

JULY 2020

The 14th and 15th British Colonies

By South Brevard Historical Society

America, using the date of the Declaration of Independence as her birth, will be 242 years old this July 4th. At that time 13 of the 15 colonies in North America proclaimed independence from Great Britain. Yes, there were two colonies (really territories) that chose not to join the other 13. Coincidentally East and West Florida were the youngest (see map, State Library of Florida, Florida Map Collection, Historic Era 18th Century 0032). The East territory extended west from St. Augustine to the Apalachicola River (approximately 60 miles west of present day Tallahassee). The West territory started at the Apalachicola River and extended 377 miles to Lake Pontchartrain. Great Britain established these territories as a result of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years War (May 1756 – Feb. 1763). However, New Orleans remained a territory of France.

The people who lived in the Florida territories at the time were loyal to King George III and Great Britain. Historian Caroline Mays Brevard said that this was since Florida “had been so well treated that she had not the same causes for complaint against the mother country that the older colonies had.” In the beginning of the war, Florida became a refuge to

many English sympathizers from Georgia and South Carolina. (A History of Florida, by Caroline Mays Brevard and Henry Eastman Bennett; American Book Company, 1904)

Locally, the last naval battle of the Revolutionary War was fought and won by the Americans off the coast of Florida on March 10, 1783; just south of Cape Canaveral. A Florida Historical Marker commemorating the event is located at the entrance of the Canaveral Port Authority (445 Challenger Rd., Cape Canaveral) and is worth a stop if you are at the port.



Florida was under British rule through the Revolutionary War and afterwards until Great Britain ceded both Florida territories to Spain in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Spain was to retain the territories for a relatively short term this time as the ratification of the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1821, formally ceded all of its Florida territory to the United States. In 1822, the US Congress organized the Florida Territory. Florida was admitted as the 27th state of the United States in 1845.

We invite you to explore our website (<http://www.southbrevardhistory.org>) for further information about the program, Brevard's history and local events. (S)