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Herbert J. Doherty, Jr.



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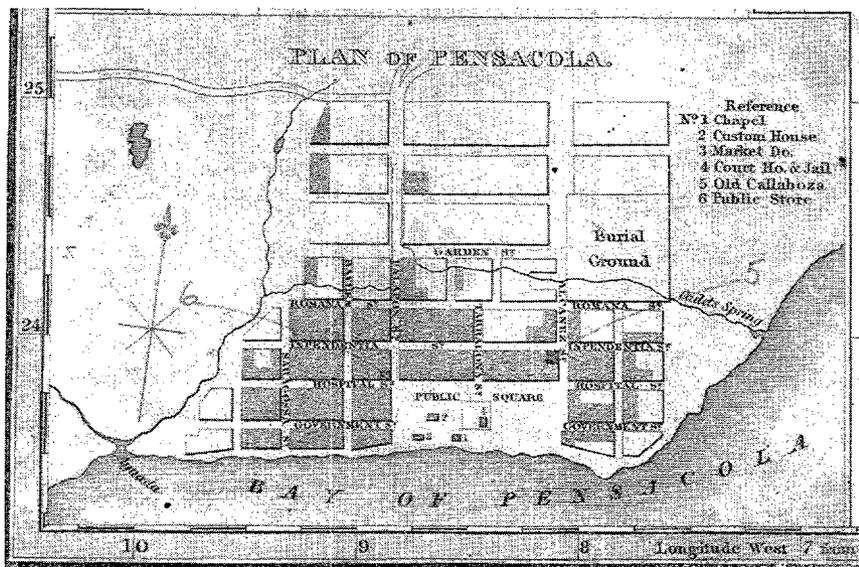
ANTE-BELLUM PENSACOLA: 1821-1860

by HERBERT J. DOHERTY, JR.

THE MORNING SUN over Pensacola on July 17, 1821, shone on a scene of historic pageantry not since repeated in Florida's history. During the early hours of that day a full company of Spanish troops, dismounted dragoons of the regiment of Tarragona who were elegantly clad and equipped, paraded in the plaza before the Government House. A few miles away, through the flat piney woods, came elements of the Fourth United States Infantry and Fourth United States Artillery regiments with flags flying and band playing. At their heads rode the gaunt gray figure of Andrew Jackson. After almost two months of tedious, irksome, and-so far as Jackson was concerned-unnecessarily time-consuming negotiations, the surrender by Spain of the province of West Florida to the United States was about to be consummated. At half-past six, Jackson and a few of his staff entered the city and took breakfast with Mrs. Jackson who was already established in a house near the plaza. At about eight o'clock a battalion of the Fourth Infantry and a company of the Fourth Artillery were drawn up by Colonel George M. Brooke opposite the Spanish troops on the plaza, which is still the plaza today. After the two bodies of troops had saluted each other, Brooke detached four companies of infantry under Major James E. Dinkins to take possession of Fort Barrancas nine miles away.

Promptly at ten o'clock the stiff, spare figure of Jackson emerged from his house followed by aides, a secretary, and interpreters. With grave dignity the little group crossed the plaza between rows of saluting Spanish and American soldiers and entered the Government House. While Jackson and Spanish Governor Jose Callava signed the transfer document within, outside at the gate the Spanish guard was ceremonially replaced with a guard of United States soldiers. Shortly thereafter Jackson and Callava moved out into the plaza where the Spanish colors were lowered and the stars and stripes were raised as the Fourth Infantry band played the "Star Spangled Banner" and salutes were fired by the artillery company, and Pensacola was American! The next day the Spanish garrison sailed away to Havana, except

[337]



PENSACOLA IN 1821

(From Williams, *A View of West Florida*, 1821)

for thirty-six officers who were allowed to remain six months longer. Former Governor Callava was among those remaining.¹

As the first American governor, Jackson may have looked upon his new capital city with some misgivings, for it was not a very impressive place. It was situated about ten miles from the entrance to Pensacola Bay and extended about a mile along its shore and less than half a mile back from the shore on a dry sandy plain. Fresh water was provided by several springs located at its rear and flowing into the bay at each end of the town. The buildings, generally speaking, were in a state of disrepair. To Rachel Jackson, they looked "old as time," and Henry M. Brackenridge thought that they were in an advanced state of decay despite much patching, painting, and whitewashing. The streets were a deep white sand, "nearly as white as flour" it seemed to Rachel Jackson, and the frequent summer rains and the heavy traffic of the throngs of newcomers turned them into quagmires.

The government buildings were in as bad shape as private dwellings. Jackson reported the Government House to be in "a

1. *Niles' Weekly Register*, August 25, 1821.

ruinous state," propped up with unhewn timbers and unsafe for habitation. Brackenridge referred to it as a wretched frame building but noted that it was surrounded by good fruit and sour orange trees. Barracks built during the British regime had neither windows nor roofs and the troops had to be quartered in what Jackson characterized as "filthy" blockhouses and in a hospital in only slightly better shape. Despite its location on a fine harbor, the port facilities of the city were virtually non-existent. Only one nearly ruined pontoon wharf was in existence and most shipping was unloaded by lighters. This was corrected before too long and by 1829 a thousand foot wharf was in use.²

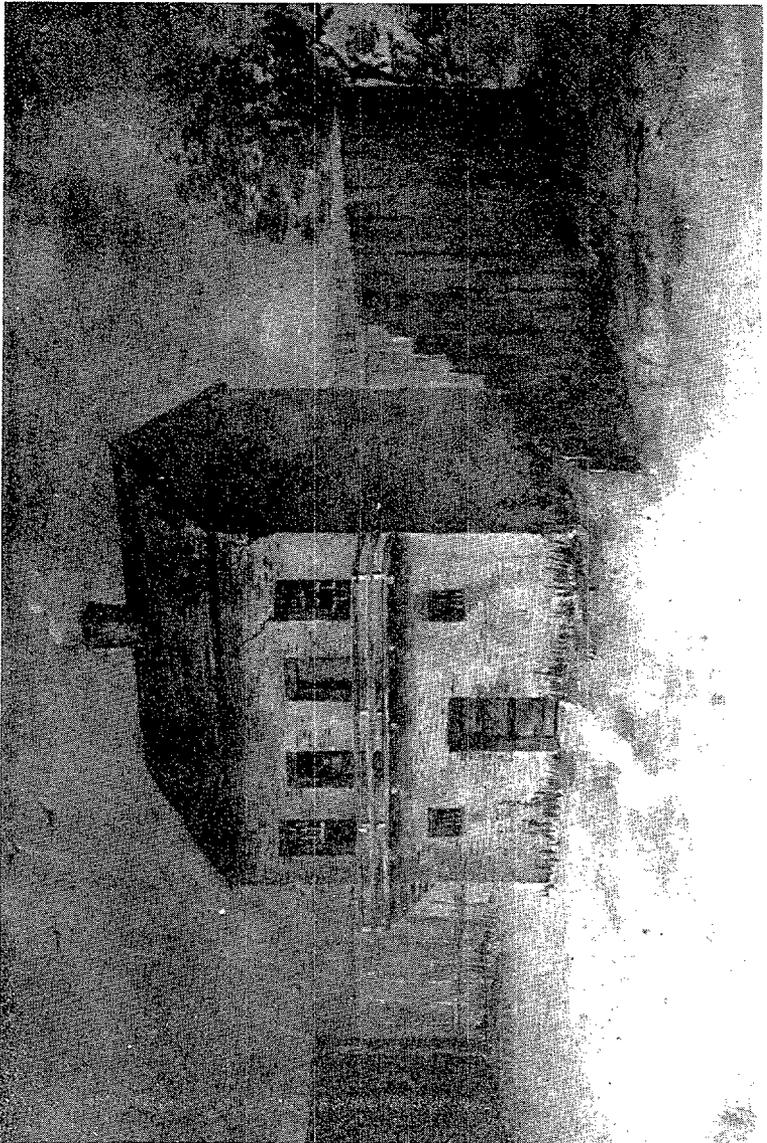
ORGANIZING THE GOVERNMENT

Jackson, nonetheless, lost no time in establishing a governmental system which he sought to make a combination of traditional Spanish institutions and American practice. He appointed Henry M. Brackenridge *alcalde* of Pensacola, and seized upon the fact that the city had once had a *cabildo* as sufficient precedent for ordaining a mayor and city council. George Bowie was appointed the first mayor, but was succeeded in October by Colonel John Miller. The first council included William Barnett, Henry Michelet, John Innerarity, and John Brosnaham. A board of health, headed by John D. Voorhees, and a county court, presided over by David Shannon, were also created. Justices of the peace included E. B. Foster, John Garnier, N. Shackelford, and Cary Nicholas.

Jackson also issued proclamations defining the powers of the city authorities and creating the county of Escambia from all of the territory of Florida west of the Suwannee River. Though never precisely defined, Jackson's powers as provisional governor were vast and, considering all things, were rather temperately exercised by him. They partook of the powers of the former Spanish officials and of the first provisional governor of Louisiana, and apparently embraced legislative, executive, and judicial powers, but Jackson complained that he was a "little at a loss" to know precisely what they were.³

2. Descriptions of Pensacola and Jackson's residence there are taken in large measure from correspondence published in Clarence Carter, editor, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, XXII (Washington, 1956).

3. *Ibid.*, 151, 168, 227; Niles' Weekly Register, September 15, 1821.



SPANISH JAIL IN PENSACOLA
(Presumably Callava was imprisoned here.)

During August of 1821 the notorious Vidal case which had international repercussions arose in Pensacola. Mercedes Vidal, the natural heir of a Spanish military auditor, Nicholas Maria Vidal, went to Alcalde Brackenridge to secure the enforcement of a decree by the last Spanish governor which had ordered an ac-

counting by the executors of the estate. Papers of the late Vidal which were needed for the proof of the case were not among those surrendered by the Spanish officials, but had been retained with military papers which were to be removed. On hearing these facts Jackson ordered the papers delivered up, maintaining that, dealing with private property, they were not properly military papers. Jackson's order for their delivery was brought to Callava while he was dining in a large company at the residence of Colonel Brooke. Brooke prevailed upon the officers to withdraw without further embarrassment to his guest, but Jackson subsequently sent a detachment of troops to Callava's home where the former governor was routed from bed and brought into the presence of an impatient, hot, tired, and annoyed Andrew Jackson. There a scene of wild confusion took place in which Jackson demanded that Callava deliver up the papers or be held in contempt of the authority which he wielded under the provisional regime. For several hours Callava refused, maintaining that he had a privileged position as commissioner for the transfer. Unmoved, Jackson committed Callava to the local jail for the night and seized the papers.

The jailing of Callava also led Jackson into conflict with the federal judge in Pensacola, Eligius Fromentin. Fromentin was persuaded by the friends of Callava to issue a writ of habeas corpus, despite the fact that the only federal laws which had been extended to Florida were those dealing with the revenue and the regulation of the slave trade. Jackson promptly set aside the writ and severely lectured Fromentin for interfering with his authority. Though Fromentin fancied that Jackson might appropriate to himself the powers of the Spanish Grand Inquisitor and burn him at the stake, the President and the Secretary of State both upheld Jackson's action. Jackson later heard the Vidal case himself and handed down judgment in favor of the Vidal heirs. Upon his release, Callava proceeded to Washington where he stirred up the Spanish minister and the political enemies of Jackson to a storm of protest. Due largely to the efforts of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, however, Jackson's conduct in Florida was justified, and later attempts to get Congressional censure of his acts met with failure.⁴

4. The Vidal incident is described in detail in this author's "Andrew Jackson vs. the Spanish Governor," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV (October, 1955), 142-158, and in "The Governorship of Andrew Jackson," *ibid.*, XXXIII (July, 1954), 3-31.

END OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

By September, of 1821 Jackson was tiring of Pensacola and concluded that his obligation to receive the territory and reorganize the government had been fulfilled. In September he informed the authorities in Washington of his determination to retire, and during the first week of October his departure took place. During his absence George Walton, the Secretary of West Florida, was to exercise the gubernatorial powers in that region. The interim regime under Walton was terminated in March, 1822, when Congress created a government for the territory. Under the act of March 30 it was to consist of a governor, a secretary, and a legislature, all appointed by the President. Judicial power was vested in two Superior Courts and such inferior courts as the territorial Legislative Council might create. Florida was to be represented in Congress by a non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives, to be elected as the Legislative Council might determine.

Pensacola was the temporary capital of the new territory and the first regular territorial governor was William P. DuVal of Virginia, who had been federal judge for East Florida. George Walton was named Secretary of Florida and the West Florida federal court at Pensacola was presided over by Henry M. Brackridge.

Soon after the departure of Jackson from Pensacola the throngs of adventurers, opportunists, and office-seekers who had crowded into the little town at the time of the transfer began to drift away. Two weeks after Jackson left, Secretary Walton wrote that the population, which had approached 4,000 at the time of the transfer, was rapidly decreasing. At this time the commercial importance of Pensacola was slight and economic opportunities were restricted. In addition, the cost of living was said to be higher than that at New Orleans or Washington, and many of the amenities of civilization were lacking. For instance, the Pensacola *Floridian* reported more than a year after the transfer that there was still not a minister of the gospel in all of Florida.

As the seat of the territorial government, the city of Pensacola was to be host to the first session of the Legislative Council on June 10, 1822. Due to the extreme difficulties of travel in Florida, however, a quorum of the Council was not present in Pensacola

until July 22. When the quorum had assembled, however, the Council organized and selected James Bronaugh as presiding officer. Bronaugh was an army surgeon who had been Jackson's personal physician. In the Council a contest developed between Bronaugh and Richard K. Call, a Pensacola lawyer and former aide-de-camp to Jackson, centering around the post of delegate to Congress. The major business of the Council was concerned with governmental organization, including the procedures for the selection of the Congressional delegate. Bronaugh and Call each sought to get the Council to approve suffrage qualifications which each felt would benefit himself and disadvantage the other. Ultimately, by breaking a tie vote, Bronaugh secured suffrage laws which he thought would be to his advantage.

YELLOW FEVER

The deliberations of the Council were abruptly terminated, however, during the week of August 10-17 by the appearance of an epidemic of the dreaded scourge, yellow fever. To escape the disease the Council adjourned first to the home of one of its members, Don Juan de la Rua, at Gull Point and later to the ranch of Don Manuel Gonzales, some fifteen miles from the city. Despite these moves, members of the Council were struck down with the disease and James Bronaugh died of it on September 2. Shortly thereafter Joseph Coppinger Connor, the clerk of the Council, also died. Edmund Law was then chosen president and the Council named Joseph M. Hernandez of St. Augustine as delegate to Congress and provisions were made for the popular election of a delegate to the Eighteenth Congress in 1823. The Council adjourned on September 18.⁵

The ravages of the 1822 yellow fever epidemic were quite severe. In what was probably a pessimistic exaggeration, Governor DuVal wrote that "almost all the American population of Pensacola have died." It is true, however, that after the epidemic the population was estimated to be only 1,000 to 1,250. Former Governor Jackson was shocked to hear of the death of his friend Bronaugh and of the tragedy of this visitation to Pensacola. He attributed the appearance of the disease to the fact that the

5. The first session of the Legislative Council is discussed in some detail in this author's "Andrew Jackson's Cronies in Florida Territorial Politics," *ibid.*, XXXIV (July, 1955), 3-29.

“police was lax.” He used the term “police” as a military man does to mean “to make clean.” He wrote: “Pensacola is a healthy place with a proper police, and the present catastrophe is no evidence to my mind of the contrary. I have the prosperity of the Floridas much at heart, and its late dreadful visitation has filled my heart with woe.”⁶

ROAD BUILDING

Among other things the first Legislative Council concerned itself with projects for internal improvements and petitioned Congress for such programs, including roads, canals, and a navy yard at Pensacola. Road building received the most immediate attention since this was one of the most pressing needs of the territory. Under the Spanish regime many existing roads had fallen into disuse and had virtually disappeared. An army engineer, Daniel E. Burch, in 1823 made estimates of the costs of a road to St. Augustine, and surveyed possible routes which might expedite travel between Pensacola and Blakely, Alabama, located on Mobile Bay. He estimated that the army might build a highway to St. Augustine for slightly less than \$19,000. Modern day highway contractors might be startled to learn that the itemized estimate contained an entry of \$924 for whisky! In 1824 Congress authorized the opening of a road to St. Augustine and appropriated \$20,000 for that purpose. In 1825, 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1830 additional appropriations were made for this highway. All of these were small sums, probably for maintenance, except for the 1830 appropriation which was \$33,000 for opening a Pensacola to St. Augustine road. This would seem to indicate that the road needed rebuilding by this date.

In addition to the life-line route connecting the two principal cities of Florida, the people of Pensacola were concerned about their connections with Alabama. Three main routes were followed: a carriage road which ran to a ferry across the Perdido River twenty-one miles from Pensacola and from that point to an intersection with the Blakely to Claiborne, Alabama, road fourteen miles above Blakely; a trail which ran to a ferry a few miles below the carriage road and from that point directly to Blakely; and a

6. Andrew Jackson to George Walton, November 26, 1822, in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV (July, 1955), 26.

trail which crossed the Perdido River at an even more southerly point and proceeded to Blakely. The distances involved were seventy, fifty-three, and sixty-five miles respectively.

Two other thoroughfares, connecting Pensacola and Barrancas, were also objects of concern. One, not properly a road, was a route along the beach which crossed two bayous at their mouths. The distance to Barrancas this way was seven miles, but it could be negotiated only on horseback at low tide. The other route was a wagon road which headed one bayou and crossed the other on a bridge. This route was fifteen miles in length. Despite continued exertions and expenditures of money, the whole road system remained in a crude state and was not capable of supporting a heavy volume of commerce.⁷

Unlike the ports of Apalachicola and New Orleans, Pensacola also lacked an important major waterway draining an extensive back country. For a decade or so after Florida became American, canal projects were projected in a variety of different locations. One of the most feasible plans was to connect Pensacola with Mobile Bay, but others were also entertained: to connect Pensacola with New Orleans, with the Apalachicola River, and even with the Atlantic Ocean by means of a cross-peninsula canal. None of these projects ever materialized, however, and by the mid-thirties the people of Pensacola were looking to the new steam railway as a possible substitute for a canal or river.

THE PROSPEROUS THIRTIES

The 1830's were a period of rising prosperity after the withering years of the twenties. One of the earliest marks of increased commercial activity in Florida as elsewhere was the chartering in 1831 of the Bank of Pensacola. In the same year construction was begun on Fort Pickens and Fort McRee under the direction of Captain William H. Chase of the army engineers. With this stimulation, prosperity approached a peak in 1834 and local business interests optimistically projected a railroad line from Pensacola to Columbus, Georgia. Northern capital, however, had to be raised to get serious work started and New York and Philadelphia businessmen were soon enlisted. Ambitious

7. Highway building information is found in quantity in the documents and correspondence published in Carter, *Territorial Papers*.



schemes were then set in motion to enlarge the capitalization of the Bank of Pensacola with the support of the territorial government, to engage in speculative real estate operations, and to construct a railroad.

In 1835 the charter of the bank was amended to increase its capitalization by \$500,000 and to authorize its purchase of stock in the newly chartered Alabama, Georgia, and Florida Railway Company. The bank was authorized to float a bond issue to the amount of its increased capitalization and the territorial government guaranteed the principal and interest of the bonds. In return the territory took liens on the capital stock of the bank, its railroad stock, and any other property which it owned. The promoters of this plan organized the Pensacola Land Company to handle their real estate operations, and the Pensacola Association to float the bond issue. Control of the bank of Pensacola was placed in the hands of the Pensacola Association through their purchase of a large block of the newly authorized bank stock. In December, 1835, the bonds were sold at face value to Biddle, Jaudon, and Chauncey who ultimately marketed them in England.

Actual construction on the railroad was begun in 1836, though the terminus was changed from Columbus to Montgomery, Alabama. The lands at the Pensacola terminus were acquired by the Pensacola Land Company and an entire new city was laid out east of the old one. The first public sale of lots was held in January, 1837, and about one-half million dollars worth were sold. A second sale in May was much less successful, with only about \$35,000 worth of land being taken.⁸

The financial panic which swept the country in 1837, however, made a shambles of these optimistic beginnings. The Bank of Pensacola was forced to close its doors on June 5 and soon after the land company failed and construction on the railroad ceased, never to start again. No rail had been laid on the road, with the exception of a few hundred yards, and for generations the abandoned graded roadbed stood as a monument to these ill-fated beginnings. The bonds which had been sold abroad by the bank could not be paid and the foreign owners pressed the territorial government for payment in the 1840's. The hard-

8. There is a detailed discussion of the boom of the 1830's in Dorothy Dodd, "The New City of Pensacola, 1835-1837," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (April, 1931), 224.

pressed government was in little better shape than the bank and sought to evade its responsibility. Governor Richard K. Call suggested that the bondholders must first prosecute the individual stockholders of the bank into insolvency before the territory could assume responsibility, but this hopeless task was never undertaken. In 1842 the Legislative Council formally repudiated the bonds.

Another railroad venture involving Pensacola was launched in 1853 when the legislature chartered the Pensacola and Georgia railroad to build to the Florida-Georgia line, with a branch to Tallahassee. Edward C. Cabell was president of this road, which soon abandoned its plans to build to Pensacola and concentrated on connecting Quincy and Lake City. In 1856 the Alabama and Florida Railroad got under way under the presidency of Benjamin D. Wright. Wright was soon succeeded by W. H. Chase, however, and in April ground was broken on the road, which was to connect at the Alabama line with another road building south from Montgomery. By 1860 this road offered travelers a line from Pensacola to Pollard, Alabama, where connections were available to Mobile and other points.⁹

MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN PENSACOLA

More important to Pensacola's prosperity in the territorial period than roads, canals, or railroads were army and navy installations. In 1821 Colonel John R. Fenwick was in command of the Southern frontier, which included Florida, though actual command of the occupation troops in Pensacola seems to have been exercised by Colonel Duncan L. Clinch and Colonel George M. Brooke. Late in 1823, however, Brooke was transferred to Tampa Bay and Fenwick to Norfolk, Virginia, leaving about one company of infantry in Pensacola under Clinch. Clinch remained in this post until his transfer to Tampa Bay in 1829. The quarters for the troops were about as makeshift as Jackson reported them in 1821 until the building of Fort Pickens over a decade later.

More important than the army installations was the navy yard which they were designed to protect. The advantages of Pensa-

9. *Pensacola Gazette*, February 16, March 22, April 12, 1856; George W. Pettengill, Jr., *The Story of the Florida Railroads, 1834-1903* (Boston, 1952), 24. See also: *Railroads Out of Pensacola, 1833-1883* in this issue of this *Quarterly*.

cola Bay as a site for a naval depot were appreciated long before the acquisition of the area by the United States. From the very first the American occupiers of the territory pressed upon Congress the desirability of such an installation. Along with recommendations for other internal improvements, the first session of the Florida Legislative Council sent a memorial to the President asking for a naval depot at Pensacola. In the next year Congress appropriated \$6,000 for a lighthouse and in 1825 an act was approved which authorized the establishment of a navy yard and depot at some place on the Gulf coast of Florida. Meanwhile naval vessels cruising in the West Indies were instructed to use Pensacola as a supply base rather than Thompson's Island (Key West).

On October 25, 1825, the commission to select a site for the navy yard arrived in Pensacola and were lavishly entertained by the citizens. The commission, consisting of Captains William Bainbridge, Lewis Warrington, and James Biddle, spent several days examining the vicinity and made their departure after a great banquet presided over by Henry M. Brackenridge which undoubtedly favorably impressed them with the hospitality of Pensacolians. On December 2 the Secretary of the Navy reported that Pensacola had been selected as the site for the proposed installation. Within two weeks Joseph M. White, the Congressional delegate from Florida, had proposed that the Secretary of War furnish Congress with information about the feasibility of fortifying the entrance to Pensacola Bay.¹⁰

By the end of 1826 plans for a navy yard had been laid out and some \$40,000 expended toward its construction under the supervision of Captain Warrington, who became the first commandant of the yard. For years, however, the Pensacola navy yard was only grudgingly provided for and by the start of 1830 little progress had been made. Excuses were offered which emphasized the distance of the project from Washington and the difficulties of starting "from scratch." Meanwhile, for fortifications at Pensacola, Congress appropriated over \$100,000 in 1828 and 1829. During the administration of President John Quincy Adams another project related to the navy yard was initiated near Pensacola. This was the establishment of a live-oak plantation on Santa Rosa Peninsula-an experiment designed to provide a re-

10. *Niles' Weekly Register*, December 24, 1825.

serve supply of timbers to be used in the construction of ships of war. By 1833 this experimental plantation covered, 225 acres and included over 60,000 trees. The Secretary of the Navy expressed some doubts about the scheme, saying that many of the trees appeared to be dwarfed and that the soil might be too poor, but he recommended continuing the experiment.¹¹

Many complaints were made about the inadequacies of the navy yard during the 1830's. It was noted that there was no hospital or other building large enough to care for all of the sick brought into the base, that the two highest classes of vessels, including the *Constellation*, could not ordinarily get into the bay because of the shallowness of its entrance, and that barracks for marines were non-existent. Gradually through the late thirties Congress made appropriations to remedy such shortcomings, but as late as 1842 it was reported that the navy yard still had no dock, only a temporary wharf costing scarcely \$1,000. Though the Senate had approved a resolution as early as 1836 inquiring into the expediency of a dry dock at the navy yard, a board was not appointed to determine whether a dry dock was practical there until 1844, and not until 1850 was the first dry dock actually launched. In 1842 David Levy, the Congressional delegate, got a resolution approved inquiring into the neglect of the navy yard, and the next year he angrily charged on the floor of the House of Representatives that one-third of the money appropriated for the Pensacola navy yard had been spent on others. It was as United States Senator from Florida that Levy, now David L. Yulee, ultimately offered in 1847 the bill which produced the dry dock at the Pensacola yard.

The incomplete condition of the Pensacola navy yard is perhaps a reason why the area was not a major base of operations during the Mexican War (1846-1848). Though activity at the military installations did quicken and bring a flurry of business activity among local merchants, the war was one which was not generally popular in Florida and the people of Pensacola do not seem to have been more concerned than their fellow Floridians. One reason for their lack of war fever was probably the recent burden of Florida's own Indian War (1835-1842), though it had not directly touched Pensacola. The closest the Indian War

11. *Ibid.*, December 28, 1833.

had come to Pensacola was an attack made by hostile Creeks on a settlement near Black Water, about thirty miles from Pensacola, in 1837.

By 1849 the construction of the dry dock had gotten under way with an appropriation of almost one million dollars, and other needed improvements were being made. Transportation from the city to the growing navy yard was provided by a small steamboat which took a little over thirty minutes for the trip. As described in the *Pensacola Gazette* and in *Niles' National Register*, the grounds of the naval station were tastefully laid out with a variety of shrubs and flowers. The station boasted four cisterns each holding 300,000 gallons of water for ships, a ship house, four brick storehouses, a blacksmith shop, and a twenty-two gun saluting battery. In the artillery park were five large guns, each weighing more than seven tons and capable of throwing 125 pound shot three miles. One of these was of the largest type gun made at that time and was called the "Columbia." By this time a hospital, too, had been completed and it contained a 1,300 volume library. Still under construction were two brick buildings for officers' quarters. Each building was two stories with a basement and was embellished with collonades on all four sides. In addition to the dry dock, a 320 foot granite wharf was under construction.¹² Thus by the beginning of the Civil War the Pensacola navy yard was at last becoming a significant installation.

POPULATION

The population of Pensacola had been a polyglot one since the beginning of the American period, possibly even more diverse in its character than was that of St. Augustine, due to a sizeable influx of French-speaking people from Louisiana. In 1821 Jackson estimated the population to be about 3,000 with the French, Spanish, and American inhabitants being the major groups. By 1822 the yellow fever epidemic and the departure of many adventurers had brought the population down to about 1,000. From this figure the city increased in size very slowly, reaching about 2,300 by 1839. The United States Census of 1850 showed 2,164 people in Pensacola, of whom 741 were Negro slaves

12. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1849; *Pensacola Gazette*, December 16, 1848.

and 350 were free Negroes. The total population by 1860 was 2,876.

The 1850 census was one of the earliest to give detailed information about the character of the population and it shows Pensacola to have been almost as diverse in its makeup as it had been in 1821. In 1850 there were seventy-seven whites and fifty Negroes who had been born in Florida during Spanish rule, and there were seventeen whites and fourteen free Negroes who had been born in Louisiana under Spanish rule. In addition there were 139 foreign inhabitants from eighteen different countries. The largest numbers were from Spain, Ireland, Germany, England, and France in that order. The American population came from twenty-one states and the District of Columbia.

The foreign-born population made a rather important contribution to the life of the community. Several prominent merchants had been born under Spanish rule, men like Joseph Sierra, Joseph Tapiola, and Francisco Moreno, while others like Germany's John Honaker and Henry Hyer, England's George W. Barkley, and Ireland's James Queen had come from abroad. The foreign community also provided two teachers in the persons of James H. Loyd of England and Juan B. Lopez of Spain. Among the clergy were a Protestant preacher, Peter Donan from Scotland, and the Catholic priest Claudius Rampon from France. In the ranks of the craftsmen were such Spanish colonials as the Rioboo brothers, Vincente and Joseph, who were watchmakers and blacksmiths respectively, and Henry Ahrens, a German tailor. The local apothecary, Desiderio Quina, had been born during the Spanish regime. Not to be overlooked, of course, is the wealthy Innerarity family of Scotland who engaged in a variety of commercial pursuits.

One hundred fifty-eight of the inhabitants of Pensacola were slaveholders and there were 741 slaves in the city. These persons undoubtedly made a significant contribution in the labor which they provided. Little of their activity is a matter of record, however, not even their names being recorded in the census. On the other hand, the free Negroes, 350 in number, were enumerated just as were white inhabitants and it is interesting to note that many were craftsmen and small businessmen who owned considerable property. One of the wealthiest was Ambrose Vaughan, a Virginia-born Negro who was a cabinetmaker by trade. Also not-

able were Ramon Lambert of Louisiana who was a tailor and Marianno Domingues who was born under Spanish rule in Florida. Though Domingues was a laborer, he owned property valued at \$1,000. The occupations which free Negroes followed in Pensacola were remarkably varied and included butcher, tinner, carpenter, tailor, shoemaker, clerk, bricklayer, barber, cigarmaker, cabinetmaker, sailor, and farmer.¹³

PENSACOLA POLITICS

It was inevitable that early politics in Florida should have been characterized by sectionalism. The size of the territory, the difficulty of communication, and the concentration of the population at the two extremes of Pensacola and St. Augustine made the governing of the region from either extremity a clumsy, inefficient business. Both areas wished to dominate the government and both were dissatisfied when the other gained the upper hand. Pensacola had an initial advantage over St. Augustine in being Jackson's seat of government and in being the site of the first session of the Legislative Council. In addition, the first elected delegate to Congress in 1823 was Pensacola's Richard K. Call. Yet in spite of these events political power rapidly slipped away from West Florida as the population of Middle and East Florida as compared with that of West Florida, grew by leaps and bounds. In 1823 the Legislative Council met in St. Augustine and in 1824 it permanently settled down in the new capital city, Tallahassee, to which William P. DuVal also removed the executive branch of the government. In 1825 Joseph M. White replaced Call in Congress and, though White was not markedly biased toward any section, Pensacola had lost her vigorous champion in Washington. The Congressional seat passed to East Florida partisans with the election of Charles Downing in 1837, followed by David Levy in 1841.

Pensacola's declining voice in Florida affairs was marked by a strong feeling among many of her citizens that Florida west of the Apalachicola River should be annexed to Alabama. The people

13. Most of the information on population comes from microfilm copies of the manuscript census returns in the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida. The originals are in the National Archives. Reference was also made to the published census volumes for 1840, 1850, 1860, and 1870.

of Pensacola felt that geography made them naturally a part of Alabama and that as part of that state their importance would be greater. Alabamians apparently felt the same way, for as early as 1822 Senator John Williams of that state had unsuccessfully attempted to get West Florida ceded to Alabama. In addition to geography, the arguments for the separation of East and West Florida and annexation of the latter to Alabama emphasized the great distances separating the populated parts of Florida, the protection which Pensacola might readily derive from the Alabama militia, the historic fact that the sections had been two provinces under English and Spanish rule, and the greater ease of centrally locating a capital if West Florida should be detached.

Though Jackson had thought that the people of West Florida opposed annexation to Alabama, the House of Representatives received a petition favoring such annexation as early as March, 1822. *Niles' Register*, published in Baltimore, took up the cause later and for years it was a controversial issue. Letters to the *Pensacola Gazette* in 1826 plugged for annexation, though the editor announced that there were citizens in Pensacola opposed to annexation who regretted the agitation of the issue. In 1840, the senate of Florida petitioned the United States Senate in opposition to division of the territory, but a public meeting in Pensacola in the same year requested the separation of West Florida and its union with Alabama. In 1844, the territorial legislature reversed itself and asked that the territory be separated, presumably so that West Florida might join Alabama.

There was a relationship between the statehood movement in Florida and the attempts to separate the territory into two parts. Those in East Florida who favored separation usually opposed Florida's early entrance into the union. In West Florida they usually were for annexation to Alabama. In Pensacola, then, sentiment for incorporation into Alabama went hand in hand with opposition to Florida becoming a state. In the West Florida port city few voices were raised for admission to the union until the Constitutional Convention of 1838-1839 which drew up the basic law for the proposed state of Florida. In that convention Escambia county was represented by Benjamin D. Wright and Thomas M. Blount. Blount was a leading businessman and Wright was editor of the *Gazette* and a leading political figure. Wright had gradually been coming around to statehood since 1837 when

he wrote that "many things have occurred . . . which have nearly changed the opinion entertained by us only a year ago."¹⁴

By the time Florida was admitted to the union a vigorous two-party system had developed and Escambia county became a stronghold of the Whig party, with the *Pensacola Gazette* becoming noted as one of the outstanding Whig newspapers of the state. In the decade following the 1845 admission a number of Whigs represented Pensacola and Escambia county in the legislature. The first state senator was Wright who resigned after the initial session of the legislature and was replaced by Robert A. Mitchell. The senate seat was held in 1846 by William W. J. Kelley and from 1847 to 1852 by Owen M. Avery. A Democrat, Samuel Z. Gonzalez, succeeded to the senate in 1852. Both Kelley and Avery served in the state house of representatives before going to the senate. Other Whig representatives included James R. Riley, Charles A. Tweed, Joseph Quigles, and William N. Richburg. The house seat went to a Democrat, Walker Anderson, in 1850.

Pensacola supplied none of Florida's governors or congressmen in the pre-civil War era, but she did provide one United States Senator, Jackson Morton. Elected by the legislature in 1849, Morton was a prominent Whig and a noted Pensacola businessman. He had been elected a presidential elector in 1848, pledged to Zachary Taylor. His election to the Senate was the occasion for a bitter sectional contest. Middle and East Florida Whigs united behind George T. Ward of Tallahassee, but West Florida Whigs insisted that the senatorship was due their section and pressed the claims of Morton. Due to the narrow margin of Whigs over Democrats in the legislature, the West Florida Whigs were able to maneuver Morton's election with the solid support of the minority Democrats. Morton was the only Whig ever to represent Florida in the United States Senate.¹⁵

During the 1850's the national Whig party split apart and died on the slavery issue. By 1856 the party in Florida had vanished, to be replaced by the American party. Pensacola did not support this new organization, however, and rapidly became a Democratic region. Before the fifties the bulwark of Democratic strength in the city had been the navy yard precinct, which the

14. *Pensacola Gazette*, November 4, 1837.

15. Morton and Whig influence in Pensacola are both discussed in this author's monograph *The Whigs of Florida*, published by the University of Florida Press.

Gazette referred to as the "Gibraltar" of Democracy. When the American legislative candidates, A. W. Nicholson and Benjamin Wright, were defeated in 1856, the *Gazette* attributed it to navy influence, bribery, and illegal voting.¹⁶

The shift to the ranks of the Democrats which was evidenced in Pensacola was closely related to national developments. Strong union sentiment had been voiced there since the *Gazette* in 1833 had praised Jackson's stem measures to counter nullification in South Carolina, adding that "it is quite a pity that these kind of State proceedings had not been similarly met in the various cases of Georgia." As late as 1847, when John C. Calhoun was spoken of favorably for the presidency, the *Gazette* noted: "The people of Florida are no nullifiers, and whatever, in other respects, might be the services and merits of Mr. C., they would remember this against him as a deadly sin, unatoned for and even unrepented of."¹⁷ In 1850 the people of Pensacola had put their faith in the great Compromise of Henry Clay to settle sectional differences in the Union. Shortly afterwards, however, sectional discord reached new heights which saw the destruction of the Whigs, the party largely responsible for engineering the compromise measures. All over the South men began to turn to the Democratic party as the last hope of protection for the South. In Pensacola this shifting opinion was marked by the election of one Democratic legislator in 1850, another in 1852, and an endorsement of the whole Democratic slate by 1856. When Florida left the union in 1861, Pensacola was a Democratic region and was in support of secession.

In 1856, a new wave of resentment against the dominance of other regions in state affairs had swept Pensacola, and the sentiment for annexation to Alabama came alive again. This time the partisans of separation succeeded in getting through the legislature a bill allowing a referendum on the question. They were much taken aback when Governor James E. Broome vetoed the measure. The *Gazette* noted the displeasure of the people with the veto and declared that "annexation is desired by a large majority of the people."¹⁸ Yet in the succeeding four years, secession of Florida from the union increasingly loomed as a more important question than secession of West Florida from Florida.

16. *Pensacola Gazette*, October 12, 1850, October 30, 1856.

17. *Ibid.*, March 6, 1847.

18. *Ibid.*, January 19, 1856.