platted some years before the War Between the States, but it was not deeded to the city until January 23, 1866, when the executors of the estate of I. D. Hart conveyed it to the city of Jacksonville for a consideration of $10. Upon the completion of the St. James Hotel (where Cohen's store is now), interest in the park developed and it was improved by private exertions by building a fence around it and a bandstand in the center. Nothing was done toward keeping up these improvements and the park soon became an eyesore. A local editor wrote in 1873: "A good suggestion has been made to turn this plot of ground (the park) into a cemetery, for by this means in the course of time we may have a few handsome monuments and sorrowing relatives will plant around them a few flowers." Likewise another editorial in 1882: "Our city park is a municipal eyesore. The fence that once surrounded it has rotted down and has been carted off; the old pavilion is a trap that ere long will fall and kill someone."

The first appropriation by the city for improving the park was in 1887, when $700 was set aside for the purpose. Walks were laid and a well sunk in the center for a flowing fountain. The fountain remained in the center until 1898, when it was changed to the northwest corner to make way for the Confederate monument. For a time the park had no name, being called simply City Park; then by common consent it was called St. James Park. As a memorial to Charles C. Hemming, who gave the Confederate monument in this park, the name was officially changed to Hemming Park by city ordinance October 26, 1899. Hemming Park contains about two acres.

Riverside Park.—In the Forbes plat of "Riverside" in 1869, a provision was made for a park of 14 acres. The Land Mortgage Bank of England afterward acquired the property and in 1893 offered to donate it to the city, with the provision that it be improved and kept up as a park. The donors further agreed to build a fence around the park if the city would lay sidewalks. The offer was accepted and the improvements were made. When the park was enclosed turnstiles were provided at the corners. Cattle roamed over that section and the fence was designed to keep stock out. The work of clearing the ground of underbrush was commenced in the autumn of 1893, city prisoners being used for the purpose.