

In this half century, bridges were built across the St. Johns River, skyscrapers reared their heads against the skyline, great modern hotels were erected, shipbuilding and paper mills became great local industries, hundreds of churches and schools were erected, the great Naval Air Station, Cecil Field and the Mayport Naval Base were installed. With all of these came thousands and thousands of new residents and families.

The Southside became Jacksonville's newest and most beautiful residential section. New housing developments, with their shopping centers, mushroomed in every direction of the compass. Civic groups, of both men and women, became increasingly active in the interests of Jacksonville's growth . . . pressing hard for new business and industrial enterprises, for constant improvements to our beautiful beaches, and for greater cosmopolitan achievements within the scope of art, music, the theater, and other cultural fields.

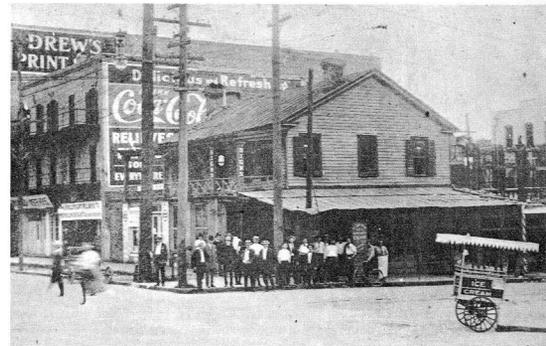
But notwithstanding this progress and growth, a strange thing happened . . . as Suburbia spread outward and beyond the City's limits, urban Jacksonville began to suffer, wore a robe of seediness, creeping decay, and creeping traffic. It was impossible to get down town, find a suitable parking space and attend to business, or shop, in any comfort. In the years between it had been allowed to follow a downward course to flophouses, saloons and second rate clothing emporiums.

The old Cow Ford fording place on the bend of the St. Johns River, endowed by nature as the most beautiful sites in our area, had been allowed to deteriorate into a series of dilapidated, unpainted warehouses (backing up on both sides of the river), covered with commercial billboards in garish colors . . . and with rat-infested and flame scorched piers, already abandoned to the tides of the St. Johns River. To visitors and tourists going north and south . . . this was what they remembered of the City of Jacksonville.

And then lightning struck . . . engendered by far-sighted municipal leaders and civic groups. Let us look into the fabulous fifties . . .



*Since early days Jacksonville homes have radiated hospitality. Above is home of W. B. Barnett, founder of the Barnett National Bank.*



*Razed to make way for the new expressway was the Riverside home of Captain C. E. Garner and later the Jacksonville Junior College.*

