

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 2
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 2,*
Issue 1

Article 6

1909

Pensacola: Its Early History

S. J. Gonzalez

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Recommended Citation

Gonzalez, S. J. (1909) "Pensacola: Its Early History," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 2: No. 1, Article 6.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol2/iss1/6>

PENSACOLA.

Its Early History.

By Mrs. S. J. Gonzalez, in Pensacola Journal.

Turning the hands of time backward along the dial of Floridian history, we find chronicled in the year 1559- or according to some writers 1553- the birth of an infant city on the shores of Ochees, a beautiful deep water bay, which offered safe anchorage to a fleet sailing northward under the command of one Tristram DeLuna, one of those adventurous Spaniards who, following the ignis fatuus of all Spanish explorers of the gulf - the fabulous golden stores of a country to the northward - had entered the harbor in search of a landing place.

How the beauty of its scenery must have impressed him we can judge from our own appreciation, dulled as it is by familiarity. Tangled native vine and creeper, stately growths of oak and pine, with here and there a flowering shrub, lent a dark and brilliant background to the shimmering blue of its placid waters. Here the lurking Indian aborigines watched the followers of DeLuna disembark, and here, somewhere in the neighborhood of Barrancas, DeLuna planted a colony - the primitive Pensacola.

No record is found of life in this settlement. Peopled by a class of men better versed in the use of arms than in implements of toil ; unsupported by the parent colony, the ill-nourished settlement dwindled, until only a miserable remnant of the expedition remained to follow DeLuna, when he was recalled after two years of ineffectual attempts to establish a permanent settlement on the shores of Ochees - the Indian appellation of the beautiful bay upon which Tristram DeLuna afterwards bestowed the name Santa Marie, in accordance with the custom that prevailed among Spanish explorers of designating their discoveries by titles of religious significance.

The name Pensacola is supposed by some to be a transposition of "Peniscola," a small seaport of Spain. There are diverging opinions on this subject, some claiming that the name of Santa Marie was given by DeLuna to the town, and not to the bay, and was in full, Santa Marie di Peniscola (St. Mary's of the peninsula) later abbreviated to Pensacola.

The name, unlike the settlement that primarily bore it, had taken deep root in the soil of the bay shore and though buried for a hundred and odd years in the silence of a few ruined and deserted huts was destined to spring into new life, and again figure in the pages of history, although the existence of DeLuna was forgotten and his bones dust before the day of resurrection.

In 1696 Andres d'Arriola, a leader in a new generation, sailed the course taken by Tristram DeLuna, many years previous, landing as near as can be ascertained on the same spot. He reconstructed the abandoned settlement which still bore the name of Pensacola. To him is attributed the building of the first Spanish fortification, later known as San Carlos. This new colony showed signs of more vigorous life than its predecessor, and bid fair to become a thriving town, even trading with other gulf ports, but disturbances in Europe set waves in motion that engulfed the smaller colonies of the new world, and in 1718 a French commander, Desnard des Champmeslin, acting under instructions of Blenville at New Orleans, attacked and captured the town, burning it to the ground, and dispersing the inhabitants.

In the conflict and conflagration that wiped out the second Pensacola, all the records of its life and struggles, if such had ever been made, were of course destroyed, but allowing the imagination to play over accounts of similar settlements, we may form some idea of conditions, and draw a picture of the demolished settlement.

We have certain knowledge of a stone fort—we can judge that the other buildings so easily destroyed were but mere thatched huts or at best cottages, clustered around a church, because every expedition, in those days, had its chaplain and was generally accompanied by members of various religious orders, zealously bent on the conversion of the Indians, so, that we can not doubt that a church of some sort existed—all huddled together under the sheltering fort.

There were days of plenty, perhaps revelry and feasting, when the transports, brought supplies from the mother colony, and days of hunger when these supplies ran low. Maize and other native products obtained from Indians in exchange for paltry trinkets, for these wandering sailors and soldiers had not yet learned to till the ground.

The fruit that grew abundantly in Southern and Eastern Florida, was not indigenous to its western portion. Flowers bloomed everywhere, but the luxuriant blossoms, that charmed the eye of the explorer and gave the land its name, were not satisfying to the palate.

Of the social life we can form small idea, but can safely surmise that the adventurers who followed d'Arriola in search of gold or territory, did not burden themselves with wife or family, and yet we can hardly suppose that these men dispensed with the gentle ministrations of womankind through the twenty years that the colony existed. Therefore it is safe to infer that many, an Indian maiden, bought or seduced from neighboring tribes shared the lives and labors of these men, who as a rule were not fettered by too exacting a sense of moral obligation. Who knows but that many a dark-skinned Floridian, if he could trace the rambling branches of his family tree, might find its root in the heart of some dusky tribe. In the annals of a later period we find records of the marriages of white men who had succumbed to the charms of Indian maidens and given them the legal right to bear their names, and there is no reason to suppose their Spanish predecessors were any more squeamish when the need of a wife presented itself.

The flames that destroyed the second Pensacola failed to obliterate the name which rose phoenix-like from its ashes to be bestowed on a colony begun (probably by stragglers and refugees from the destroyed town) on Santa Rosa Island shortly after the destruction of the second settlement, for although the former site had been restored to the Spaniards by order of the French government, the island was doubtless considered better protected from unexpected attacks by the Indians.

According to a sketch made in 1743 by a trader visiting the port, the Santa Rosa town had made some architectural advancement, A stone church, public fountain, and the commandant's house, an imposing structure, inasmuch as it boasted of two stories. Rows of smaller dwellings were laid out with a view to forming streets, and in a position to command the entrance to the harbor, the very necessary fort. We can suppose there were also warehouses, as a lucrative trade had been established with other colonies, in Louisiana and Cuba. Here also originated the lumber trade, on which the prosperity of Pensacola has always so largely depended.

It would seem that a settlement flourishing under such auspicious conditions would be a permanency, but a power beyond man's control had willed otherwise, and in 1754, in one fearful night, the results of a quarter of a century of human endeavor were swept into the angry surging waters of the gulf.

Exactly in what shape the devastating forces came is not known, but some tremendous upheaval of nature must have submerged or engulfed a portion of the island, for its dimensions, even in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, have never been such as to afford a site for a growing city. When the storm subsided those who had survived the fury of the elements clung together on the wet sand unsheltered and homeless - far from the help and succor that in our days would pour in at the tapping of a wire.

This was the last ephemeral growth. Transplanted by the survivors of the hurricane to the northern shore of the bay, to an indentation bordered east and west by estuaries, later known as Bayous Chico and Texas, Pensacola at last took permanent hold on Florida soil, although it remained for years but a puny, insignificant hamlet forgotten in the turmoil of European wars by the powers that had originally builded and destroyed it.

By the treaty of Paris in 1763 Florida became a British province, and when Spain removed the troops quartered in Pensacola, the entire population emigrated to Cuba rather than to remain under British rule. From what can be learned of the town at that time, they did not abandon much - a collection of palmetto thatched huts, surrounded by a stockade of pine posts as a protection from Indian depredations.

Pensacola became the capital of the British province, and under British rule many improvements were inaugurated. It was during the administration of the English Governor Johnstone that the town was surveyed and laid out in blocks and streets, the main thoroughfares bearing the names of England's king and queen-George and Charlotte. A centrally located district, extending as far north as the present Intendencia street, was reserved for a public park and other public uses, and early became the center around which the business life of the town revolved.

On the summit of Palafox Hill, then called after an English general, Gage Hill, was erected an observatory

and from its towering height, instead of the sightless eyes of the stone carved Confederate veteran, the alert gaze of a British sentinel kept watch, searching the broad expanse of Santa Marie for alien or piratical craft.

In 1772 Peter Chester, another governor under British rule, built a fort on Gage Hill-Fort George during the English occupancy, but changed to St. Michael after the capture by Galvez. It is still remembered by that name by the oldest inhabitants of Pensacola. Entering the house of Dr. Herron, the visitor stands on the site of its council chamber, where the white invaders - Spanish and English in their turn, held powwow with representative members of Creek, Choctaw or Seminole nations, councils on which much of the peace and prosperity of the province depended. Here the terms of capitulation were signed that transferred Pensacola from British domination to Spanish rule again.

This fort being constructed only of earth and timber, soon fell into decay, after the merciless bombardment of Gen. Jackson in 1814. There are men in the community today, who, as boys, hunted small game in the thicket of blackjack that had grown over the ruins.

The period from 1772 to 1781 of British domination was the most prosperous and peaceful that Pensacola had ever known. Several business enterprises were set on foot and trading posts established, while considerable export trade was also carried on. Immigration was encouraged by liberal grants from the government. The population was further increased by numbers of peacefully disposed persons from the northern colonies, who traveled southward, to avoid the turmoil of political disturbances then agitating that part of the country.

From a mere hamlet or army post Pensacola had developed into a flourishing city. Its prosperity, however, received a severe check, when, in May, 1780 an earthquake of some severity robbed its inhabitants of all feeling of security. Many of the most wealthy left the city, removing from it at the same time their business interests.

The city had scarcely recovered from the panic caused by the earthquake when the boom of cannonading over Gage Hill warned the inhabitants of an attacking force. The Spanish, carrying into the colonies the disruptions of Europe, had attacked and taken Fort George. Almost all the English inhabitants left the city rather than to

submit to the arbitrary religious restrictions imposed by incoming Spanish rulers. With the English exodus, the tide of Pensacola prosperity seemed to ebb.

The successive governors appointed by the Spanish government, it would seem, concerned themselves very little with the condition of the town one way or the other. It is not until the administration of Vicente Folch in 1796 that we hear of any changes being made. For some reason not apparent, he planned to build a city further down the bay, to succeed Pensacola as chief town of the province. In the absence of any other apparent motive for such a course we may suppose that a desire for personal aggrandizement or achievement prompted his intention or he may have wished to obliterate all traces of British occupancy. However, it may be, a royal mandate forbade his carrying out his plans.

His iconoclastic instincts then found vent in another direction. He undertook to change the English plan of the city, curtailing the space allotted for the public park, making Government street its northern boundary, dividing the surplus into lots and selling many of them. The Spanish Intendant Morales disapproved of Folch's proceedings, refusing to confirm the titles on his visit to Pensacola in 1806, thus rendering subtitles given through sales made previous to that date illegal, and laying a foundation for litigation and lawsuits.

The clipping of the generous space set aside in the first plan of the city has continued from time to time, until only two small squares of the original park remain - Saville square, or as it should more properly be called, Surville, being named after an intrepid Spanish soldier who did some valiant fighting on the spot, and Ferdinand square (the present plaza), named in honor of the then ruling king of Spain. Both these squares extended southward to the water front, with no intervening buildings, except a Spanish battery of small guns for saluting, erected on the south side of the plaza of Ferdinand VII.

In studying the history of colonization in the New World, we find generally speaking, that the colonial pulse beat in unison with the agitating upheavals of the mother country, so that the disturbances in the Spanish kingdom during the first years of the nineteenth century brought on a spasm of patriotic enthusiasm in Spanish Pensacola, resulting in the substitution of the names of Spanish heroes, or victories, for the English names hitherto des-

ignating the principal streets, thereby erecting a lasting memorial to Spanish glory, for in a city where the intersection streets are Palafox, Baylen, Romana, Zaragossa and Alcaniz, the military glamour of Spain, though now faded, is not easily forgotten.

In the war of 1812 between the United States and England, Pensacola became a basic point from which the English were allowed to distribute supplies to their Indian allies. Mateo Maurique, the governor, even allowed British soldiers to garrison the forts. There had been more or less dissatisfaction among Spanish officials over Napoleon's transfer of Louisiana to the United States, causing a feeling of hostility toward the Americans, and resulting in this breach of neutrality, and led to the invasion of the city of Pensacola by Gen. Jackson.

History again centers round the fort on the hill, that being the first object of attack. During Jackson's short stay in the town, he inspired the Spanish population with more friendly sentiments toward the Americans. Comparing the behavior of his forces with that of the British soldiery, they decided that Jackson's occupancy was the lesser of two evils.

It is in connection with Gen. Jackson's invasion that the name of Don Manuel Gonzalez first figures in the pages of local history under circumstances that have made the name a synonym for honor and patriotic integrity and laid the foundation of a lasting friendship between himself and the American general.

The Gonzales family has been in past years so intimately associated with the life of Pensacola, connected, as it is by marriage with the best families, vitalized and invigorated by the blood of noble Castillian dons, that a few facts about its progenitor may not be out of place in this article. Don Manuel came to Pensacola in 1784, a volunteer soldier, serving with honor in the Spanish army. He was appointed Indian agent in 1792, showing great ability in management of affairs connected with the various tribes, and obtaining great influence over them, and establishing peaceful relations, that were uninterrupted, until the machinations of the English in 1814 stirred them into hostility.

Don Manuel Gonzalez was at one time in charge of the Spanish commissary, a large storehouse situated on the site occupied now by the wholesale grocery of Lewis Bear, and of course facing on the Plaza. This building

in later years was converted into a city market. Here the thrifty housewife and vender haggled over the price of the necessaries of life, and the major-domo of more affluent houses, purchased without question the most available luxuries. Perhaps the most popular section of his market was the coffee stand, where those who were early abroad, and others who had not yet retired, met to sip the exhilarating beverage that had become so necessary to the Spanish temperament, and, which, to suit Spanish taste, must be "black as night, strong as love, and hot as hell." So it was served at the old market stand with an accompaniment of hot calas, a sort of fried cake, the compounding of which is only understood by the old Spanish cooks of slavery times.

That Don Manuel Gonzalez was a man whom "the king delighted to honor," is apparent from the concessions or grants of land, made in his favor by the Spanish government. He owned a large cattle range, extending as far north as Gonzalia, and encircling the city on the east, as far as Gabaronne on the bay shore. A tall chimney still stands at that point, and like some ancient obelisk, marks the site of some dead and gone industry.

After the Floridas became United States territory, Don Manuel refused to join the body of his compatriots, who, rather than "pay tribute to Caesar," broke home and family ties and migrated to the Spanish colonies of South America. He was appointed to a responsible position in the American army in 1822, and continued a citizen of Pensacola until the time of his death, which occurred in 1838.

Mr. Peter Gonzalez, a son of Don Manuel, was for many years the agent or manager of the stage coach line, running between Pensacola and the eastern shore of Mobile bay, that being the only means of public travel in those days, unless horseback riding was preferred. It is recorded that Bishop Potier made visitations to the various parishes of the Mobile diocese on horseback in 1826. Perhaps there are some who remember the old "ride and tie" method by which two men might take a long trip with one horse. One rode to a certain point, the other following on foot. When the designated point was reached, the rider dismounted, tied the horse and left him for the use of the man who had started on foot, when the same program was repeated.

A little incident narrated by Mr. Peter Gonzalez in connection with the stage coach line will demonstrate the force of habit.

A driver who had been in his employ, making the trip regularly, without intermission for a number of years, finally decided that a holiday was due him, making the request, which was granted. When he again reported for work, Mr. Gonzalez inquired as to what disposition he had made of his time. The query elicited the fact that having passed so many years of his life on top of the coach, he had no interest elsewhere, and so had followed the coach, over the accustomed route, on foot.

Mr. Peter was the father of Mr. F. Gonzalez, known to the public as a man of wide charity and, at the time of his death proprietor of the Golay Mills.

Another well-remembered name is that of Major Samuel Z. Gonzalez, holding that commission in the American army, and also at one time collector of ports. He is still spoken of as a representative type of the old Spanish don, fearing no man, chivalrous toward women and upright in all his ways.

The Gonzalez family is allied either by tie of blood or marriage with many of the oldest Spanish families. The Morenos, Bonifays and Yniestras are all close connections.

After Jackson's expulsion of the English in 1814 Pensacola again dropped out of sight, enjoying a period of somnolent inactivity. The stirring business enterprises that had from time to time increased the prosperity and furthered the development of Florida's (and incidentally, of Pensacola's) natural resources, had been inaugurated by the English or Americans, for although good soldiers chivalrous and brave, an easygoing indolence is a national characteristic of the Spanish people.

The reply of an old Pensacolian when asked why he did not occupy himself with some profitable employment must have been an inherent sentiment transmitted from a colonial forefather. "God made the day to rest, and the night to sleep; what time is there to work?"

Certain it is that the old Spanish inhabitants took life easily. Surrounded by slaves, who stood at beck and call, and whose labor furnished a revenue, they lived to enjoy life. Six days in the week does not seem to have given time enough for worldly pleasures.

When Jackson was appointed governor general of Florida in 1821 he again visited Pensacola, accompanied by his wife. Her strict Puritanical ideas were particularly shocked by the loose observance of the Lord's day, and which brought forth a lively protest from that lady. We find her complaining that places of business were kept open on the Sabbath. But we must take into consideration that many of the small tradespeople lived in the rear or on the second floor of their stores, and therefore the front door stood open, more in hospitable welcome to friends and neighbors than as a matter of business. That such was the case in one instance can be gathered from the following story:

A dealer in groceries, whose business did not warrant the keeping of books or bookkeeper, was in the habit of chalking down memoranda of credit sales on the floor under his bed in the rear room. A customer coming in one day to settle his account, the storekeeper was somewhat embarrassed to find his wife had scrubbed out the memoranda. His accounts (while unwashed) were reliable, but it is told of another dealer, who could not write, that he made his memoranda by drawings; which method sometimes led to such slight misunderstandings as the following:

"Hey, Mr. -. When you going to pay for that cheese?"

"I never bought any cheese from you."

"Oh yes, but I got it in my book."

"I tell you, I never bought any cheese, but I owe you for a grindstone."

After a few minutes' puzzled scrutiny of the hieroglyphic account, the dealer acknowledged his mistake.

"That's so, that's right,- I forgot to draw a hole in the middle."

Mrs. Jackson further complains that "dancing and fiddling took up the greater part of the day," and it cannot be denied that such pastimes were indulged in, or that the soft dulcet tones of the guitar, accompanied by the strains of a love song, were not then heard more frequently than the Psalms. It would seem that the religious observance of the Sabbath had almost been forgotten; but we must remember that after the English occupancy, Catholic church property had, contrary to terms of Spanish treaty been destroyed, or put to other uses, so that when the Spanish again came into possession,

there was neither church nor priest in Pensacola, and for many years the people were deprived of spiritual ministrations and the public practices of devotion. Under these circumstances, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the prayerful observance of the Sunday should be forgotten.

A brief glance at the ecclesiastical history of Pensacola will bring to light a story of struggle and vicissitudes.

The Jesuit and Dominican fathers sacrificed much in their endeavors to establish churches in the early Catholic colonies, and with varied success. We find the existence of a church in Pensacola, recorded as early as 1696, which must have belonged to the settlement of d'Arriola and there is mention of a church on the island settlement, but from the time of the removal of the city to the northern shore of the bay, the pages of church history are blank up to the period of British ascendancy and then it is only through mention of confiscation of church property and oppressive legislation against Catholics, that we have any knowledge of the existence of a church at the time.

The next we hear of the return to Catholic worship is after the English exodus at the time of Galvez's invasion, when Pensacola again came under the dominion of Spain. The resultant influx of Spanish people must have been accomplished by pastor, or priest, for a warehouse situated somewhere near the site of the present county jail was utilized for church services with a Father Coleman in charge. This good priest's efforts to gather together the scattered flock would be a history by itself, while his successes might be narrated in a few pages. It was through the untiring efforts of this priest that a small frame church was finally erected on a government grant on the east side of the Plaza. Miss Sabina Bonifay, a lady devoted to the interest of the church, performed the duties of sexton in this church up to the time of the civil war. This church, like subsequent structures for the same purpose in the city, was under patronage of St. Michael.

Despite Father Coleman's zealous efforts at reorganizing a parish, when the newly-ordained Bishop Potier of Mobile made his first visitation in 1886, he found the church in a deplorable condition. Although the faith still lived in the hearts of the people, nourished and kept

alive by the teaching and example of many pious mothers, who, though altars were desolated, kept God enshrined in their hearts, still, its outward practice was neglected.

This church on the Plaza was destroyed by the federal forces during the civil war; but not before it had fulfilled its mission. Through the patient endeavor of successive pastors, the scattered flock had again been gathered into a devout congregation, faithful to the practice and teachings of their religion.

After peace was restored and the refugees returned to wrecked or demolished homes, a new church was built facing on Government street, near the opera house. It was doomed to share the fate of the old St. Michael's, being burned to the ground, along with the parsonage, in 1882.

Of the Protestant churches in Pensacola the Episcopalian and Presbyterian are the oldest. The first Episcopalian church, 1936, was built so as to face Seville square, and many of the best families of the town congregated under its roof. It escaped destruction at the hands of a wanton soldiery and still stands grey and ivy grown, a memorial of other days.

The Presbyterian church antedated the Episcopal some years. Many Scotch Presbyterians came to Pensacola during the English era, and engaged in extensive business transactions, notable among whom was one William Panton, a man of great commercial influence; to which fact was due, in all probability, his exemption from retaliatory religious restrictions imposed by the incoming Spanish government. He may have been one of the earliest contributors to a church fund. That its bell pealed forth its clear resonant tones to the annoyance of an old Spanish inhabitant is certain, for tradition tells of his complaining to the minister, that its clamoring tongue disturbed his siesta.

The practice of gaming, a sport in which all classes indulged, called forth the loudest protest from the lady, whom the chances of war had raised to an eminence from which her voice might be heard. But what constituted a vice in Mrs. Jackson's opinion was only regarded as a gentleman's pastime among the Spaniards. The practice of card playing is so common in Spain that it might almost be considered the national game. It constituted the chief amusement of her colonial children.

Although large stakes were often put up, it was more to add zest and excitement to the game, than as a matter of profit.

To accuse a man of cheating at cards was an insult to be avenged in blood. It is only after the introduction of the American element into the community that we hear of the sharp manipulators of the card-pack. This brings to mind an incident of Spanish times and the gaming table.

Two professional sharpers who had drifted into the town engaged in a game of cards with a preconcerted scheme to fleece their opponents.

One of the intended victims noticed that one of the strangers was signaling the number of trump cards he held to his partner by placing a corresponding number of fingers on the table. Without any warning the Spaniard whipped out a knife and chopped off the two fingers then doing duty, coolly remarking: "It's a good thing you didn't have four trumps, or you'd have no fingers."

The progressive pace of Pensacola's development as we trace it through the various epochs of its history, has been that of the kangaroo. A succession of forward leaps and pauses, punctuated by sudden booms and yellow fever epidemics. The last mentioned, thanks to improved sanitary conditions and scientific discoveries here and elsewhere, has ceased to menace the city. It was during one of these eruptive periods, 1836, that a brilliant future loomed up for the city. A New York syndicate conceived the project of building a railroad between Pensacola and Montgomery. The iron and cars were brought from England. Work was actually begun, and the road graded the whole length of the route, making it the third railroad in the scale of length in the United States.

Major Chase, whose residence on North Palafox street was for years spoken of as "the Chase house," but which, after a series of metamorphoses, has become the Escambia hotel, was superintendent of this road, and a Mr. Graham constructing engineer. A position full of brain-racking problems, one which threatened to turn his hair grey, met him in the labor question.

Some few slaves might have been leased, but a handful of men can't build a railroad. The only recourse was to import foreign labor.

Three ship loads of Irish workmen were the first installment furnished by the European agent.

Mr. Graham's own words, "they worked like beavers, and fought like devils," and as the last attribute offset their usefulness, Mr. Graham decided it would be better to employ men of a more phlegmatic nationality, as he wanted men to lay rails, not to wield the shillelah.

To replace the Irishmen, four ship loads of Dutch laborers were next sent over. Two of the captains succeeded in landing their human freight, but the passengers on the other two boats decided that they did not like the looks of the town and insisted on being carried to New Orleans.

Constructor Graham soon found he had swapped the witch for the devil, for the Dutch went on strike twice every day, throwing down picks and spades at 10 in the morning, positively refusing to work until each individual was served with a stein of beer. At 4 p. m. the same demand was made, backed by a refusal to work without the liquid refreshment.

A perplexing state of affairs that led Mr. Graham to ask the captain "if he could take his d- Dutchmen and drown them," and the captain, who it seems had his share of the trouble, replied "most willingly," if only Mr. Graham would show show him the law for it.

So much for human endeavor. All its fret and fume amounted to naught. In the financial panic of 1837 the project fell through for lack of funds to carry it to completion.

It was not until 1856 that the reconstruction of the road was undertaken. Although financed by the same company, and under the same management as the earlier road, the route was changed. Instead of running through the eastern part of the town, the course lay northward, as does the present road. After various delays it was completed to Pollard, Ala., in 1861.

During the civil war the tracks on this road were torn up, presumably by the Confederates, with the object of hampering the movements of the northern foe. The rolling stock was either stolen or destroyed.

A third attempt to connect Pensacola by rail with northern points, was made shortly after the close of the war, and has proved more permanent. This road terminated at Flomaton, then more familiarly spoken of as the Junction.

This last venture was entirely a southern enterprise, much of the stock being subscribed by southern planters. The city of Pensacola subscribed \$270,000, issuing bonds for that amount, which were afterwards increased.

Through a series of business manipulations, an astute financier secured the controlling interest, eventually selling out at immense personal profit to the L. & N. system, under which it is still operated.

The constructive periods of these railroads mark three epochs in the history of Pensacola. The first, a demarkation of the Spanish era proper, and the beginning of the disintegration of a family, for such were the resident people of Spanish towns. Through marriage and intermarriage, more or less nearly akin, they fraternized as the children of one home, bearing each other's burdens, sharing each other's joys. "To laugh with those who laugh and sigh with those who sigh" was a Christian precept that was put into daily practice in those early days, when men were, it would seem, less selfish, ever ready to lend a helping hand to one another.

In social life the same spirit of true democracy existed. The bluest blood might run in the veins of some, but it did not forbid a courteous demeanor toward those in whose views the life-giving fluid ran in more plebeian tint. Bon ton and elite as applicable to social status, had not yet been written in the vocabulary of the town. A ball was an occasion for a general gathering - not a function participated in by a select few. Men took time for such things then. The pater familias and the matron danced with youths and maiden, and "all went merry as a marriage bell."

Later, in 1812, we hear of disruptions. The Americans are masters of the town, and some high spirited members of the family have broken the circle and moved to parts unknown. There is a day when those who have remained stand with bowed heads and sorrowful hearts near the flagstuffs in the center of the Plaza, to watch the Spanish flag come down. But time, the great healer, closes the wound, and native and alien mingle in social intercourse. We can imagine the little group that clustered on street corners, or in the Plaza, to discuss an entertainment, at which Mrs. Jackson was guest of honor. In low tones, they tell of the host's embarrassment when that lady requested a pipe that she might take her accustomed smoke after dinner. A hasty search

had only been productive of a common clay pipe, such entertainment, at which Mrs. Jackson was guest of honor as was used by the slaves in their quarters.

As these gentlemen narrate the incident they smoke cigarettes, made of the best Cuban tobacco, rolled in dainty strips, cut from dried corn shucks.

That was a time when mutual trust and confidence characterized all business transactions. Where, in these days of iron bound contracts and grinding mortgage, shall we hear the like of this:

"Mr. - I wish you would lend me some cash. I need it in my business."

"All right; how much do you want?"

"\$500 will do, I think."

"Here's my key ; help yourself."

The lender never turned in his chair. A year later the debtor returned;

"Mr. - here's that \$500 I borrowed."

"Oh! all right. Take the key and put it where you got it."

Perhaps this was the same man who refused to take a man's note because he was sure if he didn't pay the money he wouldn't pay the paper.

The second railroad introduced a period of disorganization and disaster. The war cloud, though no larger than a man's hand, was gathering on the horizon. Already the shadow of the coming struggle had dulled the capacity for enjoyment. Men's hearts were heavy with a premonition that the coming strife would change affluence to indigence.

A whispered hope of freedom had reached the negro quarters, and an inward exultation make them less fearful of the lash, less docile and obedient. Even those who had the kindest masters were ready to desert them at the first intimation of emancipation.

After the war cloud burst, the non-combatants of Pensacola evacuated the city seeking shelter in more protected towns. Everything was left at the disposal of an invading soldiery, whose pleasure, it seems was to wantonly destroy.

After peace was declared the refugees returned to find wreck and ruin on every side. It took brave hearts to pick up the broken threads and piece together demolished industries and fortunes and begin life under new conditions. The topsy turvy state of affairs was well

stated by a freed slave, when he told a white prisoner of war "bottom rail on top now, move up, bottom rail on top," though the speech cost him his life in later years.

The building of the third road inaugurated an epoch, the history of which is not yet written.

By the slow process of evolution the old Spanish city is becoming Americanized, even the fiery element conspiring to obliterate all traces of Spanish occupancy, until but few of the quaint old landmarks remain.

With the arms of commerce reaching out towards Panama, and the deep water bay of Pensacola furnishing unrivalled facilities for trade there is no telling where the future leaps may land our town in the scale of prosperous cities.

At present the leaps are skyward; yet why, with so much ground space, such high jumps should be necessary is beyond my comprehension. Perhaps the spirit of the Plaza still holds the business of the town around it.

With the contemplated skyscrapers the city should adopt "a banner with a strange device, Excelsior."