

## **The Kings Road in East Florida**

The SAHSRL holds the following relevant materials regarding the Kings Road, which was constructed by the British Crown in the 1760s and 1770s. Many portions of the right-of-way have been abandoned, especially in St. Johns County.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### 1. Where was the Kings Road?

The road ran from the northern boundary of the Province of East Florida at the St. Marys River near Colerain, Georgia through the Cowford (Jacksonville) and St. Augustine to just south of New Smyrna, near today's Oak Hill, Florida. It mostly parallels U.S. Highway 1.

#### 2. How long was the Kings Road?

About 150 miles long.

#### 3. Why was the Kings Road built?

It was built to promote the settling of the new province of East Florida after it became a British colony in 1763, and to increase commerce. The St. Marys River was no longer an international border between the Spanish and British empires. The Kings Road connected with another road in Georgia, which allowed for land travel from Savannah, Charleston, and other British colonies to the north. During the American Revolution, it became an invasion route from Rebel held Georgia to Loyalist East Florida.

#### 4. Where can I drive down the Kings Road?

Much of the right-of-way has been abandoned. In Nassau county, there are portions marked County Road 121A or County Road 115. In Duval county, there are both Kings Road and Old Kings Road. In St. Johns County, the right-of-way is largely abandoned except for portions of San Marco Avenue, St.

George Street, Kings Ferry Way, Ferry Place, and Old Moultrie Drive. In Flagler County, much of the route is still in use as Old Kings Road.

5. Who is the King the road is named for?

The road is named for King George III of the United Kingdom, who reigned from 1760 to 1820. Charlotte Street is named for his wife.

6. Was King Street in St. Augustine part of the Kings Road?

No, not when it was originally constructed. In the 1820s and 1830s, the route was changed to include the current King Street due to the relocation of the bridge across the San Sebastian River.

#### Resources:

- Vertical Files:
  - Road Names: Kings Road – this file contains newspaper clippings and magazine articles.
- Books:
  - Ryan, William P. *Search for the Old Kings Road*. Call number - [388.1 Rya](#)
  - Adams, William. *The King's Road: Florida's First Highway*. Call number - [388.1 Ada](#)
  - Bockelman, Charles W. *The King's road to Florida: the stagecoach route*. Call Number – [388.1 Boc](#)
  - Bennett, Charles E. *Southernmost battlefields of the Revolution*. Call Number – [975.903 Ben](#)
  - Ward, James Robertson. *Old Hickory's town: an illustrated history of Jacksonville*. Call Number - [975.9121 War](#)
  - Strickland, Alice. *Ashes on the wind: the story of the lost plantations*. Call Number - [975.921 Str](#)

- Periodicals:
  - Schafer, Daniel L. “St. Augustine’s British years 1763-1784”, *El Escribano*, No. (2001)
    - Chapter Five “Governing the Town” discusses road and bridge construction.
    - Chapter Eight has brief biographies of the engineers and surveyors.
- Digital Only Collection – Available in the library only.
  - John Moultrie Accounts – This is a scan of the Royal Accounts for East Florida 1772-1775, with details concerning who was paid and the costs for building the Kings Road.
- Map Collection:
  - Anonymous map of eastern Florida, circa 1816, illustrating from Cumberland Island, Georgia to New Smyrna, Florida. It shows the entire route of the Kings Road. Drawer 24, folder 33
  - Various Township and Range maps from the 1830s-1950s, illustrate portions of the route. Also maps that illustrate St. Johns County. Drawer 16
  - The 1917 Soil Survey of St. Johns County illustrates the Kings Road in St. Johns county. Drawer 13, folder 9 (scan located in Aston maps)
  - Plans for the San Sebastian River Bridge by James Moncrief, 1767. Drawer 7, folder 9
- Web Resources
  - [The King’s and Pablo Roads: Florida’s First Highways. Narrative History of Their Construction and Routes in St. Johns County.](#)
  - [King’s Road \(Florida\) - Wikipedia](#)