

Duval High School, the first in Florida to provide studies beyond the elementary level, was established in Jacksonville in 1875, foretelling, as it were, the universities of today.

The so-called "Gay Nineties" were not as gay in Jacksonville. The loss of many tourists, several fires and a hard freeze discouraged many. The decade was topped by the Spanish American War when, again, Jacksonville was a staging area and feeling ran high. Camp Cuba Libre was established in the city.

A new century inadvertently ushered in a new city: on May 3, 1901 Jacksonville was virtually destroyed by fire. Only a part of the downtown city, West of Laura along Forsyth and Bay Streets, was saved. All else lay in ashes. The fire started in a moss fibre plant at 12:30 p.m. at the corner of Beaver and Davis Streets. For eight hours it burned through 2,400 buildings. Ten thousand people were made homeless.

Hardly had the bricks cooled than men were out putting up temporary stores and offices and setting in motion agencies to care for the refugees. The whole nation responded

with aid. Rebuilding began almost immediately and by the year's end, 1,500 new structures had been built.

Out of the disaster, a new town emerged, a town which was even more the center of transportation, made so by the development of a network of railroads.

The new century saw, too, the rise of Jacksonville as the state's financial center. The city's oldest bank, Barnett National Bank of Jacksonville, had been founded in 1877. In 1903, the Atlantic National Bank was chartered and in 1905, the Florida First National Bank.

By 1914, almost a dozen tall buildings had risen in the city's center. One skyscraper a year pierced the skyline in a building boom which ended with the erection of the Rhodes-Futch-Collins building on Main Street.

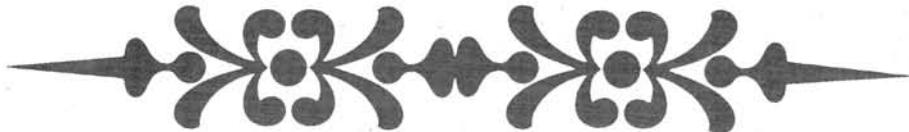
And some of the new building was for fun. Dixieland Amusement Park opened on the South side and automobile races were held at Atlantic Beach. Movie tycoons had discovered Florida's sunshine and Jacksonville gained a head start, but only a start, in the industry.

World War I, with bond drives, Red Cross work, frantic shipbuilding, doughboys, nostalgic songs and parades consumed the time and energy of all as every effort was made to win an early victory.

The war's end melted into the big boom of the 1920's when thousands of tourists passed through the city. On their heels came the depression of the thirties which telescoped into World War II with its own brand of shortages and rationing, its own hectic day-and-night shipbuilding, and the establishment of Jacksonville as an aviation and naval center.

Peace in 1945, then another building boom of the fifties and sixties remade much of the city and spilled into the suburbs. It was at this time that Jacksonville came into its own as the insurance center of the South.

To match this physical growth, a new charter was adopted, making one the city and most of the county. Consolidation Day, October 1, 1968 ranks beside Founding Day, June 15, 1822, for out of it all has come the Bold New City of the South.



FLORIDA MILESTONES

Discovery of Florida by Spain	1513
Discovery of the St. Johns River	1520
France claims Florida	1562-1565
Founding of St. Augustine	1565
Florida becomes a British province	1763-1783
Florida is again Spanish	1784-1821
Florida is ceded to the United States	1821
Founding of Jacksonville	1822

