where the mines were tested before placing in the river, was at the base of the bluff. A distressing accident occurred here; while undergoing test, a mine exploded, killing two men and seriously wounding an officer. The mines in the river were exploded late in September, 1898, and the channel cleared.

Local Conditions During the War

When General Lee designated Jacksonville as the commissary depot of the Seventh Army Corps, and issued notice that so far as practicable supplies would be purchased locally, it meant a great deal to the merchants carrying the necessary lines. The wholesale provision and hay houses reaped a harvest. During the five months the troops were here, they were paid $2,160,000 and this too in large measure was spent in Jacksonville. It has been said that some valuable business property in the down-town section represents profits derived from concessions at the camp. In a business way the camp did much for Jacksonville.

Barring the wave of typhoid that swept Camp Cuba Libre, the service of the volunteers here was not an unpleasant one. The men, of course, were under military discipline, but "off duty", and that was often, they flocked to the city, bent on having a grand, good time. Unfortunately there was considerable drunkenness among the soldiers, as Jacksonville was a wide-open liquor town in those days. It was considered only a prank when one day an officer rode his horse into a saloon, up to the bar and took his drink on horseback. And another, as Mary and Martha, the police-patrol horses, galloped by in answer to a call, a squad of soldiers jumped aboard and broke "Black Maria" down. Again when a company swooped down upon a squatter commissary near the camp, and with kind consideration left the proprietor the remnants of pasteboard boxes and paper sacks. So the camp news day by day was filled with echoes such as these. It did not seem like war, but more like a large body of troops off on a frolic.

This body of men was made up of the flower of young manhood of their respective States, as volunteers for war usually are. A strong attachment grew up between them and the people of Jacksonville. The residents invited them freely into their homes. During the sickness at the camp delicacies of all kinds were sent out to them; many ladies of