1-1-1960

Brick wall a memento of early Navy yard

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PENSACOLA --- It has been a long and happy "marriage," the union of Pensacola and the U.S. Navy that dates back to the earliest of Florida’s Territorial days.

The first session of the Territorial Legislature called on the President to build a naval depot here. This got action and a commission of Navy brass visited here on Oct. 25, 1825, to select a site. President John Quincy Adams and Secretary of Navy Samuel Southward realized the advantage of the Pensacola harbor and the large timber reserves for ship-building nearby. Development of the project moved slowly, and, finally in 1842 the Florida delegate to Congress, David L. Yulee, demanded action. Yulee followed through as U.S. Senator which he became when the state was admitted to the U.S. in 1845.

A memento of the early days of the Navy Yard still stands. It is a long brick wall which defines the north and west boundaries of the original Navy Yard. It was erected during the years 1837 to 1855 and it separated the Navy Yard from the old city of Warrington to the West and the old city of Woosley to the North. The wall was 14 feet high, 24 inches thick and 3,120 feet in length. It cost $20,368.

The Pensacola Lighthouse was erected in 1825. A dry dock was built in 1849. During the Civil War, the Navy Yard was in the hands of the Confederate forces. The young U.S. Engineer who was in charge of building the Navy Yard, Maj. William Chase, became a general officer for the Confederates and took over the base in January, 1861.