the event was celebrated at Jacksonville as a new shipping era for this city. On Christmas Day, 1878, something unexpected happened at the bar: A new channel suddenly broke out to the northward, in the path of an old channel, furnishing practically 11 feet at high water. This caused the Government to abandon the dredging work in the south channel.

*St. Johns bar, before the jetties were built, was fan-shaped, and extended practically from Talbot Island to Burnside Beach, a distance of more than two miles, at any point of which the channel was liable to break through. The channel would generally break out to the northward and gradually work its way to the southward, until it ran close along the south beach, when from different causes, as the varying stages of the river and storms, it would close up in the south beach channel, and open up again farther northward, and thus repeat its unique caperings./*

The Jetties

The estimated cost of the jetty work under Gen. Gilmore's plan was $1,306,000. Congress made the first appropriation to start the work, $125,000, in June, 1880, and contracts were awarded to R. G. Ross & Co., and J. H. Durkee. Both of these contracts were completed before another appropriation became available, and the construction work ceased for a time. This was the history of the work all during the early years—appropriations became available in relatively small amounts, and separate awards were made under each appropriation, which resulted in considerable delay, and additional expense in repairing damage arising during the intervals. And so the work wore on. If the original estimate was an accurate one, the system of separate awards cost the Government $200,000, for that was the amount in excess of the estimate when the work had progressed to the point of completion under the submerged plan. It had been decided, however, not to stop the work at that stage, but to build the jetties higher, which was in accordance with Capt. Eads' recommendation in the beginning.

The following reminiscences of Capt. R. G. Ross are here preserved as a valuable first-hand account of the work at the mouth of the river. No one knew more about the inside history of the jetty work then he, for from the award of the