The First Florida Light Artillery was organized in Jacksonville July 17, 1877, with the following officers: Captain, George C. Wilson; first lieutenant, Franklin Jordan; second lieutenant, Theodore Ball; first sergeant, H. Ernest Murphy; second sergeant, Henry A. L'Engle; ordnance sergeant, W. A. Gilbert; first corporal, Byron E. Oak; second corporal, George R. Reynolds; secretary, Arthur T. Williams; treasurer, Bion H. Barnett; surgeon, C. J. Kenworthy, M. D. The company was organized with 30 enlisted men, but the roster was soon increased to fifty-five.

On July 4, 1878, the battery was presented with a handsome silk flag made by the ladies of Jacksonville. The ceremony of presentation took place in front of the Windsor hotel, in the presence of a throng of people. Major A. J. Russell presented the flag and in his speech drew attention to the fact that among the members were those who represented the gray and others the blue in the late conflict. The battery was well maintained, being armed with sabres and side arms and two 12-pounder brass pieces, with suitable harness, caissons, etc. Their uniforms were light gray; afterward the artillery uniform of the regular army was adopted. In 1884 it possessed the latest improved five-barrel, 45 calibre Gatling gun.

On April 1, 1884, the name was changed by unanimous vote to Wilson's Battery in honor of its commander, and ever afterward through the various reorganizations of State troops, though given an official letter designation and later called First Battery, Field Artillery, F. S. T., it was known to Jacksonville as “Wilson’s Battery”. Its guns spoke the welcome in all local celebrations and the booming of “Old Betsy”