

**“La Florida in Francisco de Florencia’s Patriotic Vision of New Spain,” paper presented for *Assessing the Sacred in the Colonial Borderlands: Jesuit and Indigenous Faith at the Margins of the Spanish Empire*, American Historical Association Conference, New York, New York, USA, January 3, 2009.**

This paper focuses on the way the Floridian Jesuit Francisco de Florencia incorporated the sacred past of the Jesuit missions in Florida into his patriotic vision of New Spain. In 1694 Florencia published the first volume of his chronicle of the Province of the Company of Jesus of New Spain; but unlike other Jesuit chroniclers before him, the Florida missions play a significant role in his founding narrative. Since the Society of Jesus had been unsuccessful in Florida in the late 1560s and early 1570s, Jesuits writing about the history of the Company in the viceroyalty did not view this missionary episode as an important phase in the development of their religious province. For both personal and patriotic purposes, Florencia highlights the significance of the Florida missions by rhetorically connecting the martyrdoms, relics, and the vice-province of Florida itself to the general history of the Jesuit Province of New Spain. Florencia’s chronicle allows one to see how the sacred past of the borderlands was used to construct both corporate and territorial identities in New Spain during the age of the Baroque. Modern national histories and geographical boundaries between the United States and Mexico, however, have marginalized colonial Florida in discussions on the development of a creole consciousness in seventeenth-century New Spain.