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PENSACOLA, FLORIDA: A MILITARY CITY IN THE NEW SOUTH

by JAMES R. MCGOVERN *

WHEN Henry Grady extolled the emergence of the "New South," he was primarily referring to the advent of an urban industrial civilization in that region; his conception of the "New South" did not foresee the possibility that urbanism in many southern communities would occur without industrialization. While urban history is more than a bookshelf of analyses of individual cities, localized studies of the widely divergent types of cities that make up the "New South" in the twentieth century would enrich our knowledge of the concept. Pensacola, Florida, emerged as a city in the "New South" in the period 1900 to 1945. This is evident from a marked population increase, as well as the manifestation of typical urban attitudes and social problems.¹ Between 1900 and 1945 Pensacola evolved from a provincial city (17,747) with low mobility for its citizens, defined community and family sanctions, and close neighborhood association, to a metropolitan city of 80,000, with patent heterogeneity, population turnover, and problems of social disorder.² Pensa-

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1. An essay defining the city as a place of dense, permanent population, as well as a way of life characterized by transitoriness, secondary contacts, heterogeneity, and a specialization in function, is Louis Wirth's "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIV (July 1938), 1-24. Max Weber has emphasized the nationalizing impact of city life. See Don Martindale, introduction to Max Weber, *The City* (New York, 1958), 62. On social disorganization as typical of cities, see Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore, *The Study of Urbanization* (New York, 1966), 20-21. See also John Sirjamaki, *The Sociology of Cities* (New York, 1964), 265, 294-307, which supports analyses of cities as heterogeneous communities dominated by national rather than local influences and as places of fluidity in social relationships. For a similar view, see Scott Greer, *The Emerging Metropolis* (New York, 1961), 86.
2. *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900. Population, Part 1* (Washington, 1901), 612. On metro population of 76,686, see R. L. Polk and Co., *Polk's Pensacola City Directory, 1946* (Richmond, 1946), 15.

cola's urbanization reflects the effects of a military rather than industrial-based local economy.

Because of its port, Pensacola, even in 1900, was more sophisticated than most southern cities of comparable size, yet it still remained basically a traditional southern community.³ Most of its inhabitants were born in rural Florida or Alabama, and they were not comfortable with the colorful and rather boisterous figures who abounded near the city's waterfront.⁴ Pensacola's relative isolation from cosmopolitan cities reinforced the localism and sectionalism of its residents.⁵

Local newspapers were filled with homespun and country fair sorts of trivia. Advertisements, classified ads, and information of a local nature comprised over fifty per cent of the content of the *Pensacola Journal* in 1905, with explicit local news, editorials, and comments largely about Pensacola contributing another twenty per cent.⁶ The Civil War and the way of life

3. Pensacola's population included many descendants of European colonialism. In 1971, as part of the sesquicentennial of Florida becoming an American territory, a Jackson Day Committee in Pensacola traced the ancestry of French and Spanish families from colonial times to the present. See James R. McGovern, ed., *Andrew Jackson and Pensacola* (Pensacola, 1974), 110. In 1900 there were 1,370 foreign-born persons in Escambia County out of 17,747 residents. Of these, 122 were born in Italy, 235 in Germany, and 260 were from Scandinavian countries. *Twelfth Census*, 742. There were probably about 200 Jews in Pensacola. Jacob R. Marcus, archivist for the American Jewish Archives, documents that there were seventy-three members of the Temple Beth-El in 1900. Jacob R. Marcus to author, January 14, 1975.
4. The 1870 census for Escambia County, with Pensacola as its principal community, reveals that forty-seven per cent of the white residents of the county (5,041) were born in Florida and the total southern-born population was nearly eighty-seven per cent of the county's white population. Among Negroes, ninety-nine per cent came from the South. *Escambia County Census, 1870, Population Schedules, Florida, Alachua to Jefferson County* (Washington, D.C.), microfilm, reel 33. An investigation of the place of birth of parents having children in Pensacola for the years 1900, 1905, and 1910 shows that approximately ninety-five per cent were born in the deep South. Birth Records, 1890-1900, 1901-1910, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Escambia County Health Department.
5. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad supplied the only railroad connection with the rest of the country. Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad* (New York, 1972), 157. Brent Road, the major thoroughfare leading out of the city, was often impassible. *Pensacola Journal*, July 12, 1905; and J. Osgood Bellah, "Reminiscences from Pensacola Back to Pensacola, 1903-1935" (unpublished ms, Pensacola Historical Museum, 1953), 5.
6. Horrace G. Davis, Jr., "Pensacola Newspapers, 1821-1900," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (January-April, 1959), 443-44. Estimates of percentages are based on samplings of the *Pensacola Journal*, January 5, April 5, and August 5, 1903.

for which Southerners had fought that war were still vivid recollections in the early years of the twentieth century. A speaker on Confederate Memorial Day in Pensacola in 1905 declared that the South had “fought because equal rights were denied equal states.”⁷ One of the “largest audiences” of the season in 1908 gathered in Armory Hall to attend services commemorating Jefferson Davis.⁸ The example of the town’s gentry still dictated norms of social propriety and child-raising. Women were especially prized for their gentleness, sensibilities, and sexual innocence in the best traditions of the “Southern Lady.” Pensacola’s upper class women prided themselves on the good form which characterized the old southern aristocracy. They had cooks, maids, and yardmen. They presided over dinner in grand style; linens and forks in the right place, and food served from the left side.⁹ Local men kept all “respectable women” from the “coarse appetites” of objectionable blacks and away from the vicinity of the city’s notorious red-light district.¹⁰ While Pensacola in 1900 was not so much the typical small southern community just serving an agricultural region, the town’s leaders had not yet committed themselves to modernization.

Pensacola’s physical appearance was hardly modern either. The business district was made up mostly of two or three-story buildings. Merchandise was still hawked on the sidewalks.¹¹ The city was redolent with offensive odors from fish and turpentine on the waterfront, horse dung on the streets, and the prevailing smell of privies almost everywhere.¹² Ships moving in and out of port and the buzzing of lumber saws dominated sounds on the

7. *Pensacola Journal*, April 27, 1905.

8. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1908.

9. Interviews with Florence Marple, April 10, 1975, and with Mrs. Edward P. Nickinson, February 13, 1973. Both women were conversant with norms of women’s behavior in the area in that period. See also the reference to the “good and gracious influences of a mother or a wife or both,” in the *Pensacola Journal*, December 3, 1911, and the text of a sermon, “Man is known better by his public life, woman by her private life.” *ibid.*, May 28, 1916.

10. The Board of Public Safety ordered saloons, particularly those patronized by Negroes, to be cleared of all pictures and statues of nude women. *Pensacola Journal*, October 9, 1906.

11. Bellah, “Reminiscences from Pensacola,” 3-8.

12. In 1899, city inspectors reported that only one in six houses had sewer connections; 3,778 houses had privies; and there were twenty-nine urinals in the city. *Minutes of City Council*, July 5, 1899 (City Hall, Pensacola), 97.

waterfront. Pensacola lacked adequate public services; garbage, for example, was deposited just outside the city limits west of Pensacola. Mayor James M. Hilliard reported to the City Council in 1899 that Pensacola's streets were in "deplorable condition" and that "in many places there are no lights . . . and more than half our city is without drainage of any kind."¹³ Ferdinand Plaza, the city's principal park, he declared, "has more the appearance of dumping grounds for garbage carts than anything else." The wooden sidewalks were "pestholes for vermin." The city's drainage facilities consisted of two large sandy bottom ditches which carried run-off from North Hill by circuitous routes to Pensacola Bay. One councilman described them as so miserable as "to profit only doctors, druggists and undertakers."¹⁴

In the late 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, progressive attitudes began to transform the city.¹⁵ The Chamber of Commerce, real estate promoters, the editors of the *Pensacola Journal* and the *Bliss Quarterly*, and the manager of Pensacola's new San Carlos Hotel gave special impetus to the "New Pensacola." The *Journal's* editor, Frank L. Mayes, asserted that Pensacola only needed more of the "Atlanta spirit."¹⁶ His editorial, "Wanted A Few First Class Funerals in Pensacola," described his most straight-forward feelings about people who blocked progress.¹⁷ Progressives believed that Pensacola's proximity to the Panama Canal assured a brilliant economic future.¹⁸ Anticipated increases in shipping would lead to the development of manufacturing, and Pensacola might even become the premier industrial city of the Gulf. The city did experience moderate growth in population and income in the decade 1900-1910 as Pensacolians speculated on their city's future prosperity and constructed office buildings and a modern hotel, paved roads, installed sewers, and laid out several attractive new suburbs.¹⁹

13. Mayor James M. Hilliard reports to the council, Minutes of City Council, June 14, 1899, 56-63.

14. Minutes of City Council, March 21, 1908, 395.

15. Mayor W. E. Anderson made this point in a talk at a Chamber of Commerce dinner in 1897. Draft of speech, P. K. Yonge scrapbook, 1875-1917, Ledger 48 (P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville).

16. *Pensacola Journal*, May 21, 1908.

17. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1906.

18. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1913; *Pensacolian*, II (June 1910), 11; and *Bliss Quarterly* magazine, II (March 1904), 48.

19. Pensacola grew in population from 17,747 in 1900, to 22,982 in 1910, a

The city's industrial development did not occur, however, with the opening of the Canal in 1914. Community leaders had overestimated prospects of Pensacola's enrichment from the Panama Canal since Mobile and New Orleans, the latter with outstanding railroad connections, were not much farther from Panama than was their own city. Since Mobile was linked with Birmingham by an extensive river system which facilitated trade in its direction, it also pre-empted Pensacola's exports. Besides, the state of Alabama protected its port by exploiting the advantages of intrastate commerce and by appropriating large sums of money to modernize its facilities under a state port authority.²⁰ Pensacola failed to become an industrial city primarily because of inherent geographic and economic disadvantages. Timber and naval stores, the city's principal industries, were declining by 1910, and the city could not attract new industries.²¹ Conditions for industrialization were not present. While raw materials declined, markets were restricted because of the city's waterlocked position between the Perdido and Escambia rivers to poor areas in southern Alabama.

Optimism prevailed, however, among Pensacola's leaders. They called for "new politics," through an efficient and honest

gain of thirty per cent in one decade, impressive, though less than Mobile's seventy-four per cent increase over the same period. *Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the Year 1920, I, Population, 1920* (Washington, D.C. 1921), 82. Pensacola experienced a major building boom between 1906 and 1910. Several new office buildings, including the ten-story American National Bank building, the Citizen's and People's Bank, the City Hall, and the San Carlos Hotel, were completed in this period. *Pensacola Journal*, January 14, September 23, 1906, March 6, December 23, 1908, January 8, 1909, and April 19, 1910. Meanwhile, new residential areas developed on the west, north, and east of the city. *Ibid.*, April 17, 18, 1910.

20. For example, the Alabama Railroad Commission cut rates on fish shipped from Mobile to Birmingham below rates from Pensacola to Birmingham though the distances were similar. Edward L. Ullman, "Mobile: Industrial Seaport and Trade Center" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1943), 64-65, 70.
21. The *Pensacola Journal*, July 13, 1909, expresses concern that forests were "fast passing away." The Pensacola Chamber of Commerce acknowledged the passing of the lumber industry as well. *Progressing Pensacola and West Florida* (Pensacola, 1908), 11. On naval stores see *Pensacola Journal*, September 19, 1915, and *Savannah Weekly Naval Stores Review and Journal of Trade*, (April 7, 1923), 6 (Rare Book Room, University of West Florida, Pensacola). One new industry that did come into Pensacola was the Newport Company (1916), a manufacturer of naval stores which employed about 200 workers. Janice Croft, *A Twin Success Story: Pensacola and Newport* (typescript, June 30, 1968, Pensacola Historical Museum), 6.

local government which would foster urban services commensurate with Pensacola's future as a major port and manufacturing center. The city adopted a commission form of government in 1913, largely because the business and professional classes believed it would help fulfill cherished objectives.²² The new government, in keeping with typical processes of urbanization in America during the period, responded to the desire of public-spirited citizens and initiated changes leading to a better-lighted, healthier, cleaner city with adequate urban police and fire protection and improved educational opportunities.²³ The city budget nearly tripled between 1900 and 1914 despite only a moderate increase in population.²⁴ Local progressives, buoyed by the prospects of economic betterment and facts of civic improvement, prophesied a great future for Pensacola.

It is doubtful if they reflected on the impact that urbanism and industrialization would have on traditional patterns of behavior or thought. If they did, they had little to fear in the period 1900 to 1920 when Pensacola was still governed by community sanctions of class, race, and role. North Hill was the elite area and provided the city's acknowledged social and cultural leaders who lived for the most part in its Queen Anne and Greek Revival-style houses.²⁵ Its leading citizens-lumbermen, bankers, lawyers, doctors, and merchants-were usually Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Catholic.²⁶ East Hill was inhabited

22. Members of Pensacola's Progressive League, the principal organization which endorsed the commission form of government, came mostly from the city's professional and business classes. *Pensacola Journal*, July 1, 1910, lists the charter members of the League. See also R. L. Polk and Co.'s, *Pensacola City Directory, 1913* (Jacksonville, 1913).
23. See Blake McKelvey, *The Urbanization of America, [1860-1905]* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1963), 73-126. Pensacola expanded its sewer system (Minutes of the City Council, September 14, 1910, 313), removed health hazards from garbage disposal (*Pensacola Journal*, November 13, 1913), and introduced efficient lighting and fire and police protection (*Pensacola Journal*, June 14, 1916). For police and fire departments, see Minutes of City Council, November 20, 1910, 29-30, and compare with Ordinances of the City of Pensacola, 1916, 343-45, when twice as much money was spent for these urban services. On innovations in education, see Yonge Papers, folders 35-37 (Special Collections, University of West Florida Archives).
24. Compare Minutes of City Council, November 20, 1910, 29-30, in which the budget was nearly \$100,000 and the Ordinances of the City, 1913, 214, when it was \$280,000.
25. Norman Simons and James R. McGovern, *Pensacola in Pictures and Prints* (Pensacola, 1974), 77-82, illustrates the styles of the period.
26. Interviews with J. McHenry Jones, July 25, 1973; Richard H. Merritt, April 17, 1974; Mrs. E. P. Nickinson and Anna Switzer, April 15, 1973.

mostly by middle class residents and artisans, who for the most part were Methodists and Baptists. They were on speaking, but not social, terms with people from North Hill, and did not belong to their elite clubs or share in their sumptuous marriages. Immigrants also occupied a distinct niche, mostly as servicers of the more established population. Both the Jews and the Greeks, comprising together about two per cent of the population in 1920, were generally well received in Pensacola because they aspired to the "good citizen" image. Reform Jews from Germany were successful because of their middle class values, important servicing role as merchants, and because they were careful to avoid the risk of community censure. Where they were different in religious and social customs, they kept those differences to themselves. Even this accommodation did not win them admission into North Hill social circles however, and they themselves shunned later-arriving Orthodox Jews, partly for fear that identification with them might jeopardize their own status.²⁷ The position of Greeks, who worked mostly with the fishing fleet or in the restaurant or grocery businesses, was socially, politically, and economically inferior to the reform Jews. They lived mostly in working class areas on the southside and socialized almost exclusively among themselves, with the church serving as nucleus for their group activities.²⁸

The city's blacks, representing over fifty per cent of the population in 1900, lost ground economically and politically during early decades of the twentieth century. They experienced the full effects of the Jim Crow system and suffered serious economic decline. Indigenous blacks who were familiar with the ways of the dominant white population lost status and income because they came to be identified with large numbers of blacks migrating from Alabama and rural Florida. The latter were often ignorant or contemptuous of the prevailing social norms established by whites and produced a negative impression of the race as a whole. Whereas marginal Greek and Jewish residents accommodated to their new society and thereby succeeded, the

27. A membership list of the Temple Beth-El in 1931 reveals that forty of 100 persons of known occupations were in clothing, grocery, or jewelry businesses. List supplied by Amelia Wagenheim, historian of the Temple. See also interview with Irvin Greenhut, December 3, 1974.

28. Mrs. C. N. Frenkel to author, October 4, 1974; and Abe Levin to author, November 17, 1974.

failure of sufficient blacks to do so provided whites with a rationale to stereotype them negatively. For whites, Pensacola's progress seemingly depended on the continued subordination and segregation of its black population.²⁹ Even Creoles, who lost their special status and were listed as colored in the official city directories as Pensacola became more segregationist, tried to escape the onus of socializing with Negroes by employing severely discriminatory policies in clubs and churches against blacks whom they regarded as inferior.³⁰

Women from all classes of society, while not segregated as a sex during the early days of Pensacola's modernization, lived according to rigid definitions of role. They were enveloped in a climate of family and church. Those from the middle and upper classes devoted whatever other time they had to ladies' societies, to philanthropy, and the arts. There was another group of women in Pensacola who lived completely outside the role of polite society. Prostitutes were segregated in Pensacola's unofficially sanctioned red-light district which accommodated the port city's large number of free-lancing males.³¹ They were ghettoized on the "Line," and paid the price for the lifestyle of their more virtuous sisters.

The "flapper" phenomenon especially demonstrated the increasing complex role of Pensacola's new women. Those pictured in the *Journal* wore short hair, bare arms, and low necklines.³² The local flapper also smoked, went without stockings, and wore the popular one-piece bathing suit.³³ "Necking parties," while not socially approved, became a fact of life in Pensacola, as elsewhere in America. Indeed, one such party took place in the early afternoon in Pensacola's downtown Plaza. According to

29. Interviews with Corinne Jones, September 18, 1975; Rosebud Robinson and Rex Harvey, April 15, 1973. Donald H. Bragaw, "Status of Negroes in a Southern Progressive Era: Pensacola, 1896-1920," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LI (January 1973), 281-302.

30. Linda V. Ellsworth, "Remnant of a Culture: Creoles In Pensacola" (unpublished ms, West Florida Museum, Pensacola); interview with T. H. McVoy, April 13, 1973; and Donald H. Bragaw, "Loss of Identity on Pensacola's Past: A Creole Footnote," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, L (April 1972), 414-18.

31. On the relationship of the city's ladies to the red-light district, see James R. McGovern, "'Sporting Life on the Line': Prostitution in Progressive Era Pensacola," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LIV (October 1975), 131-44.

32. *Pensacola Journal*, April 1, 1923, January 15, 1928.

33. Interview with Anna L. Switzer.

the newspaper report, "The couple made love in ardent fashion, oblivious of their surroundings and audience-until police officers interfered. They were taken to the police station but not held when Sgt. Johnson ordered them to go 'out in the woods.'" ³⁴ Young married women from the better classes indulged in prohibited liquor on occasion, and dancing parties became increasingly popular.

The new freedom between the sexes sometimes led to tragic consequences as in the case of two separate incidents of shootings in "lovers' lanes" in the vicinity of Bayview Park and Scenic Highway in 1931. ³⁵ Illegitimate births also increased dramatically during the 1920s as compared with the pre-war period. Records in the Bureau of Vital Statistics reveal only fifteen illegitimate births among the 503 recorded births in 1910 (three per cent), but in 1925 there were sixty-three in 1,814 recorded births, nearly eight per cent. ³⁶ That abortion was being practiced at this time might be inferred from the death of a white, unmarried woman from alleged "post operative complications" in a hospital operated by a black midwife. ³⁷

The Navy's presence assisted the social emancipation of Pensacola's young females. Generally speaking, women from middle and upper class families looked to naval officers as excellent catches. ³⁸ As each graduating class at the Naval Air Station (N.A.S.) wound up its assignment in Pensacola, young women seemed to think that there might never be another group like them. Fliers escorted them to dances at the San Carlos Hotel and the country club, especially the gala New Year's Ball given by naval officers. There were also the "solo parties," given after members of a class had completed their first solo flight. Officers also kept an open house on Saturday nights at Barrachoville (Spanish meaning, "drunkville"), where they served corn liquor to local belles. ³⁹

34. *Pensacola Journal*, July 18, 1929.

35. *Ibid.*, February 1, October 24, 1931.

36. Bernard Skinner, "Legitimate and Illegitimate Births in Escambia County, Florida" (unpublished research paper in author's file).

37. *Pensacola Journal*, August 12, 1927.

38. Interviews with Anna L. Switzer; J. McHenry Jones; Francis P. Taylor, October 17, 1974; and Mrs. E. P. Nickinson. By 1930, over 100 local women were married to naval officers. *Pensacola Journal*, October 25, 1931.

39. Interviews with Anna L. Switzer and Francis P. Taylor.

The local economy in the 1920s was increasingly forced to depend on the Naval Air Station, as hopes of attracting outside capital evaporated with the collapse of the Florida land boom. The older industries-lumbering and naval stores-continued their decline and thus precipitated a further decrease in the city's export trade. Perhaps the coming of the Frisco Railroad in 1928, and the area's road and bridge building programs in the late 1920s, might have produced salutary results if the Depression had not paralyzed trade and confidence so soon after their completion.⁴⁰ Pensacola's relatively poor performance in industries, real estate promotion, and transportation prompted an observer in the local paper to describe the Naval Air Station in 1928 as "the city's greatest industrial plant."⁴¹ As a result, Pensacola's business leaders turned increasingly to the Navy, which by 1930 was probably supplying one-fourth of the total salaries in Pensacola, for economic growth.⁴² They conducted business relations with the Navy with great entrepreneurial skill.⁴³ While the decision to cultivate the growth of the Naval Air Station was beneficial as well as inevitable, this pact with the government welfare

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40. Pensacola's Scenic Highway was completed in 1929 with the opening of the Pensacola Bay Bridge (1931) and the bridge linking the city with Santa Rosa Island. *Pensacola Journal*, June 12, June 14, 1931. The Lillian Highway Bridge across the Perdido River was completed in 1931.
41. *Ibid.*, June 28, 1928. There were 437 civilians employed on a per diem basis at the Naval Air Station in 1922; 628 in 1927; and 853 in 1932. "History of Naval Training Bases, Pensacola, Florida" (U. S. Navy Operational Archives, Washington Naval Shipyard, Washington, D. C., n.d.), Supply and Accounting 1, part 12, appendix 15. The station reportedly employed 670 permanent enlisted personnel in 1923 before its major expansion in 1927-28. *Pensacola Journal*, June 20, 1923. The entering class of fliers in July 1925, was reportedly 100. *Ibid.*, July 31, 1925. Disbursements to military and civilian personnel augmented from \$2,301,000 in 1921 to \$4,233,000 in 1930. "Naval Air Training Bases," appendix 3.
42. According to the 1934 *Pensacola City Directory*, total salaries for wholesale and retail businesses in Pensacola, excluding the military, was \$13,500,000. R. L. Polk, *Pensacola City Directory* (Jacksonville, 1934), 13-14. In 1930, N.A.S. was disbursing \$4,233,000 to its military and civilian personnel. "Naval Air Training Bases," Volume I, part 12; "History of Supply Corps Activities" (United States Navy Operational Archives, Washington Naval Shipyard, Washington, D.C., n.d.), appendix 7.
43. For example, local business and fraternal organizations donated land to the Navy to facilitate the expansion of its fixed wing training program. *Pensacola Journal*, May 28, 1920; F. M. Blount to Duncan W. Fletcher, February 2, 1927 (Special Collections, University of West Florida); and *Pensacola Journal*, February 8, 1927.

might have had negative effects because prosperity linked to the Navy may have throttled local initiative.⁴⁴

Until 1920, Pensacola's identity as a city in the New South was chiefly characterized by its commission form of government and elaboration of urban services. Its modernization and urbanization proceeded rapidly thereafter. The Naval Air Station, which opened January 13, 1914, provided an increasing number of jobs. Federal economic supports during the Depression era and the augmenting impact of modern technology were also responsible for the accelerating effect. Formidable challenges to the old orders developed in the late 1920s. Automobiles, movies, improved news coverage through international news services, and an increasing complement of naval personnel all threatened loyalties of locality.

Automobiles provided many Pensacolians with unprecedented opportunities for new experiences and personal freedom. While the exact number of cars sold in Pensacola and Escambia County in the early 1920s is unknown, a boom in automobile purchases followed World War I. The *Pensacola Journal* reported that 1919 was "the most active [year] in the history of the automobile business" as "all classes had machines."⁴⁵ A local auto dealer's association was organized in 1920 and a great variety of cars were purchased from throughout the area.⁴⁶ One Chevrolet dealer recalls selling over twenty new and used cars each month during the period.⁴⁷ The *Journal* noted in 1925 that for the first time the New Year's Eve celebration turned Palafox Street into a "veritable race track filled with cars from Wright Street to Zarragossa"; the cars' occupants were yelling and blowing their horns as if from a scene in a wild movie of the period.⁴⁸

44. Interview with James Pace, March 14, 1973. Pace alleged that the reason Pensacola did not obtain a paper mill in the mid-1930s was because the Navy opposed it. Thomas Kennedy believes that Pensacola lost Ingall's Shipyard to Pascagoula because of the Navy's opposition. Thomas Kennedy to author, March 30, 1974. See also *Pensacola Journal*, April 6, 1934.

45. *Pensacola Journal*, January 4, 1920. The Pensacola Electric Company, which operated the street car system, experienced a loss of revenue in the early 1920s attributed to the popularity of automobiles. *Ibid.*, November 1, 1923. In the later 1920s, over 20,000 automobiles were registered in Escambia County. Jerome Tyre (chief of Registration Service, Division of Motor Vehicles), to author, December 2, 1974.

46. *Pensacola Journal*, January 15, 1920.

47. Interview, Bradley Bean with Filo H. Turner, January 12, 1973.

48. *Pensacola Journal*, January 1, 1925.

Like most American cities in the early 1930s, Pensacola could not cope with the hard times of its residents through voluntary social welfare organizations. The city welcomed New Deal emergency programs which were especially generous as a consequence of President Roosevelt's decision to allocate large amounts of relief dollars into projects for national defense such as the Naval Air Station. Expenditures for facilities were matched by a striking growth in numbers of naval officers, trainees, and enlisted men, as well as civilian employees at the Naval Air Station. Yearly disbursements at N.A.S. grew from \$2,408,000 in 1933, to \$6,017,000 in 1936.⁴⁹ While Escambia County received only about \$3,000,000 in FERA, CWA, and WPA monies for non-Naval projects between 1932 and 1936, the federal government dispensed \$15,200,000 in salaries of Naval and civilian employees at N.A.S., \$3,000,000 in WPA and PWA money for the station, and probably more than \$2,000,000 for purchase of supplies and maintenance equipment in Pensacola, a total of \$23,000,000 in a four-year period.⁵⁰ The Navy expended even more money in Pensacola in the late 1930s as the threat of war in Europe grew. The number of cadets expanded rapidly, and several new flying fields were purchased and made operational.⁵¹ As a consequence, even as the city's own industries remained relatively unchanged,

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49. "Naval Air Training Bases," Part 2, appendix 4. Federal disbursements at Ft. Barrancas near Pensacola to members of the Civilian Conservation Corps stationed in several nearby states aggregated \$600,000 per month in 1934. *Pensacola Journal*, April 6, 1934.
50. Estimate of federal expenditures to Escambia County is taken from the *Final Statistical Report of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration* (Washington, D.C., 1942), 255, which shows an appropriation of \$1,519,431. The Civil Works Administration contributed \$721,489 to Pensacola. On WPA monies, approximately \$600,000, see *Pensacola Journal*, November 22, 1935. Estimates of PWA and WPA monies diverted to the Naval Air Station are taken from *ibid.* President Roosevelt's inclination to divert funds from relief to military buildup is established in William D. Reeves, "PWA and Competitive Administration in the New Deal," *Journal of American History*, LX (September 1973). Monies dispensed to civilians and military personnel employed at N.A.S. is taken from "Naval Air Training Bases," part 12, appendix 4.
51. "Naval Air Training Bases," part 12, appendix 4; "History of Supply Corps Activities," appendix 7. Disbursements from 1939 to 1941 were approximately four, eight, and fourteen million dollars. On the doubling of the numbers of aviators trained at Pensacola, see Bureau of Aeronautics, General Correspondence (National Archives, Washington, D.C., n.d.), Vol. 8, Commandant N.A.S. to Chief of Bureau of Aeronautics, August 23, 1937; *ibid.*, Vol. 19, January 11, 1939; and *ibid.*, Vol. 20, September 13, 1939.

Pensacola experienced economic gains, rapid population growth, and significant urbanizing influences.⁵²

By the 1930s Pensacola had clearly become an important center in the New South. Its metro population probably reached 50,000 in the late 1930s and increased to at least 80,000 during World War II. Pensacola's urbanism was characterized by growth in sophistication as well. The presence of an expanded military, together with the interlacing consequences of technology and culture disseminated from the nation's great cities, developed urban mentalities as well as urban dwellers. In general, Pensacola became a more open and tolerant community typical of urbanized areas.⁵³ Ethnic enclaves disappeared. The older, rigid basis of socialization founded on residence, religion, ethnic grouping, and quality of sexual moral life virtually disintegrated in the face of urbanizing forces. While many North Hill residents still adopted superior attitudes toward people from other areas, their friendships with acceptable people from East Hill were now more common. Select sororities such as the Welakas and Entre-Nous had memberships from each area, though these groups did not include members from poorer areas such as West Hill. Dating and double-dating patterns illustrated the same changes. The rules governing ladylike behavior which had kept North Hill girls several notches above their peers became outmoded. Social friendships developed between Christian and Jewish girls and young men on North Hill, and a number of inter-marriages between local Jews and Gentiles occurred-which was unthinkable in an earlier period. Even the relationship between Reform and Orthodox Jews became more equal; rapid economic strides made by the Orthodox Jews during World War II would further close this gap. A rotational system of inviting rabbis and Christian clergymen to deliver the commencement sermon at Pensacola High School was another sign of growing understanding, as was the school board's decision to hire Catholic and married women

52. *Pensacola Journal*, December 11, 1939. *Forbes* magazine listed Pensacola as a "good area" for business sales in early 1940. *Forbes* magazine, XLV (January 15, 1940), 30. Pensacola's population grew from approximately 31,579 in 1930, to 37,449 in 1940, a gain of fifteen per cent. *Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population*, Vol. II, Part 2, 124. Metro population for 1940 was estimated to be approximately 50,000. *Pensacola City Directory, 1942* (Richmond, 1942), 13.

53. *Pensacola Journal*, August 13, November 12, 1939.

as teachers.⁵⁴ Greeks also participated more in the social affairs of the community, and by the 1930s many of them had become prosperous owners of the city's principal restaurants.

A major consequence of the expanded federal presence was to weaken local and sectional identifications among area residents. The Navy sponsored some of the city's most distinctive social affairs, and "town society" was delighted to be entertained at receptions at the commandant's quarters on the station or at cocktail parties sponsored by officers at their homes.⁵⁵ Navy contingents also participated in the local horse shows esteemed by the town's elite. Some Navy wives with professional skills conducted classes in portraiture in the Federal Art Gallery on a voluntary basis, directed and participated in the Pensacola Little Theatre, and sponsored art exhibits.⁵⁶

As Pensacola became more of an urban community, the impact of rural people moving in was not as great as in earlier years. The best index on the number in this sizable group in the local population comes from birth records which show an increase in the number of Pensacola parents who were born in the rural areas of Alabama and northwest Florida.⁵⁷ In 1940, for example, when the local economy was experiencing rapid growth through large military expenditures, only 590 of Pensacola's 2,786 parents were themselves natives of Pensacola, while 616 were born in other areas of Florida and 789 in Alabama. Yet, those in-migrants too felt the effects of the increasingly secular, mobile, heterogeneous, business-oriented, cosmopolitan society in which they lived.

World War II produced greater national influence on the community than at any previous time in its history. The city grew enormously through expansion of the military and its civilian employees and secondarily through industries directly associated with the war effort. Though the city's population increased from 37,449 in 1940, to 43,304 in 1945, Pensacola and

54. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1939.

55. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1938.

56. Interviews with Osgood Anson, July 23, 1975, and Thomas M. Kennedy, April 17, 1974; Irvin Greenhut to author, March 17, 1974; George Wagenheim to author, May 17, 1975; and Mae Partridge to author, April 10, 1975.

57. Birth Records, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Escambia County Health Department, 1935-1940 (Pensacola, Florida).

its vicinity housed at least an additional 100,000 people during those years.⁵⁸ Expenditures through the main disbursing office for N.A.S. (known after 1942 as the Naval Air Training Command in Pensacola) from 1942 to 1945 indicate that the Navy paid civilians approximately \$50,000,000: \$30,000,000 for officers, and \$20,000,000 to the "crew."⁵⁹ Whereas federal spending of more than \$20,000,000 in the 1930s was responsible for Pensacola's relative prosperity during the Depression period, the infusion of at least \$160,000,000 from 1942 to 1945 generated unprecedented income and savings.

There were many indicators of this unparalleled surge in the local economy and progressive urbanization. Bank deposits in Pensacola's three major banks between 1940 and 1945 grew from \$11,000,000 to over \$30,000,000.⁶⁰ Bank clearings simultaneously rose from \$122,000,000 to \$328,000,000.⁶¹ Pensacola reportedly ranked high among American cities in per capita income.⁶² Five years of rapid economic growth produced results which nearly tripled Pensacola's economic achievements between 1900 and 1940. Frantic calls for labor and chronic shortages of housing, despite remedial efforts by the government in setting up a free vocational school for 100 students and building 744 housing units in the Navy Point area, were other barometers of the "boom."⁶³ The San Carlos, a tribute to the golden days of hotel building in 1910, paid off its debts and made plans to modernize and add a new floor costing \$500,000-identical to the original cost of the hotel.⁶⁴ In the fiscal year ending September 30, 1944, the city of

58. *Florida State Census, Seventh Census of the State of Florida, 1945* (Tallahassee, 1945), 72. There were, for example, 28,562 fliers designated at Pensacola during World War II. *Gosport*, August 24, 1945. Their friends and wives, trainees who did not finish the program, and additional workers for the Navy would justify an estimated population of 100,000 additional residents at some time during the war.

59. "Naval Air Training Bases," Vol. I, Part 12, Supply and Accounting, A-16, appendix A. Pensacola experienced modest industrial growth in the 1930s with the opening of St. Regis Paper Company sixteen miles north of the city. *Pensacola Journal*, September 14, 1939; *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Manufacturers 1939*, III, 191.

60. *Rand McNally International Banker's Directory* (Chicago, 1940), 441; *ibid.*, 1945, 447-48.

61. "Bank Debits to Deposit Accounts" (Research Department, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta), 2-3.

62. *Pensacola Journal*, November 23, 1942.

63. *Ibid.*, November 4, 1943.

Pensacola first operated on a \$1,000,000 budget, a hallmark of urban development.⁶⁵

World War II promoted cosmopolitan attitudes among Pensacolians as well as urban growth. As all values and attitudes had to withstand the scrutiny of national goals, petty divisions among religious groups or neighborhoods dissolved. Members of the Catholic Daughters worked side-by-side with the Beth-El Sisterhood and with Protestant women's groups at the U.S.O. and military canteens. Social differences between North Hill and East Hill, already minimized in the 1930s, did not deter the city's ability to sustain six successful war bond drives.⁶⁶

The war promoted Pensacola's urbanization by accelerating a dissolution of community and family controls over individual behavior. Military men typified the transitory, heterogeneous residents of the modern city. Arrests of military men for drunk and disorderly behavior were fairly common occurrences. Other types of social disorder were closely related to the military presence in the area. Pensacola attracted a disproportionate number of unmarried women. Some hoped to find employment as clerks or machinists; others worked outside the former zone for prostitution at all class levels and in all sorts of establishments from back alleys and mobile trailers to plush rooms at the San Carlos Hotel.⁶⁷ Vice and venereal disease in Pensacola distressed Navy and local officials alike.⁶⁸ An article in *Time* magazine, "Red Light for Red Lights," may have contributed to the military's concern when it singled out Pensacola as "one bad spot" in Florida and as being "near the top of the War Department's black list."⁶⁹

Crime, especially among juveniles, also escalated. Knifings, petty thievery, and grand larceny involving youths were frequently reported. In July 1945, approximately half of the 118 court cases awaiting trial involved persons under twenty-one

64. *Ibid.*, September 9, 1944.

65. City of Pensacola Ordinance No. 18-43, August 27, 1943, 12.

66. *Pensacola Journal*, December 2, 17, 1944.

67. Interview, George Crain with John Cordell, May 15, 1975.

68. Minutes of the Council, 1931-43, November 7, 1941, 512. Note approval of action by city authorities on part of commander of N.A.S., Admiral G. D. Murray, in *ibid.*, 596.

69. *Time* magazine, XXXIX (April 27, 1942), 55-56. See also Commissioner's Court Records, 10, 1938-42, 526 (Escambia County Courthouse), which relates to the efforts by the county commissioners to eradicate V.D.

years of age.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, a survey in the local paper suggested that illegitimate births were increasing because young women were being left alone by working parents.⁷¹ The local community also lost influence in determining the marital prospects for its young people. About one in seven servicemen who married in Escambia County during the war wed a Pensacola girl.⁷²

Although Pensacola's blacks, of all groups, were least affected by urbanizing and nationalizing pressures during World War II, they too benefited in several ways. The number of blacks registered to vote increased from 289 in 1941, to 1,066 in 1943.⁷³ The need for skilled fliers, regardless of color, exploded myths of racial inferiority of blacks. Three Pensacola blacks became officers and fliers in the Army Air Force: Lieutenant James R. Polkinghorne, Jr., Lieutenant Scott C. Jones, Jr., and Lieutenant Daniel (Chappie) James, Jr.⁷⁴ All had been trained to fly the P-38 in the 96th Pursuit Squadron at Tuskegee Institute. Both Polkinghorne and Jones died in action in Italy, and their remarkable dedication to their country won local commendation.⁷⁵ General Daniel James would later become the highest ranking black officer in the history of the American military. (The state office building in Pensacola is named in his honor.) Thus, the social dislocations prompted by the national emergency began to change the white image of some blacks, though they still basically constituted a sub-community similar to urban groupings of blacks in other American cities of the period.

Pensacola's urbanization occurred without significant industrialization primarily because of expansion in the area's naval facilities and personnel. Technology and media culture supplemented the impact of the military in contributing to cosmopolitan and secular views and dissolution of neighborhood and com-

70. The City Council described a "noteworthy increase" in "child delinquency" in 1943. Police were ordered to enforce curfew laws requiring "children" under sixteen off the streets after 9 p.m. *Minutes of the City Council*, 1943-47, January 7, 1943.

71. *Pensacola Journal*, November 16, 1943.

72. William Adams, "Pensacola During World War II," Appendix A, 82-88, Colonel Adams researched marriage applications at the Escambia County License Bureau.

73. *Pensacola Journal*, April 4, 1943.

74. Interview with General Daniel (Chappie) James, April 20, 1974; and *Pensacola Journal*, April 4, 1943.

75. Interview with Mrs. Corinne Jones.

munity standards, typical of urban areas. While Pensacola became urban in the size and attitudes of its middle class, the large rural population attracted to the city during World War II by employment opportunities with the Navy and military-related occupations created cultural dichotomies. Their in-migration diluted, to some extent, the federal presence and slowed the breakdown of the distinctive organizational and cultural forms of the old locality, hence the impact of urbanization. Pensacola's evolution suggests a model for the numerous military-based southern cities that contribute to the mosaic conveniently described under the rubric "New South."