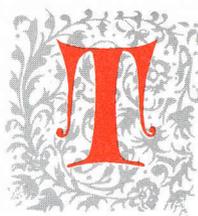




An aerial view looking towards the city from the Southside expressway complex shows the clean challenge of the new buildings rising alongside the St. John's River.

The Fabulous Fifties —

The Jacksonville Story



his decade of dynamic growth started with the building of a municipal parking lot and ended with the completion of one of the finest city expressway systems in the country.

Who was responsible?

These ten years of urban revitalization and redevelopment were brought about by the concerted efforts and the tireless work of hundreds of our business, civic and political leaders . . . men of vision, determination and vast experience in their fields. Fortunately Jacksonville was blessed with many of them.

All realized something HAD to be done if this mushrooming city was to retain its heart and core in the urban district.

Three groups must be singled out for their tremendous efforts in Jacksonville's rebirth: The city officials of whom the Commission (comprised of five members) is the administrative body and the City Council, the legislative body; the Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of One Hundred . . . a group of business men primarily interested in the redevelopment of the entire area.

The immediate problems were downtown parking and slum clearance. As beautiful residential sections and shopping centers were developed on all sides of the City, the heart of Jacksonville was ringed by a circle of slum areas. The worst of these was a fifteen block strip on the banks of the St. Johns River.

The City Commission is a very strong and well rounded one. It is comprised of its Mayor-Commissioner, Haydon Burns, a man with great business and political experience; J. Dillon Kennedy, a man who has come up through the ranks and knows every phase of the Electric and Water Utility business . . . Jacksonville's largest source of municipal income; Claude Smith, an outstanding lawyer who has been most successful in meeting the city's health problems; Louis H. Ritter, a young man who holds a B.S. degree in public administration and who is making this field his career; and Dallas Thomas, a man who has carried his most successful business experience into the field of public administration. More about them later. Their strength is apparent in that each of them is serving from his second elected four-year term, to his fourth. They have worked in complete cooperation . . . with foresight and boldness in the interests of the city's growth. The nine members of the City Council and other elected officials have shown the same cooperation and vigor in behalf of our progress.