

There were no soda fountains in those days, and it was seldom that ice could be obtained. Ice was brought from the North in sailing vessels. Lemonade and tamarind water were the most popular "soft" drinks. The tamarind is a species of bean that grows in the West Indies, and from it a sticky substance exudes. The beans were put into a pitcher and hot water poured over them; this concoction was allowed to cool, when the drink was ready for use. It had a semi-acid taste, and was considered very healthful. Drinking water came from wells and cisterns. Rain water, when filtered through an earthen vessel called a "monkey", was considered a great luxury.^b

In the spring of 1846, Captain John L'Engle bought for \$300 the square bounded on the north by Bay Street, east by Laura, west by Hogan, and south by the river. In 1853, the northwest corner lot at Bay and Market Streets, including a two-story boarding house, was purchased for \$2,500; and A. Judson Day, of Maine, bought half the block, west half, between Julia and Hogan Streets from Forsyth through to the river for \$3,000. A year or so later, the northeast corner of Bay and Ocean was sold to Ambler & Hoeg for \$3,000. Residence lots a few blocks back from Bay Street sold for less than \$100. Springfield was a wilderness and Riverside a corn field. Northwest of Hemming Park, between Forsyth and Church, Clay and Jefferson Streets was a dense swamp, where in places the water stood several feet deep. LaVilla was an island, owing to the course of several small streams that have since been filled in.^f

The building material used in Jacksonville at that time was mostly pitch pine, very inflammable, and as there was no adequate way of controlling large fires, it was but a question of time when the town would suffer a general conflagration. It came on April 5, 1854.

The Great Fire of 1854

A description of this destructive fire was published on the following day in an "Extra" gotten out by the Florida Republican, a copy of which follows, except that typographical errors have been corrected:^g