

Fernandez-Llambias House
31 St. Francis Street
St. Augustine
St. Johns County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-171
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

FERNANDEZ-LLAMBIAS HOUSE

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Address: 31 St. Francis Street, St. Augustine, St. Johns
County, Florida.

Present Owner: City of St. Augustine.

Present Use: Maintained and exhibited by the St. Augustine
Historical Society.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. The following historical data, based on changes of title as recorded in St. Johns County Records and on other documented research as indicated, was compiled c. 1964 by Mrs. Doris C. Wiles, Secretary, and Mrs. Eugenia B. Arana of the staff of the St. Augustine Historical Society. Copies of all research materials may be found in the library of the historical society.

"At the time of the first Spanish evacuation in 1763, many St. Augustinians were unable to sell their properties before their departure. Don Juan Elixio de la Puente was appointed to dispose of all private property. He made a map in 1764 in which he plotted every house and gave each one a number and made a list of property owners to identify them with each house. This may be the earliest record of property ownership in St. Augustine as earlier records have never been located.

"It is this map which identified the house in this study with Pedro Fernandez in Block m, No. 383 and measuring North-South 120 varas, East-West 16 varas, and described it as a stone house.

"Puente was able to sell some real property. Among his transactions, he sold this house and others to Jesse Fish, a British subject and resident of St. Augustine. Fish paid de la Puente 150 pesos for the Fernandez house for which Fernandez gave his receipt. (Deed dated 7 July 1764, Book 357, p. 16-17, East Florida Papers. Legajo 372. Papeles procedentes de Cuba, Seville)

"Those houses that de la Puente was unable to sell he turned over to Fish, who had convinced de la Puente that he would sell them and reimburse the Spanish owners. (Puente Sale of Houses, No. 52)

"There is no record of sale of this property in Jesse Fish account book. The Moncrief Map of 1765 shows Fish as owner of all of the houses on this block, among them the Fernandez house. However, it seems that the British Government either disregarded or did not recognize Fish's ownership of this or the other houses east and west of it because four of these were granted to Richard Henderson, an Englishman.

"Henderson later sold the Fernandez property to Thomas Adam, a merchant from Charleston, S. C. Adam was deeply in debt to Charles Ogilvie, Sr., of London, who at Adam's death was named his Executor. Ogilvie gave his attorney in St. Augustine, Edward Corbet, power to recover his debts and take possession of Adam's properties. To avoid a law suit, Governor Tonyn granted the four houses and lots to Ogilvie on June 18, 1783. Subsequently he sold one of these houses and its lot (the Fernandez house) to Nickol Turnbull and procured a grant of it to him from Governor Tonyn. Shortly thereafter, by the Treaty of Paris, Florida was returned to Spain in 1783. By the terms of the treaty, Turnbull had 22 months to dispose of his property or become a Spanish subject. Instead he had removed to Georgia and the Spanish Crown recognized the previous ownership of Jesse Fish. (W. H. Seibert, Loyalists in East Florida 1784-1785, Vol. 2, pp. 90-92.) (Spanish Land Grants in Florida - Claims Unconfirmed, Vol. I, T-29, pp. 319-320)

"Jesse Fish died on February 8, 1790. His son had removed to London and his father's properties had remained unattended threatening ruin. Governor Quesada, at the request of Treasury Officials, issued a proclamation stating that by the death of Jesse Fish and his son's absence from the Province, his properties should revert to the Spanish Crown. Appraisals were made of the houses and sold at an auction which took place on December 15, 1790. Mariano Moreno, Sgt. of Grenadiers on this Presidio, bid on and purchased the Fernandez house. Title was issued to him on March 21, 1791 for 'a masonry house with a shingle roof and corresponding lot, situated on St. Francis Street which the deceased had owned and had acquired by legitimate titles which have been submitted for proof. That said house fronts with said street, on the East the Barracks, on the South lots of Fish and West by Salvador Pedroza. Measures in front East-West, 52 varas, and in depth North-South, 57 varas. . . ' (Escrituras - Book 368, p. 61)

"On September 14, 1791, again this property was sold. Pedro Cocifacio, with Power of Attorney from Moreno, sold to Pedro Marrot, Surveyor of the Province, for 480 pesos. (Escrituras - Book 368, p. 291)

"On August 27, 1792, Pedro Marrot, sold to Francisco Xavier Sanchez for 500 pesos. (Escrituras - Book 368, p. 538)

"On November 7, 1795, Sanchez sold to Juan Andreu, Sr., a Minorcan by birth who had come to Florida with the New Smyrna Colony and with others had taken refuge in British St. Augustine in 1777. (Escrituras - Book 370, p. 132)

"Juan Andreu died in 1813. His wife, Catalina Pons inherited the house and at the time of her death, in the legal distribution of her estate, this house was adjudicated to her daughter Catalina Andreu Giraldo on August 14, 1818. (Testamentary Proceedings, Year 1818, No. 318, Doc. 8, p. 5)

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"Catalina Pons' son-in-law, Antonio Giraldo, a mariner, imported some merchandise into the port of St. Augustine on which duty was charged by the U. S., and two bonds were given, each for \$704.77, due and payable, one on 15 January 1825 and the other on April. Giraldo paid \$300 on the first. Judgment was entered in the Superior Court for the balance due plus costs, against Giraldo, Joseph M. Hernandez and Joseph Delespine, sureties on his bonds.

"Meanwhile Giraldo and his wife, who relinquished her rights in the property, which she had inherited from her mother, gave a mortgage deed to Hernandez, but Writs were issued by the Superior Court for sale of their property for the recovery of \$1,167.43, the amount of the judgment and costs. On May 1, 1827 Waters Smith, U. S. Marshall, gave a deed to Benjamin K. Pierce who was the highest bidder at the public auction. Pierce paid \$515.00. On October, 1827, Giraldo and his wife, who had by then removed to Key West, gave Pierce a Quit Claim Deed to the house and lot, apparently so that Pierce could have a good title. (Deed Book G, pp. 178-181, Deed Book H, pp. 34-35, St. John County Records) Note: We have been unable to locate this court file in the St. Johns County Records.

"On November 1, 1827 Pierce sold to [Dr.] W[illiam] H[aynes] Simmons for \$1,400. (Deed Book H, p. 37, St. Johns Cty. Court Records)

"In 1835, Simmons sold to Rev. Edward Thomas from Barkley County, S. C. This deed is not recorded but on a Power of Attorney connected with the sale from Thomas to the below owner, this sale is recorded.

"On April 23, 1838 Kingsley B. Gibbs with Power of Attorney from Rev. E. Thomas sold to Peter and Joseph Manucy for \$2,100. (Book N, p. 12, St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On September 4, 1838 Peter Manucy sold his share of the property to his brother Joseph for \$1,100. (Deed Book N, pp. 229-230, St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On June 20, 1854, Joseph Manucy sold to Catalina Llambias for \$450. He sold her the house with only the portion of the lot where the house was situated as Deed shows the lot now measures 54 feet in front. Original lot measured 52 varas. (Deed Book P, pp. 355, 356, St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On February 21, 1877 Catalina Llambias sold to Ana Cornelia Bravo, widow, and Antonia M. Llambias for \$5,000. (Deed Book W, pp. 284-285, St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On March 31, 1919, the heirs of Antonia Llambias sold to Harry N. Campbell for \$100 'and other good and valuable considerations . . .' (Deed Book 42, p. 180, St. Johns Cty. Records)

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"On July 5, 1932, Harry N. Campbell sold to Annabell Newbill, Josephene Newbill, and George Newbill for \$10 'and other valuable considerations. . .' (Deed Book 101, p. 151, St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On December 28, 1938 the Newbills conveyed this property to the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C. (Deed Book 119, pp. 276-277-278. St. Johns Cty. Records)

"On December 31, 1938, the Carnegie Institution conveyed title to the City of St. Augustine. (Deed Book 119, p. 355. St. Johns Cty. Records)"

- B. In 1964 the St. Augustine Historical Society also had a single sheet of historical and architectural information printed for distribution to visitors. It is here quoted in its entirety:

"The House and its Restoration

"This house is one of a handful of dwellings in St. Augustine whose origin dates to the First Spanish period. When Florida was ceded to Great Britain in 1763, Pedro Fernandez owned the coquina house on this site, and indications are that it was a typical one-story Spanish colonial structure, enlarged to two stories under British ownership.

"Restoration was accomplished by the St. Augustine Restoration and Preservation Association in 1954, under the supervision of Mr. Stuart Barnette, restoration architect. The front elevation of the house is restored to an appearance of the Territorial period (1821-1845).

"The walls are built of a native shellstone (Spanish - coquina). The floor is tabby (Spanish - tapia), a concrete made of oystershell, sand and lime. Structural wood is yellow pine. At various places in the house, the superimposed coats of paint have been retained. Elsewhere, the techniques of lathing and shingling may be observed.

"The Minorcan Story

"In 1768 a large group of colonists, many from the Island of Minorca, were settled at New Smyrna. With the failure of this venture nine years later, the remaining settlers moved to St. Augustine, where their descendants still form an important part of the community. The trials, tribulations and drama of the New Smyrna colony are too lengthy for this leaflet, but since several owners of the house, including the Llambias family, were of Minorcan descent, it is entirely fitting that the house be considered a monument and shrine to the Minorcan group.

"Some Owners of the House and its Furnishings

"It was during the Second Spanish period (1784-1821) that the house was occupied by St. Augustinians of Minorcan descent. The first was Juan Andreu, a native of Mercadal, Island of Minorca, one of the New Smyrna colonists who came to St. Augustine in 1777. The house remained in the Andreu family ownership until after the cession of Florida to the United States. Later it was purchased by Peter and Joseph Manucy, whose father came to New Smyrna from Mahon. In 1854, the Manucys sold to Catalina Llambias and the house was retained by the Llambias heirs for some 65 years. A small table in one of the upstairs rooms is a Llambias family heirloom, given to the St. Augustine Historical Society for use in the house. Presently the title to the property is held by the City of St. Augustine.

"The drop-leaf table and chairs in the first floor room are authentic reproductions of period pieces handmade in Minorca especially for the Fernandez-Llambias House. These, as well as the image of Nuestra Senora de Monte Toro, Patroness of Minorca, the framed maps, paintings, spirit lamps, rugs and antique chest, were given to the Society by Don Fernando Rubio Tuduri, of Mahon, Island of Minorca.

"The second floor and bedrooms are furnished with English, Spanish, and early American antiques spanning the years 1800 to 1845.

"Maintenance

"The Saint Augustine Historical Society is responsible for the preservation, maintenance and interpretation of the house and grounds. It is open every afternoon without charge."

- C. Extensive records for the restoration in 1954 were made by the New York architect, Stuart Barnette. These bound records are permanently housed in the library of the St. Augustine Historical Society.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Condition of fabric: The structure was restored in 1954 by the St. Augustine Historical Society and has since then been well maintained.
- B. Description of Exterior:
 - 1. Number of stories: two.
 - 2. Number of bays: Four bay front x one bay.

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3. Over-all dimensions: Approx. 35'-5" (front) x 17'-5-1/4" (without rear porch which extends across the entire rear elevation; this porch is 8'-7" wide).
4. Layout - shape: rectangular.
5. Foundations: Unobserved; however, the usual method of foundation construction in St. Augustine, as indicated on p. 68 in Albert Manucy's The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821 (St. Augustine, Florida: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1962), probably was used in the Llambias House: "By present-day standard, house walls had no foundations. The usual preparation was to excavate a trench slightly wider than the wall and about a foot deep. A thin layer of flat stones or oyster shells was tossed in as a sort of spread footing, after which the workmen began wall construction without further ado."
6. Wall construction, finish, and color: The structure generally is constructed of coquina masonry with a plastered finish, painted white; the rear wall of the second floor (under the porch), however, is of frame construction covered with matched horizontal boarding, painted gray.
7. Porches: The wooden second-floor front balcony cantilevers approximately 5' beyond the front wall. It has a hipped roof with wooden shingles, simple square wooden posts (chamfered above the railings) and molded wooden railings. Instead of balusters, a simple pattern composed of two diagonal, one vertical, and one horizontal square wooden members fills the spaces between posts. This pattern seems quite common for balconies in 19th century St. Augustine. A two-level rear entry porch - with a tabby floor at the first level and a random-width cedar floor at the second - has a shed roof (covered with wooden shingles) which appears to be a continuation of the "kick" of the main hipped roof.
8. Chimneys: Plastered exterior coquina masonry chimney on west (side) wall. It has two moldings and a "pyramidal" crown.
9. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wide six-paneled wooden doors with simple moldings; simple molded wooden door frames set in masonry openings.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Generally all windows have twelve-over-twelve-light, double hung wooden sash, which are set in simple molded wooden frames. All wooden louvered shutters are exterior and are painted a gray-green.

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10. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hipped roof with a pronounced "kick" at the eaves; wooden shingles.
- b. Eaves: Exposed (square) roof beams.
- c. Dormers: A small frame dormer is located on the rear (south) slope of the hipped roof. It has a four-light casement window and a shed roof with wooden shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: One long, rectangular room [the long, east-west, axis is parallel to St. Francis Street; the entry is through the rear (south) from a three-bay by one-bay arcaded porch. The fourth (westernmost) bay is enclosed and has a two-run stairway to the second floor].
 - b. Second floor: Two-room plan [each with two exterior doors (one to the rear entry porch, and one to the front cantilevered balcony); a single interior door located on the long, east-west, axis connects the two rooms. The eastern room is furnished as a bedroom; the western is a parlor].
 - c. Albert Manucy's book, The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821 (St. Augustine, Fla.: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1962) illustrates on p. 54 the evolution of a simple or "common" single-room plan to the "St. Augustine Plan" of the Fernandez-Llambias House. The following passage in reference is found on pp. 52-53: "For although the one- or two- cell plan is identified with the poor man. . . an ambitious fellow's house grew with his fortunes. . . and the floor plan was readily capable of expansion. Perhaps the easiest method was to add rooms in single file, so that the old roof lines might be extended right over the new work. However, examination of the oldest house [see HABS records, FLA-138], the Llambias House [Fernandez-Llambias House], and the Arrivas House [see HABS records, FLA-122] has shown that in these instances the original small houses were enlarged in practically all directions."
2. Stairways: A two-run, open-newel stairway is situated in the end bay of the rear, two-tiered porch. The first run is of coquina masonry - approximately 3'-5" wide. At the top of this run is a square landing of both coquina.

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and tabby. Another square landing of wood starts the second run, which is wooden. The closed-string stairway has four turned wooden newel posts, turned wooden balusters and molded handrails. The enclosing porch wall is of plastered coquina masonry painted white and has first- and second- floor level windows (first floor: rear, south wall has six-over-six double hung wooden sash; second level: six-over-six double hung wooden sash in both south and west walls). A wooden storage closet with a vertical board door is located under the second run of the stairway.

3. Flooring: First floor: tabby floor. Second floor: 4-3/4" width cedar boards. Attic: wide, random-width boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are all of plastered coquina masonry painted white. The ceilings have exposed beams and flooring. The first-floor ceiling is painted white; the second has a natural finish.
5. Doorways and doors: The single entry to the first-floor interior has a six-paneled wooden door with simple moldings. The doors on the second floor are similar.
6. Decorative features and trim: First floor: simple, molded, wooden window frames. Second floor: simple wooden window and door frames; 7"-wide simple wooden baseboard with a single upper molding.
7. Notable hardware: Box locks and iron wall hooks for lamps.
8. Lighting: Only the first level of the rear porch has an electric light fixture. Candles are used otherwise. Electric outlets, however, are located unobtrusively in each room.
9. Heating: The fireplace in the second-floor parlor (west wall of west room) has a wooden mantel with pilasters and panels. This mantel has rather elongated Federal period proportions. The fireplace immediately below this on the first floor has a brick hearth and no mantel or decoration. In the masonry over the opening is a recessed, rectangular niche.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: The structure is almost immediately adjacent to the street line and faces north. Entry to the house is through the rear arcaded porch, and access to this porch and garden through a wooden door in the coquina street wall, which is approximately 7' high. The door has four panels - the upper two open inward and have vertical rails of iron.

2. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: A brick walk leads from 55-5AUG the gate in the street wall to the rear porch. The relative- 42-ly large rear and side garden has a lawn and several large cedar, pecan, and cabbage palm trees in three rows. On axis with the rear entry door is a circular, coquina masonry well with a simple wrought-iron hoist. This well is reached by a brick walk covered by a trellis of both wood and coquina masonry. There are also several formal flower beds. At the west side of the property is a small bamboo grove.

Prepared by John C. Poppeliers
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March 1965