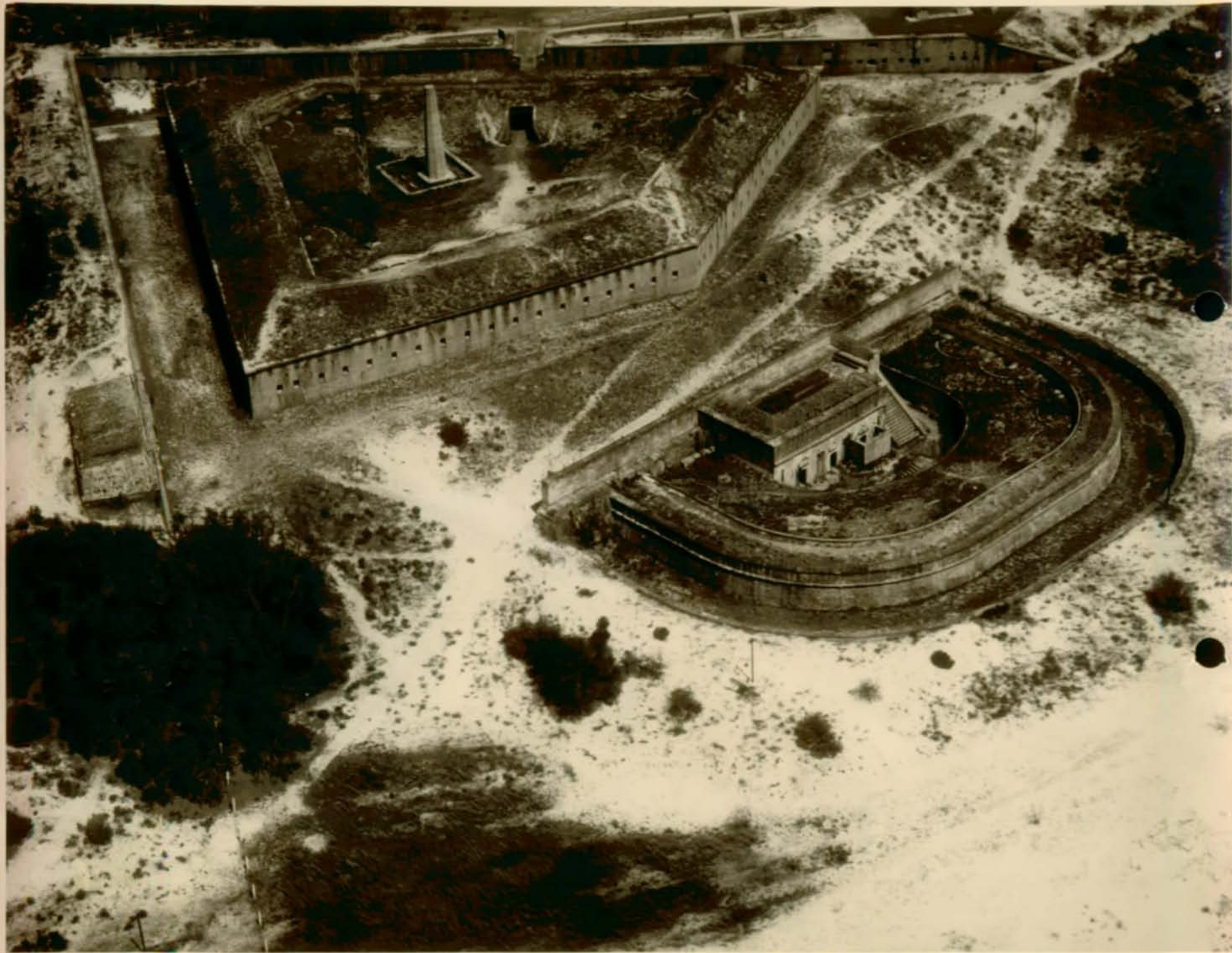


Preliminary Report on Historic Sites  
at Pensacola, Florida

by  
Herbert E. Kahler  
and  
C. L. Vinten

January, 1938



PNX-15532  
4-33.

San Carlos



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

OFFICE OF  
COORDINATING SUPERINTENDENT

S - REGION I  
RICHMOND, VA.

JAN 27 1938

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON HISTORIC SITES  
AT PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

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January 12, 1938

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FORT MARION NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT  
CASTLE PINCKNEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT  
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT JEFFERSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

Introduction

Accompanied by Mr. Olinus Smith, Engineer, and Mr. C. R. Vinton, Inspector, Santa Rosa Island and Pensacola were inspected January 6 and the morning of January 7. As preliminary to the report it should be mentioned that Engineer Smith mapped the area around Fort San Carlos and the naval station and therefore was very helpful in getting orientated.

Mr. Vinton has made frequent inspections of Santa Rosa Island on behalf of the Florida State Park Board which had seriously considered developing the east end of Santa Rosa Island as a State Beach Park

Historical Background

Pensacola was settled because of Spanish-French rivalry in the Gulf region. In 1682 Sieur de La Salle sailed down the Mississippi River and claimed the Gulf Region for Louis XIV. In 1684 he organized an expedition which failed to accomplish its purpose. However, it aroused the fears of the Spanish who sent an expedition to Pensacola in 1698 and made the first settlement in the vicinity of where Fort San Carlos de Barrancas now stands. The first fortification erected was a wooden structure about one hundred feet square. The purpose of the settlement was to defend the fine harbor against the French. The defense was not adequate to keep the French from capturing Pensacola in 1719 and holding it until 1723. Before leaving the town the French burned the impoverished settlement. Therefore, the Spanish decided to rebuild their town on Santa Rosa Island

Santa Rosa Island

Who Saint Rosa was and when the island was so named is not known. In the preliminary survey made by the Spanish in 1693 the west point of the island was named Puente Siquenza after the professor of mathematics who was mapping the area. It was planned to defend the harbor by erecting forts at Puente Sequenza and the spit of land across the bay and stretch a rope between the two forts.



FROM COLLECTION T. T. WENTWORTH, JR.

# PENSACOLA TWO CENTURIES AGO

SKETCH OF THE TOWN ON SANTA ROSA ISLAND DRAWN IN 1743 AND PUBLISHED IN THE  
UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE, LONDON, JANUARY, 1746

- 1 FORT
- 2 CHURCH
- 3 GOVERNOR'S MANSION
- 4 COMMANDANT'S HOUSE
- 5 WELL
- 6 BUNGO

COMPLIMENTS T. T. WENTWORTH, JR.  
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA





In 1723 Pensacola was built on the west end of Santa Rosa Island and Fort Santa Rosa (wooden structure) was erected.

In 1754 a hurricane destroyed the settlement on Santa Rosa Island and the survivors settled on the mainland.



PENSACOLA TWO CENTURIES AGO  
SKETCH OF THE TOWN ON SANTA ROSA ISLAND DRAWN IN 1743 AND PUBLISHED IN THE UNIVERSAL  
MAGAZINE, LONDON, JANUARY, 1764

The site of Pensacola on Santa Rosa Island is in the vicinity of Fort Pickens and part of the island that the War Department has reserved for its own operations.

Fort Pickens located on the west end of Santa Rosa Island is still an active military post. It is accessible only by boat.

Fort Pickens was started in 1830's and played an active part during the Civil War. It with Fort Taylor and Fort Jefferson are among the few (if not the only) forts in Confederate territory held by Union troops throughout the war.









*Roads.* More than \$5,000,000 have been spent in Escambia County for good roads. They radiate north, east and west from Pensacola, offering the motorist the highest type of road construction amidst surroundings of great scenic beauty.

*Golf.* In addition to the many natural advantages Pensacola has to offer visitors, she has developed two of the finest eighteen-hole golf courses in the South. The Pensacola Country Club, located two miles from the city, is most interesting. The fairways are good and grass greens in excellent condition make putting a pleasure. The Osceola Country Club, located



SCENIC HIGHWAY



The history of Fort Pickens and its long range bombardment with Fort Barrancas and Fort Redoubt during the Civil War can be found in the Official Records and should be investigated.

Fort Pickens is a brick fortification which is obsolete as a defense and no doubt will be abandoned like the other fortifications of that period.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Park Service acquire it when the War Department is willing to release it.

Fort San Carlos

Description



The fortifications extant at Pensacola are Fort Pickens, Fort McRae, Fort San Carlos de Barrancas, Fort Barrancas and Fort Redoubt. (See Map)

Of these fortifications San Carlos is the oldest. It was built by the Spanish in the 1780's. It is a semi-circular brick fort which at one time was covered with plaster. The design on the plaster is similar to that found on Spanish houses in St. Augustine. It is believed by Julian C. Yonge that thin red brick used in the structure were made in the vicinity of Pensacola.

The fort has two casemates, the wooden interiors of which are apparently of recent origin as noted from the tongue and groove millwork. Above the doors of the casemates are remnants of decorative scrolls. The glacis and terreplein are of sufficient elevation to protect the entrances of the casemates from gunfire.



PENSACOLA BEACH—AMERICA'S WAIKIKI



The design of the fort is unlike any other fortification that the writer has knowledge of. The man who designed the structure is unknown, nor have plans of the fortification or the costs of construction been found.

Fort San Carlos was taken by Andrew Jackson in 1814 when he stormed the town of Pensacola. The Spanish who held Pensacola permitted the British to use it as a base of operations against the United States. Jackson did not hesitate to take Pensacola, even though Spain was nominally a neutral nation. A detailed study of Jackson's invasion and its political implications should be made. Fort San Carlos was taken by Andrew Jackson in 1818 when the Spanish were giving aid to the Seminole Indians. This event had a direct bearing on the purchase of Florida and deserves careful study.

#### FORT BARRANCAS (Means ravine)

Fort Barrancas is a massive brick structure built by the United States in 1839-1844. Part of Fort San Carlos was removed when Barrancas was built. The fort is triangular in shape and the interior arrangement is different from that of Forts Pulaski, Jefferson or Clinch. It had no casemate guns. The walls were pierced for rifle fire. The rooms (casemates) are narrow passageways which widen out at each rifle loophole. Provision was made on top of the fort for barbette guns. The fort has a commanding view of the harbor and was surrounded by a dry moat. The mechanism of the drawbridge is still intact. A number of the original heavy doors are still in place.

Fort Barrancas was taken by the Confederates under General Bragg and played a part in the artillery duel across Pensacola Harbor.

#### Fort Redoubt

Located about one thousand yards distant from Fort Barrancas this large brick fortification was built by the United States to defend Pensacola from land attack. It was built the same time Fort Barrancas was under construction.

A dry moat surrounds the fort and the drawbridge mechanism is still in place. A tunnel connected Fort Barrancas and Fort Redoubt. The brick of the upper part of the fort have been painted black. The fort is in fairly good state of preservation.

The fort was taken by the Confederates during the Civil War.

### Live Oak Plantation

The exploitation of natural resources and the advancement of the frontier has been one of the great themes in American history. Less study and thought has been given to the history of conservation which has become a vital subject today and will increase in importance as time marches on.

In the light of information available the first Federal venture in conservation took place on a tract of ground across the bay from Santa Rosa Island. In 1828 President John Quincy Adams set aside the naval reserve called Live Oak Plantation for the purpose of preserving the live oaks used extensively for building vessels. Thickly wooded areas were thinned out to make a more substantial growth and two hundred acres were used as an experimental tract in planting trees.

The timbers for reconditioning of "Old Ironsides" in 1927 came from Live Oak Plantation.

Live Oak Plantation is two and one half miles long and about one mile wide. The coastal highway passes through the length of the tract. The area has a commanding view of Santa Rosa Island. The Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts have camps in the area. The tract is owned by the Navy.

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### Historical Significance of the Area as a Whole

Pensacola, the Capital of West Florida, has an interesting history that is of more than local importance. The important historical remains are excellent focal points from which to disseminate the story of early explorations and early attempts at colonization in the Gulf Region; the rivalry of Spanish, French, English and Americans for the possession of this area; the War of 1812, the raids of Jackson, the Seminole Indian War, the purchase of Florida, attempts at conservation, and the Civil War.

Pensacola and St. Augustine were the northern outposts of a vast Spanish empire centered around the Carribbean. Fort San Carlos with Fort Mifflin and Fort Marion are among the few Spanish fortifications extant in the eastern half of the United States. Each is located at a strategic point and has played a significant role in American history.

It is recommended that Fort San Carlos, Fort Barrancas, Fort Redoubt and Live Oak Plantation be included in the monument area.



### Suggestions for Development

1. The Live Oak Plantation would be suitable for the administrative and utility group. It is centrally located with reference to all areas; has telephone and electricity and apparently a good water supply.
2. Sufficient area should be obtained around Forts San Carlos, Barrancas and Redoubt to provide for scenic control and parking.
3. A separate roadway should be constructed from these forts to the highway so that present Fort Barrancas could remain intact as a military reservation.
4. Comfort stations and ranger stations should be located near the parking areas. Because the visitors habitually deface walls and use casemates as latrines, it will be necessary to have at least one ranger on duty at Forts San Carlos and Barrancas and one at Fort Redoubt.
5. Provision should be made for trailside exhibits, probably something similar to those designed for Stone River National Military Park. Orientation disks will be needed at Fort Barrancas.
6. Some of the dark passageways in Fort Barrancas should be lighted. It was noted that part of the fort is wired for lighting.
7. The east end of Santa Rosa Island is leased and has thirty five cottages that are shabby looking. If cottage groups are to be included in the scheme of development, they should be carefully planned.
8. The parking area at the Casino deserves careful treatment. The tavern, bowling alley and the multitude of advertising signs at these places are out of keeping with the surroundings.
9. The water tank on Santa Rosa Island should eventually be lowered. A pressure system could be installed.
10. State highway No. 115 crosses Santa Rosa Island at the east end and follows the coast. The question of ownership of the road and policing power should be considered.
11. Some of the people of Pensacola have the idea that the National Park Service will build a highway across Santa Rosa Island. Because the island is narrow the construction of a thoroughfare would lessen the value of the area as a recreational beach park. Spur roads from the east and west ends of the island are desirable, especially as the area becomes increasingly popular.

It was estimated 250,000 people visited the Casine last summer. Bathing, hiking, fishing and boating are the chief recreation. Landing docks on the north side of Santa Rosa Island (Santa Rosa Sound) will make it possible for people to explore the island at various points.

12. Steps should be taken to have the State Road Department take over the toll bridges between Santa Rosa Island and Pensacola and make them free as they have done in other parts of the state.

13. It is recommended that the people of Pensacola take the initiative in the transfer of Live Oak Plantation, Fort San Carlos, Fort Barrancas and Fort Redoubt.

14. The fences and radio antenna should be removed from Fort Barrancas.

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The source of my historical data is Mr. Julian C. Yonge, Editor, Florida Historical Society Quarterly and who possesses one of the finest collections on Floridians.

*Herbert K. Kahler*



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

January 10, 1938

OFFICE OF  
COORDINATING SUPERINTENDENT

FORT MARION NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT  
CASTLE PINCKNEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT  
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT JEFFERSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

NOTES on trip of January 6, 1938  
to Santa Rosa Island  
Pensacola, Florida

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Trip was made in company with Coordinating Superintendent  
Herbert E. Kahler and Engineer Olinus Smith.

Areas visited:

- (1) Forts San Carlos - Barancas - Redoubt
- (2) United States Naval Reservation
- (3) Santa Rosa Island

Recommendations:

- (1) Forts San Carlos - Barancas - Redoubt.
  - a. A report on the historical aspects of these interesting structures is being submitted by Coordinating Superintendent Kahler.
  - b. In considering transfer of these fortifications to the National Park Service it is recommended that boundaries be delineated which will provide for separate control of access, and adequate marginal areas which will permit the location of roads and fence enclosures according to scenic demands and the necessity for adequate parking and circulation. The removal of radio masts and old concrete tower should be considered in future studies.
- (2) The United States Naval Reservation, or "Live Oak Plantation" is of timely interest due to its association with early beginnings of conservation. Aside from its historic value its acceptance by the Service will provide a buffer against further exploitation of property by undesirable intrusions and will preserve a generous length of native woodland and scenic shoreline which might otherwise be sacrificed to the hasty development which is evident in this locality. Acceptance of this area will give control of two and one half miles of highway frontage. The unit, in itself, holds interesting historic, recreational and scenic possibilities, and is situated so as to serve as a probable center of administration for all three units.

- (3) Santa Rosa Island is the only continuous stretch of sand beach in Florida, under one ownership and within the realm of possible acquisition, that possesses sufficient extent to be of national importance as a seashore area. The fact that almost fifty miles of this beach is on an island should be an important factor in simplifying control.

The existence of leased portions of Santa Rosa Island are considered as unfavorable factors which should be cleared by agreements which would ultimately terminate control by private interests. It is felt that the problems of the toll bridge, Pensacola Beach, the old "pinto ship" and the Tower Beach, are items which can be solved most effectively if given consideration during the formative period when local citizens are working out details of property transfers. Consideration should further be given to the highway rights-of-way on the eastern and western ends of the island. The eastern end of the island from the East Pass bridge to Tower Beach is traversed by U. S. Highway No. 98 for a distance of four and one half miles, and construction of parking areas and maintenance of the road is now accomplished by the State Road Department.

The occupation of the western end of Santa Rosa Island by the Army Coast Defense base is not of major consideration except that the existence of an active military unit in this location hinders the possible use of Fort Pickens as an historic link in this delightful chain of historical areas. It is possible that this fort may be added to the other units in the proposed area in the course of time, such batteries are now obsolete. It is recommended that the National Park Service be placed on record as being interested in the Fort Pickens base, as well as the quarantine station island near the toll bridge, in order that these properties may not fall into private hands.

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The above notes are made solely from the standpoint of describing and evaluating the areas under consideration, and also to note certain precautions which should be given early attention.

R. A. Cullen  
Inspector