



Fernandina Beach, Florida

"Fernandina Beach is on Amelia Island (Nassau County) Florida. It is the only city in the United States to have flown under **8 different flags of rule.**" According to <8flags.com> and <fcit.usf.edu> they were:

FRANCE: In 1562, a first recorded explorer, French Huguenot-Jean Ribault, arrived in this northern most area in Florida on the Atlantic Coast. It was then known as Napoyca from the Timucuan mound-building Native Americans who had been on the island since 1000 AD. This tribe continued to live in the region until the early 1700s. Ribault named the region Isle de Mar.

SPAIN: In 1565, Pedro Menendez de Aviles and his Spanish soldiers invaded the island and killed Ribault and several hundred French colonists. Spanish Franciscans established a mission that they called Isla de Santa Maria. Fernandina was settled in 1685.

BRITAIN: Fernandina was attacked and destroyed by British raiders, but left the town deserted after their intrusion. James Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, found the area with orchards and deserted fields and renamed the area "Amelia Island," after princess Amelia, daughter of King George II of England. In 1763, the area flew the flag of England and became a sanctuary for English Loyalists fleeing the revolutionary colonies in the north.

PATRIOT FLAG OF THE REPUBLIC OF FLORIDA: This flag, as history tells, flew only for one day. A group calling themselves the Patriots of Amelia Island attempted a coup, but failed in 1783, Spain regained control of Florida. Fernandina's Spanish harbor became a center for smuggling, slavery, liquor contraband and other foreign luxury trade.

GREEN CROSS OF FLORIDA: The fifth flag to fly over the island was one brought on by Sir Gregor MacGregor. A Scotsman with a band of men took control of the island in 1817 with smuggling and slave trading still in effect. MacGregor did not last long.

MEXICAN REBEL FLAG: A pirate name Luis Aury with three ships sailed into Fernandina and assumed control of the island. Pirating flourished under Aury, but this would come to an end as United States naval forces were making gains in the Atlantic.

UNITED STATES FLAG: The United States assumed control of the territory from Spain in 1821. Fernandina became an import harbor and city during this period. Florida became part of the United States on March 3, 1845. Fort Clinch was to have been built on Amelia Island. It started in 1847 but was never completed.

CONFEDERATE FLAG: On January 10, 1861, Florida delegates in Tallahassee, the capital, voted to secede from the Union and became one of the six of the original Confederate States, eventually numbering 11 states. In the same year, Confederate sympathizers of the Third Regiment of Florida Volunteers occupied Fort Clinch. It had been abandoned by Federal workers during construction. The Union, however, saw the importance of Fernandina in supplying the Confederates. A flotilla of Union gunboats led by Commodore Samuel Dupont arrived in the harbor as Robert E. Lee ordered the evacuation of Fernandina and Fort Clinch. Federal control took place and the United States flag was again raised on March 3, 1862.

Prior to the Europeans coming to the region, the first inhabitants were the Timucuan Indian tribe who lived in Northern and Central Florida and southeast Georgia who numbered in hundreds of thousands. There were many distinct groups within the tribe system with many Timucua language dialects. Eurasian infectious diseases with no immunity and warfare caused much death and suffering to the Timucua peoples. By 1700 the tribe was almost decimated. <en.wikipedia.org>

Fernandina's history is a place of many firsts in Florida's history. It is the birthplace of the modern shrimping industry in America. Fernandina's shrimp could be found in New York City's famous Fulton Fish Market. <ameliamuseum.org>

Cotton played an important part in Fernandina's history. The Amelia Island Museum's informative website tells us that "Amelia Island was a critical staging ground for efforts by the United States (during the Civil War) in being able to confiscate Confederate stockpiles of cotton and propagate future crops. The Union regularly shipped cotton out of the Port of Fernandina to textile manufacturers in the U.S. and Europe, which were hit hard by wartime cotton shortages." <ameliamuseum.org>

This was possible when some planters, who did not flee from the coastal areas, negotiated deals with the Union military to continue to sell cotton to be sent to mills in New York and Rhode Island. The deal stipulated that the owner's property could be kept and an oath of allegiance to the United States was not required. During reconstruction after the war, Fernandina played an important role in international cotton trade. Later the first railroad bypassed Fernandina, and the Mexican Cotton Boll Weevil infestation beginning in 1917 caused a stiff decline in the area's cotton industry. Lumber replaced cotton as a commodity in business and trade. <ameliamuseum.org>

Fernandina Beach has over 12,000 residents with over a 10% increase since 2000. The median resident age is 55. The median household income is higher than the state of Florida. Fernandina Beach's land area is 10.7 square miles. According to the census, the ancestries of residents in the area include, in a descending percentage, English, Irish, German, Italian, French, Polish, Scottish, African American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and Pacific Islanders. <city-data.com>

Today, tourism plays an important part on Amelia Island and Fernandina Beach. With 13 miles of pristine beaches, golf, Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival, Fort Clinch State Park, museums, cruises, shopping and fishing in the area brings many people to Amelia Island. This photo program shares some of those sites. <visitflorida.com>





"Between 1880-1910 Fernandina's docks were among the busiest in the south." Originally constructed as a haberdashery in 1878, Louis G. Hirth bought the Prescott building in 1903 and replaced shoes with booze and named it the Palace Saloon. Hirth called upon his old friend Adolphus Bush, founder of Anheuser-Busch to assist him with the design of the elegant Bar, and Busch reportedly traveled from St. Louis to oversee the installation of the now famous fixture. The saloon still has the elegant features that made it famous for over a century: inlaid mosaic floors, embossed tin ceilings, hand-carved mahogany caryatids (undraped female fixtures), a 40-foot bar lit with gas lamps, and walls painted with six commissioned murals. A true "gentleman's establishment," the bar even included complimentary towels hanging from the bar to wipe the foam from patron's mustaches and 14-pound solid brass cuspidors (spittoons) for those who enjoyed a good chew with their drink. Customers included the Rockefellers and Carnegies from Cumberland Island. It was the last bar to close on the eve of Prohibition. It even served Coca-Cola in 1905."

<thepalacesaloon.com>

Known as the "Shipcaptain's Bar," the Palace Saloon to this day is the oldest continuously operated bar in Florida.





Sources: <https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/fernandina/fernandina.htm> , <http://8flags.com/history.html>,
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