Interests headed by J. M. Barrs acquired the ferry franchise in 1904; built the ferryboat Duval, and placed her in service Sept. 20, 1904, her first trip being made from the foot of Main Street, which for the first time was used for ferry purposes. This change from Newnan to Main Street was made in the face of injunctions brought by private parties, it was said for business reasons; but the ferry company continued to use Main Street, built the slip and erected the present terminals in 1905. On March 15, 1905, the County Commissioners granted the ferry company, which had been incorporated as the South Jacksonville Steam Ferry Co., a franchise under which extensive improvements were made in South Jacksonville. The ferry company then bulkheaded the river front on the south side and improved it as Dixieland Park (see page 233.)

The South Jacksonville Steam Ferry Company sold out to the Ames Realty Company in July, 1912; the new owners changed the corporate name to Jacksonville Ferry & Land Company. With the growing popularity of the ocean beaches and the increasing use of the automobile the ferry became a bonanza for its owners. Before the Jacksonville-St. Johns River Bridge was built in 1921, it was not unusual on Sundays and special occasions, though two large ferry-boats were in use, for a line of automobiles awaiting their turn to cross the river to form reaching from Broad Street to the ferry slip at Main. On one occasion the line extended out East Bay Street to Florida Avenue, thence beyond St. Andrew’s church in East Jacksonville; the last automobile of that line reached the ferry three hours later. Upon the opening of the highway bridge across the river July 1, 1921, the business of the ferry was reduced almost to the point of non-profit, which resulted in a curtailment of the ferry service and the sale of one of the boats, the South Jacksonville.

Bicycles

The bicycle is entitled to a place in history, not alone for the pleasure it gave during the twenty years of its popularity prior to the coming of the automobile, but also for its contribution to the development of sections adjacent to the city and its service as the pathfinder of most of the local improved boulevards today.