

The Patriot Banner†

*The design of the Patriot flag was: Field, white; figure, a soldier in the act of charging bayonet; inscription, "Salus populi lex suprema" (Safety the supreme law of the people). Thus another banner was added to the array of flags signifying actual or attempted possession that have flown in Florida in times past.

The country between the St. Johns and the St. Marys Rivers did not enjoy a lengthy peace after the departure of the "Patriots." A peculiar chapter in Florida's varied history was written here when an attempt was made to organize the "Republic of Florida" based on the American system, but under the jurisdiction of the Spaniards—a form of compromise between the Spaniards and the settlers in this section. The republic functioned under this system for a year or two and really bore the imprint of law and order. Trouble again arose, however, when M'Gregor and his so-called "Carthaginians" or "Venezuelan Patriots" took possession of Fernandina and turmoil continued until the negotiations of the United States for the acquisition of Florida were begun.

Fort San Nicholas

An early Spanish map indicates a block-house or a Spanish post on the south side of the river in the vicinity of the present South Jacksonville. Thenceforth its history is lost, but it was probably the parent of the post that later became known as San Nicholas.

There is no record to indicate that the English had a garrisoned post at this point. When the Spaniards returned in 1784, they reestablished the military post under the name San Nicholas.

The history of Fort San Nicholas was an exciting one. McIntosh destroyed it in 1796, and the Patriots doubtless did likewise in 1812. The post was temporarily abandoned in 1817 out of fear of an attack by the "Carthaginians", who held Fernandina. During the last years of its existence it was maintained principally for the purpose of preventing smuggling, although the commanders seem not always wide-awake in this respect, according to an article written by Rev.

†Described by G. I. F. Clarke in a letter written from Fernandina 19th March, 1812.
—Fla. Hist. Society.