

Dr. Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna Plantation was a COLONY.

The Turnbull colony was a formal endeavor under British law, with its foundation and operation outlined by royal proclamation. Established with 1,403 individuals sailing from the island of Minorca in 1768, it was planned as a large, permanent colony with incentives for growth. Operating directly under British authority within the legal framework of a colony, its indentured servants, British citizens, were entitled to all the privileges and protections of British law. However, attaining these rights was nearly impossible, as the courts and judges were approximately seventy miles away in St. Augustine. While some may regard the Turnbull colony as a 'multicultural settlement,' it essentially mirrored traditional colonies of the era, tied closely to Britain's economic interests in producing cash crops for export and exploiting natural resources. Viewing New Smyrna as more self-sustaining or less tied to British economic interests might lead some to classify it as a settlement. However, self-sustaining crops at the Turnbull plantation were secondary to the most important goal—providing goods for the Mother Country. Its function extended far beyond that of a mere settlement.

Referring to the Turnbull colony as a "settlement" diminishes the scale and importance of the endeavor, potentially underestimating its role within the larger framework of British colonial ambitions. This choice of term also undermines the significance of the Minorcan colonists. Favoring "settlement" over "colony" may reflect modern biases and perspectives that fail to fully acknowledge the historical context.

The debate over whether to label Turnbull's plantation a colony or a settlement highlights the complexities of historical interpretation and the subtleties in understanding the past. Each term carries distinct connotations and implications, shaping how such endeavors are viewed and remembered. For the descendants of the Minorcans, who were indentured servants, especially those whose ancestors are among the 964 buried there in hidden graves, referring to them as settlers—on par with the individual Georgia families who moved to East Florida—is both inaccurate and degrading.

Some British writers and others may be reluctant to acknowledge that the largest colony founded in America during the colonial era was composed of Minorcans. Because the Turnbull colony ultimately failed in 1777 for various reasons, some historians might choose to label it as a settlement, perhaps attributing this term to its lack of long-term success. Nonetheless, most historical accounts refer to Turnbull's enterprise in New Smyrna as a colony.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence supporting the fact that it was a colony comes from Carita Doggett, a direct descendant of Dr. Andrew Turnbull. She affirmed its colonial status by titling her book *"Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida."*

St. Augustine and New Smyrna Beach share a remarkable heritage that warrants recognition and pride. History shows that during the colonial era, the largest group of European colonists brought to America first settled in New Smyrna. Despite the hardships they endured, the 300 to 400 survivors later carried their rich cultural traditions to St. Augustine. This shared history not only connects the two communities but also underscores their significant contributions to America's colonial legacy.

CONFIRMATION NEW SMYRNEA WAS A COLONY.

Dr. Andrew Turnbull wrote his inaugural letter regarding the Turnbull colony a full two years before the final vessels carrying Minorcan colonists arrived in St. Augustine and then to New Smyrna. The 1,403 Minorcan, Greek, and Italian colonists who voyaged across the Atlantic Ocean for seventy days in 1768 represented the largest single British colonial endeavor in America during the colonial period. These brave Minorcans, contracted as indentured servants within Turnbull's colony, unequivocally qualify as colonists—a status that is indisputable.

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to James Grant, Governor of British East Florida (1764-1771). [London], Circa **July 1766**

“I acquainted your Excellency some months ago that I had then solicited an order for a grant of land in your Province under your government. I obtained that order last month, and am now preparing to depart for Charlestown in the beginning of September at farthest. I flatter myself of being in St. Augustine in November, and I bring my family with me, not doubting but that the soil and climate of East Florida will encourage me to continue in the intention. I mentioned before to your Excellency of settling a Greek **colony** in that Province. I cannot omit mentioning that I have the greatest satisfaction imaginable in being assured by your friends here that no protection, assistance, and advice will be wanting on your part to promote this affair.”

Your Excellency's
Most obedient and
Most humble Servant,
Andrew Turnbull
James Grant Papers, Roll 18, File 469-471

A sample of books and articles affirming New Smyrna was a **colony**.

*Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna **Colony** of Florida*-Carita Doggett. ISBN: 1611530261, the title of the book by Dr. Turnbull's direct descendant confirms the Minorcans were colonists.

Minorcans in Florida: Their History and Heritage-Jane Quinn- Library of Congress Catalog Number 75-6573 - page 24, “Maria Turnbull encouraged her husband to take along Roman Catholic priests. The British governor went at the obvious breach of official instructions in loading ships with Catholic settlers bound for a British **colony**, where their religious practices would be held against them.“ **Colony** and **colonists** mentioned many other times in this book.

*Fromajadas and Indigo-The Minorcan **Colony** in Florida*- Kenneth H. Beeson Jr. Page 32, ISBN 1.59629.113.3 “Now that he had land in East Florida, Doctor Turnbull began in earnest to make preparations for the formation of his **colony**.”

New Smyrna An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey by Panagopoulos - E.P. Panagopoulos, Library of Congress Catalog Number 66-29456 – Page 1 “ it was a British **colonial** enterprise of great magnitude.”

The Background of the Greek Settlers in the New Smyrna Colony- E. P. Panagopoulos - Florida Historical Quarterly-Number 2-Florida Historical Quarterly 1956. Page 1, “Andrew Turnbull, the principal founder of the New Smyrna **Colony**, was not the first who thought of bringing Greeks to people Florida.” The word **colony** is used forty-four times in this article.

The Minorcans of Florida, Their History, Language and Culture- Philip D. Rasico- ISBN 1-877633-05-4- Chapter 2, page 31, “In 1777 a number of **colonists** from New Smyrna formally complained about their conditions on the Turnbull plantation to British authorities in St. Augustine.” Chapter Three TITLE, Page 36-THE NEW SMYRNA **COLONY**.

Stories of Old St. Augustine by Elizabeth Edwards-St. Augustine Historical Society 1971 – Page 8, “In spite of all sorts of difficulties, Father Camps held his flock together and ministered to their spiritual needs with devotion and courage, but things were going from bad to worse in the Turnbull **colony**.”

*Archaeology of the New Smyrna **Colony***, Produced for the City of Port Orange, the City of New Smyrna Beach, and Volusia County by Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc.-The title says it all.

Mullet on the Beach-The Minorcans of Florida 1768-1788 by Patricia C. Griffin-ISBN 0-8130-1074-8.. page 28-“A **Colony** Begins”.

St. Augustine’s British Years 1763-1784 by Daniel L. Schafer, ISSN-0014-0376- Chapter Two, Page 16- “Peopling & settling the new Established **Colonies**.”

ST. AUGUSTINE UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG 1763-1775, by Charles L. Mowat. Florida Historical Quarterly: Vol. 20: No. 2, Article 3. Pages 133 & 149. 1941 “A total of 342 persons had petitioned for land and had received warrants of survey period new paragraph It is thus clear that about 2/3 of the province's population., excluding Negroes and the **New Smyrna colonists**, lived in Saint Augustine, but that even so the town was very small.” Page 133 “Doctor Turnbull was suspended from the sinecure of the secretaryship, his **New Smyrna colony** was broken up, and he himself kept in custody for a year until he left the province for South Carolina.” Page 149

True Tales of St. Augustine by Fredrick de Coste, 1966 - in cooperation with the St. Augustine Historical Society.-Page 53, “Originally, the doctor planned to recruit **colonists** in the Greek Islands, from one of which he had chosen his bride. In her honor, the Florida **colony** was named New Smyrna.”

Architectural Ruins in New Smyrna Beach, The Florida Historical Quarterly -- Dot Moore spent more than 30 years working with professional archaeologists and historians, uncovering historic sites and artifacts in New Smyrna. “Dr. Andrew Turnbull, along with a partner, William Duncan, received large land grants from the British government in 1766,” Moore says. Turnbull himself

was appointed plantation manager of these, and he had all the responsibilities of recruiting people, hiring people, buying slaves, providing whatever resources that were needed to establish the Smyrna settlement, as it was called by the British. Dr. Andrew Turnbull, along with a partner, William Duncan, received large land grants from the British government in 1766,” Moore says. “Turnbull himself was appointed plantation manager of these, and he had all the responsibilities of recruiting people, hiring people, buying slaves, providing whatever resources that were needed to establish the Smyrna settlement, as it was called by the British. Turnbull arranged to bring Greek, Minorcan, and Italian settlers to New Smyrna in 1767. He envisioned a **colony** that would grow cotton and other crops, to trade with Great Britain. The ships carrying the settlers were plagued with rough weather and sickness, and 148 of the 1,403 people aboard died before the ships reached Florida. Turnbull arranged to bring Greek, Minorcan, and Italian settlers to New Smyrna in 1767. He envisioned a **colony** that would grow cotton and other crops, to trade with Great Britain. The ships carrying the settlers were plagued with rough weather and sickness, and 148 of the 1,403 people aboard died before the ships reached Florida.”

Dr. Turnbull Letters affirming New Smyrna was a **colony**.

Dr. Andrew Turnbull in a letter from London, circa July 1766, to Governor James Grant writes: “I mentioned before to your Excellency of settling a Greek **colony** in that Province. (**Emp. Added**)

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, November 26, 1766 writes, “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.

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan, January 21, 1767 writes, “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.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan, February 1, 1767 writes: “I have purchased and engaged for fourty 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**.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Governor James Grant from London, April 7, 1767 writes: “A peopled Province may do very well without a Residence of their officers but a new **colony** will stand in need of every aid. I think I have heard you say, Sir, that the officers should be obliged to reside in the Province.”

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. From Whitehall the Board writes, “The ballance of this fund now lying in the agent’s hands unappropriated, in eleven hundred pounds; the amount of the bounty will be one thousand pounds; and we submit to your Lordship whether it may not be expedient; that the remaining £100 should be allowed to the first Priest of the Greek Church which shall be established in that **colony**.” “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.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Leghorn, Italy, June 15, 1767 writes: “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, and if your letters get here before I go away I shall still be in time to go on as at first intended, and to take up my first plan.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Leghorn, Italy, June 26, 1767 writes: ““Though this first number is small, I can see that it has opened such an Emigration (sic) from this part of the world as will be of great consequence in America. As soon as I set these people down at Mahon I depart for Greece to bring the other colonists.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan, from Port Mahon, July 1767, writes: ”will endeavour to take only those who have such qualifications as are necessary in a new colony. I have these first recruits here under proper care and regulations and I hasten to Turkey for the Greek colonists.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan, from Minorca, February 21, 1768, writes: “I have sent you three letters since my arrival here, but had not time to acquaint you with the particulars of my voyage into Turkey and the measures I was obliged to take to procure people for our colony, which were, that when I found that the Turks were apprised of my Scheme by the Levant Company’s consuls, and that the Priest, engaged to meet me, was stop’t by his Patriarch at Constantinople, and consequently could not fulfill his contract with me, I then turned myself to that part of the Peloponnese where the Greeks are not subject to the Turks, who they drove out of their Country fifty years ago, and still maintain their independency. I beg the favour of my humble respects to Lord Hillsborough with my hearty congratulations on his being appointed Secretary of State for America. I hope our Infant Colony will grow up to Manhood under his Lordship’s administration.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Port Mahon, March 16, 1768 writes: ““I think our colony will be worth your while to come and see in two or three years. My collection (sic) is none of the worst I assure you: being composed of People brought up to Husbandry, and almost all of a proper age. Our young brood also look well.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Port Mahon, March 30, 1768 writes: “About the colonists, Turnbull wrote: “I had a woman brought to bed yesterday and 2 others are very nigh their time.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Gibraltar, April 7, 1768 writes: “Plans had to be altered after the lead captain of the voyage to this point announced that he would continue only as far as the Madeira Islands, and two of the largest ships had to be replaced by three smaller vessels in order to carry along all the colonists.” He also wrote: “Turnbull conducted another census of his prospective colonists and discovered “upwards of fourteen hundred People on board the eight ships all belonging to us except one hundred.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Gibraltar, April 18, 1768 writes: “After two more anxiety-filled days in port at Gibraltar, Dr. Turnbull wrote to Duncan explaining that westerly winds had again forced a delay. He was very anxious to depart since it was then the best season for travel. In addition, his expenses mounted each day he was away from the East Florida settlement where he expected less costly food to be in waiting in storage, and where the **colonists** “will raise provisions for themselves very soon.”

Earl of Hillsborough to Governor James Grant, from WHITEHALL, London, May 12, 1768 writes: ““I had a letter lately from Dr. Turnbull from Gibraltar, by which I find he has upwards of 1000 **colonists**, Greeks and others. This will be a noble addition to your infant settlement. I shall be glad to hear of their safe arrival.”

Governor James Grant letter to Captain Adam Bachop from St. Augustine, June 22, 1768 writes: “The governor instructed Bachop to go Mosquito Inlet to unload provisions for the Turnbull **colony**, and to help disembark the settlers shipped on board the Broughton Island packet and a small schooner under command of James Warner. Dr. Turnbull and the remaining settlers were expected to arrive in other vessels.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan, from St. Augustine, June 28, 1768 writes: “As our **colony** is much greater than first intended, I propose to add 20,000 acres of land to first three grants, which 20,000 will be taken up in family plots, so that the whole to be divided at expiration and agreement will be 80,000 acres, one tract extending from the banks of Hillsborough River to those of St. Johns River giving each a front on both. I flatter myself of scheming into your hands very noble estates at the end.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, July 17, 1768 writes: ““I came here lately from our Plantation to settle accounts with the captains who brought our People from Europe, and also to provide many things wanted for our **colony**. I have begun to fix the families on the banks of the Hillsborough where we have eight miles in front. This will be all settled in farms in a few days. Each family to have about seventy yards in front on the River and to run back to as many acres as the family can cultivate.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Governor James Grant from New Smyrna, August 29, 1768 writes about the positive side of the Forni rebellion: ““Though this affair carries a loss with it, yet I think it a kind of lucky accident to the **colony** for at present it not only clears us of villains but it will keep the others in awe for the future.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, September 21, 1768 writes: “The **colonists** were “getting on well,” Turnbull said and he was then “much employed in supplying their many wants....”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from St. Augustine, September 22, 1768 writes: “Turnbull argued that great advantage for the **colony** could result from introducing settlers from Southern Europe because it would bring along “different modes of culture into the province, many of which seem superior to which is generally practiced in America; and we have

now a prospect before us of bringing many valuable articles of commerce to market, as cheap if not cheaper than the French and Spaniards.”

Governor James Grant to William Knox from St. Augustine, November 24, 1768 writes: “The governor reported that the Greek colonists have been quiet of late, but they have been sickly, suffering from “a virulent scurvy contracted during their long voyage is their only remaining disorder. The settlement has lost by death since landing 300 people, chiefly the old and young children.”

Earl of Hillsborough to Governor James Grant from Whitehall, London, December 10, 1768 writes: ““I have received and laid before the King your dispatches by the Grenville packet numbered from 8 to 13. “It has given His Majesty great concern to find that the settlement carrying on under the direction of Doctor Turnbull, which His Majesty considers as an undertaking of great public utility and advantage, has met with obstruction and the proprietor sustained so considerable a loss from the mutineers behavior of a part of those **colonists** which had been collected at so large an expense and that they should have made so ungrateful a return for the kindness and tenderness with which they appear to have been treated. The assistance you afforded Dr. Turnbull was very reasonable and your conduct upon this occasion has met with His Majesty’s approbation.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull to the Earl of Hillsborough from Smyrna, January 7, 1769 declares: ‘This **colony** needs people or it fails.’”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrna, January 24, 1769 writes: “I do not mention ovens, smiths, forges, etc. The mending of Tools, and making what cannot be found for present use employs four Smiths of whom we have very good ones, as well as every other trade necessary in a new **colony** which enables us to carry on everything as easily, and with as much regularity as if we had been settled for twenty years.”

Governor James Grant to Andrew Turnbull from St. Augustine, June 28, 1769 writes: ““My letter of the 1st of December to the Earl of Hillsborough upon the subject of your settlement has produced an order to me to supply your **colonists** to the extent of two thousand Pounds Sterling, specifying service, and drawing bills accompanied with proper vouchers to the account, upon the Treasury.”

Governor James Grant to the Earl of Hillsborough from St. Augustine, July 21, 1769 writes: “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. The money shall be laid out in the manner which is thought best adapted to the circumstances and necessities of the **colonists**, and when I draw for the amount or any part of the fund upon the Treasury, the accounts and proper vouchers shall be laid before your Lordship. If those gentlemen should stop as I have long expected, the bounty which has been allowed will not be sufficient to maintain and clothe these **colonists** till they can raise provisions and other produce for their own support. If Mr. Turnbull’s bills should return protested I will pay no money upon that account, the whole of the bounty shall be laid out to supply the present necessities of the **colonists**, for I apprehend I

have nothing to do with any debt contracted prior to the order with which your Lordship has honored me.”

Sir William Duncan to Andrew Turnbull from London, August 4, 1769 writes: “In order to save our colony and hinder your bills from being protested, I have exceedingly distressed both Lady Mary and me and ruined all our Schemes of Amusement; and I give you fair warning that I will not accept one bill more after the £300, happen what will. I think I have already advanced 13 or 1400 more than our partner; wherefore if you should want more money at any time for the future, which I scarcely think is possible, you must write to our friend beforehand and persuade him to pay up his share, till that is done I repeat it again, I will not advance one shilling more.

Dr. Andrew Turnbull letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrnea, September 24, 1769 writes: “Turnbull encouraged Duncan to ask Humphreys “anything about this colony.”

Governor James Grant to Andrew Turnbull from St. Augustine, December 14, 1769 writes: ““It was lucky that a bounty was obtained from His Majesty for the support of your colony for this fear that additional charge for provisions would have been discouraging, but if government had not given the money your constituents must have paid the money, or have given up everything which has already been advanced, for as your provision crop failed, if the two thousand had not been thrown in your people must have starved, and as corn is so uncommonly dear in Carolina and Georgia, that money will barely carry you on to next crop.”

Governor James Grant to the Earl of Hillsborough from St. Augustine, September 1, 1770 writes: “Doctor Turnbull is diligent and assiduous, he resides constantly with his Greek colonists, and does as much as a man do to repair the first fault of exceeding the number of people to be imported and of course the funds which his constituents had agreed to advance. In place of six thousand which was the stipulated sum, they have actually my Lord, paid £24,000, and are determined to go no farther.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull to Sir William Duncan from Smyrnea, October 29, 1770, writes: ““If I could leave I would engage to bring many of them away. Better for this settlement if I stayed here for some years. I want to stay until stability is assured.” Another way would be to appoint an agent at Port Mahon to receive all Greeks who come, giving them four pence a day, and when the number of colonists fills the ship, bring them to Florida. A stock of provisions, enough to last for one year, should be in storage prior to their arrival.”

The Earl of Hillsborough to Governor James Grant from Whitehall, Dec. 11, 1770 writes: ““Your despatches No. 38 & 39 have been received and laid before the King & I am very glad to find you have so good hopes that the improvement of the important colony under your government will not be impeded by any real difficulty attending the navigation into its ports. “I am very sensible of the advantage which the public may derive from the success of Dr. Turnbull’s Settlement at New Smyrnea, but as the £2000 which His Majesty was most graciously pleased to grant for that purpose upon a former application from you, was at the time declared to be in consideration of the then distress of that colony and by no means intended to encourage any expectation of a further bounty. I cannot take upon me to authorize any further expence to the public on that account. I will, however, transmit your letter to the Lords of the Treasury and

shall be very glad if it shall have the effect to obtain some further bounty in support of so meritorious an undertaking.”

John Robinson to John Powell, Esq., from Treasury Chambers, London, March 8, 1771 writes: “My Lords having resumed the consideration of your letter dated 25th Feb. 1769 transmitting an Extract of a letter from [James] Grant, Governor of East Florida, relative to the 1200 Greek **Colonists** introduced into that Province under the care of Doctor Turnbull and desiring to know whether my lords think fit that Governor Grant should be allowed to draw Bills for their subsistence in case the expence should become too heavy for the Undertakers, I am directed by My Lords’ Commissioner of the Treasury to acquaint you for the information of the Earl of Hillsborough that their Lordships having by minute of this board of 23 March 1769 consisted that Governor Grant should draw for a sum not exceeding Two Thousand Pounds for the support of the Greek **Colonists** & at the same time desired it might be understood by Governor Grant that the Public were to be at no farther expense upon that Account.”

Dr. Andrew Turnbull's letter to Sir William Duncan from Smyrna, May 27, 1771, writes: "He complained that Creek Indians had terrorized his settlers, but that the acting governor, John Moultrie, had refused to send a reinforcement of five soldiers needed at Smyrna. Moultrie, because he hindered Turnbull's efforts and diminished his enthusiasm for the **colony**, 'threatens to break the back of this settlement.' This incident, Sir, besides other things which happen daily, convinces me that it would be of importance for the protection and safety of this small **colony**, who, being foreigners, are suspected by Indians not to be English... [Turnbull says he suspects that he would be held in high regard by the Indians, and also in high esteem by 'his People' were he to be appointed lieutenant governor, showing his] influence in the province or to let his people see that he has power to protect them, the worst of which I feel much at present."

In conclusion, the beautiful marker in front of New Smyrna City Hall proudly features one of many plaques honoring and affirming that Dr. Andrew Turnbull's endeavor was truly a colony, and the Minorcans were, in fact, colonists. It was so much more than a settlement. It is essential, and only fair, that the Minorcans are acknowledged as such, ensuring their true history and what these brave immigrants brought to America is preserved.



Robert P. Jones
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