

nearly 24 hours on account of the schedule of some competing or antagonistic railroad. In 1875, a ticket from Jacksonville to New York cost \$36.75; the time was 66 hours according to the printed schedule, but the actual time usually consumed in making the trip was between 75 and 90 hours. In 1880 there was a general shaking-up of railroad managements in the South that resulted in shortening the schedule from Jacksonville to New York from 12 to 16 hours, but even then travel to Florida was tedious and slow.<sup>s</sup>

The Southern roads maintained costly car hoists and extra sets of trucks and wheels for through freight shipments; this was expensive maintenance and freight rates were necessarily high, while great uncertainty prevailed as to time of transit. Improvement of this condition was started in 1886, when an agreement was reached among the prominent Southern roads to change their gauges to standard, 4 feet 8½ inches. With respect to Jacksonville it was completed in 1888, when on January 10, 1888, the first through vestibuled train from New York came in over the Savannah, Florida & Western, having made the run from Jersey City in 29 hours and 30 minutes. Henceforth there was noticeable improvement in travel conditions generally. Time of freight shipments was greatly lessened and the rates were reduced. Modern railroad service to and in Florida dates from this period.<sup>s</sup> Jacksonville at this time was the terminus of the important railroads in the State and they were the means by which this city became the wholesale distributing center for Florida, a position it has held ever since. Henry B. Plant was the father of the railroad construction that produced this result for Jacksonville.

### Seaboard Air Line

#### Florida Central Railroad.

After the war the track of the Florida, Atlantic & Gulf Central Railroad was described as two streaks of rust running through the wilderness. Nevertheless, on March 4, 1868, William E. Jackson and associates bought the property, or what remained of it, for \$111,000.<sup>s</sup> A special act of the Florida Legislature July 29, 1868, incorporated the new owners as the Florida Central Railroad Company. It was so operated until January 6, 1882, when it was sold at public auction to Sir E. J. Reed, representing foreign interests, for