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## Fort San Carlos' yo-yo ownership

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## FORT SAN CARLOS' YO-YO OWNERSHIP

By HAMPTON DUNN

PENSACOLA -- On the reservation of the U. S. Naval Air Station here stands the sturdy Fort San Carlos, whose colorful history dates back to the earliest development of Florida, and has had many "owners."

As the Spanish sought to strengthen their position in the new world, a colonial expedition led by Adm. Don Andres de Arriola landed in the mid-1690s. The body of 300 soldiers immediately built Fort San Carlos, naming it in honor of Spain's King Charles II.

The French, keen rivals of the Spanish, touched down at Pensacola about this time but moved along to settle in Mississippi and New Orleans. This co-existence didn't last long. In 1719, as war raged in Europe, the French surprised the Spaniards in Pensacola, who capitulated. But the Spanish got reinforcements from Havana and Fort San Carlos was recaptured. Subsequently, however, the French regained Pensacola in a bloody battle. The fort was burned in the process. Finally, the city was restored to Spanish control in 1723.

England erected a fort on the site in 1771, but it was destroyed by the Spanish when they regained West Florida in 1783. A new San Carlos was built, a massive 100 x 100 foot semi-circular fort built of handmade bricks with a dry moat, and finished in 1790. In 1814 it was lost to the English and then to the United States, who returned it to Spain after the War of 1812.

The historic fort was again taken for the U. S. in 1818, after an Indian uprising by doughty Gen. Andrew Jackson.

