



*Aerial view of the Riverside expressway interchange, Fuller Warren Bridge and Southside industrial area.*



*Modern office buildings were needed to accommodate new business facilities in the rapidly growing city.*

*Blending of old with the new is often seen when Jacksonville's history-marked buildings gradually give way to modern progress.*



values. Sears Roebuck and Company bought a site west of the parking lot and built on it a strikingly modern store, the company's largest retail outlet in the country, including another spacious parking area for 900 cars. Old freight depots, sheds and warehouses moved from this area to the outlying parts of the City.

All told, about half a mile of riverfront decrepitude has been transformed into a half mile of beauty and utility.

Much of Jacksonville's business growth during the 1950s can be attributed to the insurance industry. The start was the decision of the Prudential Insurance Company of America to establish its South Central Home Office in Jacksonville and they completed a twenty-two story structure in 1954 in a commanding location on the south shore of the St. Johns River. The Independent Life and Accident Insurance Company, which in the early 1950s was still heating its ancient offices with a pot-bellied stove, put up its own modern 19-story building. Other companies made similar plans and the City now has about six thousand home office employees in the insurance business as against about five hundred ten years ago. For these efforts we must credit the Florida State Legislature and the Committee of One Hundred.

The Robert Meyer Hotel, one of the most beautiful in the southeast and the first hotel to be built in Jacksonville since the 1920s was erected in the heart of the City. J. C. Penney and many of the chain variety stores erected new and beautiful retail outlets. The new Baptist Hospital rose on the south shore of the river, adjacent to the Prudential Building.

Naturally, this overall growth and, particularly, the tremendous improvements to the riverfront property, has had its effect on the oldest business district in the city, Bay Street. Owners of this property now realize that it is too valuable for