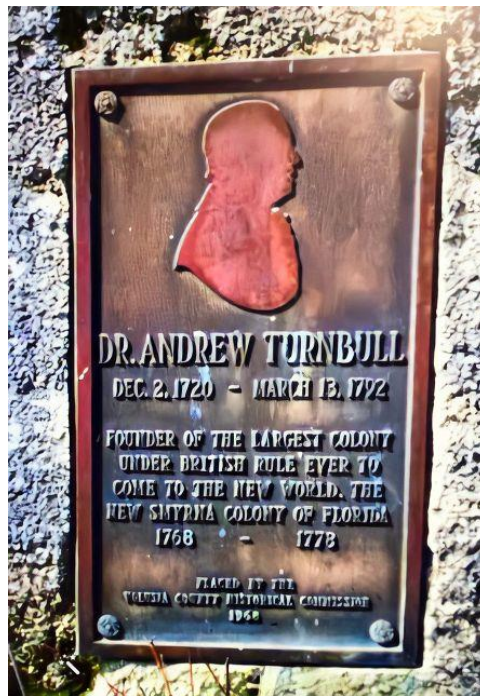


THE MINORCANS WERE COLONISTS

by Robert P. Jones



PLAQUE AT OLD FORT PARK - New Smyrna Beach, Florida

The Minorcan **colony** at New Smyrna was the largest British **colony** brought to America during the colonial era. The 1,403 **colonists** who sailed from Port Mahon, Menorca, in April 1768, outnumbered the 144 brought to Jamestown by almost ten to one.

When England acquired 84 million acres of land in Florida from Spain under the 1763 Treaty of Paris, 32 million acres were in East Florida. King George III quickly recognized the need to populate the newly established provinces of East Florida and West Florida. Plans were set in motion to grant land to British subjects, with detailed specifications outlining the amount of land each soldier would receive, starting with the highest ranks and working down to the lowest. Additionally, a royal proclamation authorized the allocation of large tracts of land for **colonization** and the cultivation of products that could be exported back to the Mother Country.

Well-connected and affluent men eagerly embraced these land grants as opportunities to expand their wealth. Given that England was a leading nation in the slave trade at the time, most of the plantations established in East Florida relied heavily on enslaved people to perform all the labor.

One of the few exceptions to the use of enslaved labor was Dr. Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna **Colony**. Turnbull's management of the **colony** was considered his investment in the venture, with his wealthy partners agreeing to share the profits equally.

Countless books and articles recount the history of this **colony**, yet few devote sufficient attention to the 964 Minorcan **colonists** who lived, labored, and perished there. These individuals have been largely forgotten, with no effort ever made to locate and honor even one of the 964 Minorcan **colonists**.

A partial list of books that affirm Dr. Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna plantation was a **colony**:

1. Doggett, Carita. *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*. ISBN 1611530261.
2. Quinn, Jane. *Minorcans in Florida: Their History and Heritage*. Library of Congress Catalog Number 75-6573. Page ix, Preface by Michael V. Gannon. "In company with other **colonists** from Greece and Italy, 300 Minorcan families immigrated to Florida in 1768 in the condition of indentured servants." Page 76, Quinn writes, "Turnbull's **colony** was on its way to making a handsome profit."
3. Beeson, Kenneth H. Jr. *Fromajadas and Indigo: The Minorcan Colony in Florida*. ISBN 1-59629-113-3.
4. Panagopoulos, E.P. *New Smyrna: An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*. Library of Congress Catalog Number 66-29456.
5. Rasico, Philip D. *The Minorcans of Florida: Their History, Language, and Culture*. ISBN 1-877633-05-4.
6. Edwards, Elizabeth. *Stories of Old St. Augustine*. St. Augustine Historical Society, 1971.
7. Griffin, Patricia C. *Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida 1768-1788*. ISBN 0-8130-1074-8. Chapter 3, page 28, "A **COLONY** BEGINS."
8. Schafer, Daniel L. *St. Augustine's British Years 1763-1784*. ISSN-0014-0376. Page 120, "The prospect of forming a **colony** in East Florida with Greek farmers intrigued Oswald."
9. de Coste, Fredrick. *True Tales of St. Augustine*. In cooperation with the St. Augustine Historical Society, 1966.

Articles and Reports:

1. Panagopoulos, E.P. "The Background of the Greek Settlers in the New Smyrna **Colony**." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 1956.
2. Mowat, Charles L. "St. Augustine Under the British Flag 1763-1775." *Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 20, No. 2 (1941): 133-149.
3. Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc. *Archaeology of the New Smyrna Colony*. Produced for the City of Port Orange, the City of New Smyrna Beach, and Volusia County.
4. Moore, Dorothy. "Architectural Ruins in New Smyrna Beach." *The Florida Historical Quarterly*.
5. Grange, Roger & Dorothy Moore. "Archaeology of the New Smyrna **Colony**" is the title. "Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna **Colony**" is the first article.
6. Arlene Fradkin, Roger T. Grange, Jr., Dorothy L. Moore. "Minorcan" Ethnogenesis and Foodways in Britain's Smyrna Settlement, Florida, 1766—1777" *Historical Archaeology* 2012. "The purpose of this settlement **colony** was to raise commercial crops for export to Britain. As such, Smyrna was an economic rather than political endeavor"

The following bibliography is from the letters of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, et al, affirming New Smyrna as a **colony**.

Primary Source Letters:


1. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter from London to Governor James Grant, circa July 1766. "I mentioned before to your Excellency of settling a Greek **colony** in that Province."
2. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, November 26, 1766. "I can only see that a Greek **colony** will be of much more importance both to the Proprietors of Lands here & to the Mother Country than I imagined."
3. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan, January 21, 1767. "I have entered largely into expenses in preparing for our Greek **Colony**, and have drawn on you this day one bill for 496 pounds sterling, and five bills more for 100 pounds each."
4. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan, February 1, 1767. "I have purchased and engaged for forty Negroes, and that two overseers are to be the care of these Negroes, also of the white people which are to be employed building houses and preparing for our Greek **Colony**."
5. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Governor James Grant from London, April 7, 1767. "A peopled Province may do very well without a Residence of their officers but a new **colony** will stand in need of every aid."
6. Report of the Board of Trade to the Earl of Shelburne upon Doctor Turnbull's Memorial for a Bounty to Greeks imported into East Florida. Whitehall, Date Unknown. "As to Mr. Turnbull's proposal for the disposition of what Parliament may hereafter think expedient to grant for the service of this **Colony**, We think it will more properly become an object of consideration when the estimate on which any future grant shall be founded shall be directed to be prepared."
7. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Leghorn, Italy, June 15, 1767. "He decided, therefore, to proceed with £1500 of my own money which I had forwarded to this place and I have freighted a ship to carry me to the Levant to collect as many **colonists** as I can provide for at present."
8. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Leghorn, Italy, June 26, 1767. "Though this first number is small, I can see that it has opened such an Emigration from this part of the world as will be of great consequence in America."
9. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Port Mahon, July 1767. "Will endeavour to take only those who have such qualifications as are necessary in a new **colony**."
10. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Minorca, February 21, 1768. "I then turned myself to that part of the Peloponnese where the Greeks are not subject to the Turks."
11. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Port Mahon, March 16, 1768. "I think our **colony** will be worth your while to come and see in two or three years."
12. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Port Mahon, March 30, 1768. "About the **colonists**, Turnbull wrote: I had a woman brought to bed yesterday and 2 others are very nigh their time."

13. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Gibraltar, April 7, 1768. "Turnbull conducted another census of his prospective colonists and discovered upwards of fourteen hundred People on board the eight ships."
14. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Gibraltar, April 18, 1768. "After two more anxiety-filled days in port at Gibraltar, Dr. Turnbull wrote to Duncan explaining that westerly winds had again forced a delay."
15. Earl of Hillsborough. Letter to Governor James Grant from Whitehall, London, May 12, 1768. "This will be a noble addition to your infant settlement."
16. Grant, James. Letter to Captain Adam Bachop from St. Augustine, June 22, 1768. "The governor instructed Bachop to go Mosquito Inlet to unload provisions for the Turnbull colony."
17. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, June 28, 1768. "As our colony is much greater than first intended, I propose to add 20,000 acres of land to first three grants."
18. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, July 17, 1768. "I have begun to fix the families on the banks of the Hillsborough where we have eight miles in front."
19. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Governor James Grant from New Smyrna, August 29, 1768. "Though this affair carries a loss with it, yet I think it a kind of lucky accident to the colony."
20. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, September 21, 1768. "The colonists were getting on well."
21. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, September 22, 1768. "Turnbull argued that great advantage for the colony could result from introducing settlers from Southern Europe."
22. Grant, James. Letter to William Knox from St. Augustine, November 24, 1768. "The governor reported that the Greek colonists have been quiet of late, but they have been sickly."
23. Earl of Hillsborough. Letter to Governor James Grant from Whitehall, London, December 10, 1768. "The settlement carrying on under the direction of Doctor Turnbull, which His Majesty considers as an undertaking of great public utility and advantage."
24. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to the Earl of Hillsborough from Smyrnea, January 7, 1769. "This colony needs people or it fails."
25. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrnea, January 24, 1769. "I do not mention ovens, smiths, forges, etc."
26. Grant, James. Letter to Andrew Turnbull from St. Augustine, June 28, 1769. "The bounty which has been allowed will not be sufficient to maintain and clothe these colonists."
27. Grant, James. Letter to the Earl of Hillsborough from St. Augustine, July 21, 1769. "The £2000 allowed by His Majesty for the support of the settlement under Mr. Turnbull's direction comes very seasonally for the relief and subsistence of these adventurers."
28. Duncan, William. Letter to Andrew Turnbull from London, August 4, 1769. "In order to save our colony and hinder your bills from being protested, I have exceedingly distressed both Lady Mary and me."
29. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrnea, September 24, 1769. "Turnbull encouraged Duncan to ask Humphreys anything about this colony."

30. Grant, James. Letter to Andrew Turnbull from St. Augustine, December 14, 1769. "If the two thousand had not been thrown in your people must have starved."
31. Grant, James. Letter to the Earl of Hillsborough from St. Augustine, September 1, 1770. "Doctor Turnbull is diligent and assiduous, he resides constantly with his Greek colonists."
32. Turnbull, Andrew. Letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrna, October 29, 1770. "Better for this settlement if I stayed here for some years."
33. Earl of Hillsborough. Letter to Governor James Grant from Whitehall, December 11, 1770. "I am very sensible of the advantage which the public may derive from the success of Dr. Turnbull's Settlement at New Smyrna."
34. Robinson, John. Letter to John Powell, Esq., from Treasury Chambers, London, March 8, 1771. "The 1200 Greek Colonists introduced into that Province under the care of Doctor Turnbull."



Historical Marker: The New Smyrna Odyssey 1768 – 1777 [The New Smyrna Odyssey Historical Marker \(hmdb.org\)](https://www.hmdb.org)

Inscription.  (side 1)

“The story of New Smyrna's first immigrants is one of hardship, endurance and survival by a group of religious colonists of several nationalities who came to the New World seeking freedom and a better life. After Spain ceded Florida to the British in 1763, the British offered large land grants to encourage colonization.”