

1911

of Bay Street between Main and Laura; property loss \$40,000.

January 22: Large warehouse fire in the wholesale section east of Broad Street viaduct; property loss estimated at \$60,000. W. B. Johnson Grocery Company, E. Bean & Company, and Flynn-Harris-Bullard Company were the firms that suffered.

March 31: Automobile races at Atlantic Beach. Louis Disbrow driving his Pope-Hartford "Hummer" broke four world's records for speed and won a cash prize of \$1,000. His average for 300 miles was 77.08 miles an hour.

April 1: Derby at Moncrief race track; final day of the annual meet and the last of professional horse-racing at Jacksonville.

Effect of the Races

There were three meets held here—the first in the spring of 1909, and the others in the winter and spring months of 1909-10 and 1910-11. The effect of the races on Jacksonville and its people was nowise good. The increase in crime as an attendant feature and the methods pursued by the criminals told plainly that the most dangerous criminal element of the country was attracted here. "Stool-pigeons" hovered around the local sports and professional gamblers fleeced them. "Playing the ponies" was a temptation that many residents, including women, could not resist—and they lost, numbers of them all they possessed. The moral and financial wreckage in the wake of the races was plainly evident. The races were held at a season when the hotels customarily were filled anyway and the high-class restaurants usually had all they could do. It was only a substitution of one class of visitors for another, to the detriment of Jacksonville. The money that passed from local hands to the bookmakers was bundled up and shipped by express out of Jacksonville. The local banks handled little of it. Banking records of the time indicate nothing in this respect; while the business of the banks showed a substantial increase over former years, it was not due to the races, but to the legitimate money being used in pushing Jacksonville's skyline upward.