for it."³² Solana was also very greedy with the Church's money, Paredes claimed. He had resisted giving alms to the poorest of the parishioners and had refused to pay the salary of Fray Juan Antonio Hernandez, a Franciscan who had served more than two years as Solana's assistant priest.

Finally, Paredes talked of Solana's role in giving ecclesiastical sanctuary to the soldiers and of Solana's relationship with the governor. As Paredes told it, the soldiers were walking in the street after deserting their posts when they encountered Solana. He told them that, if they desired, they had the immunity of the Church and that he would defend them. Solana also told the soldiers that the chief sacristan, Father Paredes, had already sent word of their desertion to Palacio y Valenzuela. Paredes then testified that he was coerced by Solana into cooperating

30. Certification of Father Paredes, February 12, 1758, AGI, SD 2242.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

with him: "Señor Don Juan [Solana], so that I would defend the immunity as auxiliary vicar, told me various times that if the governor makes demands for the soldiers the blame would be placed on me."³³

Paredes claimed that, despite Solana's efforts, he was able to remain neutral throughout the incident and maintain a good relationship with the governor. After the conspiracy had been quelled, Palacio y Valenzuela told Paredes that Solana "was very quarrelsome and a man of bad inclinations." Solana, according to the governor, had disregarded the fact that Florida belonged to the king. As regards the animosity between Solana and Palacio y Valenzuela, Paredes certified "that when Don Lucas de Palacio y Valenzuela arrived and took possession of the governorship, the beneficed priest, Don Juan Joseph Solana, had communicated with his wife. And that even before the soldiers took refuge they had ceased friendly relations without me knowing the cause or motive for this separation."³⁴

While claiming ignorance as to why Solana and the governor were enemies, Paredes clearly implied that the relationship between Solana and the governor's wife had set the two men at odds. On February 16, 1759, the proceedings finally ended. Having gathered more than forty pages of testimony, Paredes had his findings certified, notarized, and sent to Havana.

Although his instructions required that Paredes gather information in secret, in the small town of St. Augustine even the most privileged information was more public than private. Not long after proceedings began Solana was made aware of the actions against him. In a letter to the bishop he expressed his disconsolation: "I will tell Your Illustriousness of the great distress in which I find myself to see my character publicly defamed and the false slander that the governor imputes me in the hands of Don Juan de Paredes, commissioned by Your Illustriousness for this end, my most declared enemy."³⁵ In the same letter Solana complained of a conspiracy between Paredes and Palacio y Valenzuela to take control of the parish church. For the peace of his own conscience Solana felt obliged to inform the bishop

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Solano to bishop, February 19, 1759, AGI, SD 2242.

of the danger this would present to the integrity of the Church. To place the parish church in the hands of Paredes and Palacio y Valenzuela, he wrote, "will be to place it in the hands of Lutherans and Calvinists."³⁶

To counteract the testimony collected by Paredes, Solana initiated proceedings of his own. In his favor Solana presented a certification from Don Alonso Fernández de Heredia, governor of Florida from 1755 to 1758. Heredia testified that Solana had always served diligently, "attending with promptness and charity to the sick, administering the sacraments, visiting them and consoling them, and helping some of the poor with alms according to his small salary of 380 pesos."³⁷ He also noted that Solana had donated much of his own time and money to rebuilding the parish church.

The sergeant major of St. Augustine, Don Alonso de Cardenas, supplied further testimony on Solana's behalf, as did Fray Alonso de Cardenas, president of the convent of San Francisco.³⁸ The primary focus of Solana's proceedings, though, was a condemnation of the lifestyle and practices of Father Paredes. Various soldiers gave testimony indicating that for many years Paredes had lived with a mulatto woman and that with her he had a daughter who was eight or nine years old. Soldiers also described Paredes as an excessive drinker who was drunk nearly every night. On the night before one religious holiday Paredes became so intoxicated that he broke into a neighbor's house and began threatening the couple as they lay in bed. Other neighbors, hearing the screams, came to help, but nobody was able to calm Father Paredes until sometime after four in the morning.³⁹ According to the testimony Father Paredes was "the

36. *Ibid.*

37. Certification of Governor Alonso Fernández de Heredia, March 12, 1758, AGI, SD 2242. This certification was originally given as Heredia was leaving office in the spring of 1758. Solana had a copy of the original certification placed in the auto, which he subsequently submitted to the bishop.

38. Though they shared the same name, it is not known if the sergeant major and the Franciscan were related. Given the preponderance of familial ties present in eighteenth-century St. Augustine and the fact that both the sergeant major and the Franciscan were testifying in favor of Solana, it is highly probable that the two were relatives.

39. Testimony of Antonio Ansures, Francisco Ramirez, and Pedro del Puche, December 22, 1758, AGI, SD 2242.

laughingstock to all for his frequent drunkenness and indecent manner of behaving himself."⁴⁰

Father Paredes was also accused of having illegal dealings with British ships that often came to trade in St. Augustine. On more than one occasion observers saw him boarding the ships at night wearing a cloak and large hat to conceal his identity. He was then seen leaving the ships carrying sacks of contraband, which he delivered to the sentinel who guarded the door of the governor's house.⁴¹

Palacio y Valenzuela's relationship with Paredes was, according to testimony, public knowledge. Many noted of Paredes, "He abandons the church to be in the house of the governor."⁴² Neither Paredes nor the governor seemed to be particularly popular with the common soldiers. Antonio Ansures, a thirty-four-year-old soldier of the presidio, testified that Paredes went every day and night to the governor's house and that the governor was "unpopular with the whole town, and more so with the troops because he treats them with infuriating words of penalty, and other burdens."⁴³

Solana completed his proceedings on February 19, 1759. The public notary of St. Augustine, Don Gregory Gonzalez, witnessed, notarized, and sent them to Havana. The bishop of Santiago de Cuba, Don Pedro Agustín Morell, received the reports offered by both Solana and Paredes by mid March 1759.

In Cuba, Bishop Morell had for sometime been unsuccessfully attempting to send the auxiliary bishop for Florida, Don Pedro Ponce y Carrasco, back to St. Augustine. Ponce y Carrasco pleaded that both poverty and illness prevented him from leaving Cuba. Finally, on November 19, 1759, the governor of Cuba intervened and informed the bishop that the problems of Florida could no longer await resolution of the conflict between the bishop and his auxiliary for Florida. If Ponce y Carrasco refused to go, the governor wrote, then the bishop should send Don Manuel Francisco Calzado y Cadenas.⁴⁴ Bishop Morell,

40. Ibid.

41. Testimony of Juan Rodriguez, January 14, 1759, AGI, SD 2242.

42. Ibid.

43. Testimony of Antonio Ansures, December 22, 1758, AGI, SD 2242.

44. Governor of Cuba to Morell, November 19, 1759, AGI, SD 2242.

weary of arguing with Ponce y Carrazco, agreed with the governor's recommendation.

In the spring of 1760 Father Calzado y Cadenas, who held the title of *canónigo penitenciario* of the cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, arrived in Florida.⁴⁵ Upon his arrival Calzado y Cadenas made Father Thomas de Miranda, whom he had brought with him, the interim vicar of St. Augustine. He also replaced Paredes as chief sacristan with another of his companions, Father Bartolome Thomas Gutierrez de Carvajal.

On June 12 he convened an *auto definitivo* to examine Father Solana for "the crimes of scandalous incontinence, especially of sedition, against Señor don Lucas Palacio y Valenzuela, Commander of Castillo de Alcantar, Field Marshall of the armies of Your Majesty, your governor and Capitan General of this said city and its Provinces, words that he proffered lacking modesty, mildness, and lenity against said governor, defects and omissions in the accomplishment of the obligation of parish priest, improper rights that as Ecclesiastic Vicar he perceived, and other excesses that results in the summary information . . . made earlier by Don Juan Paredes."⁴⁶ After examining all of the evidence, Calzado y Cadenas declared that there was no case against Solana. He dismissed the evidence gathered by Paredes, which he described as "slander, and false imputations lacking of charity and justice." Calzado y Cadenas then pronounced: "And it is said to the referred Don Juan [Solana], to the good credit, reputation, and character of the Priest, that he has been a good example and a vigilant priest who has complied exactly with the obligations of his office. In consequence he is owed the same, commanding and commanded that he be released from the prison in which he is found, that the embargo on his goods be lifted, and that he be restituted the use and exercise of his orders and benefice."⁴⁷

The only charge, in fact, that Calzado y Cadenas found to be even partially justified was the claim that Solana had per-

45. A *canónigo* (canon) was one of ten middle-ranking members of a cathedral chapter who usually celebrated the capitular mass. As *penitenciario*, Calzado y Cadenas was the confessor of the cathedral.

46. *Auto Definitivo*, June 12, 1760, AGI, SD 2242.

47. *Ibid.*

formed marriages for some soldiers after the governor had ordered that they not be allowed to marry. Calzado y Cadenas considered this a minor offense and noted that Solana was only following the example set by the auxiliary bishop when he had resided in Florida. Still, Solana had disobeyed the governor's orders. As punishment Solana was to "say four Masses, applying two for the alms of purgatory, because they needed more of them, and the other two to benefit those that have slandered him, praying to God our Father to move their hearts."⁴⁸ Calzado y Cadenas then recommended that Paredes, not Solana, be called to Havana to stand trial.

The king, meanwhile, had been kept informed of all that was occurring in Florida. In 1759 he decided that, because of the numerous complaints against the governor, an investigation was in order. Rather than appoint a formal investigator, however, the king commissioned Father Solana to forward a report. In 1760 Solana responded by sending the king two long accounts of the misdeeds of Palacio y Valenzuela.⁴⁹ Among the charges brought by Solana was the accusation that Palacio y Valenzuela had mistreated a large number of forced laborers and that the governor had "abandoned the service of Your Majesty for his own; since, in all the time of his governorship, it has been noted (with no little pain of this citizenry) that he has not put one rock on top of another in the works of fortification."⁵⁰ Solana also reported that the governor had not respected the clergy. He informed the king that Palacio y Valenzuela had abandoned the Catholic faith and was adverse to all ecclesiastics except Paredes, whom the governor used "as an instrument for his purposes." Finally, Solana told the king of the many good and charitable works done by Father Calzado y Cadenas since his arrival in St. Augustine.⁵¹

Calzado y Cadenas did, in fact, stay in St. Augustine for some ten months. During that time he saw to ecclesiastical affairs and aided the Franciscans with some German families who had received refuge.⁵² By the beginning of 1761 Calzado y Cadenas

48. Ibid.

49. Solana to king, April 9, August 12, 1760, AGI, SD 2584.

50. Ibid., August 12, 1760, AGI, SD 2584.

51. Ibid.

52. Auto, October 27, 1760, AGI, SD 2242.

had completed all he had come to Florida to accomplish. When he made preparations to return to Cuba, Palacio y Valenzuela confronted him and asked him what he intended to do about Father Solana. Calzado y Cadenas replied that Solana, having been cleared of all charges, was being left behind to continue serving as parish priest. The governor then informed Calzado y Cadenas that such a decision was not agreeable to the service of God or to the king. When asked for justification for this statement, Palacio y Valenzuela simply responded that "it was sufficient that it was said by a Capitan General, and that he need not give any more reason."⁵³

Calzado y Cadenas continued arguing with the governor, telling him that being governor did not give him the power or the right to banish a parish priest. Palacio y Valenzuela, however, had had enough argument. He threatened Calzado y Cadenas with violence and told him that if he did not do as instructed the governor would have him arrested and thrown in the city jail.⁵⁴ Calzado y Cadenas had good reason to believe and fear the threats of the governor. The previous year a forced laborer, Joseph de la Paz, had murdered his Spanish overseer in a fight near Apalachee. When Paz confessed to his crime the governor had him executed. He then ordered that Paz's head and hands be removed from his corpse. One of the severed hands was placed at the site of the murder as a warning to other forced laborers, and the remaining hand was placed in Fort San Marcos as a reminder of the governor's justice.⁵⁵

Seeing that it was a hopeless situation, Calzado y Cadenas went to Father Solana and asked that he return to Havana with him. He explained to Solana that, although he had declared Solana innocent, the only way they could both avoid being put in prison by Palacio y Valenzuela was for them to leave for Cuba together. Solana reluctantly consented to the request. A public announcement proclaiming Solana's innocence was then made to protect Solana's honor, and the two priests departed St. Augustine, leaving Father Miranda behind to serve as interim vicar.

53. Certification of Father Calzado y Cadenas, February 23, 1761, AGI, SD 2242.

54. *ibid.*

55. TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 63-64.

On February 9, 1761, Solana and Calzado y Cadenas arrived in Havana.⁵⁶

In audience before the bishop both Solana and Calzado y Cadenas described their mistreatment at the hands of the governor of Florida. The bishop then informed the king that, in his opinion, Palacio y Valenzuela should be removed from office. At the same time Solana wrote to the king explaining his hardships and requesting a post in Havana, perhaps as chaplain to the city's foundling hospital.⁵⁷

The slow movement of justice in the Spanish Empire often allowed nature to resolve a dispute before the king had time to act. Such was the case in Florida. Palacio y Valenzuela's death early in 1762 brought all proceedings and petitions to a sudden stop. Instead of receiving a position in Havana, Father Solana returned to his Florida parish in May 1762; Paredes's name disappeared from the records shortly thereafter. Solana's name, too, soon became a part of Florida's history. Beginning in the summer of 1763 and extending into 1764, he and his parishioners made the exodus to Havana as St. Augustine and Florida became a British possession.

Precisely what initiated the personal animosity between Father Solana and Governor Palacio y Valenzuela remains unclear. It is certain, however, that their feud intensified with the mass desertion of a significant portion of Florida's military force, an event that led to the solidification of certain alliances and a schism within the ranks of the secular clergy. Father Solana and Father Paredes, who had served together in the same parish for thirty years, now found themselves on opposite sides as they struggled for control of the church and St. Augustine's religious life. The governor, who obviously resented the challenge to his authority that Solana presented, became an ally to Paredes, while the Franciscans joined the wider community in supporting Solana.

To discern all of the ramifications of this struggle on St. Augustine is impossible, but the conflict certainly must have had a profound effect on the daily lives of the city's inhabitants. In

56. Certification of Father Calzado y Cadenas, February 23, 1761, AGI, SD 2242.

57. Solana to king, April 17, 1761, AGI, SD 2242.

the tumultuous years before St. Augustine was surrendered to the British, the city was deeply divided. Even the intervention of the bishop's representative proved ineffective. In a letter to the king dated December 19, 1760, Bishop Morell expressed his frustration with the situation in Florida: "Perhaps the fissures of Florida cannot be restored, and the loss of so advantageous a port without hope of recovering it will be mourned by the Spanish nation. In the end, it seems to me that the disorders that can unexpectedly happen in some towns of this bishopric with my temporary absence, if they are put in the balances of the Sanctuary, will weigh much less than the calamities of Florida."⁵⁸

The bishop implied that the loss of Florida was imminent and that his presence there would soon be necessary. Morell proved prophetic on both counts. In 1762 the British captured Havana and took Morell from Cuba against his will. After being detained for two weeks in Charleston he was released and transported to St. Augustine. At the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763 the British agreed to return Havana in exchange for either Florida or Puerto Rico. King Charles III of Spain decided that Florida was the more expendable of the two properties. In the spring of that year Spain formally relinquished all control of Florida and St. Augustine.⁵⁹

The "calamities" that occurred in Florida during the last ten years of the First Spanish Period demonstrate the intricacies of social relations in early St. Augustine. The fact that soldiers' deserting their post sought ecclesiastical asylum rather than the option of escape into the wilderness is striking. It is also significant that these soldiers were so secure in the power of the Church that they left their weapons and challenged the governor unarmed. As these events reveal, the tensions that existed between religious and secular authorities were not limited to direct confrontations between priest and governor. Instead these tensions were often manifested in the actions of the soldiers, settlers, and merchants who comprised both the citizenry of the state and the laity of the Church. To understand Spanish St. Augustine, then, requires both an exploration of the struggle for power among the elites and an examination of how that power was interpreted by the masses.

58. Morell to king, December 19, 1760, AGI, SD 2242.

59. Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870*, 2nd ed. (Gainesville, 1983), 80-83.