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World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

Cover

WORLD'S FINEST BEACH

EVERYBODY HAS A GOOD TIME AT JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FLORIDA

9



THE WORLD'S FINEST BEACHES

61633



By

Donald J. Mabry

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World's Finest Beach

by **Donald J. Mabry**

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World's Finest Beach

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Preface

People asked me why I was writing a book. Some were in awe that they would know an author. Most of them did not know that I am an established author with five books published (more if one counts electronic reprints) and over one hundred articles. Nor do they know my [Historical Text Archive](#) has published seventy (70) books and six hundred and eighty four (884) articles and photograph collections. Because the HTA receives nineteen (19) million page views each year, more people read it than read most newspapers or magazines.

After all, why should they? They see an elderly man sitting in coffee shop in front of his laptop with earphones in his ears, typing with one finger. Because I am there six mornings a week, we regulars see each other, wave or speak, sit down or leave with coffee and a muffin. Some comment about how hard I am working (and I am working hard and they are only seeing a small part of the process; researching and writing a history book takes time). I tell them that I am retired. Of course, work and getting paid are two very different things, but we don't waste our time sorting out the distinction. Besides, almost all of them have paying jobs or are students at Mississippi State University (and probably get "paid" from a job, a subsidized loan, or a scholarship). They are a bit baffled by the fact that I work without getting paid, especially doing something so demanding as writing a book. It is not just the people from the coffee shop; others of my acquaintance find this behavior odd. They would not devote their time to researching and writing a book.

Why do I do it? Why not? It beats doing many other things. It is fun. It satisfies my need to express myself. Perhaps it will help those who lived or live on the Beaches or in Jacksonville, Florida or visited either understand that particular past. One can always hope that this micro history will help us understand the human condition. Or not. And I have deep ties to the subject matter.

My family went to Duval County, Florida by 1917 after my maternal grandfather died in south Georgia. My grandmother, Jennie Griner Harris, moved her brood to Jacksonville in search of a better life. Jacksonville was a common destination for ambitious south Georgians. She met and married a veterinarian from New Jersey. She died giving birth to twin boys in 1921. Her children raised each other. One would live in the Beaches area and had daughters who went to K-12 schools at the Beaches. One of Jennie's two sisters and her husband lived at the Beaches. My mother met and married Frank Olschner, Sr. in Jacksonville and bore him a son, Frank, Jr. in 1930. Later that decade, she met and married my father, Jerry L. Mabry, Sr. During my childhood, which began in Atlanta, Georgia in 1941, the family or parts of it were in and out of the Jacksonville and Jacksonville Beach. Sometimes, I went to school there. I have loved the Beaches since I was very young. Then in 1953, I moved there more permanently. In some ways, I carry the Beaches with me. My cousins, my two full brothers, and I graduated from the local high school. So family ties are a reason to write about the Beaches and, perhaps, an attempt to understand myself.

My life at the Beaches was successful because of others—fellow students, their parents, teachers, townspeople—who helped or forced me to become a responsible adult, giving me leadership opportunities early in life. When it came time to go to college, my

extracurricular activities in addition to my high grades enabled me to get scholarships to an expensive private college; I could not have gone to college any other way. Some of those friendships have lasted over the decades. If I wrote a dedication for this book, it would be to those who went to or worked in Duncan U. Fletcher Junior-Senior High School.

Somewhere along the way as I passed through life, I became a scholar, a person trained to systematically gather evidence on a topic, evaluate it, and use logic to reach a conclusion, one that has to be modified in the light of new evidence and/or new questions. For the true scholar, one learns to accept almost nothing at face value and to reject assertions based on emotion and wishful thinking. Being a scholar means accepting the fact that one can be wrong. It means being curious.

When I lived at the Beaches, then later while living in other places, and then in recent years, I sometimes wondered about why the Beaches were settled and why they developed as they did. As I aged, nostalgia played a part. Memories of things seen and heard were jolted by the reality of population growth and landscape sculpturing. Was one imagining it all? Childhood memories romanticize.

Reading in Beaches history was one solution. And I did that—on the Web, in books, in articles, and newspapers. Trips to the Beaches were essential. The Beaches Area Historical Society archives under the leadership of Dwight Wilson supplied written and photographic material. The Beaches Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library and the instructional Media Center of Duncan U. Fletcher High School provided materials unavailable elsewhere. Florida has wonderful Internet resources in the online Florida Heritage project, the online historical resources of the Jacksonville Public Library, and the Florida Historical Quarterly, most of which is online. Other online materials are also available as noted in the bibliography. I purchased books and people sent me written materials.

Other people helped. We talked either face to face or by electronic mail or both. Fletcher friends corresponded, answering whatever question I might ask. They provided information and friendship and kept me from going down wrong paths. As luck would have it, some of them allowed me to enter their lives again after four decades.

It is hard to know where to begin. Dwight Wilson, Class of '48 of Fletcher High School, and Archivist Emeritus of the Beaches Area Historical Society, is a delightful source of Beach lacunae. One wonders what he does not know. He spent hours with me at the archives, showing me sources and answering my questions and, then, over a year later, met with three of us one Friday afternoon to discuss Beaches history. People with whom I had gone to school helped. Austin Smith knows so much and loves the Beaches. Hazel Wern and Emory Dalton, Dianne Hardee Wingate, Ron Wingate gave hospitality and friendship. My high school classmates—Harry "Flash" Hoover, Terry Brant, Tom Ravoo, Leigh Koffman Callahan, Hazel, Diane, Reggie Watterson, and Barbara Crawford William—helped. So, too, did Charlotte Thames, mother of two Fletcher graduates, who provided information and insight. Younger than me, Suzanne McCormick Taylor, is the daughter of a former Jacksonville Beach mayor and the granddaughter of B. B. McCormick, both prime movers in Beaches history, had unique information. John W. "Wimpy" Sutton, a truly great teacher, and his wife, Bobbie MacDonell Sutton, gave friendship and information. They also honored me by letting me help him with his memoirs and allowing me to use some family photographs. Other Beaches denizens, current or past, helped. Clint Sykes, Class of '43 of Fletcher Junior-Senior High School, provided materials and explanation of life on the Beaches before I was born. Towards the end of my research and writing, I was able to ask questions and get answers about the Beaches on an alumni listserv. Thanks to all who responded.

Special thanks to my beloved wife, Paula Crockett Mabry, whose love inspired me and whose patience sustained me. One could not have a more supportive spouse.



Jacksonville Beach Duplex

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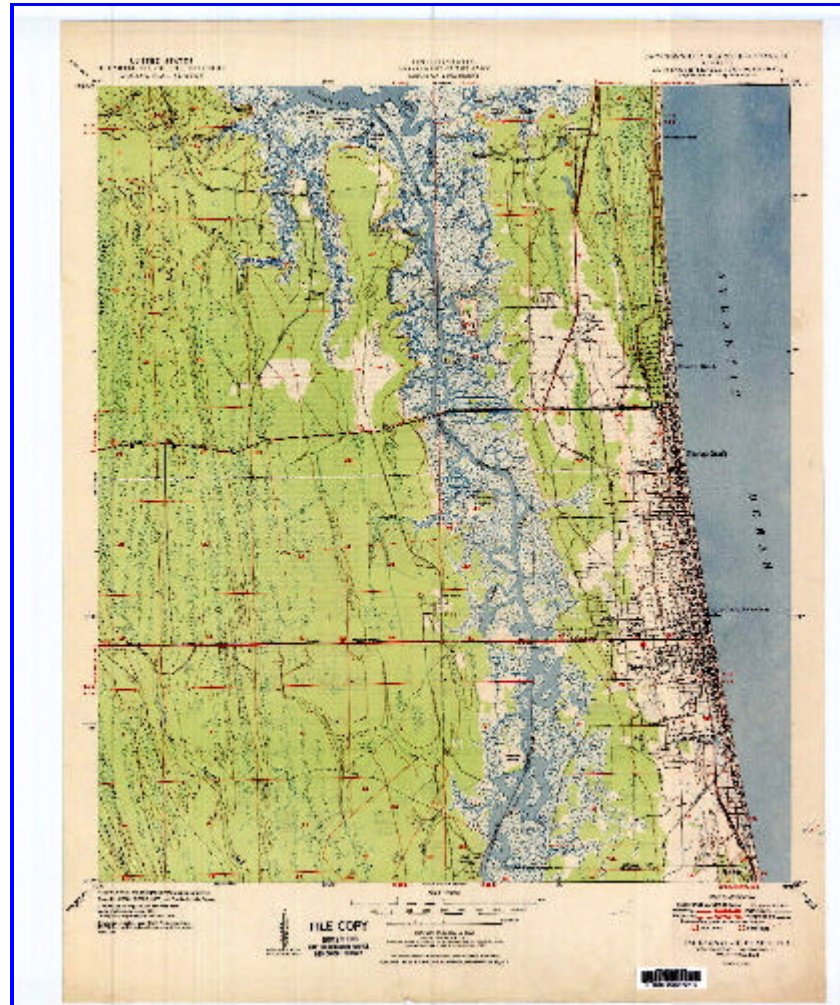
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World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

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About the Author

For years, the Jacksonville Beaches promoted the phrase "Get sand in your shoes when you visit the Beaches and you'll always come back." After all, the Beaches are on a barrier island which offers water, sand surf, sun, entertainment, relaxation, and hospitality. The Beaches were casual; people never inquired too closely about personal origins or beliefs. Residents came from everywhere, either for visit or forever. Those who got "sand in their shoes" found themselves yearning to return.

That's what happened to Donald J. Mabry who has a long association with Jacksonville, Florida as does his family. His maternal grandmother and her children moved to Jacksonville about 1919 after his maternal grandfather died in south Georgia. His mother and father married there and, although, they lived other places, they often returned to visit her relatives. Mabry went to elementary schools in Jacksonville and Jacksonville Beach several times before finally settling at the Beaches in 1953. He was in the first graduating class of San Pablo Elementary School. He graduated from Duncan U. Fletcher Junior-Senior High School in 1959. At Fletcher, he was an honor student as well as treasurer, vice president, and president of the student body during his last three years. In addition, he was an award-winning editor of *The Florida Key*, the state Key Club newspaper, and participated in other school activities. Through the influence of Frank Doggett, the Fletcher principal who published scholarly books in U.S. literature, he was able to attend Kenyon College on scholarships.

Like Doggett, he became an educator and scholar. Mabry holds the BA with honors from Kenyon, the M.Ed. from Bowling Green State University, and the Ph.D. with honors from Syracuse University. He taught at St. Johns River Community College in Palatka, Florida, Syracuse University, and Mississippi State University. At the University of Kansas, he was special assistant to the chancellor; at Mississippi State he served as special assistant to the president, associate dean of arts and sciences, director of the Biological and Physical Sciences Institute, and director of the Institute for the Humanities. He taught U.S., European, and Latin American history. In addition to writing articles and reviews for scholarly journals, he authored *Mexico's Acción Nacional*, *The Mexican University and the State*, *Colonial Latin America*, and [World's Finest Beach](#); co-authored *Neighbors-Mexico and the United States*; and edited *The Latin American Narcotics Trade* and *U. S. National Security*. He has also written hundreds of articles and review. He has testified as an expert witness in both houses of Congress. Mabry was a pioneer in the use of the Internet by professional historians.

Not surprising, he remains very active on the Internet and Web. His [Historical Text Archive](#) (historicaltextarchive.com) is a massive resource for the study and teaching of history and receives about nineteen million page views each year. He also maintains a Web site for Fletcher alumni (1937-1966) at djmabry.org. His travel photography can be seen at djmabry.org/art.

He continues to do research on the history of the Jacksonville Beaches in addition to *World's Finest Beach* and the articles ["A Man and Three Hotels,"](#) ["Neptune Beach, Florida Before 1931"](#), and ["Harcourt Bull's Atlantic Beach, Florida"](#) all published by the HTA.

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1: The Setting



Figure 1-1 The Ocean

The cold, bitter wind swept from the ocean across the "world's finest beach" westward to the marshes and San Pablo Creek. The nor'easter, as northeast winds were called, was not only cold but destructive. As the wind whipped the waves into a frenzy, they

crashed against the shore, shifting the loose sand. The winds formed or destroyed dunes, for they are sculptors. Sea oats anchored much of the sand but it shifted. The coast altered a bit; the wind and the ocean unknowingly cooperate, but what they do works.

Nor'easters never lasted long, two or three days usually; most days there was just a breeze. Some mornings, the ocean was smooth as glass with small waves rolling ashore. Some evenings too. Sandpipers scurried across the beach. Sea gulls flew to the beach in the morning and inland to roost at night. The occasional pelican would skim above the water and suddenly dive bomb when it spotted a meal. Porpoise schools would move along the coast, breaking to the surface for air. Underneath the surface and away from the breakers, various fish swam, eating and being eaten. Jellyfish and Portuguese men-of-war lived beyond the breakers but storms sometimes blew them ashore, where they died.



Figure 1-2 Calm Ocean

Or the surf could be rough, either morning or evening or all day in stormy weather. When it did, even the marshes and San Pablo Creek might ripple. The Creek, a river by most standards, ebbed and flowed with the tide which changed about every six hours for its mouth was the mighty St. Johns River, itself a tidal river. Birds took refuge there. So did alligators, snakes, turtles, panthers, bears, and assorted other wildlife. The water and the marshes were a wonderful habitat.

So much water. The Atlantic Ocean to the east; marshes and the San Pablo Creek to the west; the St. Johns River to the north; and marshes, swamps, scrub land, the Tomolato River down to the St. Augustine Inlet to the south. A barrier island as it were, sitting on the northeast Florida coast adjacent to what would become Jacksonville, Florida. For centuries isolated to all but the hardy.

An island of sand and dirt, of marshes, swamps, and dry land, of palmettos, yucca plants, cabbage palms, pine trees, and live oaks. Wildlife of all kinds loved it-birds, panthers, rabbits, rats, alligators, crab, snakes, frogs, squirrels, wolves, deer, fish, and others. Mosquitoes-millions and millions of them-and gnats and sand fleas, food for birds but so difficult for humans. The pungency of the marsh would tell people that they were approaching the coast; to those who lived on the Beaches, it was the smell of coming home; to

those who lived farther inland, it was offensive.

It was hot and humid for much of the year. Temperatures reach the low-90s in the summer, mitigated by the sea breeze, but are mild in winter, except those rare occasions when it drops below freezing. The rains come, over 50 inches a year, sometimes as early afternoon showers, others as downpours for a day or more. The climate is subtropical. Cockroaches did not die. There were cold winter days--it even froze on occasion--but not many and not for long. People in New England might think it was summer. Until the advent of cheap air conditioning, not many humans liked the weather.

Who would want to live there? If any did, it was not many. People migrated to the Great Plains but avoided northeast Florida.

Humans first migrated into the region thousands of years ago and would continue. The Timuqua/Timucua arrived 12,000 to 16,000 years ago. We have no way of knowing how many people lived in the region before the Europeans started arriving. Some scholars have 14,300 but they were guessing.¹ There was no census. Glenn Emery, who ran a Web site entitled jacksonvillestory.com, says "Downtown Jacksonville was the location of a grand Timucua city called Ossachite. It proved bigger than other communities in the area. Ossachite thrived about 1000 years ago, but it survived until about 300 years ago."²

The Timuqua (Timucua), as they are known, would have found plenty of game and ample fishing spots so an appreciable number could have lived on or near the island. Europeans reported some people on the northern part of the island but not many.³ James Mooney in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* distinguishes among three groups of people:

The tribes forming the Timucua group proper centred chiefly along the St. John's River, the principal being the Timucua along the upper part of the river and about the present St. Augustine, whose chief, known to the French as Outina, had his settlement about the present Welaka, and ruled some forty villages, with perhaps 6000 souls. On the lower course of the river were the Satuniba, the enemies of the Timucua and nearly as numerous, and west of them, toward the Suwanee River, were the Potano, with over a thousand warriors or perhaps four thousand souls. Several other tribes were of minor importance.⁴

It seems that many writers use the term "Timucua" generically. Dr. Jerald T. Milanich says "The Timucuas ruled by Chief Saturiwa lived east of the St. Johns River in Florida and south Georgia."⁵

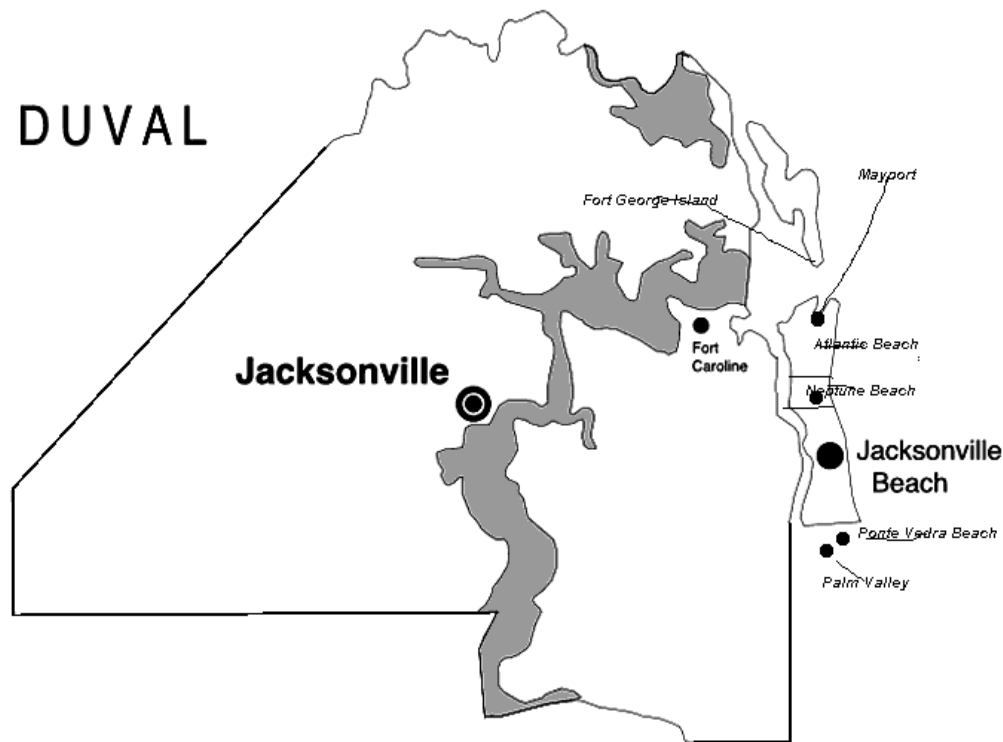


Figure 1-3 The Jacksonville Area

Regardless, Europeans and their diseases would destroy the Timucua. There were not many foreigners at first but they brought millions of microbes and viri. Europeans would not kill as many Timucua as would their diseases to which the Timucua had no resistance. Not that Europeans wanted to destroy the natives. To the contrary, they wanted servants, slaves, and sexual partners while they sought ways to get rich with as little work as possible.

Huguenots, French Protestants, under the leadership of Jean Ribault sailed into the St. Johns River (the French called it River of May) on May 5, 1562 and established an outpost on an island, calling it Mayport. They met Chief Saturiwa and his people. They exchanged presents, food on the part of the Timucua. Ribault returned to Europe and was delayed in his return to Florida when he was imprisoned. René Goulaine de Laudonnière brought a large expedition and created Ft .Caroline on the south shore of the river and further west on June 30, 1564.

The Timucua were helpful to the French until Laudonniere made a treaty with their enemies, Timucua west of the river. Then they turned against the French, who stole food and kidnapped a Timucua chief. Besides Frenchmen brewing trouble with the locals, Spain was planning to expel the Huguenots. Knowing that Laudonnière was a terrible leader, the French Crown sent Ribault back to Florida,

but the French could not hold Fort Caroline. When Pedro Menéndez de Aviles attacked Fort Caroline in August-September, 1565, the Saturiwa Timucua joined him. Knowing that the French would have ships guarding the mouth of the river, Menéndez sent troops overland through marshes and scrub to attack from the land side. They and their Timucua allies killed almost 150 settlers. Others escaped. Menéndez renamed the fort as San Mateo.

When Ribault tried to attack from south of Saint Augustine, Menéndez captured and executed them. He established a fort, Matanzas, to protect the southern approach to the main fort in St. Augustine, the Castillo de San Marcos.⁶

Helping the Spanish expel the French was Phyrrie for the Spanish destroyed them. Eventually, disease reduced the Timucua population. Those who survived became more Hispanized and many worked for the Spanish around St. Augustine. The Timucua died out. When the Spanish pulled out of St. Augustine in 1763, they took the last 12 with them to Cuba. The very last Timucua, Juan Alonso Cabale, died in 1767, as did Timucua culture. We can not even trust the drawings of them done by Jacques le Moyne because most that remain were done from memory and then engraved by someone else. Renegades from Georgia, Creeks, slowly migrated into the area but not many of them.⁷

Florida was a backwater of the Spanish empire, held because it was part of the defense system not because it had precious metals or sedentary populations they could put to work. It could not support itself. St. Augustine was a naval base to protect the Spanish fleet, its population subsidized by a Crown grant, the situado. Other forts, like Matanzas south of St. Augustine, protected the base. Scattered other forts in Florida similarly were defensive. The New World Empire was so vast that Spain could not protect all of it so the Crown concentrated on the most important parts-Mexico, Peru, Cuba-and adopted a defensive strategy of presidios, forts, and missions. Throughout the empire it relied on the conservatism of the population, that they would be loyal to the Crown and the Church. To populate is to govern.

The Beaches area was sparsely populated in this Spanish era. In the second half of the 17th century and into the eighteenth century, the Spanish Crown granted land to encourage settlement.⁸ Diego Sinoza had a plantation in what is now Palm Valley in northern St. Johns county. Few people lived on it and, fortified and sometimes referred to as Fort San Diego, it was captured by James Oglethorpe on May 12, 1740. After he failed to capture St. Augustine and withdrew back to Georgia, Diego got his property back. There simply were not enough people in the area.

Anglos would destroy any hope of holding Florida and would do it in two stages. The first came when the British Crown acquired Florida as spoils from the French and Indian War (1754-63) in exchange for Cuba which had acquired during the war.⁹ Florida was contiguous with Georgia and Alabama. Possessing it not only secured the east coast but also stopped runaway slaves and criminals from escaping into Spain (that is, Florida).

The English changed things so as to encourage people to come. To administer the new lands better, the Crown created two colonies—West Florida with its capital in Pensacola and East Florida with its capital in St. Augustine. Since thousands of Spaniards left when the British took over, the British allowed slavery (the Spanish forbade it) and facilitated the creation of plantations. Some of these were along the St. Johns River, Pablo Creek, and on the coast. To tie Georgia and East Florida together, the King's Road or Highway was built from St. Augustine through Cowford into south Georgia between 1767 and 1772.¹⁰

The Crown was successful because these conservative colonies did not join their liberal and radical brethren to the north in the American Revolution. Instead, they harbored loyalists. Like the other British North American colonies-Lower Canada, Upper Canada, Bermuda, the Bahamas—they saw nothing to gain by participating in leftist politics.¹¹ They backed the wrong horse. Great Britain lost the war and the victors reaped the spoils; Spain, an ally of the American revolutionists, took Florida back. Spain had to deal with the largely Anglo and African population which had come to Florida during the British period.

The Spanish Crown honored British land grants and continued most of what the British had done but doing so backfired. Whereas Spain hoped patriots would settle in the Floridas, replacing the thousands who had left in 1764-64, such was not to be the case.

People from Spain or its possessions were not going to emigrate to Florida but people from the United States would and did. The Crown required that they swear allegiance. Some did. Some did not.^{[12](#)}

Much of what became the Beaches was part of three land grants. The largest was the Bartolomé de Castro y Ferrer grant. Castro y Ferrer bought the grant from John McQueen in 1804 for \$7,000, half down, half in 1807. San Pablo was about 2,000 acres east of Pablo Creek. Both had to swear that they were loyal to the Spanish Crown before the transaction was allowed. Castro y Ferrer proved that he had served the king. Castro y Ferrer would obtain additional lands.^{[13](#)} Bartolomé de Castro y Ferrer had another 1,000 around Little Creek he obtained in 1815.

Figure 1-4 Bartolomé de Castro y Ferrer Grant

The Andrew Dewees grant, acquired in 1790, was also large, about 2,900 acres. His plantation, Naranfil or Orange Grove, was south of the St. Johns River and east of Pablo Creek and abutted the John McQueen-Castro y Ferrer grant.¹⁴ Much smaller was the William Hart grant of 200 acres on the San Pablo Plain.

[illegible]

Figure 1-5 Andrew Deweese Grant

D.^{no} Andrés Bujerín, Legtimen^{to} en esta provincia

Certifico q.^o el plano siguiente representa dos
cientos acres de tierra concedida a D.^{no} Guillermo
Hart en San Diego, lindando por el Este con
el camino de San. Pablo y lizando en sus demas
circunstancias conforme al dicho plano, para q.^o
conste, doy la presente que firmo, en San
agustín de la Florida a 1.^o de Agosto de 1819

Andrés Bujerín

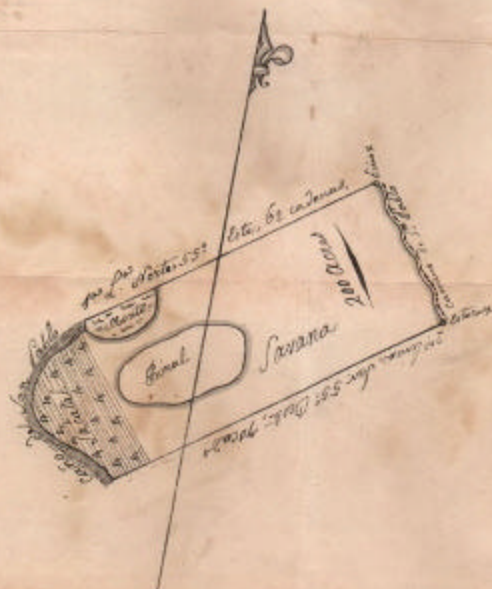


Figure 1-6 William Hart Grant

Although these late 18th century grants brought some settlement to the Beaches area, it could not have been much. Sand and marshes are not conducive to agriculture or animal husbandry. We do not know how many people lived at what is now the Beaches. We do know about Jacksonville, however.¹⁵

Humans settled in Jacksonville long before 1763 when the British settled Wacca Pilatka (as the natives called it and the British, Cowford), because the St. Johns River narrowed there enough for cows to ford the river near Fort San Nicolas on the south bank. Unhappy with Spanish rule, some colonists of English and African extraction revolted and declared the "Republic of Florida, destroying the Fort, gaining control of the land between the St. Mary's River, the present border with Georgia, and the St. Johns River. They captured the important smuggling and fishing port of Fernandina. The republic was squashed but the Spanish fully regained control. Florida entered the United States as a territory when Spain finally ratified the Adams-Onís treaty of 1819. In 1821, the people of Cowford, under the influence of Isaiah Hart, laid out Jacksonville. There were only approximately 250 people in the town, south across the river in San Nicholas, and other settlements nearby; the next year, residents laid out Jacksonville, naming their small village after the first territorial governor, Andrew Jackson. A decade later, in 1832, they obtained a city charter from the state.¹⁶

Jacksonville remained small for decades because there was little to attract people to settle. Getting there was difficult, but, it did have trade a long-standing in lumber, naval stores, and livestock. It also was a small resort for invalids. There was little to draw people there. Many citizens resisted change. Few lived there when statehood became an issue in 1845. The statehood vote in Duval County (bigger than Jacksonville) in 1845 was 174 against and only 31 for. Thus, there were only 205 "white" males in the country and fewer, therefore, in the city!¹⁷ Davis estimates that there were 250 people there in 1835. By 1850, Jacksonville contained only 1,045; by 1860, 2,118. These figures did not include "suburbs" like South Jacksonville. As Johnston notes, "nearly all of the oceanfront property in what became Atlantic Beach, Jacksonville Beach, and Neptune Beach became public domain in the 1830s and remained public lands until the late nineteenth century."¹⁸

Hazard, as Mayport was originally called, with its location on the St. Johns River a few miles west of the mouth of the river, was more important in the early days. In 1864, there were about 600 people there. One could earn a living by fishing, transshipping cargo to Jacksonville or south, taking passengers to Jacksonville, or as an entrepôt for mail to Jacksonville or the people in what became the Beaches. For example, in 1830-34, a mail route went from Mayport through Pablo Beach. When lumbering became important, the village's name was changed to Mayport Mills in 1849. The shipping of timber and naval stores became important enough that a lighthouse was built in 1859 to help ocean-going-ships find the river mouth and be warned of the sandbar there which made navigation tricky.¹⁹

NOTICE.

MAYPORT **STEAM SAW MILLS,** ***St. John's River, Fla.***

**Is offered for sale; Wrought Iron
Shafting entire, and Wrought Iron
Gate Heads; two Gangs, with Circular
Saw. Power about 80 horse.**

**The mill site with the buildings is
also offered for sale, and a quantity
of Iron, &c., appertaining to a Saw
Mill. Apply to**

A. M. REED.

Jacksonville, March 24, 1853.

Figure 1-7 Mayport Ad

Mayport and the Jacksonville area played a minor roles in the Civil War. In 1862, the Confederates built Fort Steele at Mayport for the Jacksonville Light Infantry.²⁰ The Duval County Cow Boys went to St. Johns Bluff but the United States Army occupied Jacksonville on March 12, 1862 for a month and then left but came back in October. The United States Navy maintained a blockade of the lower St. Johns with a squadron at Mayport Mills. Four miles upstream, the Confederates fortified St. Johns Bluff and the United States could not dislodge them during the September 10-11, 1862 battle between the Confederate shore batteries and US ships. After the US Army began invading the Bluff from the land was victory assured on October 3. The US Army then occupied Jacksonville.²¹

The major land engagement was the Battle of Olustee near Lake City west of Jacksonville which US Army lost on February 20, 1864. They retreated back to the town. Edwin C. Bearss notes that Mayport played a minor role in the Civil War.²²

General Thomas W. noted that

"Jacksonville, on the St. John's River, in Florida, had been already twice taken and twice evacuated; having been occupied by Brigadier-General Wright, in March, 1862, and by Brigadier-General Brannan, in October of the same year. The second evacuation was by Major-General Hunter's own order, on the avowed ground that a garrison of five thousand was needed to hold the place, and that this force could not be spared. The present proposition was to take and hold it with a brigade of less than a thousand men, carrying, however, arms and uniforms for twice that number, and a month's rations."²³

So Higginson, commanding the First South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, was sent to occupy Jacksonville in 1863.

"The claim was, that there were fewer rebel troops in the Department than formerly, and that the St. Mary's expedition had shown the advantage possessed by colored troops, in local knowledge, and in the confidence of the loyal blacks. It was also urged, that it was worth while to risk something, in the effort to hold Florida, and perhaps bring it back into the Union."²⁴

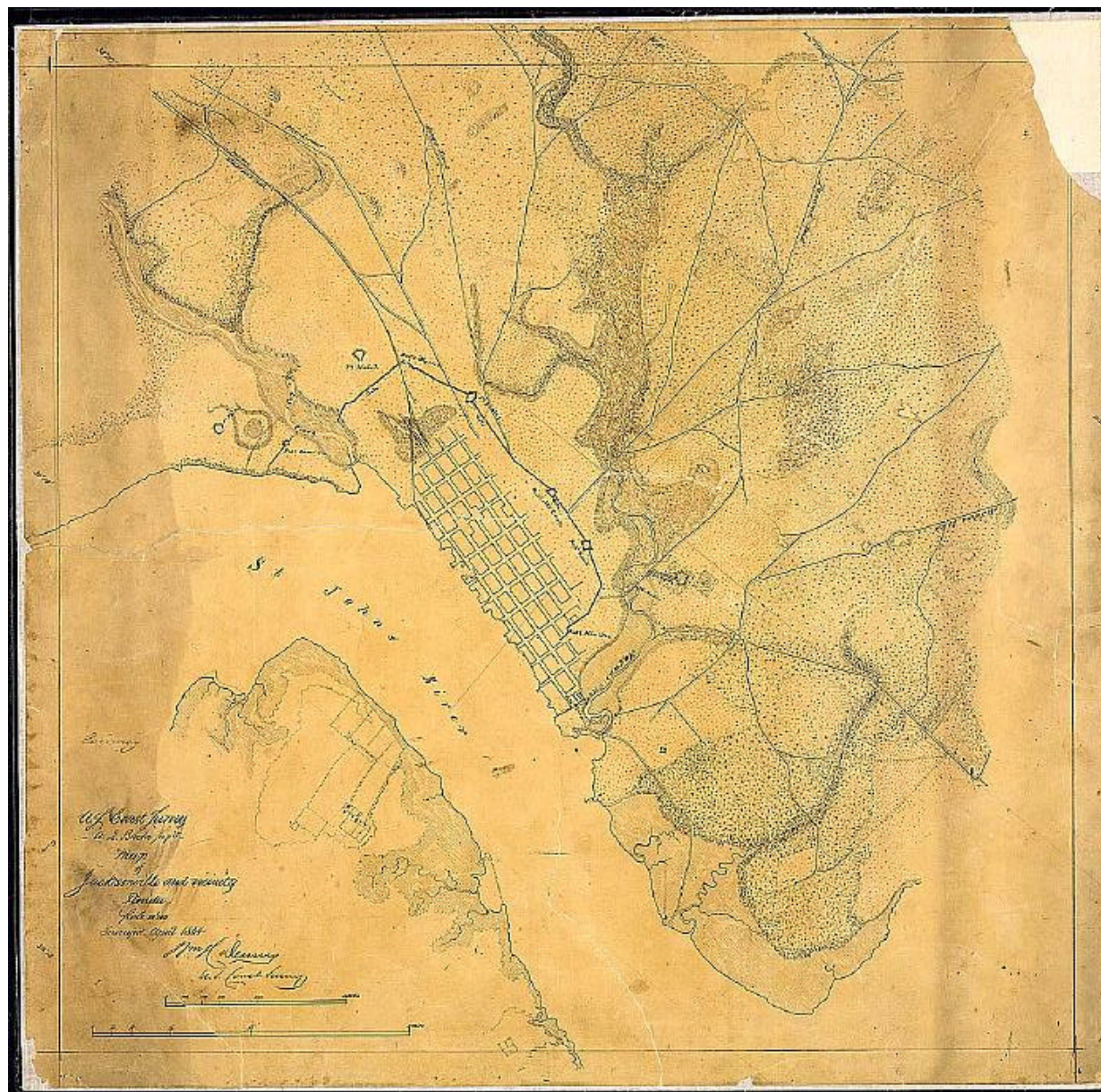


Figure 1-8 Jacksonville in 1864

The Civil War years made a difference in population growth for Jacksonville. The city grew 326% in 1860s to 6,912 persons. Of these, 3,989 (57.7%) were African-American whereas the African-American population in 1860 was only 46.5% or 985 persons. Free "blacks" went to the Jacksonville area after the war, drawn by the U.S. Army and the Freedman's Bureau. Ex-Confederates came back. Northern investors saw a wonderful opportunity. Lumber mills, naval stores, fishing, and farming picked up. Tourism began playing a very important role in the city's economy.²⁵

Jacksonville's population would skyrocket in the 1880s and grow substantially in the 1890s after the sluggish 1870s when it only grew to 7,650 in 1880. One reason was the Disston Purchase in 1881 which stimulated investment in railroads. The Florida Internal Improvement Fund owned title to millions of acres of land but was deeply in debt. Until the debt was paid, the state government could do nothing. Hamilton Disston bought four million acres for a million dollars, clearing the debt. With that the state began subsidizing private railroad companies with grants of land. By 1890, it was 17,201, an increase of 225%. By 1900, it had increased another 165% to 28,429.

Industrialization not only resumed after the War but the pace increased substantially. The expansion of the railroad network made it easier and cheaper to move freight and people. The first railroad was the Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central; chartered in 1851, it reached Baldwin in 1859 and Alligator (Lake City) in 1860. It connected to the Florida Railroad which ran from Fernandina on the northeastern coast to Cedar Key on the Gulf of Mexico. A line coming into Live Oak from Georgia was connected to the Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central. Then a boom began in the 1880s. Henry B. Plant built the Savannah, Florida, and Western and brought it into Jacksonville. Plant's railroads became the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Henry D. Flagler took over the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax Railroad, other small railroads, eventually melding them into the Florida East Coast Railway. Flagler spanned the St. Johns River between Jacksonville and South Jacksonville with a railroad bridge. The Seaboard and Southern were built and went through Jacksonville. Thus, most people and freight going to and from central and southern Florida passed through Jacksonville.²⁶

Equally important were measures to develop Jacksonville as a port, for goods shipped by land often came by sea. The building of jetties, begun in 1879 with U.S. government monies made it possible for larger ships to sail the twenty miles upriver to Jacksonville. In the 1890s, Duval County expended the vast sum of \$300,000 to dredge an 18-foot channel.

A lighthouse was important both the help ships in the entrance as well as to warn them of hazards. The first lighthouse was built in 1830 but demolished in 1835 and replaced because it could not withstand the weather and tides. That was replaced in 1859 because wind-swept sand dunes were covering it; the new one was sixty-five feet high. Its height was increased by fifteen feet in 1887 and the lighthouse was used until 1929 when a light ship took over its function.²⁷

As the United States grew more prosperous, there were more wealthy people who had the money and leisure to travel and Florida was a destination. Jacksonville was *the* major Florida tourist destination until Henry D. Flagler built the Florida East Coast Railroad to more southern (and warmer in winter) parts. One could get there by railroad, a big plus since what roads existed were terrible. Once there, one could also take cruises up the St. Johns to the south and also on the Oklawaha River. Even after tourism shifted further south, Jacksonville prospered as a gateway city.

The Beaches developed because Jacksonville developed, but good transportation had to exist first. Railroads made the difference. In October, 1883, a contract was let for the Jacksonville and Atlantic Railroad which would operate between South Jacksonville and Pablo Beach. There was ferry service across the St. Johns between Jacksonville and South Jacksonville. On November 12, 1884, even before the railroad was completed, lots were sold where Jacksonville Beach now is. In order to maximize profits, the lots were quite small, often 50 feet by 100 feet.²⁸ The Jacksonville & Atlantic Railway Company built a narrow-gauge road of three-feet gauge and 35-pound rail which was completed in December, 1884. On November 12, 1884, before the railroad was finished, the company, which had land at the beach, 34 lots for a total of \$7,514. This was the first development. The station at the beach was attached to the rear of the

Murray Hall Hotel.^{[29](#)}

The settlement of tents called Ruby Beach was named after the baby daughter of William E. and Eleanor K. Scull, who moved there and lived in one tent while using another tent as a general store and post office for the once-a-week mail. Eleanor Scull, born in 1861 and who was 78 when interviewed in 1939, ran a rooming house for tourists in Jacksonville, her family having moved to Florida from Indiana. She married William Scull in 1879. Her father, D. H. Kennedy, had helped survey the railroad route to the beach, so she and her husband were familiar with the beach. They moved there in October, 1884. The Sculls got the post office concession and named it after their daughter Ruby. William Scull got the mail at Mayport and brought it south over the hard-packed beach sand at low tide in a wagon. They built a house in 1885 from lumber they salvaged from a shipwreck near Mayport which was carrying it as cargo. Since there were no roads, they brought it down Pablo Creek and then the few miles overland to where the Pablo A venue area is now. When the train finally reached the beach, there may have been thirty families living in Ruby Beach.^{[30](#)}

Thanks to the New Deal, we have access to the memories of Eleanor Scull:

From the time we went to the beach in October, 1884, until February, 1885, we were the only family there. Then a family built a small house and located in the woods about a mile south. Another family lived at what is now Neptune Beach, two miles north. When we first went to the beach it took two hours to drive to the boat landing at Mayport and three more to make the trip to Jacksonville up the St. Johns River. The steamboat bringing mail and supplies from Jacksonville at that time was the *Katy Spencer* in charge of Captain Napoleon Broward, afterwards governor of Florida. There was a way by which Mr. Scull used to drive to Jacksonville by going six miles south through the Palm Valley section where there was a settlement, but it took two days to make the trip, so that one night he had to camp out. There was no way to cross Pablo Creek except to ford it, and that was the reason they had to go such a roundabout way in order to reach near the source of the stream where it was narrow and shallow. Dr. Burroughs had an orange grove in the Palm Valley section, and he used to drive that route too, and sometimes he and Mr. Scull would make the trip together. There is still quite a bit of ocean front between Jacksonville and St. Augustine which has been slow in developing.

The second house at the beach was built by Mr. and Mrs. Dickerson. They had a store and she was afterwards postmistress. In September, 1886, the post office was moved to the Murray Hall Hotel, and Mr. French, who was the manager, acted as postmaster. This arrangement was not satisfactory. The guests at the hotel objected to the riff-raff then at the beach coming into this splendid hotel for mail, Mr. French thought it took up too much of his time, and the people themselves did not like the arrangement. After the hotel burned, it was established in a store up town. I forgot to say, the railroad company built a pavilion at the terminus in the first period, and it had a skating rink which was quite popular, both with the excursionists and the people at the hotel and the beach residents.^{[31](#)}



First house on the Beach, built by Mr. and Mrs. Wm. E. Scull in 1884, when it was Ruby Beach. It was later acquired by other owners who turned it into the Dixie House, with room and board. The site is now occupied by the Pioneer Apts. Beach Blvd. & 2nd. St. Courtesy Beaches Area Historical Society.

Figure 1-9

Ruby Beach attracted rich and somewhat eccentric people. General Francis E. Spinner, ex-Congressman and Treasurer of the United States appointed by Abraham Lincoln and also serving under Andrew Johnson and U.S. Grant, moved from Jacksonville to the beach. He created a compound he called Ruby Camp Caroline and his friends and acquaintances joined him. His compound included a pavilion with a honky-tonk.³² Prominent businessmen in Jacksonville began building summer cottages there.


Ruby Scull's fame as the namesake of the settlement, for the railroad company decided it was to be Pablo Beach in 1886. However, serious development had finally begun south of the port and fishing village of Mayport.

Endnotes

- 1.T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville Florida and Vicinity 1513 to 1924* . (Jacksonville, 1925), p. 2.
- 2.In [Timucua Ossachite](#) but other sources say there were few left by 1700. Emery has information at [Timucua Times](#).
- 3.Haines Brown has a brief essay entitled "[A brief history of the Timucua people of Northern Florida](#)".
4. "Timucua Indians," [Catholic Encyclopedia](#). 1907.
- 5.Taino-L, May 21, 2000 archived at "[The Timucua Indians-After the Europeans Came-\(1562-1767\)](#)", "
6. Davis, p. 4. Francis Parkman did a very readable [Huguenots in Florida: the Pioneers of France in Florida](#).
- 7.There are many accounts of Jean Ribault, the Huguenots, and the St Johns River. An easily accessible one is by M. Adele Francis

- Gorman, "[Jean Ribault's Colonies in Florida](#)," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 44:1 & 2.
8. Sidney Johnston, *The Historic Architectural Resources of the Beaches Area: A Study of Atlantic Beach, Jacksonville Beach, and Neptune Beach, Florida*. Jacksonville, FL: Environmental Services, Inc., July, 2003), p. 10. ESI Report of Investigations No. 382. Prepared for the Beaches Area Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Johnston, *Architectural Resources*.
9. Seven Years War, 1756-63, in European history.
10. [New World in a State of Nature; British Plantations and Farms on the St. Johns River, East Florida, 1763-1784](#) ; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p.13.
11. Michael Gannon, *Florida, A Short History*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993, pp. 18-24 does a quick synopsis of the English period.
12. Gannon, *Florida, A Short History*, pp. 24-27.
13. [Florida Memory, Spanish Land Grants, Confirmed](#). John McQueen deed for plantation known as San Pablo to Castro y Ferrer. There is a description at Box: 7, Folder 7, Page 9 of the site. The plantation was east of Pablo Creek. Another document that says 2,000 acres on the west side of Pablo Creek in addition. He got it free in 1818 for 24 years of service to the King. He acquired another 35 acres in 1817.
14. [Andrew Dewees Grant](#) . In 1804, the Dewees plantation was called the Orange Grove or Naranfil, some 2290 acres/2300. In 1882, some of this grant was subdivided and given to three heirs, the Floyd family being one of them. The Floyd family became one of the mainstays of Mayport. The grant included Mayport. St Johns, Atlantic Ocean, Pablo Creek, and south of section 9 and parts of 5 & 6. It was resurveyed several times. The 1882 survey excluded Mayport and extended it further south but 1885 appeal reversed this. William Hart had 200 acres in the San Pablo Plain in 1809 and was confirmed 1816. See www.floridamemory.com.
15. Land grants are discussed in Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 17-22.
16. Carita Doggett Corse, [Story of Jacksonville. 1935](#). She was the sister of Frank E. Doggett (1906-2002), principal of Duncan U. Fletcher Junior-Senior High School from its beginning in 1937 until 1969.
17. Sharon Weightman, ["Cowford grew on the river's edge."](#) *Florida Times-Union*. February, 1998.
18. Davis, p. 75; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 34. South Jacksonville did not become incorporated into Jacksonville until 1932.
19. Michael Gannon, *A Short History*, p. 31 says Mayport was created in the 1820s and 1830s.
20. City of Jacksonville, ["Mayport Naval Station"](#).
21. T. Frederick Davis, "Engagements at St. Johns Bluff St. Johns River, September-October, 1862," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 15:2 , pp. 78-85.
22. Edwin C. Bearss, "Military Operations On The St. Johns, September-October, 1862 (Part I)," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 42:3 (January 1964), 232-248. and See Edwin C. Bearss, "Military Operations On The St. Johns, September-October, 1862 (Part II)," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 42:4 (April 1964), 331-351.
23. Higginson, Thomas Wentworth. [Army Life in a Black Regiment](#). Historical Text Archive. Chapter 4.
24. *Ibid*.
25. Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, ["Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States"](#).
26. Herbert J. Doherty, "Jacksonville As A Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58:4 (April, 1980), 374-387.
27. St. Johns River [Lighthouse](#).
28. George W. Simons, Jr., *Report for Jacksonville Beaches Chamber of Commerce*, 1944, p.10 comments on the very small lots in Pablo/Jacksonville Beach. Davis, p. 350, write of the railroad and real estate.
29. Davis, p.169.

30. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 39.
31. Rose Shepherd, [Interview of April 11, 1939](#) with Mrs. E. Scull, American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940.
32. Bill Foley, "Disgust With Big-City Rat Race Gave the Beaches Life in the 1880s," *Florida Times-Union*, August 20, 1997.

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World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

2: Pablo Beach, 1886-1907



Figure 2-1 Sunrise

As the sun peeked over the eastern horizon in the morning, the sky glowed pink, yellow, and orange. Waves lapped the shore. Serene, the beach scene calmed the human heart. The beauty existed long before humans came to enjoy it. The beach seemed to be the "World's Finest Beach," at least to some.

A railroad created a town. It allowed people and goods to get to the ocean shore cheaply and quickly when cars and, later, trucks were rare or expensive. People in Jacksonville could and did establish summer residences. "Eagledune," the L'Engle-Barnett house was built in 1887 was one of a dozen houses scattered near the railroad terminal. George Wilson, W. A. MacDuff, S. B. Hubbard, P. McQuaid, J. W. Shoemaker, and others had houses. Tom Cashen was one of the early residents of Pablo Beach but built a house on

the oceanfront away from the others in what is now Neptune Beach. General Francis Spinner, former U.S. Treasurer, lived at Pablo Beach in a tent for about two years—1885-87—because he said it was good for his health. Spinner was the father-in-law of Shoemaker, the first cashier of the First National Bank of Florida. By 1895, Jacksonville residents had summer cottages there.¹

The City of Jacksonville only had 7,650 persons in 1880 but it grew rapidly in the 1880s and had 17,201 in 1890, a 125% increase.² Its economic diversity and wealth increased as well. The largest city in the state, it housed the U.S. District Court, a customs house, and the other paraphernalia of the most important city in the state. Naval stores and lumber were important exports. Citrus fruits were important. The city had three daily newspapers. Winter tourists flocked to the city. Some enjoyed steamboat excursions on the St. Johns and Oklawaha Rivers. Entrepreneurs saw the ocean front as another possible tourist destination and tourism from Jacksonville quickly became a major source of employment and cause for settlement at the beaches, first in Pablo Beach, later in Atlantic Beach. Even Mayport and its immediate area was the site of tourism development.

Pablo Beach tourism began when John G. Christopher and his wife built the fabulous Murray Hall Hotel in 1886 and equipped it for \$150,000 dollars. Located a block from the ocean at what is now the corner of First Street North and Beach Boulevard, its 200-350 guests enjoyed fireplaces, water from its own artesian wells, and electricity generated by the hotel's power plant. The three-story building had turrets and porches. As the image below indicates, it was luxurious.

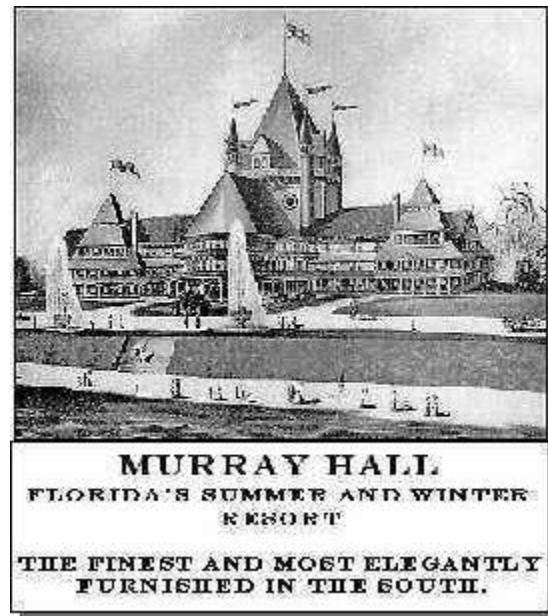


Figure 2-2 Murray Hall Hotel Ad

The Murray Hall quickly became the center of Pablo Beach even before it was finished. On July 2-5, 1886, state troops encamped at Pablo Beach.³ Eleanor Scull reported that the post office was moved from her tent in September to the hotel and the manager, a Mr.

French, became postmaster.⁴

As people moved to Pablo, churches were established to meet their spiritual needs. In 1886, St Paul's-By-The-Sea Episcopal Church was created by congregants who met in the Murray Hall Hotel. The land was donated by the J & A Railroad in 1887. The church building was dedicated on August 14, 1887 and still exists although it was moved twice, first in 1952 to 11th Avenue North and Fifth Street in Jacksonville Beach and then in 1970 to the Central Christian Church in Neptune Beach on Florida Boulevard. The congregation was small; services were only held during the summer season for many year. The church ended by 1923 and was revived in 1925.⁵ Although never large, many prominent community members belonged. By 1890, Father William Kenny established St Paul's Catholic Mission on 1st Street South. The Diocese of St. Augustine obviously hoped that the mission would convert or attract many people even in a Protestant area.



Figure 2-3 St. Paul's-By-The-Sea Episcopal Church



Figure 2-4 St. Paul's Catholic Church

Very soon after Pablo Beach started on its development path, efforts were made to grow Mayport and environs. Mayport, which contained 600 people, was founded in 1830 by river pilots and fishermen. Boats went twice a day to Jacksonville. The Mayport (Hazard) lighthouse had been destroyed by a hurricane and a new one was built. The US government began removing the sand bar at mouth of St Johns River.⁶ In May, 1888, the Jacksonville, Mayport, and Pablo Railway and Navigation Company opened a railroad from Arlington on the south Bank of the St. Johns near Jacksonville to Mayport. Alexander Wallace built it to develop the fish and phosphate business at Mayport and tourism at Burnside Beach on the coast just south of the jetties. Land developers from Chicago created Burnside Beach, Seminole Beach, and Manhattan Beach (for African Americans).⁷

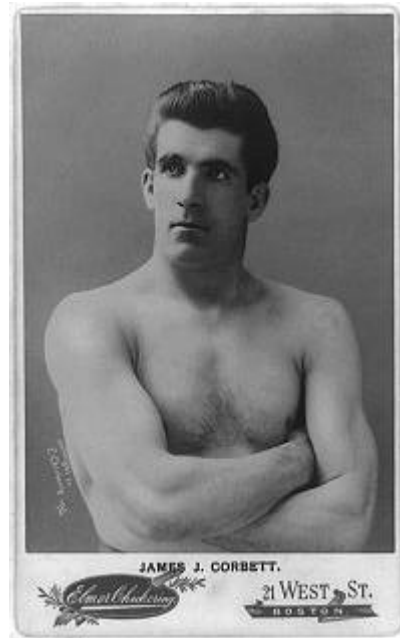
Wallace and the R. M. Haworth Company also created East Mayport. Whereas Mayport was an island with shifting sand, East Mayport had fertile fields. The Jacksonville, Mayport, Pablo Railway & Navigation Company road (JMP) or Jump, Man, And Push, as it was nicknamed, quickly ran into financial troubles. The business with Mayport did not develop to pay the costs. Wallace died in 1889. The JMP went bankrupt but made eventually earned money hauling freight and coal.⁸

The failure of the JMP was just one difficulty in developing Mayport. The San Diego Hotel, the Beaches Pavilion, the pre-Civil War Burnside House, and the new 4-story Palmetto Hotel were destroyed by fire in 1889. In March, 1892, the JMP was bought out and its terminus moved from Arlington to South. Jacksonville, but its financial troubles continued. There was not enough traffic for two railroads to Mayport and it could not compete with the Jacksonville and Atlantic Railroad. By 1895, all but mail delivery (by hand car) was all that was left. Its rail bed became the original shell road into Mayport and remained only paved road until after 1940.⁹

Mayport, the little village at the mouth of the St. Johns River in northeast Florida, played a significant role in two fights by "heavyweights" in the winter of 1893-94. One is well-known, drawing international attention; the other was not. Victory for one;

defeat for the other. Both are intertwined.

"Gentleman Jim" Corbett fought the English heavyweight champion, Charles Mitchell, for the heavyweight championship of the world on January 25, 1894 in Jacksonville, Florida. The fisticuffs were held in Moncrief Park under the auspices of the Duval Athletic Club. The club sold tickets for \$25 each to pay the purse of \$20,000 and meet expenses. The DAC had pulled off a coup in getting this championship match scheduled for Jacksonville both because other places wanted this "Super Bowl" of boxing and because the illegal fight met stiff resistance.



Jim Corbett



Charles

Mitchell

Corbett trained at Mayport less than twenty miles by train from the south part of Jacksonville. He and his crew rented the summer home of Claus Meyer and almost got arrested when one of Corbett's aides forgot to pay Meyer until he threatened arrest. Mitchell trained in St Augustine, well over thirty miles distant.

Both were distant from the furor in the state over the upcoming fight. The opposition seemed insurmountable. Opposed were Governor Mitchell I. Mitchell, Jacksonville Mayor Duncan U. Fletcher, Duval County Sheriff Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, churches and moralists, and the Second Battalion of Ocala Rifles which the governor sent to Jacksonville. They saw betting immoral and feared that the match would bring riff raff, whores, gamblers, the wrong kind of tourist, and such to the city. They feared violence.

They pressed public officials which seemed to work. The Governor said no. The Mayor and the Sheriff each said no. One suspects they were not that opposed but were afraid to say otherwise. Sheriff Broward didn't complain that much when Circuit Court Judge H. M. Call issued an injunction to prevent him from attaching the Duval Athletic Club's property or enter its grounds. Governor called up troops (the Ocala rifles). Groups tried to get the railroads of H. B. Plant and Henry Flagler not to transport any spectators or gamblers or whores or boxing people to Jacksonville. Free enterprise prevailed, however. The railroads were not about to forgo profits. They refused to accept the argument that it was their moral duty and they should act as government. Moreover, they refused to transport

the troops without cash payments in advance. The Governor conceded. When he threatened martial law in Jacksonville to prevent the Corbett-Mitchell fight, he went too far. Public opinion turned against him. Prominent merchant L. Furchgott protested; the business community had joined the pro-fight crowd. The troops that came were booed as they marched down Bay Street. As it turned out, their presence was a charade, a way of saying the Governor was serious about maintaining public order. The fight would go on.

One who came to Jacksonville was a blond New York City woman who was wintering in Florida went to Mayport with her Jacksonville cousin to visit the training facilities of Jim Corbett. No doubt, they probably also wanted to see this very fine example of male beauty. As the New York Times reported on December 25, 1893, "Corbett's muscles stood out in perfect relief, and his skin glowed with perfect health." He was worth seeing. He sparred and wrestled and ran. He weighed himself twice a day on the scales he used, scales which had to be accurate to satisfy boxing rules.

Our heroine made a bad decision, one that caused her to lose the battle to maintain her dignity. She sweet talked the powers that be to allow her to try Corbett's scales, to become more than a spectator. And she mounted them. Much to her horror, she weighed 138 pounds! Surely, she thought, she couldn't have gained weight on vacation in Florida; surely the scales were wrong. She searched the tiny windswept, sandy village for another scale, one that she was sure would show she wasn't that "fat."

A little grocery store nearby had scales to weigh its products, keeping them with hogsheads of molasses in a small annex. The hogsheads had a trough below for the drippings when drawn off. The trough was two by nine feet, more or less, and a foot deep. The annex was dimly lit and its floor was lower than the main building. Our heroine fell into the trough, for her eyes focused on the scales which would restore her reputation. But she was stuck! She was too fat to get out of the trough either by herself or with the help of the owner and his assistant. It took four men!

The defeated tourist, holding her head high, headed for the proprietor's house to get clean as small boys tasted her newly-acquired sweetness. She was even heavier.

The other heavyweight, Gentleman Jim Corbett, won twice. The "scientific glove contest," as the DAC termed the match, was held in Moncrief Park in Jacksonville before 1800 people. Corbett won in twelve minutes and became Heavyweight Champion of the World. The purse was awarded; Corbett also collected the \$10,000 he had in side bets; and the swells and "sports" settled up according to their bets. Corbett and Mitchell were arrested for assault and battery. Corbett was tried first and acquitted. The government gave up. The crowds left. The Duval Athletic Club disbanded. Life in Mayport settled down.

We don't know if the sweet woman ever recovered from the loss of face.¹⁰

By 1888, Jacksonville was a tourist destination Presumably the beaches got some of this trade. Moreover, there were summer residences at the beaches. That was a hard year for Jacksonville for it suffered a Yellow Fever epidemic. There were 4,676 cases of yellow fever in 1888. The epidemic hurt city of Jacksonville but Pablo Beach still got aid from Jacksonville.

Yellow Jack! That scourge of the tropics and subtropics visited Duval County, Florida in 1888, coming on July 28th without warning, sickening rich and poor alike, and killing and killing. R. D. McCormick, a business traveler, had brought it unknowingly; he stayed at one of the best hotels, the Grand Union. The disease spread cross the city within two weeks. Many died. There seemed to be no stopping it, no cure. People fled if they could. Death was everywhere. The city's population dropped from 130,000 to 14,000. Dwellings flew yellow flags to warn of the presence of yellow fever.

Other places tried to isolate Jacksonville. Roads were sealed. Guards stopped people from sneaking out of town. Steamboat traffic was suspended. Trains were fumigated or prevented from passing from Jacksonville to other towns. People theorized what caused yellow fever. "Ironically, when yellow fever broke out in Jacksonville in 1857, the railroad builders, clearing and draining the marshy areas for the tracks, were accused of having released malarial miasmas which brought on the dreaded plague." The *Florida Dispatch* explained the theory of "Wiggins, the Canadian weather prophet crank" who said: "The cause of the fever is astronomical. The planets were in the same line as the sun and earth and this produced, besides cyclones, earthquakes, etc., a denser atmosphere holding more carbon and creating microbes. "Mars had an uncommonly dense atmosphere, but its inhabitants were probably protected from the

fever by their newly discovered canals, which were perhaps made to absorb carbon and prevent the disease." Some from Jacksonville exploded guns and cannons to "concuss the microbes."

On August 14, 1888, the Florida Times-Union suggested:

Keep indoors from an hour or more before sunset 'til an hour at least after sunrise...

Avoid the night air...

Avoid exposure to the sun...

Eat no meat...

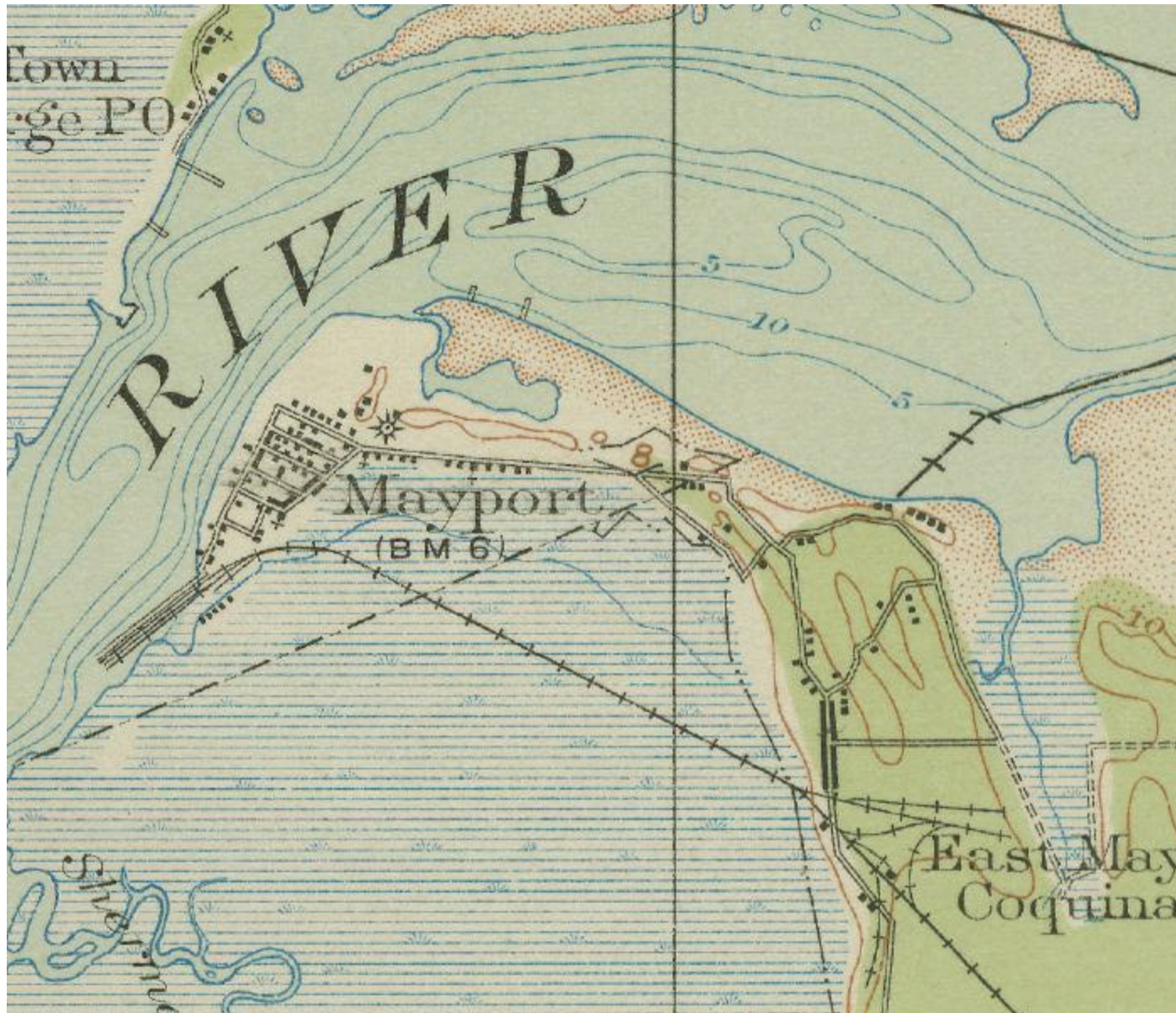
Eat no cabbage...

Eat before leaving your house...

Avoid nervousness...

Have faith in your doctor...

American scientists did not know the causes or means of transmission. They had not read the work of Dr. Carlos Finlay, the Cuban medical doctor who had figured it out. It was not until the aftermath of the Cuban-Spanish-American War of 1898 that Finlay's work became known to U.S. scientists and experiments were conducted to prove Finlay was right. Walter Reed was enough of a scientist to understand Finlay's theory, test it with experiments, and prove it. Mosquitoes were the culprit. Those concerned with public health then sought to control the mosquito population.



Mayport 1918

Some twenty miles from the city lay the little village of Mayport, sitting at the mouth of the St. Johns River; its residents were not so concerned with the cause of the disease. They wanted to keep this scourge away from their little resort and fishing village. Vacationers and working people conspired to prevent those westerners from spreading the disease to Mayport. Residents of Pablo

Beach to the south were scared off by men with guns, "shotgun protection," as they called it. There were so few people, even vacationers, in Pablo Beach, they were not much of a threat. To counter Jacksonville to the west was the problem. People could cross the river from Jacksonville and take a train to Mayport; "Yellow Jack" might take the train as well.

Mayport residents wanted supplies so they became sneaky about when the train made its loop. People would make "contrary statements" about when the train would run between Mayport and Jacksonville, that is, they only relayed the train departure times from Jacksonville to those they trusted. In other words, the wealthy and the permanent residents knew the fluctuating train schedule but hid it from others. They would ride the little train to and from Arlington, just across the river from the city only when absolutely necessary. They refused help from refugees. Mayport successfully isolated itself and survived the epidemic.

Frost came on November 25, 1888 and killed the mosquitoes. The epidemic died; the crisis passed; and no one in the U.S. understood why.¹¹

Pablo Beach, with its 282 people, 257 in the town in the 1890 census, struggled to survive. The Murray Hall Hotel burned on August 7, 1890. Spinner, its most famous resident, died on December 31, 1890. Florida was dealt a second economic blow in the winter of 1894-1895 when the "Great Freeze" effectively destroyed its citrus industry. The cultivation, processing, and shipping of oranges had been an important staple of trade along the St. Johns River since the 1870s. In north Florida the business evaporated in the winter of 1895-96. Earlier, in September, 1892, entrepreneurs got the county government to use convict labor to cut a road through the wilderness to Pablo Beach. The "road" was primitive. Later county commissioners did not want to make it a viable road.¹² As it was, it took an entire day to travel from Jacksonville to Pablo.



Figure 2-5 1895 map of Duval County

Pablo Beach played a role, albeit minor, in the Spanish-American War. Before the war of 1898, Napoleon Bonaparte Broward had been helping the Cuban rebels by running filibustering expeditions from Mayport and Pablo Beach.¹³ After the war began in 1898, some of the troops sent to Jacksonville recuperated from typhoid fever at Pablo Beach. Eventually, some 1,400 soldiers were stationed there. Most famous was William Jennings Bryan, the Populist Party and Democratic Party presidential candidate in 1896 and 1900, who was there in September with the 3rd Nebraska Regiment. Pablo Beach had become more than a few summer cottages but it was still very small and isolated.



Figure 2-6 U.S. Army on Pablo Beach



Figure 2-7 Army Marching on the Beach



Figure 2-8 Showing the Pavilion in the right background.



Figure 2-9 Colonel William Jennings Bryan

The beaches and Florida came into their own because Henry Flagler, a multimillionaire from the Standard Oil Company of John D. Rockefeller, developed a personal interest and spent some of his personal fortune to pursue a whim. In winter, 1878, he visited Jacksonville because of his first wife had tuberculosis. She died a few years later on May 18, 1881. He remarried and made another trip to northeast Florida, this time to charming St. Augustine. Bored with his Standard Oil duties and seeking a new life, he became interested in the possibilities of the frontier state. He returned in 1885 and built the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St Augustine. He also bought the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax Railroad which ran between Jacksonville and St. Augustine. Thus, the Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC) was born. He then began buying other railroads and building luxury hotels on the east coast of the peninsula. One of these was north of Pablo Beach in what became known as Atlantic Beach.



Henry Morrison Flagler

Figure 2-10 Henry M. Flagler

Flagler bought the Jacksonville and Atlantic Railway Company in 1899 and changed the narrow gauge, light rail road to standard gauge with 60-pound rails, thus making it compatible to the railroads in the country. In other words, he made the beaches railroad part of the FEC system and the national train network. He extended the line to Mayport; built a spur to Mineral City when mining began there; and built a railroad bridge across the St. Johns River between Jacksonville and South Jacksonville. Moreover, he built a luxury hotel, the Continental, in Atlantic Beach, opening up that part of the beaches. In 1900, on March 9th, the first FEC train, which had taken over from the Jacksonville & Atlantic Railroad, arrived in Pablo Beach. The engine burned wood until the railroad was extended to Mayport where it could get coal. In 1915, the FEC began converting to oil fueled engines but also ran a gas electric to Pablo beach but that service stopped in 1920.¹⁴



Figure 2-11 The Beach in 1900

On June 1, 1901, Flagler opened his Continental Hotel in Atlantic Beach. The yellow hotel was 47 feet by 447 feet with a six story rotunda and five story wings. The dining room could seat 350. There were 186 sleeping apartments (later 200) and 56 baths. It had numerous outbuildings.¹⁵ It was spectacular as these images show.



*Continental Hotel-Atlantic Beach, Florida.
The W. H. B. Brown Co., Publishers, Jacksonville, Florida.*

Figure 2-12 Continental Hotel with Beach on the Right



Figure 2-13 Continental Hotel Rear View



Figure 2-14 Veranda of Continental Hotel

To promote the Continental Hotel as well as Pablo Beach, the FEC ran excursion trains to the beaches every weekend. People came from neighboring states to the beaches. On Labor Day, 1901, many people from Jacksonville went to the beaches. H. H. Buckman, a developer associated with the JMP and then with Flagler, sold some of his property to the FEC. He promoted lots in Atlantic Beach but the community remained very small.¹⁶



Figure 2-15 Buckman Atlantic Beach Ad



Figure 2-16 Buckman 1925 Map

Flagler's interests lay farther south so, in 1911, his company leased the Continental Hotel for ten years to A. S. Stanford who represented the American Resort Hotel Company. In 1913, the hotel and 4,000 acres north to the south jetty were sold by the Florida East Coast Hotel Company to E. R. Brackett and a consortium of New York capitalists who formed the Atlantic Beach Corporation and renamed it the Atlantic Beach Hotel. This corporation, headed by Harcourt Bull, sought to develop the community. On May 17, 1917, the hotel property was sold at public auction and bought in by the FEC Hotel Company for \$167,000. In November, 1917, it was leased to W.H. Adams, Sr. It burned on September 20, 1919, a loss of \$300,000.¹⁷



Figure 2-17 W. H. Adams, Sr.

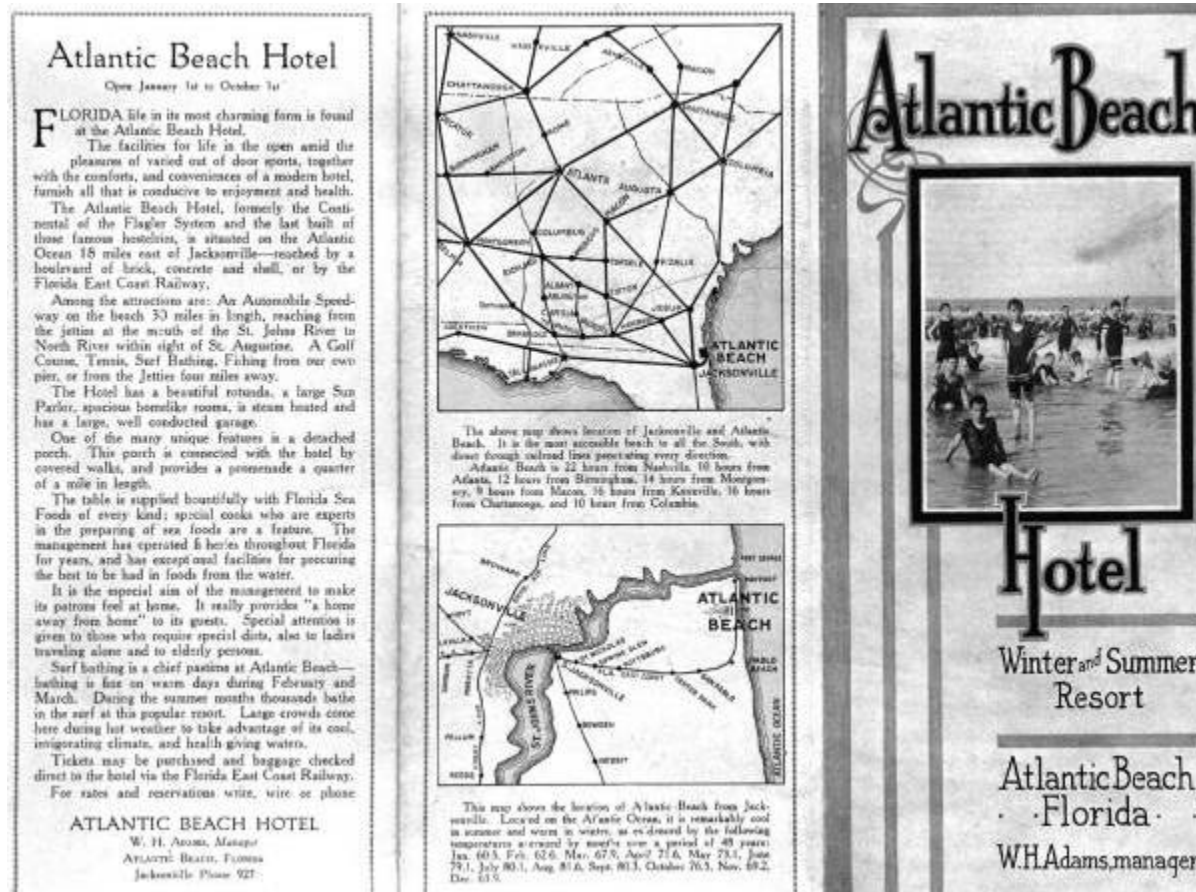


Figure 2-18 Atlantic Beach Hotel Brochure

In 1901, John G. Christopher built a house at 11th Street and Oceanfront in Atlantic Beach. The Christopher-Bull House, as it was eventually known, still exists. Christopher had brought telephones to Jacksonville in 1881, built the Murray Hall Hotel, and operated steamers on the St. Johns to Palatka. At his new home, he entertained numerous guests, making it the social nexus of the beaches. Then he sold it in 1917 to Harcourt Bull, who pioneered Atlantic Beach and raised a family there. George Bull, Sr. and Mary Bull lived there 29 years after WWII.¹⁸



Figure 2-19 Christopher-Bull House

There was a separate development in north Pablo Beach, just south of Atlantic Beach, by 1902. S. F. Myers bought land there and named it Neptune. He planned to create a middling development, not as nice as Atlantic Beach but above Pablo Beach. Myers planned to build a hotel but did not. ¹⁹

So, at the turn of the 20th century, the coast of Jacksonville was being populated. Mayport was still the largest settlement; it had a better economic base as a port, railroad hub, and fishing village. Atlantic Beach had begun as a luxury hotel and only a few dwellings served by a railroad. Pablo Beach showed the most promise because it not only contained vacation houses but also would become a tourist destination. Tourism, primarily day trippers from Jacksonville, would cause the town to grow. Hotels, rooming houses, amusements, bath houses, food purveyors, bars, whore houses, a pier, and a dancing pavilion were some of the aspects of tourism. And they would require more and more year-round residents—cooks, cleaners, clerks, carpenters—skilled and unskilled labor, in other words, as well as owners and managers. African-Americans as well as “whites” settled albeit not in the same neighborhoods.

African-Americans were an important part of beach life even though they were segregated into their own community. In 1900, a census taker noted fifty-one African-Americans within eleven families in Pablo Beach, an average family size at the time. They did much of the hard and/or dangerous work as well as running businesses for other African-Americans. By 1905, there were enough African-Americans at the beaches for the founding of the St. Andrews African Methodist Episcopal Church by Mother Rhoda L. Martin in Pablo Beach. This was the section known as “The Hill.” Initially, the church met in her home at the corner of Shetter Avenue and 7th Street South and south of the FEC railroad tracks. She also began teaching school there. ²⁰ Her “school” became the Jacksonville Beach Elementary School for “blacks.”

Education was not considered important in Duval County for “white” children and even less for “black” children. In 1900, the Duval County school system spent \$12.08 per white child and \$5.47 per “black” child. In the system, 51% of the students were “white.” School lasted only 101 days. Salaries were low but were less than \$40 per month for “black” women. School was only for five months. ²¹ African-Americans had the beaches had no public school, only the one taught by Mother Rhoda L. Martin in her home. The elementary school for “whites” was located at 2nd Street South and Orange Avenue now 2nd Avenue South. This photo, taken from *The Beaches Leader* newspaper, was typical of the elementary school in those days.



Figure 2-20 Pablo Beach Elementary Students

People did not go to beaches because of education; they went to have fun and they did. Some went because they had no choice. On August 21-25, 1900, there was an encampment of the Jacksonville Light Infantry and Atlanta Artillery at Pablo Beach, Camp Wheeler. The hard packed sand on the beach was conducive to transportation when the tide was out. The strand was 600 feet wide and the tides changed every six hours. Wagons had traveled the strand to transport goods south from Mayport but rich people soon found another use for this hard surface.

The Beaches had brief fame for automobile racing even though there were only 17 in Jacksonville and 296 in Florida in 1906, the year when Joe Lander broke the stock car speed record on the Atlantic-Pablo Beaches Course. He drove 5 miles in 4 minutes and 55 seconds. The course started at the Continental Hotel. People who had both the inclination and the money came from Jacksonville by way of Mayport to watch. Within less than a decade, automobiles would cease being a rich man's toy. By 1913, there were 15,000 autos in the Jacksonville area. Races were held again in July, 1910. In March 1911, however, monster cars from around the world came to race for four days. Thousands attended to see if any of the cars could exceed the 75-mile-an-hour speed record. Races were held again in 1917. Then the U.S. entered the First World War, suspending beach racing.²²



Figure 2-21 Race Car, Pablo Beach, 1906



Figure 2-22 Cycle Racing, Atlantic Beach, 1915

Some men had special needs met. In 1908, Cora Taylor Crane, widow of Stephen Crane, the famous author of *Red Badge of Courage*, operated a brothel, Palmetto Lodge, at Pablo Beach. It was on the west side of First Street North between 8th avenue North and Ninth Avenues North.

For African-Americans in this bigoted age, in 1907, Manhattan Beach, north of Atlantic Beach and south of the jetties, opened with pavilions, cottages, and playgrounds. Some years later, it would be replaced by American Beach in Nassau County to the north.²³

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company created maps so it could minimize risks and Pablo Beach maps exist.²⁴ The Web server does not allow a viewer to get a large full map. One can download snippets of some size, which I have done to illustrate the appearance of Pablo Beach. On the maps, the buildings are color coded; yellow indicates a wooden building; red equals brick; blue equals stone; gray equals stone; and brown equals fire proof. East-West streets In 1903, all the buildings were coded yellow. The maps also give dimensions.

This general map provides a glimpse of the layout of the little town. To the modern reader, the maps can be confusing because if name changes over time. In 1903, Putnam Avenue became Pablo Avenue; Duval Avenue became Mundy Avenue and then Beach Boulevard. In 1937, the east-west streets north of Putnam and south of Duval were numbered. Leon Avenue became Dickerson Avenue and then 1st Avenue North; Shockley Avenue became 1st Avenue South. The creek shown on these maps was Bonsall Creek which ran towards the southeast until it turned east around Greiner Avenue and went to the ocean. It was eventually eliminated. In south Pablo Beach but close to Railroad Avenue/Mundy Drive there were a number of important institutions. One was the [Pablo Hotel](#) on 2nd Street South and Orange Avenue (2nd Avenue South). St. Paul's-by-the Sea occupied the northeast corner of 2nd Street South and Orange Avenue (2nd Avenue South). The public school was on the northwest. On 1st Street South between Suskind (4th Avenue South) and Mann (5th Avenue South) stood St. Paul's Catholic Mission. The maps shows other important structures. Summer cottages lined the shore. There were public bath houses and dressing room. The open-air dancing pavilion between Putnam and Duval was very popular.

In 1903, the Ocean View Hotel, owned and managed by W. H. Adams, Sr., was located on Putnam Avenue and had an adjoining public bath house the photo below shows.²⁵ This wood frame structure was very popular, the successor of the Murray Hall Hotel.



The Ocean View Hotel, Pablo Beach, Fla.

Figure 2-23 Ocean View Hotel

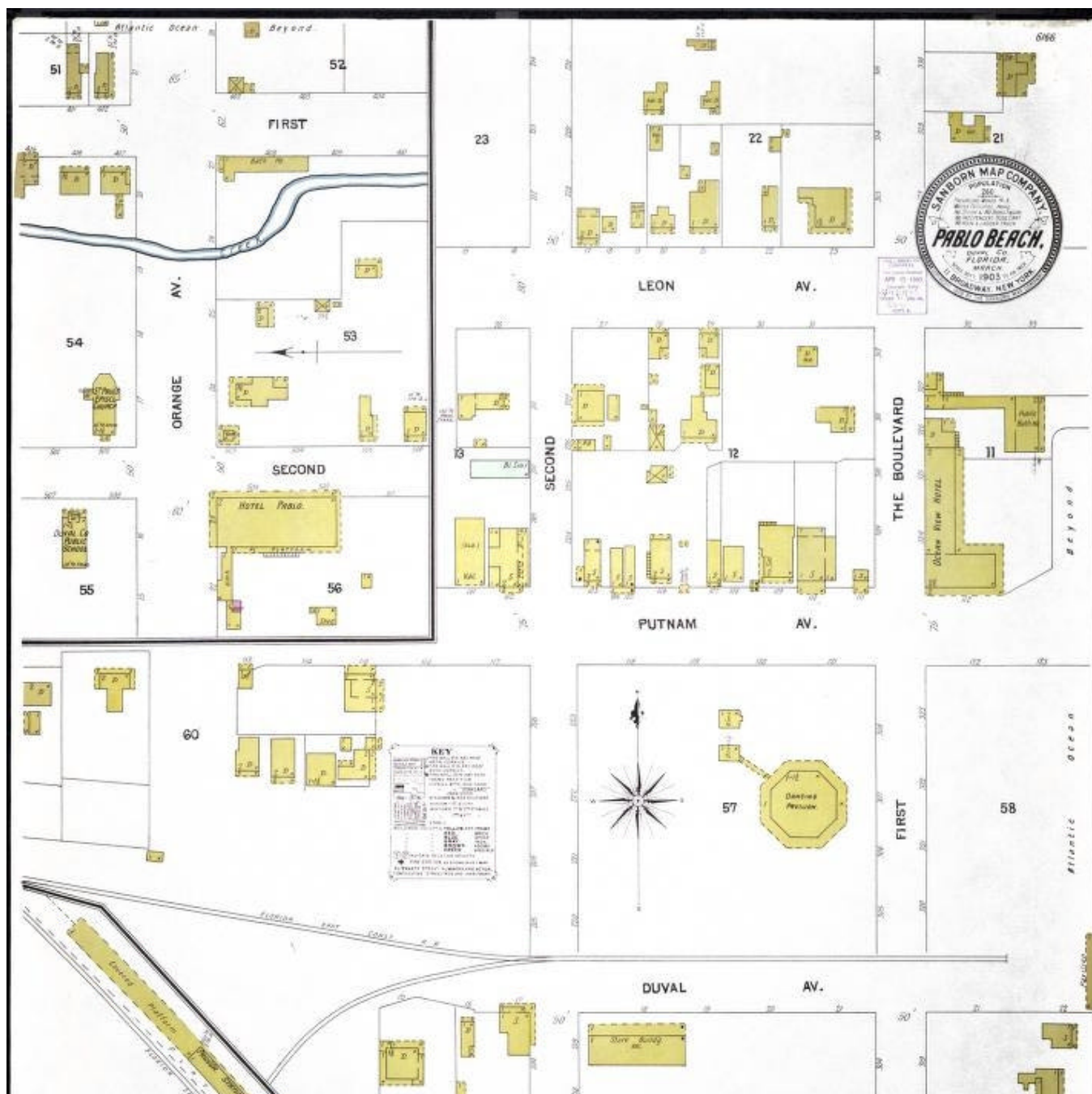


Figure 2-24 Schematic Map of Downtown Pablo Beach

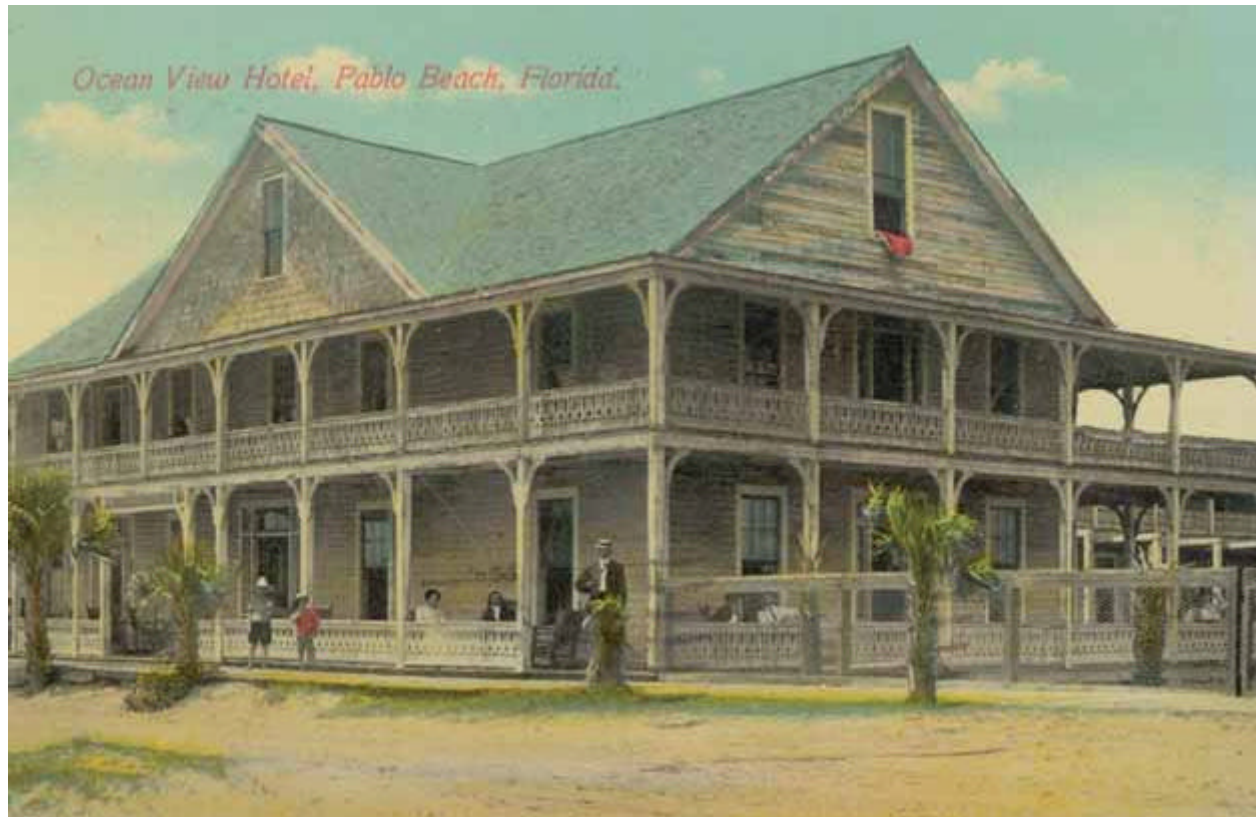


Figure 2-25 Ocean View Hotel Post Card

One of the most striking features in town was the FEC train station a few blocks west of the ocean. Arriving passengers only had to walk a few blocks to a hotel or bath house or restaurant bar or amusement. The train ran north to Atlantic Beach and Mayport along what is now 2nd Street North. Other than landing by boat at Mayport and traveling on the beach at low tide, taking the train was the most convenient mode of travel so it was the lifeline.

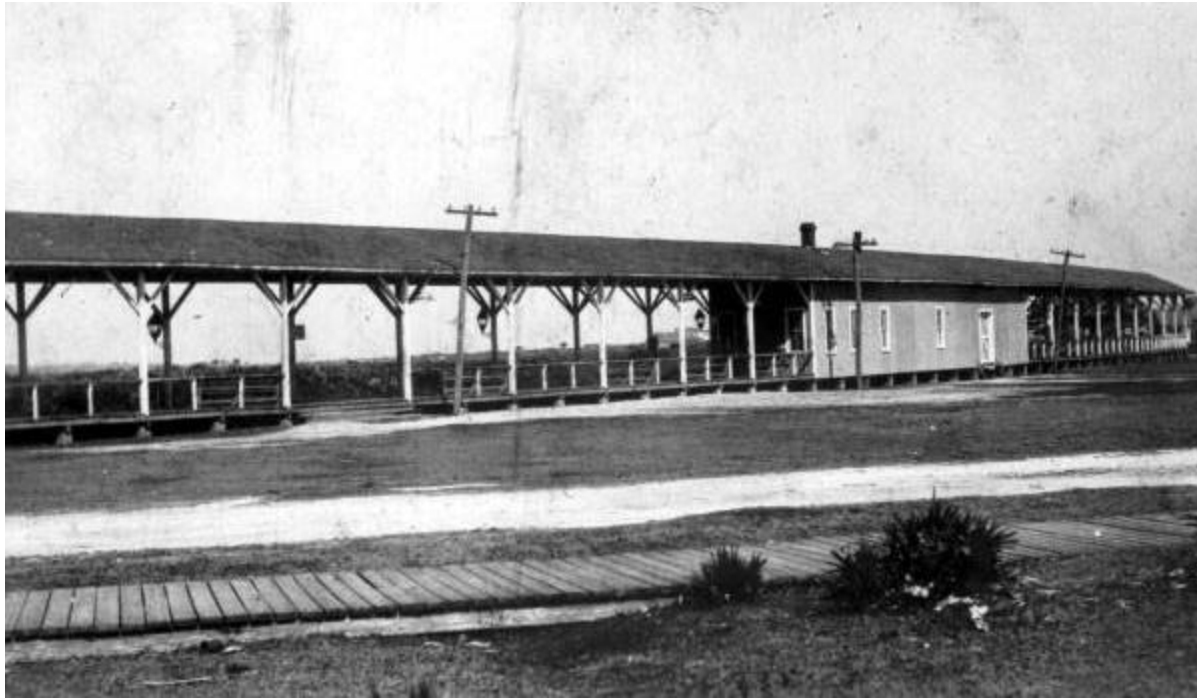


Figure 2-26 Pablo Beach Railroad Depot

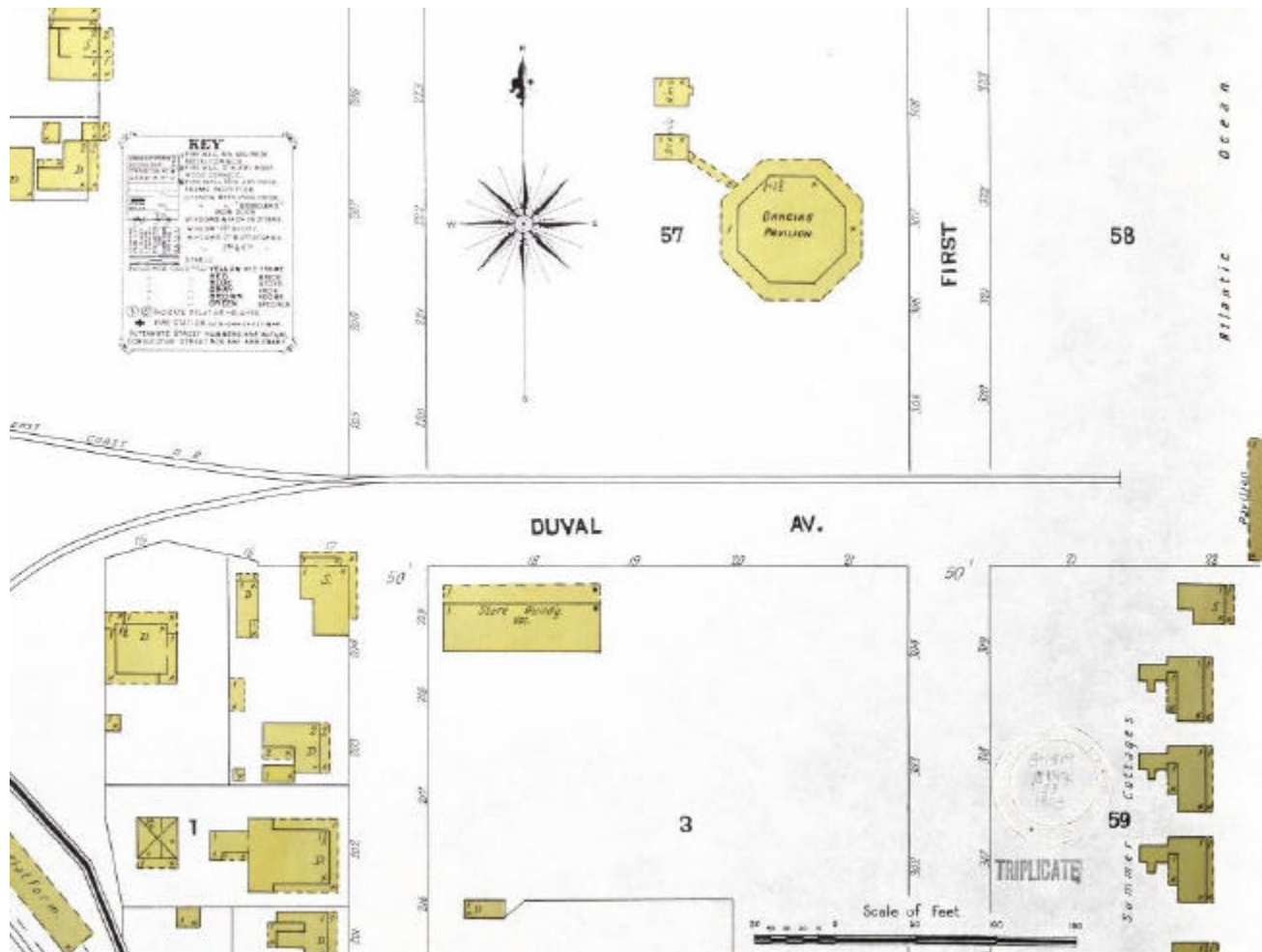


Figure 2-27 [Pablo Beach Showing Summer Cottages](#)

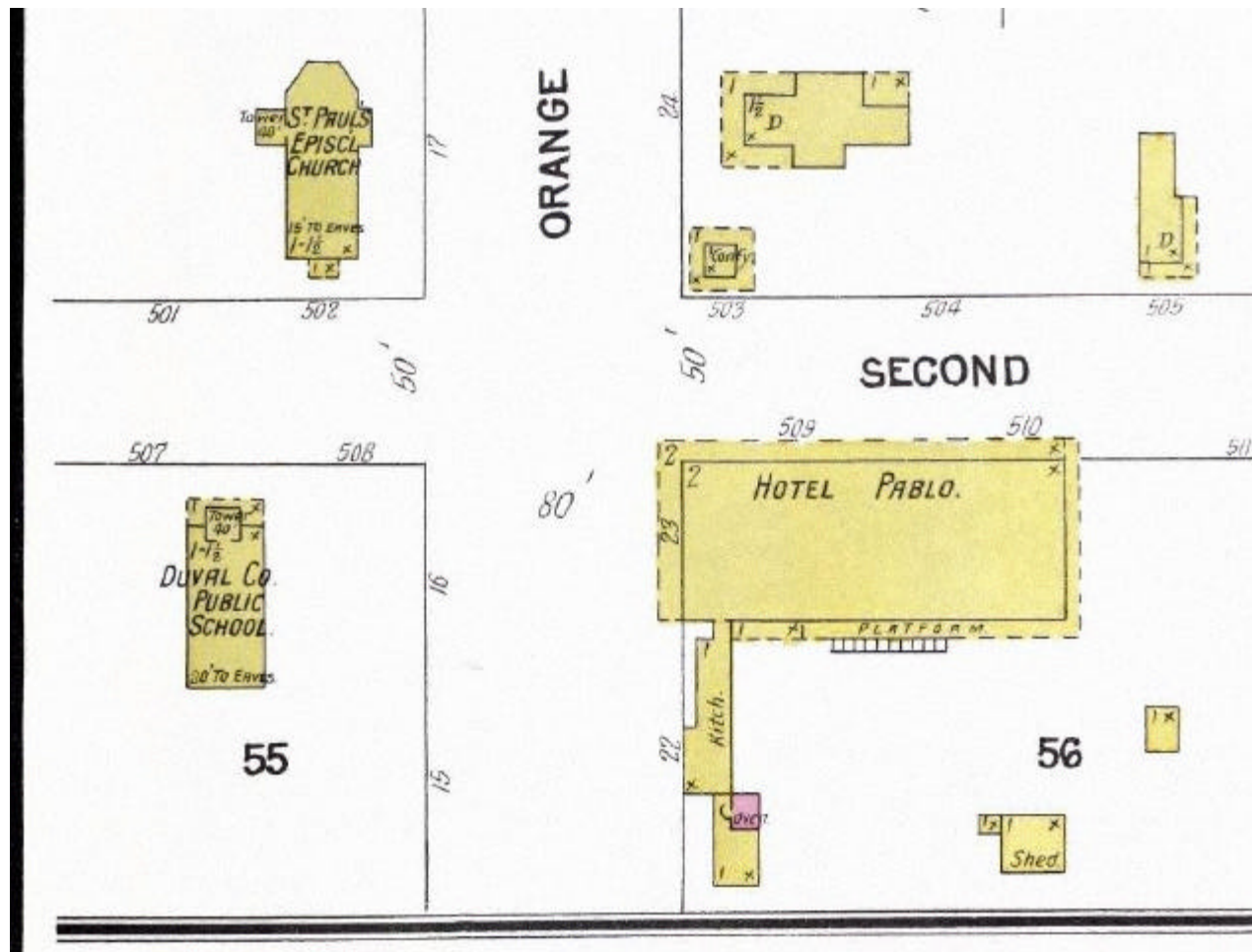


Figure 2-28 Just South of Pablo's Downtown

Given that most of the buildings were made of wood and were lighted by candles or kerosene lamps and heated by fireplaces or kerosene heaters, fires threatened their existence. How devastating they could be was brought home with a vengeance on May 3, 1901 in Jacksonville. The great Jacksonville fire destroyed 146 city blocks and 2,368 buildings. The fire slowed the development of Pablo and Atlantic Beaches because funds were devoted largely to rebuilding Jacksonville but the new Jacksonville would be more dynamic.²⁶

For people in east Duval County though, life was a beach. The ocean, a very wide strand cooled by breezes which could serve as a highway, sand dunes, creeks, homes—seasonal and permanent—places to eat, drink, play, mail service, maid service, and people dedicated to serving one's needs and desires made it delightful. The little train brought passengers and supplies eight times a day. One could take trips to Jacksonville or Mayport for profit or pleasure. People could stay at the Ocean View or Pablo Hotel or cottages, rooms, flat, or tents if they weren't doing a day trip. If they had money, they could stay at the Continental Hotel in Atlantic Beach.

There was plenty to do besides dipping in the surf. The small permanent population of several hundred swelled to thousands in season. One could live at the beaches and earn a living. There was a public school for "white" children and those so inclined and whose parents could afford to keep them out of the workforce could take the train to attend Duval High School in Jacksonville.

The following photographs and postcards depict the was casual, pleasant life on the beaches.



Figure 2-29 Palmetto Avenue, Pablo Beach



Figure 2-30 Ocean Front, Pablo Beach



Figure 2-31 The Shore



Figure 2-32 Pablo Avenue, Looking East

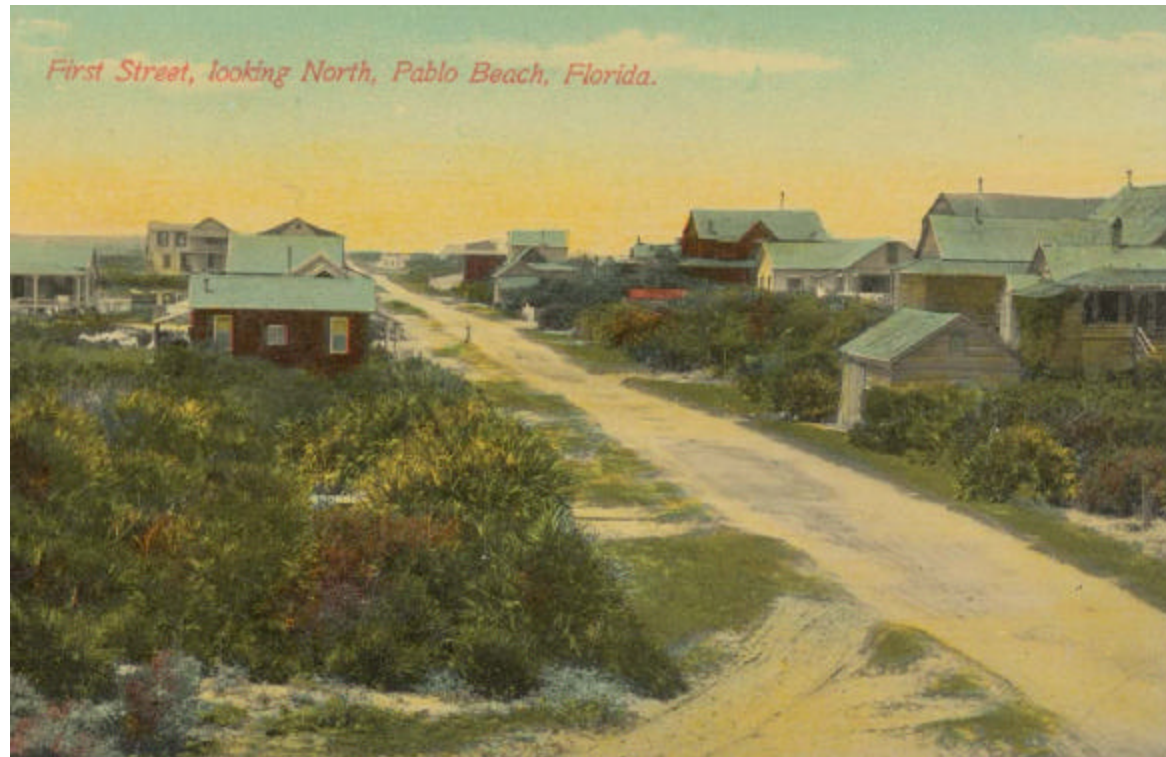


Figure 2-33 First Street, Looking North

Far to the north on the banks of the St. Johns, Mayport thrived. The village was not actually a part of the beaches although it served a very useful function for Pablo Beach and the cluster of buildings in Atlantic Beach. Mayport existed long before its southern neighbors and was more oriented towards Jacksonville. Although necessarily small, there were churches, stores, schools, and the other accoutrements of "urban" civilization. It even had its own baseball team for adolescents. East of Mayport, Elizabeth Worthington bought two oceanfront lots in 1914. She expanded her holdings to 300 acres. She and her new husband, Jack Stark, created Wonderwood-by-the-Sea.^{[27](#)}



Figure 2-34 Mayport Docks



Figure 2-35 Railroad Station and Wharf, Mayport



Figure 2-36 1901 Mayport Baseball Team

Pablo Beach was finally organized as an official town in 1907; before it had just been a post office. To run the town the Governor appointed local citizens. H. M. Shockley was named mayor; J. Denham Bird as treasurer, and G. W. Wilkerson as city clerk. The town council members were J. E. Dickerson, E. E. Willard, William Wilkerson, E. E. Suskind, Alexander Stevens, W. H. Shetter, C. M. Greiner, T. H. Griffith, and C. H. Mann.²⁸ They had lent their names to the avenues long before. In 1908, they began paving some streets with shell. Most streets were just sand.



Figure 2-37 Dickerson Avenue and 1st St. North

Endnotes

- 1 "Ancient History at Beaches Is Recalled As Landmark Will Be Razed for Modern Buildings," *Florida Times-Union*, 1935; S. Paul Brown, *Book of Jacksonville: A History*, (Poughkeepsie, NY: A. V. Haight, 1895), p.144.
2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population of the United States by Minor Civil Divisions*. Washington, 1891, p. 7. This figure does not include such suburbs as Fairfield and South Jacksonville.
3. Davis, 175.
4. Davis, p. 493; Scull interview; Ed Smith, [Them Good Ole Days at Mayport and the Beaches](#). Luxury hotels are unlikely places for U. S. post office and, as Scull reported, hotel guests complained.

5. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 43.
6. Wanton S. Webb, "Duval County," *Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida*, Pt. I., 1885, pp. 43-47.
7. "Mayport Naval Station," COJ.net.
9. Davis, pp.189, 353-54.
10. To see Corbett fight, click on the following links. To see Corbett, follow these links: [Bob Fitzsimmons and Jim Corbett](#) (1894); [Jim Corbett v. Bob Fitzsimmons](#) (1894); [Quick Jim](#). John W. Cowart, "Gentleman Jim Corbett's Big Fight," <http://www.cowart.info>, 2005.
- Foley, Bill. "Jacksonville's boxing title match had real sideshow," *Florida Times-Union*, February 23, 2000. "The Vanity Of A New York Woman Wintering in Florida Got Her In Trouble," *New York Times*, January 28, 1894. "Corbett in Active Training," *New York Times*, December 25, 1893 "May Declare The Fight Off," *New York Times*, January 20, 1894. "The Fight Still In Doubt," *New York Times*, January 25, 1894.
11. Davis, 175-77; Webb, "Duval County," 43; Davis, 102, 180; Margaret C. Fairlie, "The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1888 in Jacksonville," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 19:2 (October 1940), 96-109. John W. Cowart, "[Yellow Fever in Jacksonville](#)," says: "On July 28, 1888, Yellow Jack invaded Jacksonville, Florida;" "Yellow Fever's Victims," *New York Times*, September 17, 1888; and Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "Jacksonville As A Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 58:4, p. 374.
- 12 Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 45-47; Davis, p. 198.
- 13 George Buker, *Jacksonville: Riverport-Seaport* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992). Pp. 103-7. See "Three Friends Ready," *New York Times*, December 6, 1896. Broward later became Governor of Florida.
- 14 Davis, 351.
15. Simon, p. 11.
16. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville After The Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, 1991, p.27; Herbert J. Doherty, "Jacksonville As A Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58:4 (April, 1980), pp.383-4.
17. Davis, 494. The Adams family played an extraordinary role in Beaches history. Some still live there. The [cost of living calculator](#) of the American Institute for Economic Research converts this figure to \$2,546,750 in 2005. See my "[A Man and Three Hotels](#)".
18. Christopher F. Aguilar; "A Party to History," *Beaches Shorelines*, February 2, 2002. The story of Harcourt Bull's involvement in Atlantic Beach is told in my "Harcourt Bull's Atlantic Beach, Florida.
19. Bill Foley, "Neptune Was Born As A Buffer to Atlantic", *Florida Times-Union*, June 21, 1997.
20. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 57; Kathy Nicoletti, "AME celebrates 100 Years at Beaches," *The Beaches Leader/Ponte Vedra Leader* (October 28, 2005). In 1949, it was moved to 125 Ninth Street South.
21. Crooks, p. 13.
22. Davis, 218; Bill Foley, "Millennium Moment: March 25, 1911,," *Times-Union*, March 25, 1999; Michael Gannon, *Florida, A Short History*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993, p. 7; Davis, 232. *York Times*, January 29, 1911; "Florida Beach Races," *New York Times*, March 14, 1911; *New York Times*, January 29, 1911. John W. Cowart, "Jacksonville's Motorcar History." <http://www.cowart.info/Florida%20History/Auto%20History/Auto%20History.htm>, 2004.
23. Russ Rymer, *American Beach: A Saga of Race, Wealth, and Memory*. (NY: HarperCollins, 1998).
24. [Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Pablo maps](#).
25. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 52.
26. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville After the Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City*. (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991).
27. "[Mayport Village](#)," City of Jacksonville Web site. In 1940, the U.S. Navy took the property for the base it was building
28. Davis, 233; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 52.

World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

3: Pablo Beach, 1907-25

Now the tiny community by the sea was the Town of Pablo Beach, not just a rural post office. It was now an official entity, a way to collect revenue and provide for the common good of residents-permanent and summer-and tourists. The Town could effect changes. It could encourage growth. Government money, not its own, would determine the Beaches future. To live outside the public budget is to live in error. Pablo Beach officials knew the score.

The new government supported the digging of a canal through the Diego Plains to connect San Pablo Creek to the Tolomato River near St. Augustine in 1908. The Florida Coast Line Canal & Transportation Company (FCLC&TC), organized in the 1880s, finished dredging a canal in 1912 but it was unsatisfactory. The undertaking was taxing. The national government eventually assumed responsibility and, by 1935, had produced a 100-foot wide and 8 feet deep canal.¹ Canal proponents hoped that the canal would be a commercial thoroughfare and improve the local economy. In the early 20th century, however, not much would be shipped from the St. Johns River to St. Augustine.

In the early 1900s, the Port of Jacksonville grew when the shipping channel was dredged to 24 feet and then 30 feet to allow bigger ships. Jacksonville truly became an international port. The St. Johns originally only had a clearance of 3-4 feet, but bigger ships drew more water. Improving the river took years of lobbying by private enterprise to get governments to pay the costs. In 1879, Congress appropriated funds to build the jetties, necessary to create a controllable channel at the mouth of the river. In the 1890s, the Jacksonville Board of Trade, as the Chamber of Commerce was then called, got Duval County to authorize \$300,000 to dredge an 18-foot channel. In 1902, Congress paid \$2.1 million to have it dredged to 24 feet which was done by 1907. In 1910, a 30 foot channel was dredged. In 1912, the U.S. House of Representatives demanded that City of Jacksonville government build city-owned docks, terminals, and warehouses before it would spend any more money on the river. The existing facilities were so bad that Congress decided to force a socialist solution because a viable port was of national importance and it was clear that the private sector would not or could not build the necessary facilities.² Jacksonville smelled the money and complied. Money talks, as they say.

Money came when the film industry came to town in 1908. Jacksonville was a winter film center more important than Hollywood as film companies came south to escape the cold and to pay lower wages. The abundant sunshine and mild weather made northeast Florida a welcome respite from the harsh winters of New York and Philadelphia. First to arrive was the Kalem Studios but others followed as word spread. At its peak, there were thirty companies with studios. Oliver Hardy and Lionel Barrymore starred in silent movies made in Jacksonville.³ Writing about a Kalem film company trip to Jacksonville in 1908, Gene Gauntier, a writer, actress, and producer said:

Within a few hours of our home were quaint negro villages, their unpainted huts set on stilts above the shifting sands. There were wonderful stretches of sand at Pablo and Manhattan Beach, facing the open sea, uninhabited and desolate, with their scrubby palmettos, which served as setting for many desert island scenes. There were fishing villages, primitive as even a picture company could wish, quaint old-time Florida houses with their "galleries" of white Colonial columns, orange and grapefruit groves, pear and peach orchards which gave forth lovely scents when in full bloom; formal gardens and Spanish patios; the gorgeous Ponce de Leon hotel and gardens, and the picturesque old fort at St. Augustine.⁴

Money did not talk loud enough. The film industry created problems in the Jacksonville area and met enough resistance that it gave up and concentrated instead on the desert of southern California. Perhaps the Beaches would have been more tolerant but many Jacksonvillians could not tolerate the behavior of movie people. Their personal lives were often blatantly messy; they disrupted normal life with the filming of car chases and shootings. For those in commerce, too many did not pay their bills on time. Banks would not extend credit as needed and film making, like farming, is done on credit. World War I disrupted the movie business because it diverted money and attention to the serious business of killing. After the War World I, a few movies were made in Jacksonville but the time had passed. Decades would pass before parts of movies were shot in the area.

The Beaches relied upon tourism for income, not the movies, and the opening of Atlantic Boulevard to great fanfare on July 28, 1910 provided a viable alternative to the FEC train. There was a parade and the dedication of bridge spanning Little Pottsburg Creek, which was close to the St. Johns River and marked an obstacle to the Beaches. On the shore, auto races were held in front of Continental Hotel in Atlantic Beach. The railroads monopoly of transportation to the Beaches was broken. Automobiles were the future.



Figure 3-1 Pablo Beach in 1906. The Pavilion on the Right

Atlantic Boulevard was long in coming. Soon after the railroad was completed to Pablo Beach in 1884, E. F. Gilbert acquired land at Beaches that he wanted to develop. He needed a wagon road from south Jacksonville to Pablo Beach. He paid a surveyor to mark a route and then got the county commission to start work on the road using convict labor. The project, started September, 1892, completed two-thirds of the route grade and the bridge across Pablo Creek before the county commission changed its views and stopped the work. In 1902, Fred E. Gilbert, son of W.E. and an automobile dealer, lobbied to get the road finished. After popular auto races at Atlantic Beach in 1906, he finally generated interest in a paved road but the Panic of 1907 intervened. In 1908, work started but only as a shell and brick road. Cars began using it 1908 but the completion and dedication had to wait. By 1922, it needed repair and the St Johns River had been spanned, thus eliminating the cumbersome and expensive ferry service. The road proved to be so valuable that, in May, 1923, the county passed a bond issue of \$2.55 million to build a concrete, lighted highway. Atlantic Boulevard would become a marvel that allowed rapid access to the Beaches.⁵

E. F. Gilbert got things done. He was originally from Connecticut and a U.S. Army veteran. His primary occupation was being a jeweler but he was also a land speculator. He bought six parcels of land at Neptune Beach and wanted a better way to get there. The train would only stop at a station so he built one in 1910 in the section of Pablo Beach known as Neptune.⁶ Neptune, the northernmost section of Pablo Beach was replatted in 1911. It extended into present-day Atlantic Beach.⁷ This would become the basis of Neptune Beach, created in 1931.

South of Pablo Beach, another development, mining, was occurring in 1912. No one could anticipate how the exploitation of these sand dunes to extract rutile, ilmenite, and zirconium (all useful for making steel) would become Ponte Vedra Beach. Instead, the firm of Buckman and Pritchard, Inc. of Jacksonville began to mine the minerals. It built a post office, store, and workers quarters. It also built a nine-hole golf course for its management.⁸

Close by in a slightly more western section of St. Johns County was the older but more fragmented Palm Valley. People have been living in this area, part of it was the Diego Plains, since the 18th century but in houses far apart. It was a hard scrabble life as settlers did subsistence farming, hunting, and fishing. People cut palm leaves to sell and ship from the Durbin Station on the FEC until they used the Intracoastal Waterway, which was finished in 1912. Those fortunate enough to go to school had to travel north to Pablo Beach for the community was far from the county seat of St. Augustine and there was precious little in between. As late as the 1950s Palm Valley was considered backwoods. Ernie Mickler, author of *White Trash Cooking*, grew up there.⁹ It was the neighboring mining camp that would eventually grow but not until the late 1930s.

Various improvements were made to Pablo Beach as a beach resort. In 1912, the Red Cross Volunteer Life Savings Corp was created. Tourists, who often did not understand the vagaries of the sea, needed help. Drownings discouraged visitors. No one could have foretold that this Red Cross Volunteer Life Saving Corps would still exist in 2006. The pier provided a place for visitors to dance, relax, and fish. Lifeguards found the pier problematical because bathers often did not understand that razor-sharp barnacles grew on the pilings. In 1915-16, Martin G. Williams, Sr. built dance pavilions, restaurants, shooting galleries, and other amusements on the new boardwalk. In 1916, the Pablo Development and Power Company created Little Coney Island in 1917. This amusement center attracted more tourists. It was located where the dance pavilion had been. Little Coney included a bowling alley, a dance floor, a pool room, stores, and a roller skating rink.¹¹



Figure 3-2 Lifeguard Station, 1912



Figure 3-3 Shad's Pier, 1922

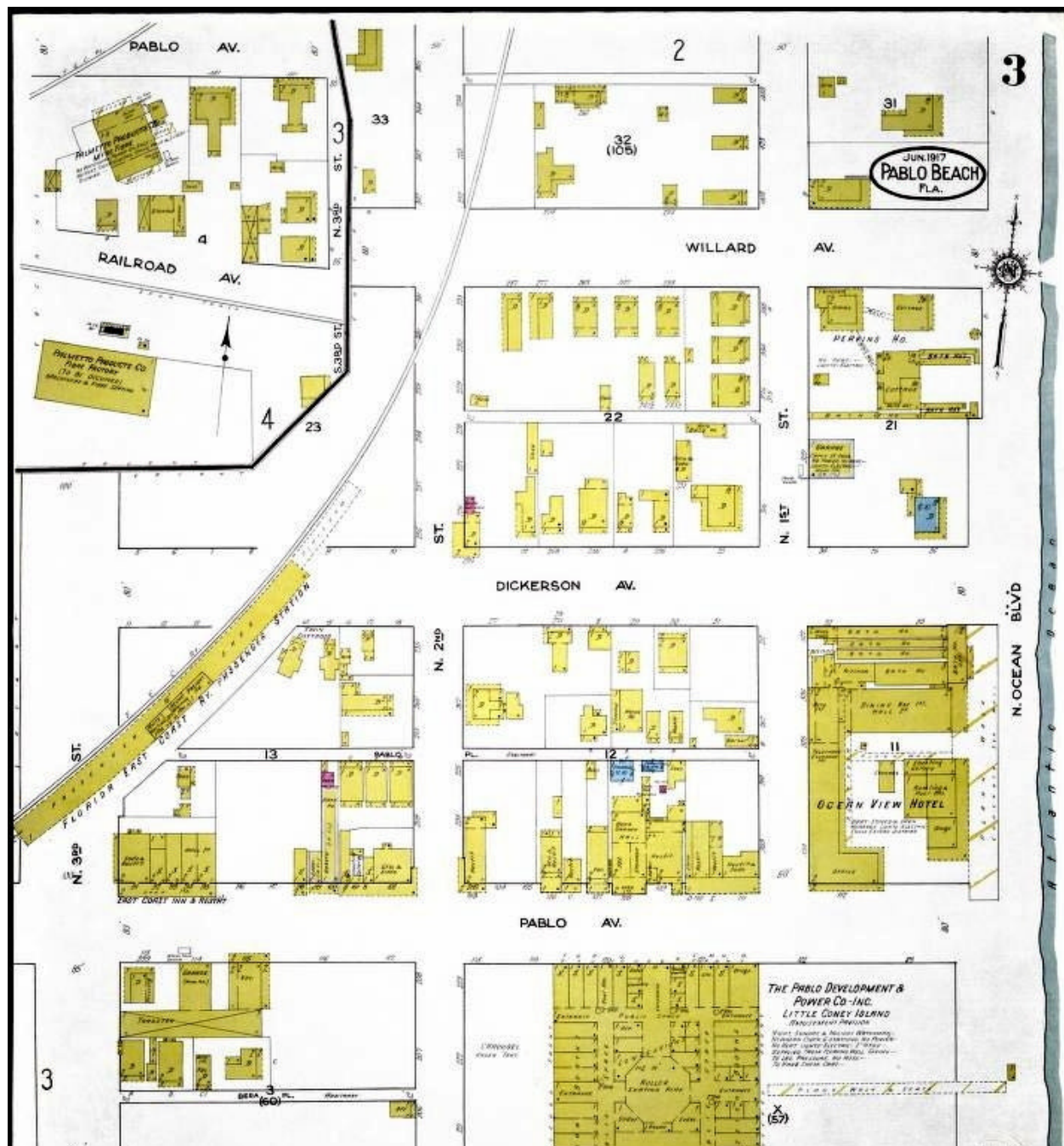


Figure 3-5 Railroad Station, Perkins Bath House, Ocean View Hotel, Little Coney Island



Figure 3-6 Perkins House



Figure 3-7 Perkins Bath House and Rooms, 1930s

World War I affected the Beaches in two ways. After the U.S. entered the war in April, 1917, the national government brought 21,000 soldiers to Jacksonville to Camp Johnston in October and November.¹² The beach was one place they went to relax. US military involvement lasted on 17 months because an armistice was declared on November 11, 1918 so the tourism impact was not very great.

A number of Beaches men served in World War I. From Atlantic Beach, there were five men: in the Navy, Crawford James Gilbert (white) , in the Army, John Jackson , Alexander Killen, Alexander Kirkland, and Willie Webb, all of whom were African American. From Mayport, in the Navy, Otto Ernest Burford, George McCauley Daniels, Neal Florence Daniels, Claude Sidney Davis, Alonzo C. Greenlaw, Herbert Austin Harris, Milton Lewis Harris, Addison Thomas Haworth, John Franklin King, George Allan Leek, Alexander Better Thompson, and Stephen Coleman Truesdale. To the Army, Mayport contributed William C. Aiken, Franklin Arnau, Walter Colman Arnau, John C. Bleight, Clarence Coward (Negro), F. A. Daniels, James L. Floyd (Negro) , Fred Dickson Haworth, George Hilgersen, Edmund Mosley (Negro), George William Murwin, Arthur Francis Sallas, Chauncey J. Singleton, Holbrook E. Singleton, Robert E. P. Singleton, Oscar F. Thompson, Jeremiah Walker (Negro), General Williams (Negro), and George Williams (Negro). From little Pablo Beach, the Navy got Eugene George Zapf while the Army got Ernest Atkinson, James Robert Barbour, Porter R. Barnes (Negro), Samuel G. Barnes (Negro), Herndon Hollinsworth Hall, William Howard Jeffcoat (Negro), William Fletcher Jones, George T. Leonard, and Carl Ulrich Smith. From Palm Valley there was Sidney Alexander Mickler who served in the Navy.¹³

Town	"Black"	"White"	Total
Atlantic Beach	4	1	5
Mayport	6	25	31
Pablo Beach	3	7	10
Palm Valley	0	1	1
Totals	7	30	47

Military pilots used the hard-packed sand as an ideal runway for airplanes, a new phenomenon in the world, as they experimented with transcontinental flights. On December 22, 1918, Major Albert D. Smith and three other Army aviators landed on Pablo Beach in Curtiss JN-4 biplanes. It had taken 18 days from San Diego. Then, on February 24, 1921, Lt. William Devote Coney landed at Pablo Beach after making a flight from San Diego, California in 22 hours, 17 minutes. His return trip began March 25, but he crashed and died near Cornville, Louisiana. That same year, Lt James Doolittle left the Neptune Beach portion of Pablo Beach on a transcontinental flight to San Diego in 21 hours and 18 minutes.¹⁴ Doolittle later became famous for leading bombing raids on Japan during World War II.

The first half of the 1920s was an exciting time for Pablo Beach. Getting to the Beaches became easier on July 1, 1921, when the Jacksonville-St. Johns Bridge (Acosta Bridge) was opened. Automobiles, trucks, busses, and pedestrians could cross the St. Johns River without using a ferry or a train. In 1920, the beach community passed some morality laws because a New York female beauty had shimmied in a "revealing" bathing suit. Town officials passed laws to outlaw shimmying, cheek-to-cheek dancing, and wearing any but a two-piece bathing costume with a skirt at least a foot long. Prohibition had become law in January and Pablo cops were told to spy on people and where they stayed to make sure they did not imbibe, searching even without a warrant, to make sure that no alcoholic beverages were being owned or consumed. In 1923, however, opinion must have changed because Pablo Beach was inundated with tourists because the town's Board of Trade had been advertising the town as a resort and could not handle the number who showed up. Earlier, in 1922, the Town of Pablo Beach had become the City of Pablo Beach. Residents of the Neptune area in the north considered seceding, however, for they were separated by several miles were more oriented to Atlantic Boulevard. On March 14, 1923, Pablo Beach joined the Jacksonville electrical system. The Duval County school board built a new grammar school for "whites" in 1924, a school that building served the community for decades. The Pablo city government started building a new city hall which was completed in 1926.¹⁵

In 1922 and after, the Beaches communities made a big push to increase tourism. To encourage this industry without chimneys, they paved the road between Neptune and Jacksonville Beaches, built seawalls or bulkheads, and installed street lights to illuminate areas near the strand. They bridged a slough in south Jacksonville Beach. They got daily bus service from Jacksonville to Pablo Beach started by the Seminole Auto Bus Company.¹⁶ To promote tourism, a swim suit competition was staged at the Pablo Beach pavilion on June 6, 1924. The American Legion Post # 9 sponsored the Delegation of Mermaids at the Revue of Modes and there were twenty-five women contestants who were said to be modeling swimsuits. Pathe News was to film the event. The suits were borrowed from the Mack Sennet film studio. Pablo Beach mayor Joe Bussey proclaimed the day American Legion Day and thousands came, perhaps 7,000. A local woman, Mary Gonzalez, won.

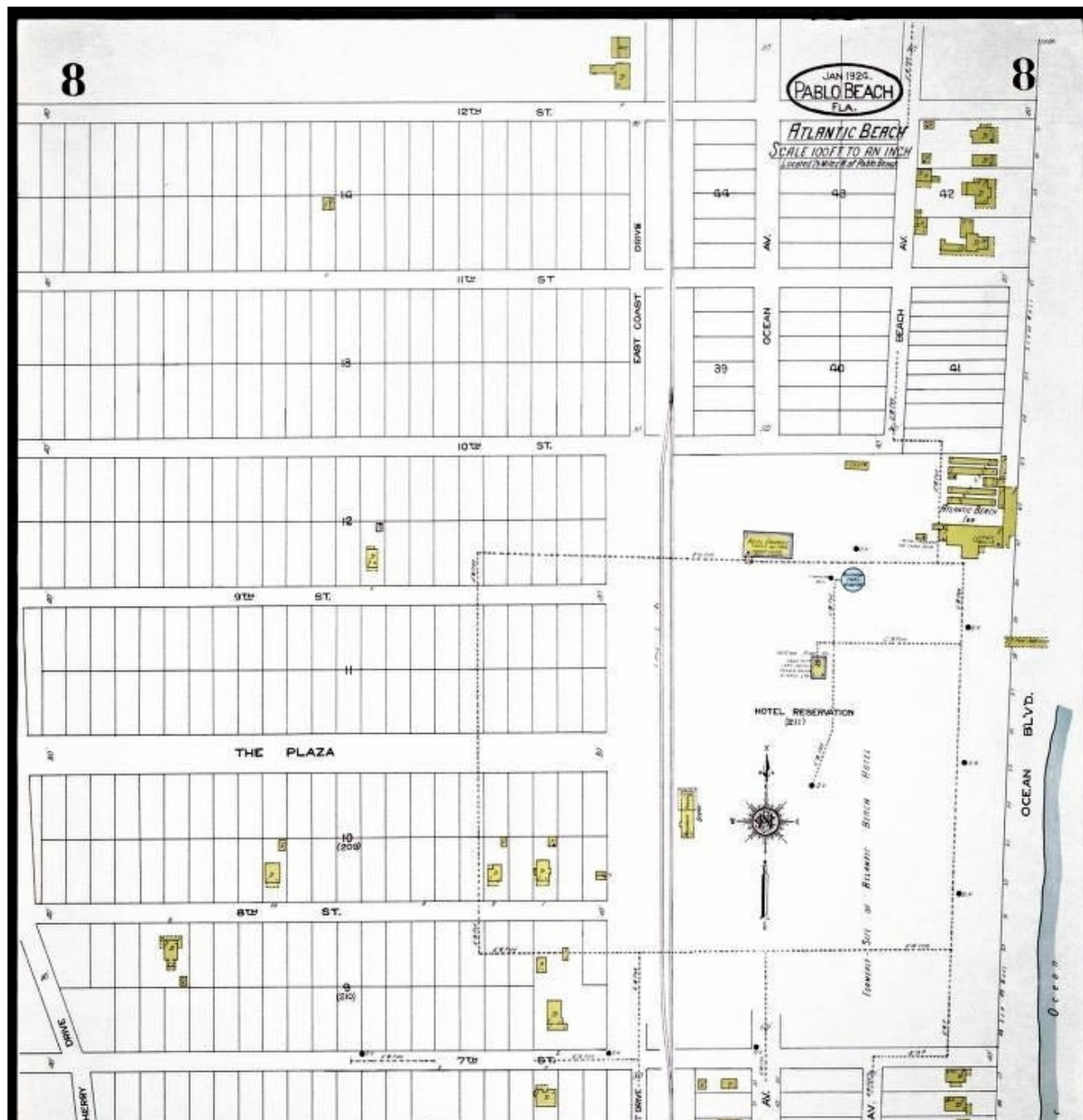
All was not well at the Beaches, however. On December 22, 1922, the Ku Klux Klan entered Florida through Jacksonville. Its largest

Klavern was Stonewall Jackson No. 1 of Jacksonville and it *joined other Jacksonville civic groups to protect city beaches from commercial exploitation.*¹⁷ The Klan would remain strong throughout the 1920s. It gained many supporters in 1928 when the Democratic Party nominated Alfred E. Smith for President, a Roman Catholic. Those who supported Smith were harassed including the police chief.¹⁸ The Klan opposed most of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Asians, Africans, most Europeans, urban mores, and African-Americans. They also wanted to enforce Prohibition. The Beaches had their share of bigots.

When the Florida Land Boom hit, people dreamed of growth. Such was the case of the development to be name Ilanda. It was to be an upscale development sitting astride the Intracoastal Waterway north of Atlantic Boulevard. In 1925, F.L. Tucker was the general manager of the Ilanda Development Company. His grandiose and expensive plans matched the euphoria of the land boom. Like it, however, it went bust. Ilanda was never built.¹⁹

In 1925 as well, Gabe Lippman purchased half a mile of ocean front between Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach to add to the land he owned west of the two beaches. His property consisted of 2,500 acres and stretched to the Intracoastal Waterway. Lippman planned to build a town with a golf course, hotel, pier, and yacht basin. He built Florida Boulevard in what is now Neptune Beach to run from the ocean west and then northwest until it intersected with Atlantic Boulevard at the Mayport Road. He had to fill many low spots and constructed a miniature railroad to haul the fill. He held a big celebration on July 2, 1925 at the ocean front but little had actually been done. In October, he sold the project to the Majestic Homes Corporation of St Louis. It planned to create a 25,000 person city but Florida Beach was never developed. When Majestic Homes defaulted in June, 1926, only a few homes had been built.²⁰

Growth would be incremental. In Mayport with its 644 people in 1925 survived on its coal docks for the FEC Railroad, a menhaden (pogey) plant, boats such as the *Hesse* making the Jacksonville loop, fishing, and the dredges for the St Johns River and Pablo Creek. The tiny commercial district included Annie Daniels hotel, boarding houses, watering holes, and food purveyors. The Atlantic Beach Hotel burned in 1919 but W. H. Adams, Sr. bought the property and built a 50-room stucco hotel which opened in June, 1925. An outdoor swimming pool was added in 1929. Atlantic Beach was incorporated in 1925 but less than 150 people lived there in houses near the Hotel.



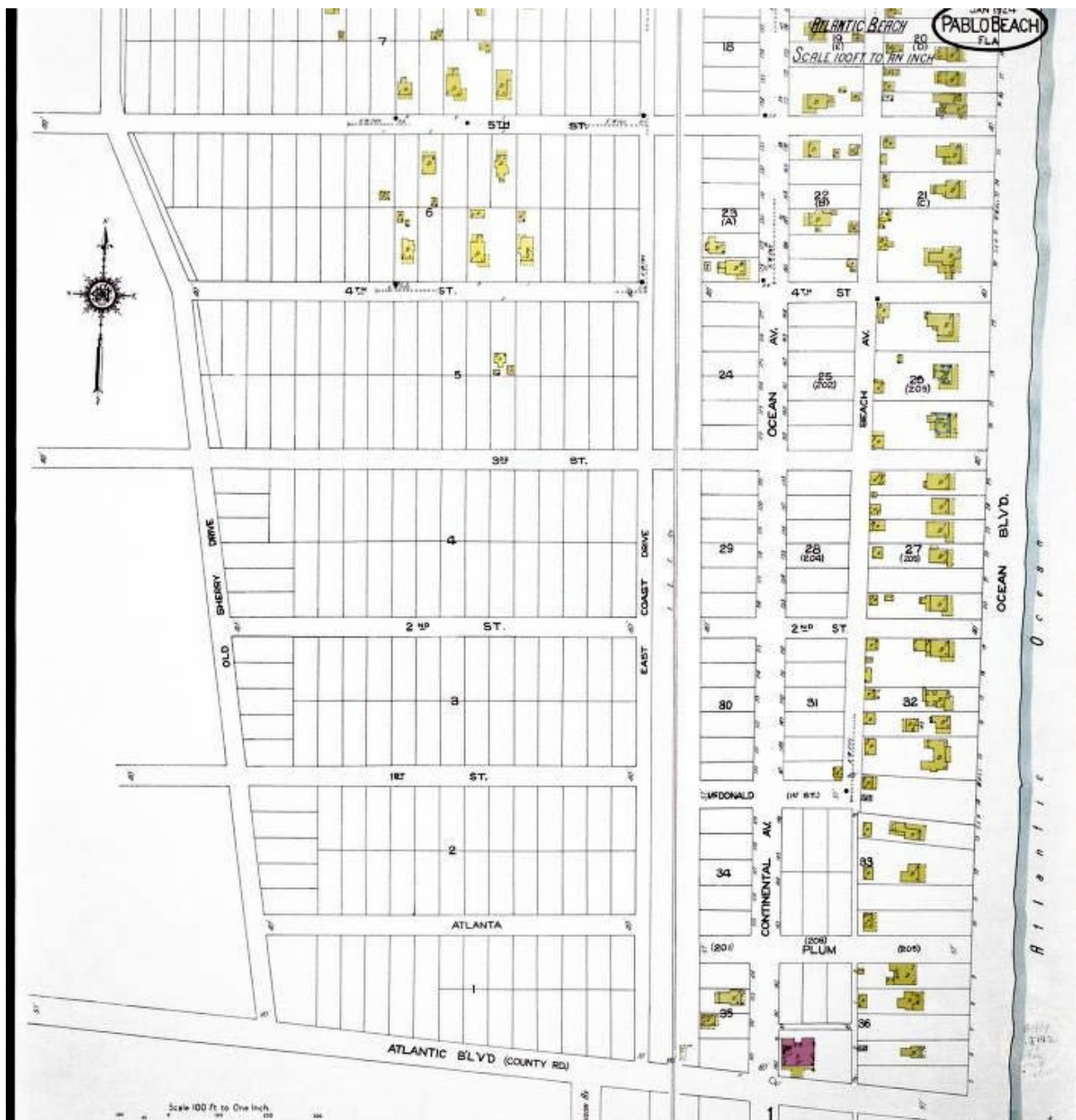


Figure 3-8 Atlantic Beach, 1924

The year 1925 was momentous for Pablo Beach. On February 9th a mass meeting to rename Pablo Beach to Jacksonville Beach was held. The city council ratified the decision with 75% wanting to change. Residents decided their future lay with being associated with the city to the west hoping it will mean growth for their little city. grow. The government also extended the city limits west to Pablo Creek, north to Atlantic Boulevard, and one mile further south. [21](#)

The little city of 744 people had grown from a few tents to substantial buildings. The Roman Catholic Church had a convent. North of the Episcopal Church on the same block was the Friendly House, a home where young women could stay. St. Andrews African Methodist Episcopal Church had been built at the corner of Shetter Avenue and 7th Street South, the focal point of the "black" community. To the west of 3rd St and south of the railroad, the African-American settlement had grown. Besides the downtown area, the city extended south about ten blocks and west about eight blocks. To the north, the city extended about a mile with scattered houses and then skipped further north to Neptune and its few houses.



Figure 3-9 St. Andrews AME Church, 2006

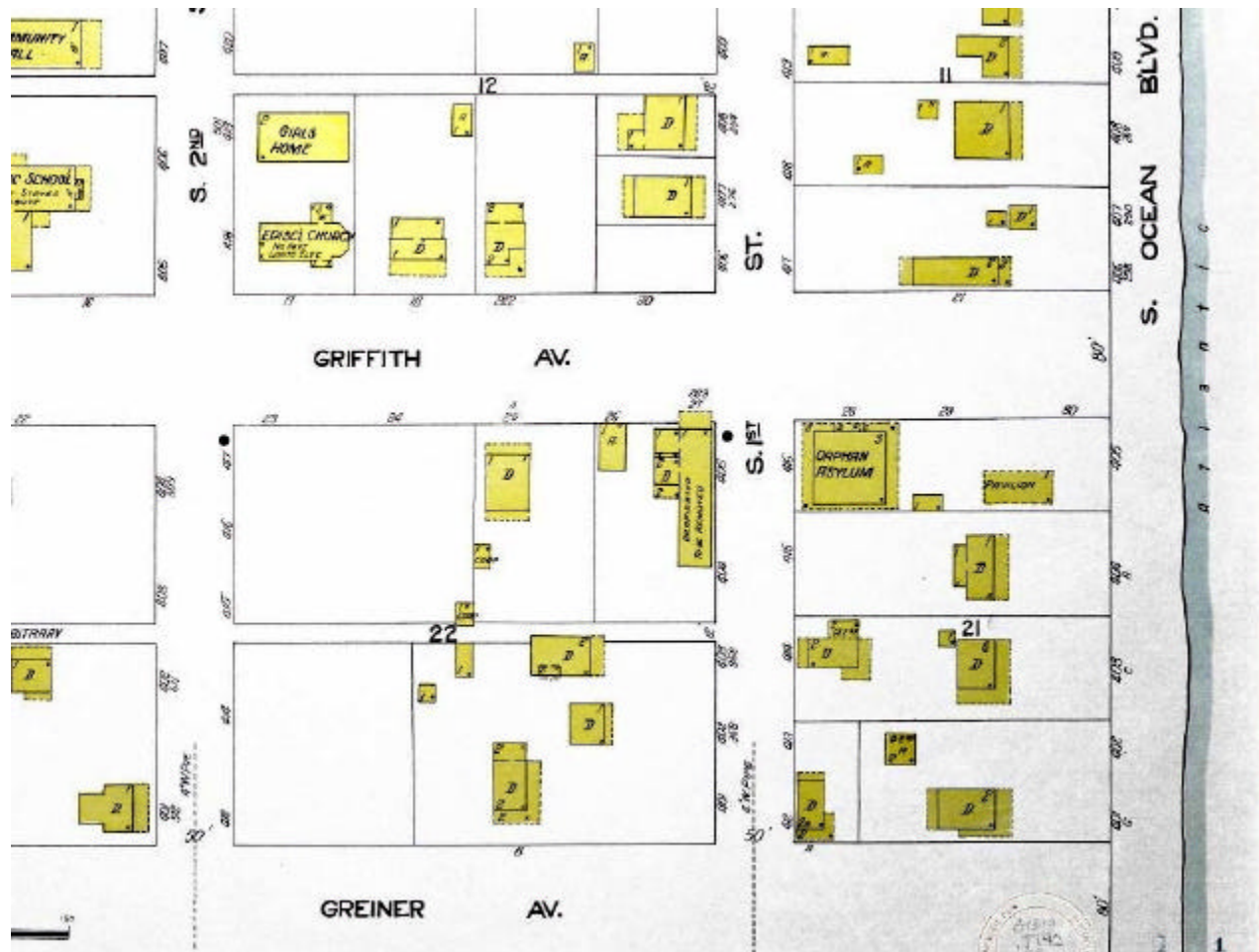


Figure 3-10 [Orphan Asylum, 1924](#)

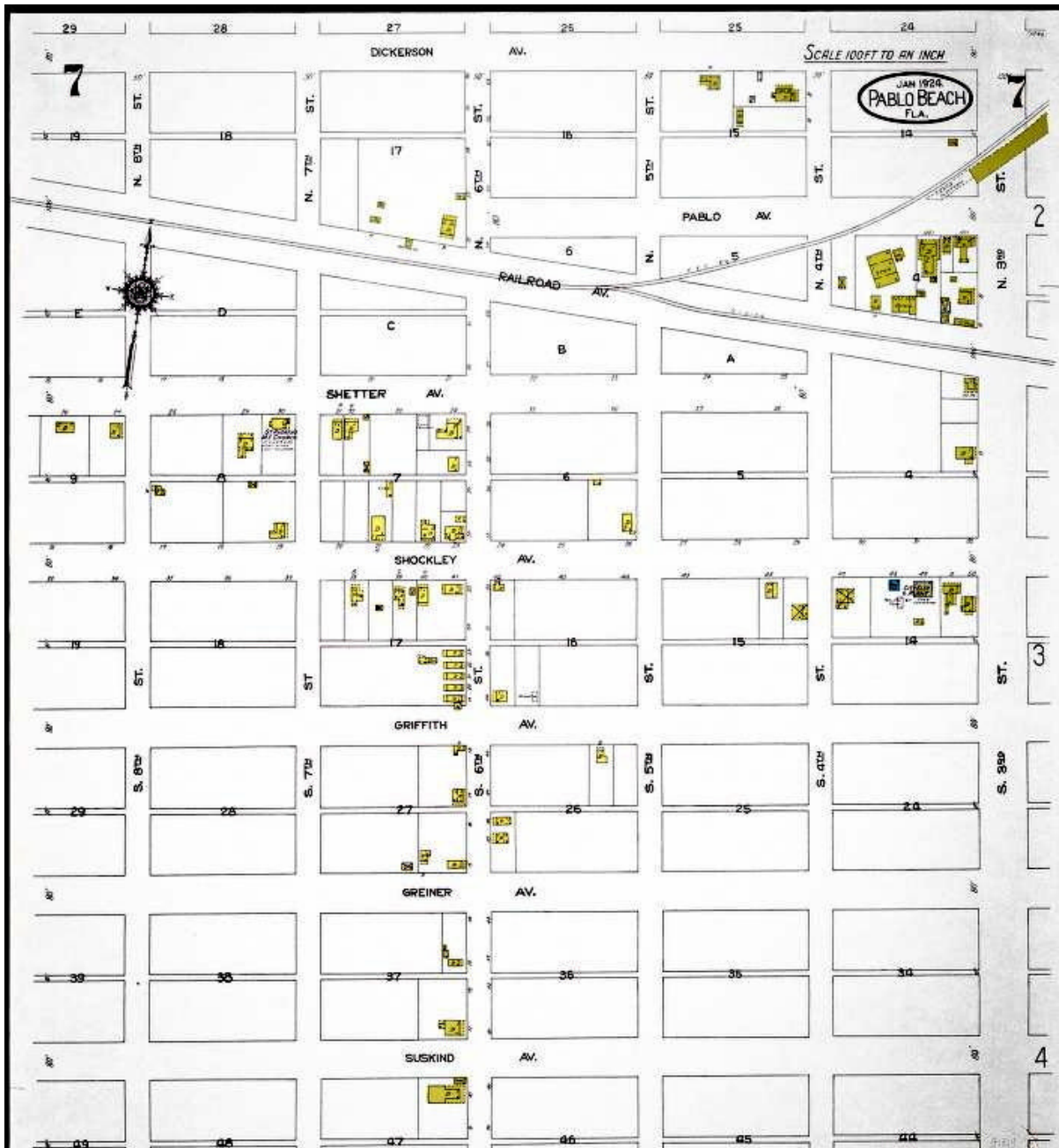


Figure 3-11 [African-American Neighborhood](#)

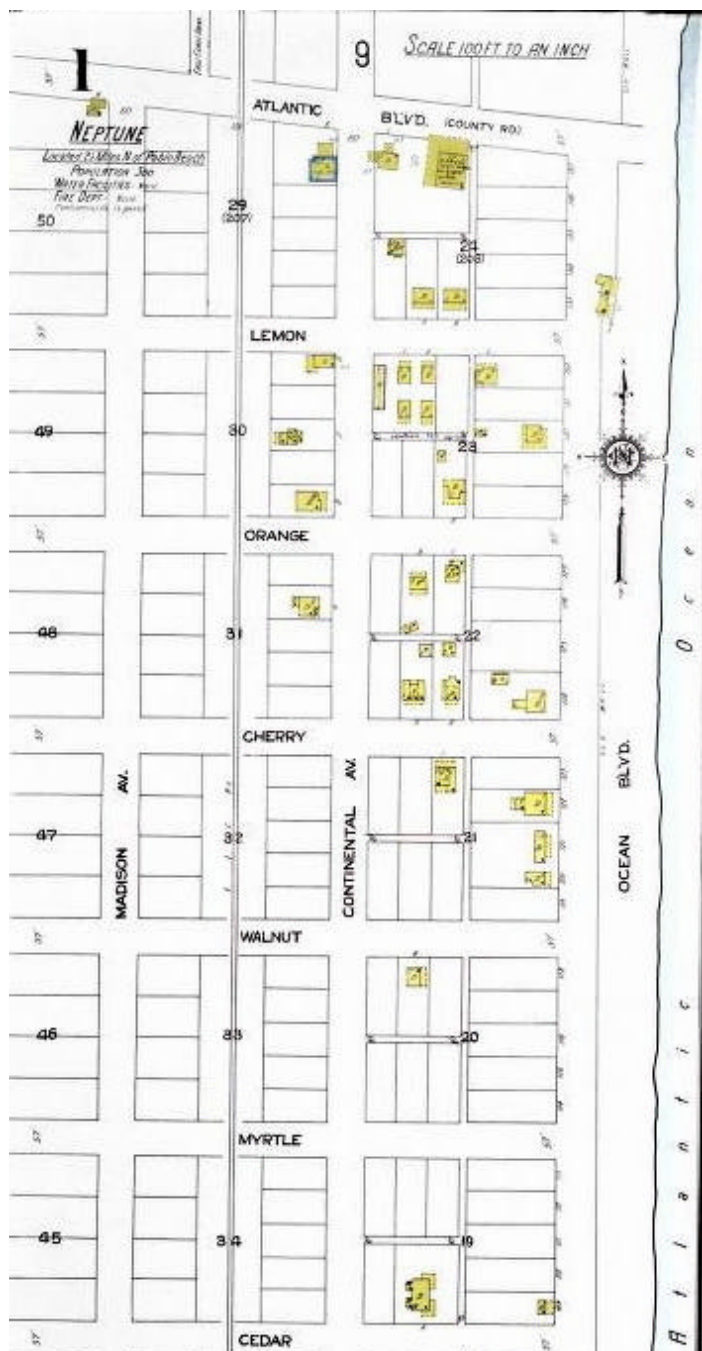


Figure 3-12 Neptune, 1924

Pablo Beach was now Jacksonville Beach; it had hitched its wagon to the Jacksonville steed. Jacksonville had 91,558 people in 1920 and 155, 503 in 1930, an increase of 179%. It was a good bet. Lighted, paved Atlantic Boulevard, opened in 1925, began replacing the FEC railroad as the umbilical cord to Jacksonville.

Endnotes

1. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 89-91. In 1882, people knew that a canal was needed. The [Floripedia Web](#) site quotes "An Ocean Voyage in Winter," in Chapter 11 of *Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers*, 1882 to the effect that no good harbors existed except Fernandina and St. Augustine. The pamphlet proposed a canal using existing waterways and building canals, starting from mouth of Pablo Creek at St Johns River. The Palm Valley Bridge was completed in 1937. The Intracoastal never became a major waterway for freight but pleasure craft used it often. Traveling on Atlantic Boulevard and, after 1949, on Beach Boulevard, could mean waiting until the drawbridge was raised and lowered for a motorized sailboat or large cabin cruiser.
2. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville After The Fire*, pp.28, 65-66.
3. Crooks, *Jacksonville After The Fire, 1901-1919*, p.29; James Robertson Ward, *Old Hickory's Town: An Illustrated History of Jacksonville*. (Jacksonville: Florida Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 188-195.
4. Gene Gauntier, "Blazing the Trail," *Woman's Home Companion*, Volume 55, Number 11, November 1928, pp. 15-16, 132, 134.
5. Bill Foley, "Atlantic, Girvin Met on Road in 1910," *Florida Times-Union*, July 25, 1998; Davis, 237-239.
6. Bill Foley, "A Typical Yankee to Thank for Road," *Florida Times-Union*, August 20, 1997.
7. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 53.
8. Elaine B. Koehl, *The Ponte Vedra Club: The First Fifty-Five Years, 1927-1982*. (Ponte Vedra: Ponte Vedra Club, 1982).
9. Michel Oesterreicher, *Pioneer Family: Life on Florida's Twentieth-Century Frontier*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996. Ernest Mickler, *White Trash Cooking*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1986. Oesterreicher and Mickler attended Fletcher High School at the Beaches.
10. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 53.
11. Bill Foley, "Trains A New Idea? Sure Back in 1916," *Florida Times-Union*, January 28, 1999.
12. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville After The Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City*. Jacksonville: University of North Florida, 1991, p. 120.
13. World War I Induction Cards., The Florida Memory Project. See Donald J. Mabry, "[Jacksonville Beaches & Mayport WWI Veterans](#)" on the Historical Text Archive for an extensive treatment.
14. Johnny Woodhouse, "Doolittle Took Up Challenge After Coney Died," Times to Remember: A Calendar for 2005. *The Beaches Leader*, 2004; Davis, 279, 282.
15. Bill Foley, "Millennium Moment: June 2, 1920: Vexing vixen's shimmy shocks Pablo Beach," *Florida Times-Union*, June 2, 1999; Davis, 324, 330; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 59; Bill Foley, "Tough Decision: Boxing or Swimsuits?" *Florida Times-Union*, June 3, 1998; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 60-62. The school was Jacksonville Beach Elementary School which was eventually demolished. What was the elementary school for African-Americans then was named Jacksonville Beach Elementary School. Bill Foley, "Millennium Moment: July 24, 1923: Possibilities for Pablo Beach were endless," *Florida Times-Union*, July 24, 1999.
16. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 59.
17. David Chalmers, "The Ku Klux Klan in the Sunshine State: The 1920's," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 42:3, 210-216.

18. Oesterreicher, pp. 91-95.
19. Bill Foley, "Ilana, The Dreamers Resort That Never Was," *Florida Times-Union*, November 22, 1997.
20. Phillip Warren Miller, Greater Jacksonville's Response to the Land Boom of the 1920s, MA thesis, University of North Florida, 1989, pp. 91-92, 119ff. We get a glimpse of housing costs in 1915 from "Estimates of a Bungalow in Florida," *The National Builder*, March, 1915, pps. 69-72 as being \$2206.04. In 2005 dollars, this was \$42,634.77. The configuration of such a house is unknown.
- 21 Bill Foley, "Millennium Moment: February 9, 1925," *Florida Times-Union*; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 58.

World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

4: The World's Finest Beach, 1925-45

The "World's Finest Beach" was on its way. The newly-named Jacksonville Beach looked to the future with great optimism. After all, the Florida Land Boom was going great guns in 1925. People were buying land, especially in south Florida, as speculators, then flipping it in a few weeks to new buyers, thus paying their initial costs and garnering a profit. Some would then do it again. On a national scale, many people were doing the same thing with the stock market. With so much demand, prices spiraled upwards. Land speculation was a familiar phenomenon in U.S. history; that was how much of the West was settled. As long as there were willing buyers, the land speculation would continue. In 1925, it was upwards and onwards for the Beaches. Not only had Pablo Beach become Jacksonville Beach but Atlantic Beach had also been incorporated.

Still, not many people lived at the Beaches. In 1925, Jacksonville Beach housed 744 people. The Florida state census classified them as 544 "whites" (73.1%), 187 "blacks" (25.1%), and 13 of "other races" (1.7%). Racial classifications are obviously inaccurate but one wonders what characteristics caused those thirteen people to be classified thusly. Were they Asians? Mayport contained 644 people of whom 430 were "whites" (66.8%). Atlantic Beach was too small to be included within the category of "minor civil divisions of the state census. The area of Palm Valley and what would become Ponte Vedra Beach had once been Duval County but Duval had ceded it to St. Johns County. In 1925, Palm Valley had 162 residents of whom 117 (72.2%) were "white" and (27.8%) were "black." People in Palm Valley scratched out a living through subsistence farming, hunting, trapping, and fishing. During part of the year they could earn cash by cutting palm fronds to sell, taking them to the Durbin Station on the Florida East Coast Railway west of the Intracoastal Waterway. When the Intracoastal which was finished in 1912, they used it. There was a one-room school. The census data also included the people who lived in Mineral City, the coastal mining community which would become Ponte Vedra Beach. This totals 1550 without Atlantic Beach. If it contained 50 people, the total for the Beaches was 1600.¹

Jacksonville was booming as well. The Duval County population, most of it in Jacksonville and its suburbs, was 123,481 persons of whom 72,870 (59%) were "white" and 50,441 (40.1%) were "black" in 1925. In 1930, Jacksonville, by itself, had a population of 129,549 whereas it had 91,558 in 1920, a 41.5% increase! Banks such as The Atlantic National, the Florida National, and the Barnett National as well as others made the city the financial capital of the state. The city has a team in the South Atlantic League of professional baseball since 1904. The city-owned electric system was constantly being extended and upgraded. Skyscrapers adorned downtown. Shipbuilding spurted during WWI; Merrill-Stevens Shipbuilding Corporation, Morey & Thomas, J. M. Murdock Company, etc. The port shipped and received millions of dollars in goods. In 1924, the Ford Motor Company has created an assembly and distribution plant in the city. Tourists both came to the vicinity for vacations or passed through to reach more southern climes. The building of good highways and the designation of a national system in the 1920s helped. Trucks became important. A building boom meant new subdivisions such as San Marco, Lake Shore, San Jose Estates, and Lake Forest were being built. Millions were being spent.²

Prohibition of alcoholic beverages brought large profits to those in the county who smuggled them from Canada and Cuba; bootleggers sold them at large profits as well.

Given this prosperity, expansionism was characteristic of the mid-1920s. The Casa Marina Hotel in Jacksonville Beach, begun in 1924 and opened in 1925, was innovative for the Beaches because it was not made of wood but stucco. In June, 1925, W. H. Adams, Sr. opened the new Atlantic Beach Hotel, a 50-room stucco hotel. It became a standard of luxury for many years and an icon. An outdoor swimming pool, at 100-by-50 feet swimming pool the largest in the state, was added in 1929. Eventually, the pool would be used by the local high school's swimming teams. In 1928, the Beach roller coaster was built by John Miller of the Miller & Rose Amusement Company of Milwaukee between Pablo Avenue and First Avenue North. The coaster, an icon for the beaches., was a 93-foot structure. The train reached speeds of 50 miles per hour. In 1933, Miller sold it to W. H. Adams, Jr., who put Lake R. Peddy in charge.³ The Coaster Block complex included restaurants, apparel stores, game parlors, and other amusements.



Figure 4-1 [Casa Marina Hotel](#)/Casa Marina Apartments



Figure 4-2 Atlantic Beach Hotel



Figure 4-3 [Down the Roller Coaster, 1930](#)



Figure 4-4 Lifeguard Station, Roller Coaster, and Penny Arcade , 1930s



Figure 4-5 Lifeguard Station, 1930

Not all plans worked out. In 1925, the Jacksonville Beach Development Company was formed to build a \$2 million amusement park but nothing was built. That same year, Gabe Lippman purchased half a mile of ocean front between Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach; behind that stretch of land, he owned 2,500 acres, including four miles of frontage acres on the Intracoastal Waterway. Lippman planned to build a town with a golf course, hotel, pier, and yacht basin. To service his development, he built Florida Boulevard from the ocean westwards and northward to intersect with Atlantic Boulevard at Mayport Road. There was so much low-lying land and marshes, that the contractors had to construct a miniature railroad to haul land fill. The road was completed and a celebration held on July 2, 1925 at the ocean front. Few structures had been erected, however. In October, Lippman, who was in the pharmaceutical distribution business, sold the development to Majestic Homes Corporation of St Louis. It planned to create a 25,000 person city. Florida Beach was never developed, however. Majestic Homes defaulted in June, 1926. Only a few homes had been built.⁴

The second half of the 1920s saw other problems as well. Disaster struck in the very early morning of July 29, 1926 in Jacksonville Beach fire struck businesses downtown. The Ocean View Hotel burned down. The kitchen fire in the two and one-half story, 60-room hotel on the boardwalk, spread throughout the hotel and then attacked neighboring businesses such as King Tut's Restaurant, the Adams bath house, and various concessions. Had the remnants of the hurricane which passed through the area had come earlier, perhaps the rain would have extinguished the fire. In 1928, a strong storm caused the loss of 200 feet off the end of the Jacksonville Beach pier. The Ku Klux Klan active in the 1920s, reaching a fever pitch in 1928 when the Catholic Alfred E. Smith ran for President. Klansmen believed such nonsense as a Catholic plot to install the Pope as the ruler of the United States or that there was an international Jewish conspiracy or that African Americans were a threat to civilization or some combination thereof. Popular Jacksonville Beach mayor Walter M. Phillips died of an accidental fall on September 7, 1928. In 1917, he had joined Buckman and Pritchard, Inc. which had mined Mineral City until the National Lead Company bought the mining project. When the mining became unprofitable, he became head of development to turn the National Lead property, eleven miles of ocean front property, into a site for a golf course, dog racing, club house, and houses for winter residents. He also worked to get a coastal highway built, A1A, from Jacksonville Beach to St. Augustine, a move successful in 1929. Phillips' death did not stop the project, however.⁵

Things got worse. The Florida Land Boom died. The dying began in 1925 but the 1926 hurricane in South Florida scared potential

buyers. The Florida economy started downward. Building projects were stopped. People lost jobs. Testiness increased.

Then things got much worse. The stock market boom ended in October, 1929; the market crashed. The crash revealed the weakness of the national economy. Signs of trouble in Jacksonville began emerging in Spring, 1928. Within a year and one half, unemployment would be serious in Duval County. The economy, increasingly based on mass consumption to absorb mass production, was financed on the "never never," credit, the belief that incomes would rise fast enough to pay the bills. Advertisers, Madison Avenue in popular parlance, were successful in convincing large numbers of Americans that they *needed* what they desired. Income did not rise as fast as demand. The 1920s were a decade when the rich got much richer than the average person so the latter started borrowing and borrowing. Mass consumption necessitates an income distribution that allows consumers to buy. Without the appropriate income distribution, warehouses will burst at their seams and production lines will clog. Racism and ethnic discrimination hurt the economy not only because large numbers of people did not get paid what they deserved but also because talent was denied. As the economy changed from coal to oil and hydroelectric power and natural fibers to synthetics, large economic dislocations occurred. The national government, under Republican Party control, restricted the free market with high tariffs and other subsidies to business. These weaknesses, unrelated to the speculative binge of playing the stock market, would create widespread suffering.⁶ By the summer of 1932, the unemployment rate was 25% and the underemployment rate approached 40%.

Hard times affected the Beaches. The population dropped. Mayport city had 511 (399 in 1920 and 441 in 1910) and Atlantic Beach town had 164 but Mayport precinct had 1,003; Jacksonville Beach area had 882 but city had 409 (357 in 1920 and 249 in 1910). Palm Valley had 63 people. In 1931, the Florida East Coast Railway went into receivership and discontinued its service to the Beaches and Mayport. The tracks were removed; the right of way sold; and the berm was leveled. It could not compete with automobiles in its passenger service. The switch to oil-burning locomotives from coal meant freighting coal from the docks at Mayport was not economical. Developers converted land from the right-of-way at the Beaches to residential lots between 1935 and 1937. Duval County bought the right-of-way from the Spring Glen area out to the beach. No longer could one ride to or from Jacksonville for a quarter. In an age when few had cars, this loss of transportation hurt. Tourism, the lifeblood, slowed considerably. In February, 1931, the *Jacksonville Journal* reported low morale and ill health among people in Jacksonville; surely people at the Beaches felt the same.⁷

Angry with the government of Jacksonville Beach because they believed not enough services were being provided in return for taxes, a group of citizens created Neptune Beach on June 10, 1931. By November, 1939, the town had 340 dwellings, a tiny city hall, a little business district on the south side of Atlantic Boulevard, paved roads, a bulkhead, fire and police stations, and a water and sewer system. In 1936-37, fifty-two houses were built in the little town. Neptune renamed many of its streets in 1937 to conform to the numerical system adopted by Jacksonville Beach that same year. In 1938, Peter Jensen erected a commercial building (shown below) which housed a number of businesses, including Pete's Bar. Dwight Wilson, Archivist Emeritus of the Beaches Area Historical Society, says the little town allowed Jewish people to live there when other communities would not.⁸



Figure 4-6 Jensen Building

Prosperity for the Beaches' economy depended upon tourism from the greater Jacksonville area, the Southeast U.S., and, to a lesser extent, people from the Midwest and East Coast. Tourism was seasonal, lasting from early May through Labor Day in September. Thousands would come for a day or longer to enjoy the ocean and the various amusements. Forty thousand people on a major weekend was common. The money earned fed those in the tourist business and a large share of the Beaches' population. Although the Beaches were a bedroom community for Jacksonville, the number of commuters was small. Even smaller were the number of people who owned second homes on the beach, summer residences. So Beaches leaders had to increase tourism to bring back prosperity.

In an effort to promote the beach area for tourism and settlement, the Chamber of Commerce published a pamphlet in 1931 calling the Beaches "The World's Finest Beach." It said the strand was 40 miles long and bragged that it was 600 feet wide. The beach had beautiful dunes but the sand was so hard packed that cars could park on the beach and airplanes could use it as a landing field. The Florida land boom brought people and improvements such as new city hall, new sewer system, new water system, and more paved streets. The pier provided a place to sightsee or dance or fish. The Red Cross Lifeguard Corps provided protection to swimmers. Getting to the Beaches was possible via Atlantic Boulevard, a 32-foot wide, lighted road between Jacksonville and the Beaches. That same year, Walter Lees and Frederick A. Brossy fly a Bellanca airplane from Jacksonville Beach and establish a non-refueling endurance record of 84 hours, 33 minutes. The next year, 1932, the American Legion sponsored an automobile race called "100 Miles of Ponte Vedra," in an attempt to ape the success of Daytona Beach. The idea did not catch on.⁹



Figure 4-7 Bellanca on the Beach

Jacksonville Beach also tried to get the Duval County government to build a road from South Jacksonville to Jacksonville Beach, a project that would open up that little city and also provide much-needed employment. The efforts failed in 1933. On February 19th at the Southside Business Men's Club, Jacksonville Beach Mayor W. E. Montgomery, the guest speaker, opposed building a boulevard that would go to close to Mineral City but said he would support a road built on the FEC right-of-way. The idea of a new road had been broached and, at a November meeting, the delegation of Ben McCormick, Gene Zapf, and W. E. Montgomery held further discussions. McCormick was the key developer of the Beaches. Duval Engineer J. A. Long spoke at the meeting. The idea was to use emergency relief workers to build the road. At the December meeting, the group resolved in favor of the FEC route. ¹⁰

City officials believed that getting more tourists would stave off the worst effects of the Great Depression and then create economic recovery. One effort to make the shoreline more attractive was to build a concrete seawall. In 1934, the bulkhead at Jacksonville Beach was finished. The city held a celebration because it increased tourism. Speaking in 1935, the mayor said Jacksonville Beach had done \$2 million in tourism in 1934 and expected to do \$9 million in 1935. At the end of the season, the Junior Chamber of Commerce staged three-day "End of Season" festivities which included a baby parade with judging, stunt flying, a swim marathon in the ocean, and a bathing beauty contest. Thousands came. Babies, sex, sports, and spunk sold. ¹¹

Mayport and Palm Valley did not enjoy the luxury of a beautiful beach, the "world's finest," with its amusement park, hotels, bath houses, bars, and restaurants. When the economic slowdown continued, some of their residents had to find a means to eke out a living. Moonshining became important in Mayport and Palm Valley in the early 1930s; ¹² the New Deal repealed Prohibition in 1933 to stimulate the economy.

Franklin Roosevelt's [New Deal](#) spent huge sums of money for Relief, Recovery, and Reform. U.S. Senator Duncan U. Fletcher of Jacksonville made sure that Duval County got its share. Such programs as the Civilian Conservation Corps at Camp Duncan U. Fletcher, the Civil Works Administration, the Federal Relief Emergency Administration, and the Works Progress Administration hired the unemployed using the principal of workfare. Construction of Duncan U. Fletcher Junior-Senior High School was begun in 1936; it opened the next year. In 1938, the U.S. government helped finance the construction of the Main Street Bridge, opening another way to the Beaches. In 1939, Atlantic Beach Elementary School (for "whites") was completed using New Deal monies. And there were more efforts to help people. ¹³

Perhaps no project of the government in Washington had as great an impact as the building of Fletcher. The junior-senior high school unified "white" people at the Beaches, for 7-12 students from Mayport south to Ponte Vedra-Palm Valley and west to beyond San Pablo Road went to school together for the first time. The age span was important because it meant that kids went through puberty together,

experiencing fears, opportunities, self-discovery, raging hormones, sports, the arts, and so much more. The school provided a sense of being something larger than oneself, of belonging to a tribe, a nation as it were, with its own traditions, songs, and warriors. Seventh graders stood in awe of seniors who "tolerated" their or their friends little brothers and sisters. The community had a focal point as Fletcher's athletic teams defended the honor of the Beaches. No longer did students have to commute to Landon in Jacksonville. From the first class graduated in 1938 until the school was divided in 1964, Fletcher joined the ocean in providing commonality to the Beaches.

Fletcher's First Graduating Class



Back row, reading left to right: Principal F. A. Doggett, Joseph B. Dobkin, Edward Reagor, Walter Stubbs, Hilliard Wright, Robert Patterson, William Duval, Edward Williams, Dean Mildred Pence, and Sponsor Lena Ramsdell. Front row, reading left to right: Jerome Finkelstein, Jane Coughlan, Jurelle Patrick, Julia Ford, Agnes Nicholson, Betty Singleton, Mable Stormes, Clara Reid Hoffman, and William Barr.

Figure 4-8 Fletcher's First Graduating Class

In spite of the hard times of the Depression, the beaches thrived in time. Part of it was because land was cheap and people who had money took advantage of the low real estate prices. The Arnot Building, a movie theatre, and the Wave Crest Hotel as well as lesser buildings went up in Jacksonville Beach while the Lovett Building graced Atlantic Beach. Arthur Penman built a house on Florida Boulevard in his Neptune Forest subdivision in 1936, expanding the development of Neptune Beach. Then, in 1939 and 1940, he built

two houses in the Pine Grove subdivision in Jacksonville Beach. Penman was honored by both towns with a road named for him. Amusements, bars, and other tourism provided income as people from Jacksonville, north Florida, and south Georgia sought relief from daily life. People came to the Boardwalk for relief. Jacksonville Beach was more "open" than Jacksonville, thus giving it an economic advantage in the amusement business. Atlantic Boulevard, paved and lighted in 1925 made it easier to get to the Beaches. The end of prohibition in late 1933 meant the bars reopened. The pier became more popular. Government money gave people spending power.¹⁴

Jacksonville grew from 129,549 in 1930 to 173,065 in 1940, a 36.6% increase but Jacksonville Beach grew much faster. In the 1930s, Jacksonville Beach experienced fantastic growth, going from 409 people in 1930 to 3,566 people in 1940. People flocked to the easier life in a warmer climate. Land at the Beaches was cheaper, so people moved there. Houses and apartments were built to supply the demand. Many dwellings. As late as 2003, we know that 67 structures, mostly single-family dwellings, still existed in South Jacksonville Beach and 63 in north Jacksonville Beach. Of these 130 structures, five were commercial, 71 were single-family dwellings, 35 were duplexes, 10 triplexes, four quadraplexes, and 2 with 5 or more apartments. Because of development over almost seventy years, the total number built in the 1930s was much higher. By 1935, Jacksonville Beach had 1,094 people, an increase of 695 since 1930. Of these 797 were "white" and 297 were "black." Outside the city limits, there were an additional people of whom 359 were "white" and 43 were "black." Mayport had 511 and Atlantic Beach had 164.¹⁵

We get a glimpse of life at the Beaches by looking at the 1935 telephone directory below. Although the list is truncated, almost all of it is shown. Telephones were expensive in 1935 so few people or businesses had them. Earl Roberts was the only physician and there was no hospital. The list does not include Mayport. The number of residential telephones shown is eighty-five; the total was less than one hundred.

1935

JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FLA.

Addington D W r Neptune.....28-J
Akard Florence Miss r Ocean Front.....43
Ambrose Karl r 1st.....9
Anderson D D r Neptune.....83
Atlantic Beach City Hall Atl Beach.....37
Atlantic Beach Drug Store Neptune.....9148
Atlantic Beach Hotel ofc Atl Beach.....9130
Bath House Atl Beach.....9125-W
Atlantic Beach Garage Atl Beach.....9105-J
Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co 1st av.....9147

B
Beach Lumber & Supply Co 3rd.....67
Bell John M r 1st.....42
Berlack A S r Atl Blvd.....97-J
Bigelow A G r S 1st.....34
Bradfield J M r 16th.....65-J
Bulfinch F S r Atlantic Beach.....36-R
Bull Harcourt r Atlantic Beach.....72
Burke J L r Neptune.....3

C
Camp C W Mrs r 1st.....28
Carter Grocery Atlantic Beach.....9106
Casa Marina Hotel Jax Beach.....9119
Chew's Hotel & Pavilion Ocean Front.....9118
Clarkson P Moody r Neptune Beach.....20-W
Clarkson Rosa M Mrs r 5th.....14-J
Compton Edgar W r Neptune Beach.....175
Copper-Kettle Inn Ocean Front.....9128
Cooper Wm C Jr Mrs r 1st.....11-J
Courson G A r 1st.....38-J
Crevasse Jpe N Neptune.....87
Crowe's Red Front Store 107 Pablo av.....95
Cummer A G r Atlantic Beach.....44-W

D
Dekle Lumber & Supply Co Neptune.....26
Dickinson's Dept Store 210 N 1st.....9150
Downs S Z r 16th.....18-J

E
Ellis Frank B r 1030 S 2nd.....88

F
Farris Ion L Mrs r Neptune.....55
Faughnan Annie r Ocean Blvd.....13
Fire Department.....Call Fire Dept

G
Gillespie Wm C r Neptune.....98
Gillish M S Mrs rms 218 Greiner av.....9132
Gonzales James r S 2nd.....6
Godding D E r Atlantic Beach.....86-R
Goodloe W Hopson r Ocean Front.....69
Grether J Richard r 517 S 1st.....15-M

H
Haynes Lawrence r 5th.....10
Hendley J M r Neptune.....178
Huntington Beach.....57

I
Independent Laundry Co 127 Pablo av.....9146

J
Jax Beach Bus Sta Willard.....9138
Jax Beach City of.....1
City Clerk.....60
Chief of Police r.....7
Elec and Water Plant.....9117
Jax Beach Pharmacy N 1st.....9133
Jensen Market Atl Blvd.....9104
Jo Ed's Roofing Co 624 Stevens.....5-J
Johnston J J r Neptune Bch.....9152
Jones Garage Jax Bch.....19
Jones Lester r Kingsley av.....77

K
Knight Raymond D r Neptune.....77

L
Lake R R r Atlantic Beach.....20-J
Lilly Pharmacy 1st.....9144
Lipton House Ocean Front.....9157

M
Mann Ave Apartments 1st.....9127-J
Mann J Marian r Neptune Beach.....41
Marshall Geo J filg sta 201 S 1st.....9126
Martin's Grill Boardwalk.....9113
Ice Plant N 1st.....80
May Robt D Dr r Atlantic Beach.....92
McCollum O O r Neptune Beach.....170
McCullough H L r Atlantic Beach.....93
McGehee M R r Atlantic Beach.....65-W
Meyer Robt R r Atlantic Beach.....50-W
Meyerson Herbert P r Atl Beach.....60-M
Morrison J A r Atl Beach.....85
Mullikin Fred L r Atl Beach.....40

N
Nelson L E r 1st.....91
Neptune Filling Station Neptune.....9134-J
Nichols Court Apts Nichols ct.....9129
Norris Frank r Atlantic Beach.....96

O
Ocean Breeze Inn Ocean Front.....9153-M
Ocean View Apts 522 N 1st.....9123
Osborne M V r Atlantic Beach.....14-M
Outler J C Atl Beach.....52

P
Pablo Garage 2nd.....9111
Pablo Hotel 2nd.....9108
Parker Forrest r Neptune Bch.....81-J
PATTEN H E.....33
Pibr 1801 N 1st.....

Perkins Bath House Jax Beach.....9110
Police Dept.....Call Police Dept
*PONTE VEDRA CO Jax Beach.....21
Ponte Vedra Country Club Jax Beach.....64
Powers A M r Neptune.....45-J
Pritchard G A r Atlantic Beach.....169
Pruitt M W r Atl Beach.....16
Pursel Anna r Ocean Front.....

R
Red Cross Life Saving Station Ocean Front.....9103
Rivers Ella Mae r S 1st.....78
Roberts Earl H Dr r 1st.....4
Roberts Earl H Dr r Canary apt.....25
Roberts Thurston r Neptune.....8-J
Rogers Wm H r Atlantic Beach.....45-M
Ryan A Sea-Home Apts.....9120

S
Sams I D r N 1st.....58
Scott's Service Sta 1st.....9142
Sheehan Lottie G r 603 S 2nd.....15-J
Sheetz F B r 429 Willard av.....82-J
Shockley Ottilie Mrs rms 2nd.....9131
Smith Carl U r 139 Gadsden av.....12-W
Smith May Garner Mrs r Atl Beach.....61-W
Stoddards Neptune Garage Neptune.....9114-W
Strang C A r 332 5th.....82-W
Sugg's Store Atlantic Beach.....9107
Sutherland H E r 135 Willard av.....17

T
Thompson Frank r Atlantic Beach.....36-W
Tokam Dept Store Pablo av.....9109
Towers C D r Atlantic Beach.....63
Treisback G S r North.....29-J
Truett L A r Atl Beach.....18-W
Tucker Finley r Atlantic Beach.....45-W
Tucker Lawrence K Jr r Atlantic Beach.....45-W

U
U S Coast Guard Radio Station Jax Beach.....177

V
Veal E W Dr r 1st.....9

W
Waterman Dorothy D Miss r Hopkins.....974
Weber R A r Jax Beach.....6
Weber's Dick Filling Station 215 N 1st.....914
Welmer's Lodge 511 S 1st.....912
Whiddon's Cash Store No 32 2nd av.....910
Wilcox Curtis P r Atl Beach.....20-
Wilkinson Albert H Dr r Neptune Bch.....
Williams Martin G r 980 N 1st.....53
Wilson Jack F r Fla Blvd.....10
Wilson Lorenzo A r Atl Beach.....1
Wood Julien Jr r 154 Continental av.....90
Wright Corrie E Mrs r Jax Beach.....91
Wright G G r Atlantic Beach.....

Figure 4-9 1935 Telephone Directory

Then, in 1937, Jacksonville Beach changed many streets names in the belief that doing so would make it easier for visitors to navigate. Most avenues became numerical with Pablo Avenue serving as the boundary between avenues north and south. Streets such as Mundy Boulevard. Pablo Avenue and Shetter Avenue remained the same. Neptune Beach also changed some street names.

Private enterprise played a role in bringing the Beaches out of the Depression; the fancy resort and housing development called Ponte Vedra Beach was developed from Mineral City in St. Johns County. The building of Ponte Vedra would spur growth in Jacksonville Beach because money was being spent within a small economy and because part of the development would be houses in south Jacksonville Beach. In October, 1928, men meeting in the office of National Lead, Inc. decided to hire Telfair Stockton Company of Jacksonville to create a grand design for its seventeen miles o property in Mineral City. The mining was no longer viable but the growth of the Beaches as a resort gave National Lead an alternative use for the property.

From the first, they did not want the development to have the honky-tonk atmosphere of the Boardwalk area of Jacksonville Beach and they wanted it to be a higher class resort than Atlantic Beach. In short, they wanted to create an upper-middle class and upper class resort and development, one that would be an exclusive private club. So they chose Joe Davin as the land engineer and Jim Stockton as the designer, planner, and manager of the resort. Stockton was a graduate of Princeton in 1916 so he recruited upper-class clients in 1937 by using his Princeton alumni connections.

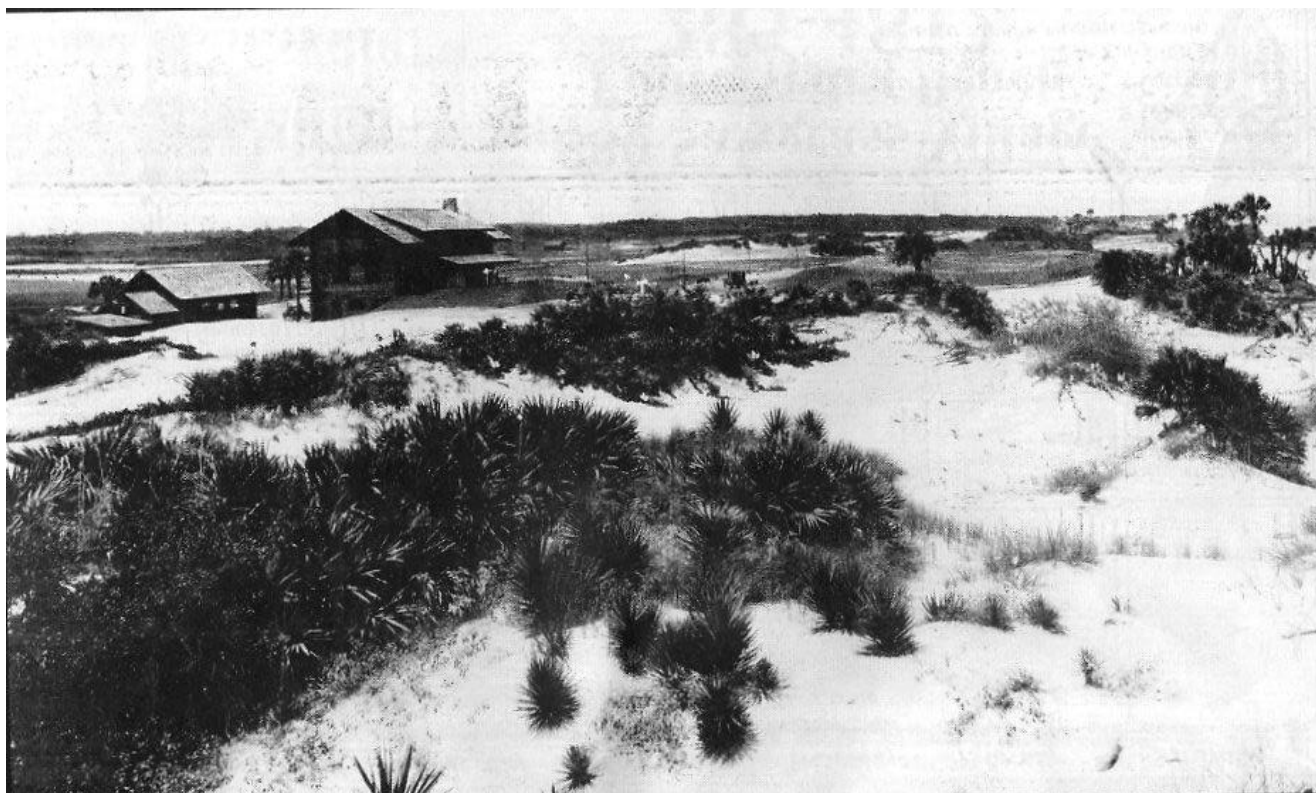


Figure 4-10 Mineral City, 1928

The property had a club house and nine-hole golf course; National Lead has built them for its managerial employees, their guests, and visiting executives. For half of the year it was much more pleasant than New York or other eastern cities. The log cabin built in 1927 was temporarily used by guests until The Inn opened in 1937. The Stockton company removed the shacks and mining equipment. It commissioned landscaping to beautify. It pressured the state to build a coastal highway, A1A, to St. Augustine to entice settlement. Equally important, they initially sold lots cheaply to get people there. They built attractive edifices befitting their proposed clientele--a Bath Club (which had a dance floor), a swimming pool for those who wanted to avoid the ocean, and then The Inn and guest cottages. The golf course was expanded to an 18-hole course. The 130 acre golf course was built in 1931-32 with 100 mules doing work. Lagoons were dug out of swampland. Talented employees were hired. The key to the good domestic service and maintenance was Collis Quarterman, a "black" man, recruited and supervised a large staff. Over a half million dollars in construction monies were spent, money which surged through the Beaches' economy multiplying as it did so. Mineral City was renamed Ponte Vedra Beach, a Hispanic name chosen to reflect the "European" character of the resort.

Stockton wrote to his fellow Princeton University alumni to encourage them to visit and, perhaps, buy property and membership in the Ponte Vedra Inn & Country Club. It worked. The resort saw the likes of the famous radio commentator Edward R. Murrow and the film star Dana Andrews as guests in addition to the ordinary well-to-do and wealthy. National Lead sold its interests in 1942. Ponte Vedra was self-sustaining. The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club was successful enough that Tommy Sabin bought 600 feet of oceanfront further

south and built the 32-room Innlet in 1940. In 1944, the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club bought it. In 1947, thirty apartments were added.¹⁶

Other developments made the Beaches a better place to live. "On October 17, 1937, fifty-nine dedicated worshipers gathered in the old Beach Theater in Jacksonville Beach to form Rising Tide Methodist Church – the forerunner to today's Beach United Methodist. "¹⁷ St. Paul's Catholic Church bought a city block of land and, in 1940, started building a church and parish hall. St. Paul's would create an elementary school. In that year, "Pogy" people from the Carolinas brought five boats and their crews to Mayport, creating employment. The Pogy or menhaden, fish factory produced fish oil and fertilizer and paid 10 cents/hour to men who shoveled processed pogy ten hours a day (\$1/day). Women worked in a crab processing plant.¹⁸ In 1937, Duval County paid FEC \$8,500 for right-of-way to Jacksonville Beach. Became State Road 376. County used WPA money to clear right of way, put in drainage, etc. Cost \$1,576,000 of which over \$500,00 was federal. WW II killed project in 1941.¹⁹

By 1940, the Beaches had become prosperous and continued to grow. By 1940s, Duval County's population increased 37% between 1920-30 and 35.1% between 1930-1940. Atlantic Beach went from 164 people to 468 people. Neptune Beach, which was part of Jacksonville Beach in 1930, had 1,363 citizens by 1940. The Palm Valley precinct, which included Ponte Vedra Beach, had 341 in 1940. Jacksonville Beach grew the most spectacularly from 409 persons in 1930 to 3,566 persons in 1940, an increase of 872%.²⁰

Much of the growth was spurred by the creation of military bases by the New Deal, for President Roosevelt and Congress reacted to World War II even though the U.S. was not involved for over two years. The war had begun in September, 1939. In fact, the Japanese had taken a chunk of China in 1931, then launched a brutal all-out war with China in 1937. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939; soon thereafter the United Kingdom and France, guarantors of Polish sovereignty, declared war on Germany. The U.S. government watched these events closely and moved to strengthen the nation's naval defenses. Jacksonville leaders, for their part, had been lobbying Washington for a naval base, arguing the geographical location of the city made it advisable.

Bases were built. Jacksonville Naval Air Station on the St. Johns River across from Mandarin was opened in October, 1940, having been authorized the year before. Local money had joined national money to acquire the requisite and construct buildings. By June, 1941, sailors were frequenting the Beaches for fun and games. Cecil Field, an auxiliary naval air field, was commissioned west of Jacksonville NAS in June, 1941. The [Mayport Naval Station](#) was selected as an auxiliary station in 1939; in December, 1942, the Mayport Naval Section Base was commissioned. In 1943, it became a Sea Frontier Base. In April, 1944, the Naval Auxiliary Air Station was built adjacent to the frontier base. Thus millions, if not billions, of dollars were poured into the Duval County economy during World War II stimulating the economy and creating permanent wealth. The U.S. government spent much of the Gross Domestic Product on the war, raising taxes and borrowing to pay for it. More distant but within traveling distance of the Beaches was Green Cove Springs, home of Lee Field and then the Atlantic mothball fleet, 1946-61. The Navy became an essential component of the Jacksonville area economy. The Beaches benefited from sailor tourism from all three bases but more directly from Mayport because of its proximity. Naval and civilian personnel bought, stayed, and played at the Beaches. When the war ended in 1945, the two Mayport bases were decommissioned, a blow to the economy of the Beaches.

The Navy took much of the old villages of Mayport, East Mayport, and Wonderwood. Navy bulldozed St Joseph's Catholic Church. The Lighthouse property was swallowed by the base. In the 1930s, there had been a school for African-Americans in East Mayport, a grades 1-6 school where Miss Short taught. The Navy took the property. In time, the Navy would acquire more property to meet its needs and desires.

World War II was a direct experience for Beaches residents. In April, 1942, a German submarine sank the tanker S. S. Gulfamerica off the coast. People could see the fire. Some made an effort to rescue the survivors. Security measures were adopted. Residents were required to use blackout curtains, car headlights were hooded, and [beach barriers](#) were erected so that ships would not be silhouetted against the shore. Residents had to carry [passes](#). A few months later, on June 17th, four German saboteurs landed at Ponte Vedra Beach in Operation Pastorius. For others had landed on Long Island on June 13, 1942. The Florida group included Edward John Kerling, 33; Herbert Hans Haupt, an American citizen; Werner Thiel; and Herman Neubauer. They had boxes of incendiary devices, bombs, and

money. They walked to Jacksonville Beach and then took a bus to Jacksonville. After a large breakfast, two checked into the Seminole Hotel, two into the Mayflower Hotel. Kerling and Thiel went to New York City and were arrested on June 24; Haupt and Neubauer went to Chicago and were arrested on June 27th. they had been ratted out by one of the Long Island party before the Florida group had landed. After a secret military trial, the Ponte Vedra four were executed on August 8, 1942 .²¹

The Beaches saw other war-related changes. In 1942, the Army built a Combat Team Camp in Atlantic Beach on 150 acres. In 1943, the Casa Marina Hotel was leased to the US government to house immigrant workers and converted into forty-nine apartments. The first hospital at the Beaches was founded in a former motel on 1st Avenue South.²² Beginning in 1943 and then again in 1947, B. B. McCormick & Sons started constructing 48 buildings from Fifth Avenue South to 16th Avenue North which would contain 354 apartments. Ben McCormick acquired much by barter, trading the work of his construction company for property. He had obtained land from the City of Jacksonville Beach in 1937, filling it in when necessary, to make it suitable for building. ²³ Thus, affordable housing was provided for civilian and military families. All was done through New Deal programs.

Although the Beaches community had grown, the shore still remained relatively small. One indicator is the size of the 1943 Fletcher High School graduating class of 57. Another is the student population of two other "white" schools at the Beaches.

Commencement Program			CLASS ROLL	
Mr. Dwight L. Wilson, Principal	Miss Mildred Pence, Dean		Fred Caney Allen ✓	Florence Louise Bache
Incidental Music	Fletcher Band		Thomas Kingsley Buck ✓	Barbara Ellen Biggers ✓
	Mrs. Elizabeth Nease, Director		Harold Theo Burch	Mary Elizabeth Curlio ✓
Processional	War March of the Priests	Mendelssohn	Rolla E. Compton ✓ "Barney"	Nona Laura Davis
Invocation	Rev. Ben Meginnis		John Glen Copeland ✓	Marselle C. Dillon ✓
Presentation of Archers	<i>principle</i> Mr. Dwight Wilson		Harry G. Daniels ✓	E'Lola Elberta Drage
Salutatory	Barbara Ellen Biggers		Harry Boll Douglas ✓	Ruth Elizabeth Drew
Commencement Address	Mr. L. F. Chapman		Edward Edmunds, Jr. ✓ "mule's footstall"	Mary Jane Fuller ✓ "Bunny"
Music	Sleeping Beauty Waltz	Tschaikowsky	Hugh Scott Falconer ✓	Carolyn Gates ✓ "Princess"
Valedictory	Mary Jane Fuller		Lyon Fowler	Sara Louise Goethe ✓
Presentation of Diplomas	Mr. B. B. McCormick		E. Eugene Gleason ✓	Elizabeth Lucy Harrison
Benediction	Rev. W. P. Everson		Robert Hardin Hogue ✓ "Lucy"	Betty Jane Heinz
Recessional	March from Lucia DiLammemoor	Verdi	James Baldrige Harper ✓ "Jim"	Elizabeth Mary Hunter ✓ "Betty"
			Cahron Jones	Jane Avenne Jones ✓
			Neal Alford Jones	Jeannette Elizabeth Karason
			Frank Jordan	Donnie Jane Kinkaw ✓
			William Ritch Mabry ✓ "Bill"	Ruby Lee Knight
			Richard Harris Peck ✓ "Uncle Ricky"	Sara Claire Lester
			Claude Davis Phillips	Roberta Morris ✓
			Henry William Purser ✓	Phoebe Eileen Nelson ✓
			Charles Anthony Ramsdell ✓ "Uncle Tony"	Mary Elizabeth Pacetti
			Telfair Stockton Rogers	Marilyn Pitts ✓
			Ben Sease	Annie Laurie Sawyer
			Wayne Carleton Smith Jr. ✓	Ethel Marie Tucker
			Vincent Henry Stormes ✓	Patay Pitts West
			Clinton Kershaw Sykes ✓ "Lucky"	Johnnie Ruth Williams
			William R. Wills ✓ "confusion"	Marnie Jane Whitman

Figure 4-11 Fletcher 1943 Graduation

SCHOOL	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Fletcher Jr.-Sr. HS	414	462	489	496	509
Jacksonville Beach Elementary	377	349	384	459	533
Atlantic Beach Elementary	135	145	158	194	232

TOTAL	926	956	1031	1149	1274
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Figure 4-12 Beaches White School Enrollments, 1940-44

Fletcher grew almost 23%, Jacksonville Beach 41%, and Atlantic Beach almost 72%. The three combined grew 37.6%, a healthy increase. In 1939, the Duval County Board of Education began building a four room elementary school for African-Americans on a two acre lot on the corner of 3rd Avenue South and 10th Street South in Jacksonville Beach. The number of African-Americans increased so a building was constructed in 1946 for "blacks" in 1946. That year, it had 86 students in grades 1-6. Population growth, it had 217 students in grades 1-6 in 1956, necessitated the addition of two classrooms and a cafeteria in 1952.. There was a "black" school in Atlantic Beach in 1946 which had 26 students. Presumably, this school also served Mayport. Nevertheless, there were not many students.²⁵

We can glimpse the Beaches through aerial photographs taken in 1942 and 1943. Most of the houses and commercial buildings hugged the shore. Jacksonville Beach was the most highly developed whereas Palm Valley was the least.



Figure 4-13 Aerial Photo #1

This photograph shows southern Jacksonville Beach and Ponte Vedra Beach (where the lakes or lagoons are) in 1942. The island in the lagoon (lower right) is the Ninth Hole of the golf course. The left side of the photograph shows marsh land and part of Pablo Creek/San Pablo River.



North of Ponte Vedra lies south Jacksonville Beach. The scale of these photos is not the same. The small lake/lagoon at the top Aerial Photo #1 can be seen towards the bottom of Aerial Photo #2. At the top right of #2, one can see a square with walks in an X-shape; City Hall is located there.



One sees the pier just north of the X-shaped square. This was and is the downtown. Just to the left of the square one can see the remnants of the Florida East Coast Railroad which was removed in the 1931-32.



The lower right shows the downtown square and pier. At the upper left, underneath the numerals, is Fletcher Junior-Senior High School. North of it is Neptune Beach.



The pier was part of the Atlantic Beach Hotel complex owned by the Adams family.



This photo shows Seminole Road running through northern Atlantic Beach through Burnside/Seminole/Manhattan Beach to Mayport. At the top of the photo one can see part of the Village of Mayport, Wonderwood, and sand dunes.



Figure 4-19 Aerial Photo #7

The St. Johns River jetties channel the mouth of the river. The white in the photo is sand. The road is Seminole Road. Ribault Bay, which became the Mayport carrier basin is barely visible in the center left. As the aerial photos show better than words, the Beaches were sparsely populated; one did not have to travel very far west from the ocean to encounter empty land and then low-lying terrain and marshes. Several city blocks north and south of downtown Jacksonville Beach were the most settled. As one went north or south, population density declined. Although the argument was made that the political jurisdictions in this north-south strip should be combined because they all faced common problems and opportunities and had a common school in Fletcher, they remained separate. Some of it was social class. Mayport and Palm Valley did not have the same prestige that Atlantic Beach or Ponte Vedra Beach had. Some of it was the fact that Jacksonville Beach was the workplace of the Beaches, the source of much of the income, the tourist center with its carny-style Boardwalk, bars, whorehouses, and such. One could live in Jacksonville Beach and completely ignore the entertainment business; most people did.

By 1945, World War II ended with the August 15, 1945 and the Japanese signing the surrender documents on September 2, 1945; the Beaches had grown substantially. Population figures demonstrated it. The Palm Valley precinct had 561 people of whom 406 were classified as "white" and 155 "black" (27.6%). Mayport had 1,236 of whom 881 were "white" and 881 were "black." Neptune Beach had 1,298 "whites" within its city limits and another 402 persons outside the city limits of whom 391 were "white" and 11 were "black." Atlantic Beach had 956 (921 "white," 35 "black"). Jacksonville Beach had 5,943 people (5274 "whites," 669 "blacks" (11.3%) and there were another 779 "whites" outside the city limits.

Endnotes

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2. Ward, *Old Hickory*, pp. 208-10.
3. Johnny Woodhouse, "First Coaster at Beach Had Pedigree, " Times to Remember: A calendar for 2004, Jacksonville Beach, FL: *The Beaches Leader*, 2003. Peddy lived at 222 First Street South; for a time, he was an uncle of the author. In 1950, the coaster was taken down. All that remained was the Coaster Bath House as a reminder that it was there.
4. Miller, Land Boom, 91-92 , 119ff. He cites the *Florida Times-Union* and the *Jacksonville Journal*.
5. Foley, "What Next After Fire? Beaches Partied On", *Florida Times-Union*, Aug 16, 1997; Oesterreicher, p. 92; Jacksonville Journal, September 7, 1928; Elaine B. Koehl, *The Ponte Vedra Club*; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 81-84.
6. Ward, *Old Hickory's Town*, pp. 210-216; Donald J. Mabry, [*The Great Depression and Herbert Hoover*](#)," Historical Text Archive.
7. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Report of the 15th Census, Florida 1930*) (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1931), pp. 142, 154; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 70-71; Floyd, *Lighthouse*, 30.
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- 13 Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 76, says the school cost \$75,000; Floyd, *Lighthouse*, p. 32; Ward, *Old Hickory's Town*, pp. 112-117; Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, p. 78. "Black" citizens were bussed into Jacksonville. A few Roman Catholics went elsewhere. See John J. Guthrie, Jr., "Rekindling the Spirits: From National Prohibition to Local Option in Florida, 1928-1935," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 74:1 (Summer 1995, 23-40; Michael Gannon, *Florida, A Short History*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993, pp. 89-92 points out the importance of New Deal spending and the revival of tourism in mid-decade.

14. Johnston, *Architectural Resources*, pp. 73-75, 78, 86.
15. Florida, State of. Department of Agriculture. The sixth census of the state of Florida, 1935: taken in accordance with the provisions of chapter 17269 Laws of Florida. Winter Park, Orange Press, 1936, pp. 25, 77.
16. Koehl, *The Ponte Vedra Club*
17. [Beaches United Methodist Church](#) web site.
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World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

5: After WWII

Winter storms sent waves crashing against the concrete bulkheads built in the 1930, shooting spray thirty or more feet into the air. The water pounded against the reinforced concrete and eroded its support. Fierce winds swept towards shore. Battering. Battering. Building bulkheads to contain the sea and give the Beaches a more orderly appearance seemed a good idea. Although they varied in style (those in much of Atlantic Beach were curved), they stretched from south Jacksonville Beach to north Atlantic Beach. The Boardwalk became concrete so people could walk on it or rest on benches provided, watching sandpipers scurrying, gulls flying, girls and guys cavorting, and the ceaseless actions of the sea. Their very existence, however, caused waves to flow differently, undermining the cement slabs. Nature subverted human intentions. Over the years, after a particularly bad storm, the seawall would collapse and the sea would reclaim the sand for its own. Forces of nature, not humanity, dominated the Beaches.



Figure 5-1 Erosion Caused by Storms



Figure 5-2 Storm Damage, 1956

One of those forces was the national economy. Between December, 1945 and December, 1947, prices in the United States rose about 33% or one-third as people bid up prices for the scarce available consumer goods. Rationing and the production of war goods meant consumer goods such as appliances and automobiles were almost impossible to buy; people saved. Wages rose and price controls prevented a cost explosion. Congress, over Truman's objections, ended them in the summer and fall of 1946. Whereas people assumed that there would be a post-war depression, there was a post-war boom. People bought and bought.

The US had grown even richer. The Gross National Product (the value of all goods and services) in 1929 had been a little over \$100 billion; it fell to \$70 billion in the Great Depression but had risen above \$174 billion in 1948. Prosperity was stimulated by pent-up demand and by massive federal spending. In 1945, the US government had spent \$98 billion dollars as opposed to the normal \$3 billion in the 1920s. Although the budget was cut to \$33 billion by 1948, the explosion in consumer spending more than made up the slack. New Deal and wartime policies of high taxes and high wages had redistributed incomes, giving the average person the wherewithal to buy. All businesses had grown, contrary to the dire predictions of conservatives that the New Deal would destroy business. Competition was very much alive.

The Beaches benefited because its economy was based on the pursuit of pleasure, on discretionary spending. When people begin spending, particularly after a long period of relative deprivation, part of the money is spent to make them feel good. Advertisers figured this out long ago and concentrated on confusing people about need and desire. Going to the beach; playing in the ocean; drinking alcohol; playing games; getting thrills from rides; and other sensual pleasures was what the Beaches were about. Tourism ruled and

many, if not most, of the people who lived at the Beaches in the immediate post-WWII period, lived off tourists, directly or indirectly.

There were commuters to jobs in Jacksonville and the number had grown. Once a paved highway was completed, the trip took less than two hours (the time necessary before 1925) and more people had automobiles commuting became feasible. In the post-war period, the number of automobiles increased dramatically and, with that increase, the number of commuters. Atlantic Boulevard, a two-lane highway, became more and more crowded. The city bus which connected downtown Jacksonville with the Beaches via Atlantic became indispensable to those who worked downtown but could not afford a car. One could enjoy the pleasure of living on a beach and be in the city half an hour later.

The Cold War and then the Korean War (1950-53) changed the Beaches. The Mayport Navy base was reactivated in June 1948 as a Naval Outlying Landing Field, a satellite of Jacksonville NAS, then as an Auxiliary Field. In October, 1952, the aircraft carrier *USS Tarawa* (CVS 40) used the new carrier basin which had been built at Ribault Bay. In 1955, Commander Carrier Division Two moved there. In 1956, the carrier, the *USS Franklin D. Roosevelt* was home ported there. Capital ships brought other ships with them and people and money and attitudes. Sailors and civilians working for the military—whether at Mayport or on one of the three other Naval bases in the vicinity—not only spent money but also relocated permanently there. Because of the lengthy deployment as a carrier group, some married Navy personnel moved their families to the base or near it. Sailors—white hats—swarmed when on leave, looking for fun in the sun. Liquor stores and bars boomed as did the Boardwalk, restaurants, clothing stores, and the like. The female population of the beaches increased for a time. Navy police, the Shore Patrol, kept order and tried not to bother civilians.

Nationally, the number of babies being born boomed. Those born in the years 1946-1964 have been immortalized by the sobriquet "baby boomers." The population boom meant new and bigger houses, new schools, more government workers such as teachers, firemen, policemen, garbage collectors, and clerks, more food and drink and dispensers thereof, more clothes, more repair shops, more entertainment, and so forth. Parents were so determined to give their children a better material life and to make sure that they did not suffer deprivation that they empowered children. Some would say they were spoiled; others rejoiced that the US economic system produced such abundance. The baby boomers moved through U.S. history like a tidal wave, sweeping long established traditions, morality, and patterns aside. The first of them turned 18 in 1964, portending student rebellion. This demographic phenomenon was not apparent, however, as women bore baby after baby and families moved to suburbs and to the shore, possible because of more and better highways.

Getting onto the Beaches' island was critical for being a tourist destination and a bedroom community. The railroad which existed from 1886 until 1931 had been essential. The rise of the automobile age created Atlantic Boulevard in 1910; Atlantic then received massive improvements in 1925. When first built, the prestige of the Flagler interests, particularly the Continental Hotel, made it seem that Atlantic Beach was the future but Jacksonville Beach became the locus of power at the Beaches. As Jacksonville Beach became more powerful, its leaders began lobbying for a highway directly from South Jacksonville to Jacksonville Beach. In 1925, a group, which included contractor and developer B. B. McCormick, tried to get a new beach boulevard that would have come into the beach at 37th Avenue South. The county commission was finishing work on Atlantic Boulevard and not interested. The Jacksonville Beach group persisted and, in November and December, 1929, had the county government to survey a route from San Nicholas in South Jacksonville through Hogan Avenue and then parallel to the FEC tracks to 12th Avenue South. Nothing came of this effort because the Great Depression and World War II intervened. Work began in 1941 by the State Highway Department as Works Progress Administration project but US entry into WWII on December 8th killed it after 6-8 months. But the seed that the FEC railroad right-of-way should be used was planted.

Serious road construction began after WWII. On December 7, 1945, four years after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, construction began from Atlantic Boulevard to Love Grove Road with a 140-foot bridge across Little Pottsborg Creek. On June 24, 1946, a paved road was opened from Love Grove Road to one mile east. By September, 1947, the project had begun to go 9.15 miles east, bridging Big Pottsborg Creek, a creek the size of many rivers. Construction also went from east to west. In 1946, B. B. McCormick &

Sons got a \$335,189.56 contract to build Beach Boulevard from 3rd street west to the bridge over Pablo Creek/Intracoastal Waterway. The next year, construction of a concrete drawbridge was begun. This, the B. B. McCormick Bridge, opened in 1949. The McCormick Bridge, begun May 25, 1948 cost \$652,523. On December 17, 1949, Beach Boulevard was dedicated.¹ Because the State and Duval County refused to extend Beach Boulevard from 3rd Street down Mundy Avenue to the ocean, B. B. McCormick did at his own expense.



Figure 5-3 McCormick Bridge on Pablo Creek/Intracoastal Waterway, 1972

Benjamin B. McCormick, B. B. McCormick, shaped the Beaches as much or more than anyone else. Born near Fulton on the St. Johns River on April 13, 1877, his family struggled to earn a living. McCormick had little formal education; he had to work instead of going to school. In 1894, he got the job as the U.S. Mail carrier between Fulton and Cosmos, both tiny settlements on the river but on the railroad line. He earned \$15 a month or \$180 a year; the average working man earned between \$400-500 a year in 1900. In 1898, he

was hired to survey and cut the right of way from Mayport to Pablo Beach, a distance of approximately nine miles, for the FEC route from Pablo to Mayport. He was paid \$1.25 a day, a rate which would have meant \$7.50 a week if he worked the normal 6 days a week or \$390 for the year if he worked all 52 weeks. It is unlikely that he did but he had improved his economic status. Then he began building lumber mills for a living, learning valuable construction techniques and making contacts. This he did until 1916.

Creating his own family was delayed until June 1, 1904, when, at age 27, he married Dora Elizabeth Oesterreicher, the oldest of nine children. The Oesterreicher family lived in Palm Valley; his ties to that family and to the Beaches would remain strong even though, in 1911, he moved to Jacksonville and built a home with his own labor. To earn the extra money needed for building supplies, he gardened at night, straining his health. When the US joined WWI in 1917, he worked in a shipyard which built wooden ships. In 1918, he began logging for some of the mills. He was doing well enough financially to buy a tract of timber just west of Pablo Beach.

He moved to the Beaches under inauspicious circumstances. His children were sick too often, so he decided to take the four boys and three girls to the beach for a month, hoping to improve their health. Disaster struck. Their house burned down the night of the morning they would leave. Having nothing but a few articles they had managed to save, they moved to the Beaches, arriving about midnight at Atlantic Beach. The friend turned his wagon around to head back to Jacksonville. The family walked on the beach to south Pablo Beach, the adults carrying the children. Once they reached their destination at 12th Avenue South, they camped out until M^cCormick could obtain lodgings in a rooming house called The Owl. Dora M^cCormick had to wash clothes and cook in the yard and there was no plumbing. One of their granddaughters says that " All they had were the clothes on their backs and those had been donated after the fire by Mr. Mayerheim who owned Furchgott's, a major department store in Jacksonville.

In 1919, M^cCormick created a development and construction company as a sideline to his timber business. In time, B. B. M^cCormick & Sons, as the company became, would make his fortune. He contracted with neighboring St. Johns County to clear its portion of state highway A1A to St Augustine, a road running a few yards from the ocean. This scenic coastal road opened up Mineral City/Ponte Vedra Beach to settlement and also funneled tourists through the Beaches to the nation's oldest city. Then he was paid to grade A1A from the Duval County line to Jacksonville Beach. He often he bartered work for land. In 1922, he built the family home at 225 First Avenue South, a few blocks south of town center. From 1938 to 1946, he was a jury commissioner. During WWII, his company profited from US government wartime expenditures by building such military necessities as barracks and airfields in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and northeast Brazil. To meet the demands of expanding population, he and his sons began constructing the M^cCormick Apartments in 1943 and would continue until there were forty-eight buildings containing 354 apartments stretched from south Jacksonville Beach to 17 blocks into north Jacksonville Beach. New Deal money helped finance the project and Ben M^cCormick had done a barter deal with the city of Jacksonville Beach to acquire vacant land. Some of it he had to fill because it was under water. And he built. After the war, in 1947-48, M^cCormick & Sons began developing the Beaches Homesites subdivision on ten acres bounded by 5th Street North, 9th Avenue North, 10th Street North, and 13th Avenue North. In 1951, the subdivision was turned over the Shad investment Company which managed to get houses built, sometimes through a third party.²

Ben M^cCormick was a devoted family man who tried to improve the Beaches. In October, 1922, his wife died, leaving him with seven children to raise. Although he relied upon relatives and domestic help, the task was daunting. Finally, in March, 1926, he married Maude Oesterreicher, the youngest of his wife's siblings. There were few eligible women available in such a small place and very little opportunity for a busy man to meet them. He sired a boy and a girl by Maude.

He had little education and was determined that his children would. The Beaches had only a three-room school building with forty-one students in 1920. The building sat with water around it, creating an unhealthy situation. M^cCormick drained and filled the site for free. Over and over, he would improve the grounds of schools at own expense. In March 7, 1923, he got the Duval County school board to seek a special tax district for the Beaches, a move that passed in the election of May 1, 1923. The school board was asked on June 2nd to issue bonds to build a new school; Jacksonville Beach Elementary School was the result. In 1925, he was elected

a trustee and served until 1947, stopped by failing health. He was honored that year when he was made an honorary member of the Fletcher High School graduating class.

He was worn out. The family, with the help of retainers, had to help. When he cut the ribbon to open the B. B. M^cCormick Bridge, he was in a wheelchair. He died in October 15, 1953, having been sick for years. "Uncle Benny" had helped schools, civic organizations, youth groups, and the Beaches for decades.³



Figure 5-4 Advertisement for M^cCormick Apartments



Figure 5-5 McCormick Apartments at 9th Avenue N.

African-Americans made progress in Atlantic Beach. In 1946, the Donner subdivision grew just off Mayport Road in Atlantic Beach. The subdivision was platted in 1921 and replatted in 1946 by E. H. Donner of Jacksonville Beach. He was a European-American real estate developer who saw the opportunity to earn a profit. The land sold for about \$50 an acre but had no public utilities. Donner deeded a lot for a playground in 1948. The people who lived there created businesses. The Palmetto Garden was a restaurant, dance hall, and motel for "blacks." There was also the Bluebird Nightclub. Tony's Seafood Shack served food but also had rooms on the second floor. Since motels and restaurants were segregated, these businesses provided a real service. There was the Negro Chamber of Commerce.⁴

Racial segregation damaged all peoples, of course, since it countered free enterprise as well as fairness but it hurt African-Americans more than other groups. Education made little difference. Of the 95 black teachers in Duval County in 1945-46, 91 of them "holding the Bachelor's degree and having maximum experience" received \$189 a month, the minimum. By contrast, 71 of 83 white teachers in the same category received \$233 a month, 23.8% more. Black substitute teachers earned \$4 a day whereas white substitute teachers only \$5 a day, a 25% difference. The African-American schools in the county also got left-over textbooks.⁵

No wonder that African-Americans began suing for equal treatment after the Second World War; after all they had sacrificed, bled, and died in a war against German and Japanese racism. There were many successful lawsuits but the one that shook the nation was *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* in 1954 which ruled that segregation was inherently unequal and, therefore, unconstitutional. At Fletcher Junior-Senior High School, one heard mutterings that African-Americans would be killed and stuffed in lockers if they tried to integrate the school. The "perfect" world was threatened. It was not the case that the "whites" would not accept another race or a mixed-race person. After all, there were students of Asian ancestry as well as people who were part American Indian. Segregation was keeping "blacks," African Americans, in "their place," a place to which no Fletcher student aspired. Nothing happened for years in terms of school integration but the civil rights movement picked up momentum in the early 1960s.

Tourism boomed after World War Two. Occupancy rates increased even as new motels were built. The post-WWII boom meant spending to meet pent-up demand, a desire to enjoy life after the Great Depression-World War II period of relative deprivation, more and better advertising by the "World's Finest Beach," and military personnel availing themselves of the "pleasure" of the Beaches. The amusements on the boardwalk enjoyed unusual prosperity; perhaps a 100,000 persons would enjoy it on major holiday weekends. The families who owned the concessions and rides would earn almost all of their annual income in six months; those who owned bars and

motels had year round incomes for the bars closed at 4 AM and people used motels for a variety of reasons.

Promotional efforts by the Beaches Chamber of Commerce helped. Fireworks displays at the tourist center of Jacksonville Beach on the Fourth of July and on Labor Day attracted many thousands. Bathing beauty contests did likewise. Tourism meant improving the infrastructure. In 1948, a new Red Cross Life Guard Station opened and soon became an local icon.



Figure 5-6 Life Guard Station



Figure 5-7 Bathing Beauties, 1946

In the 1946-64 era, the Beaches attracted hundreds of thousands of tourists during the season, providing income for thousands of residents. People from Jacksonville and Duval County, from military bases, from neighboring counties and state, and from the East and Midwest came to enjoy the surf and the amusements and to darken their skin, at least temporarily. They ate, drank, gambled, fornicated, and chilled out. Hotels, motels, and rooming houses were locally owned. So, too, were the restaurants, be they Boardwalk hamburger stands on elegant ones such as Le Chateau, the Copper Kettle/Sea Turtle, and the Atlantic Beach Hotel Fisherman's Net dining room, all in Atlantic Beach. A rating from the American Automobile Association was the closest to a national chain that these businesses came. The money stayed home or in Jacksonville.

The Boardwalk and downtown Jacksonville Beach were the heart of tourism. The pier between 2nd Avenue North and 3rd Avenue North was a landmark in downtown beach. Although not meant to be so, it was a dividing line of the Boardwalk. The "action" occurred on the pier and the area south of it. The stretch between the pier and the Sandpiper Hotel with its very cold [swimming pool](#) was not as popular. Downtown included such things as [rides](#), shops, drugstores, a [bakery](#), tourist traps, bars, and a [community center](#) with a tiny public library.



Figure 5-8 The Pier, Mid-1950s

As tourism increased and the Mayport Naval Base expanded, the road into Mayport had to be relocated the new A1A highway. In September, 1950, the ferries *Manadock* and *Reliance* docked at pilot town.⁶ In 1951, Mayport NAS was expanded and the channel deepened. The next year, the first aircraft carrier berthed in Ribault Bay, the carrier basin that had been developed. The base became more important as the United States fought the Cold War and hot wars in Korea and Vietnam. It has become one of the major US naval bases. In the 1950s, thousands of sailors took liberty at the Beaches, primarily Jacksonville Beach. When the bus from Mayport discharged its passengers at the terminal on 1st Street North and 6th Avenue, it was a "sea of white hats," as the sailors headed for hotels and bath houses to change into civvies or to bars or the boardwalk. One knew them even in civvies because \$2 bills were included in the sailor's pay and they wore black dress shoes.



Figure 5-9 Downtown Jacksonville Beach, mid-1950s

Fishing was an important but risky source of income in Mayport. Party fishing boats took the affluent out in the river or the sea to try to catch big game fish. The shrimp industry boomed. Portuguese fishermen, such as the Perry and Roland families, brought a spark and experience when they arrived in the 1920s. They joined other ethnic groups in shrimping. African-Americans shrimped as well. It was a hard business which required strong, patient men. The boats ranged far and wide, often traveling hundreds of miles to catch enough. Sometimes disaster struck. The *Donald Ray* sank in March, 1957 off the coast of Ponte Vedra with Rhodes Wylie, Melvin "Sweet Pea" Singleton, and John Gavagan being lost.⁷



Figure 5-10 Mayport Shrimp Boats

The Beaches were one, in fact, even though they comprised Atlantic, Neptune, and Jacksonville Beaches in Duval County and Ponte Vedra Beach and Palm Valley in St. Johns County. In many ways, it made little sense that there were so many governments at the Beaches. Mayport was not on the beach and had a very different history from the shore communities. In a report commissioned by the Beaches Chamber of Commerce, Simons strongly recommended, insisted, that the three beaches become one politically. In 1947, a consolidation vote was held and had a 1,252-699 result in favor of becoming one, but each beach had to agree. In Jacksonville Beach, it was 745-90 in favor but the Neptune Beach vote was 322 against, 309 for; in Atlantic Beach the vote was 287 votes against and 198 votes for. Ethnocentricity was alive and well. Neptune Beach had "escaped" from Jacksonville Beach only sixteen years before. Atlantic Beach saw itself as "different" from its southern brothers. ⁸

Fletcher Junior-Senior High School created the unity needed by the Beaches for all the seventh through twelfth graders at the Beaches attended except for African Americans and the few "whites" who attended private schools. African-Americans children were

bused over twenty miles to attend junior or senior high school. Not many "whites" attended Bishop Kenny, Bolles, or Bartram. Instead, they attended Fletcher where they were united by cheering for the Senators in athletic events, wars against other similar tribes in the region. School colors (purple and white), a school song, and traditions promoted the sense of belonging. Students from two counties (Duval and St. Johns) six communities, various elementary schools, and even from the west side of Pablo Creek were given a common identity. As more and more people moved to the Beaches, transfer students were soon acclimated and indoctrinated in the Beaches mores.

Although the age spread of six years was considerable for the adolescent years, the mixture was beneficial. Younger students learned from older students. Older students took care of younger siblings or their friends without being intrusive. One's misdeeds were likely to be reported to one's parents by someone, thus curtailing the incidence rate. Smallness meant that students at least knew each other by sight, at least, and that teachers knew their charges, often several years before they taught them in class. Although the enrollment went from about 500 in 1946 to 1200 in 1960, the student population remained small enough to be manageable.

Fletcher students succeeded. "Fletcher swim teams would go on to win 176 dual meets without a loss, 20 straight conference championships, fifteen county championships, and two state championships." ⁹ Students would win championships in track, basketball, and cross country. Although the football teams did not fare as well, they were competitive. In a small town, high school athletics are not only important for students but also for the adults as well. In an age when few athletic events, college or professional, were televised, high school athletics filled a special need. In the Fall, the games provided entertainment for locals and a place to show off clothes. Students did well in other competitions as well such as forensics, journalism, art, and science. Its extracurricular activities were an important part of its educational endeavors. A high percentage of graduates went to college, some to the most prestigious institutions. Successful careers in business, academia, the military, medicine, law, landscape architecture, architecture, the arts, and other professions were common. Its night school educated adults.

It was the only institution that almost all Beaches residents had in common. Located on the Jacksonville Beach-Neptune Beach border (see Figure 5-11), its large physical plant on many acres anchored the beach communities. The school focused people of different locales and social classes; it was democratic. Under the founding principal, Frank. E. Doggett, Fletcher absorbed new students effortlessly.¹⁰



Figure 5-11 1946, Looking South. The Building in the center is Fletcher Junior-Senior High School.

There was plenty of open space, even close to the shore as the photos show. The Neptune Beach boundary is the street below Fletcher in Figure 5-11. For miles, houses hugged the shore. In this photo, Figure 5-12, looking south across Neptune Beach, the amount of vacant land is astounding. Figure 5-13 shows Atlantic Boulevard separating Neptune Beach at the bottom from Atlantic Beach at the top. The ocean is less than a block to the right. The photo also shows the city bus about to turn left to go to Jacksonville.



Figure 5-12 Looking South in Neptune Beach Down 3rd Street, ca. 1950 N.



Figure 5-13 Neptune and Atlantic Beaches Intersect

At the north end of the island was the jetties, the huge boulders that channeled the St. Johns River as it entered the Atlantic Ocean. In daylight hours, people fished there, from the rocks or from shore. Or held picnics and swam or looked at the boats and ships in the river. Ribault Bay, the [carrier basin](#), with its warships was a sight to behold. At night, people used the sand dunes for parties, for weenie roasts or to dine on the cold fried chicken which was a staple for a "hayride." Lovers found the dunes convenient. The jetties provided isolation for those who could get there by car.



Figure 5-14 Kelly's Fish Camp at the jetties

Life at the Beaches was seasonal but pleasant. In the late Spring until almost Fall, hundreds of thousands of visitors swelled the coastal communities. Many permanent residents had to earn their income in those few months, which kept incomes lower than the might have been. Most permanent residents ignored the Boardwalk and bars. They went to the Beach Theater or the drive-in movie off Beach Boulevard. They listened to radio from the big Jacksonville stations or the local AM station, known as WJVB and then WZRO. In the late fifties, Bill Greenwood, Fletcher Class of 1960 and later ABC TV and Radio commentator, as the number one disk jockey in the Jacksonville market. People watched WMBR-TV, the CBS affiliate, and, beginning in 1957, WFGA-TV, the NBC affiliate. Few watched educational television, WJAX-TV. Teenagers frequented drive-in restaurants, first Bill's Drive-In and then the iconic Surf Maid Drive-In on Beach Boulevard. Few teenagers listened to WKTX FM on Atlantic Boulevard; it a "a good music station."

Whereas the beach, boardwalk, and bars were for the tourists, residents could enjoy minor league baseball for three seasons, 1952 to 1954. Julian Jackson's Jacksonville Beach Florida Seabirds were only a Class D team, just barely out of the amateur ranks, but still professional baseball. They played rival small towns--Daytona Beach, Palatka, St. Augustine, Cocoa Beach, Leesburg, Sanford, and Gainesville--in a 136 game season in a pleasant small ballpark a few blocks south of the new Beach Boulevard. Baseball was still important to Americans, especially in towns and the countryside. After all, most boys and quite a few girls had played the game. So popular was baseball that leagues were classified as Major Leagues, AAA, AA, A, B, C, and D. College football had not become big

business yet. Baseball was king for a few more year because the average person still could afford, in time or money, to attend a game. Seabirds games were a bonanza for the young boys who retrieved foul balls for a dime each. Sometimes, they were given an old ball; sometimes they "couldn't find" a new ball.

The team was competitive. For the first two seasons, Red Treadway, who had a credible record with the New York Giants for two seasons, 1944-1945, coached the Seabirds. This Florida State League team finished second in 1952 with a 80-56 record. The team went 68-65 in the second season and finished fifth in the league. Treadway left for the Fitzgerald, Georgia team. Spuds Chandler, a former New York Yankees pitcher for eleven years, took over and the team became a farm club of the Cleveland Indians. Cleveland sent the Nixon twins, Roy and Russ, who were outstanding. "Russ Nixon, only 20, led the Three-I League in batting (.387-5-77), 36 points ahead of runner-up Gordy Coleman, and hit safely in 32 consecutive games ending July 11. It was his second consecutive batting title. In 1954, playing for Jacksonville Beach, he hit .387-6-96 to lead the Florida State League." Russ became a major league player and manager of note. The Seabirds went 76-63, finished third, and was runner-up in the league finals.

Attendance was a problem, however. Players and others performed tricks and stunts before the game to draw crowds. The son of Bobby Trump, one of its stars, reminisced about this in 2006.

My father Bobby Trump played baseball for the Seabirds during the 1952-1953 seasons. His starting position for most of his time in Jacksonville was spent behind the plate. He was also called on to pitch on several occasions. On June 23, 1953, he pitched the Seabirds to a 6 to 5 victory for which he received the game ball. That was one of many game balls he would receive throughout his stay with the team. My most memorable story of those days to go along with the many game balls and newspaper clippings I still have telling of his early life heroics was one where, before many of the games started the organization would have the team members perform different promotional stunts. The particular stunt that I recall the most was one in which my father was ask to race a horse from home plate to first base. To this day he will still not tell me whether he won or not.

Approximately 68 games were played at home to a surprisingly sparse crowd, even considering the population of the beaches area. The following table shows the average attendance.

YEAR	HOME GAMES	ATTENDANCE	PER GAME
1952	68	23,210	341
1953	68	17,785	262
1954	68	22,660	333

Even concession stand sales, which were limited to small quantities of food and drink, could not have contributed to the team's finances. There was not enough revenue.

There were too much competition for the entertainment dollar. People did not go to the beach to see minor league baseball. They played on the beach or on the boardwalk or in bars or in rooms. Many of the residents worked at night serving the tourist trade. Most stayed home at night, watching television which, by 1952, was well on its way to becoming the dominant entertainment in the country. Besides, one could watch the Jacksonville Tars/Braves Class A South Atlantic Team at its ballpark and, on occasion, on television. [Hank Aaron](#) along with Horace Garner and Felix Mantilla, integrated South Atlantic Leagues baseball in 1953 playing for the Jacksonville

Braves. Aaron won Most Valuable Players honors for the SAL and was promoted to the Milwaukee Braves. His extraordinary talent helped him survive in racist Jacksonville as did the solicitude of his manager Ben Geraghty who visited him often in his segregated quarters.

Professional baseball did not disappear entirely. The Pittsburgh Pirates ran a Spring training facility at the Beaches for three years according to Bill Foley, "Spring Training Dream Endures in N. Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, July 30, 1997.

Getting to and from Jacksonville became easier. For those who did not want to travel that far to see live baseball, there was the Fletcher High School team. Beach residents were insular. "Going to town," i.e. Jacksonville, required dressing up, leaving shorts and pedal pushers behind. The city seemed far away because of open spaces between the Intracoastal Waterway and south Jacksonville. Beach culture was informal and friendly perhaps because so many people were not born there and there were so many transients. People were accepted as they were until they proved themselves different. Asking about a person's religious beliefs or on which side an ancestor fought in the U.S. Civil War was considered rude even though the Beaches were Southern and such behavior is common among Southerners. On the other hand, the Fletcher yearbook put whatever other high school(s) a student had attended underneath the senior picture!

In the 1950s, the Beaches leaped in population. Jacksonville Beach had 6,430 people in 1950; in 1960, 12,053, an increase of 81%. Neptune Beach has 1,767 in 1950 but jumped to 2,868, an increase of over 62%. Atlantic Beach had the highest percentage increase because it had a small base, 1,004 in 1950 and 2,868 in 1960. Because Palm Valley and Ponte Vedra Beach were unincorporated areas of northern St. Johns County, population figures can be harder to find. The 1960 US Census said that there were 5,020 people in the northern St. Johns County division, a census area larger than these two communities. We can see the growth from the table below which shows the number of houses built. If apartments were included, the number of structures would be much greater. From 1950 to 1960, Florida's population increased 79%—the fastest rate of all the states—so the increases at the Beaches was par for the course. People had been moving into north Florida for decades but the war sped up the process because people came as part of the military or to build ships or any number of occupations necessary to have 16 million men in uniform. Many stayed. The baby boom starting in 1946 was populating the Beaches but so, too, was migration from other states and, most particularly, from Jacksonville. After WWII, living on the Beaches and commuting to Jacksonville became easier and easier because of better roads and more and better automobiles. Cheap air conditioning for home and stores changed places like the Beaches and the rest of the South, making them more tolerable. Air conditioning also made possible tract housing and houses that did not required high ceilings and good ventilation. It, along with television broadcasts, helped kill drive-in theatres for families no longer used them for entertainment.¹¹

Place	Before 1939	1940-49	1950-59	1960-69	TOTAL
Atlantic Beach	204	279	881	1412	2776
Jacksonville Beach	447	683	1808	1488	4426
Neptune Beach	316	247	367	718	1648
Palm Valley-Ponte Vedra	104	66	268	337	775
TOTAL	1071	1275	3324	3955	9625

Source: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Florida.html>

Figure 5-15 Houses Built Before 1970

To accommodate the children born or migrating to the Beaches, the Duval County school board built new schools or additions to existing ones. The African-American elementary school in Jacksonville Beach elementary school, constructed in 1946 (with an addition of a cafeteria and more classrooms in 1952) had 217 students served by 6 teachers plus an itinerant music teacher. The building did not compare favorably with Atlantic Beach and Jacksonville Beach. In 1952, the Duval County school board added to Beaches schools. For Fletcher, a new gymnasium was built. The "black" elementary school had four classrooms when it was built in 1946, but two more classrooms and a cafeteria were added in 1952. It had six faculty plus an itinerant music teacher. Atlantic Beach Elementary got an cafeteria-auditorium and a class room building. San Pablo Elementary was begun behind Fletcher; it would open for classes in January, 1953. Two more classroom buildings were added to Fletcher in the 1950s and San Pablo received another classroom building in 1958.¹²



Figure 5-16 Elementary School Patrol, Jacksonville Beach

Better roads meant population and economic growth. The Matthews Bridge crossing the St. Johns River between Jacksonville and Arlington along with the Arlington Expressway in 1953 meant quicker access down Atlantic Boulevard to the Beaches; the Fuller Warren Bridge, opened in 1954, fed traffic from populous west Jacksonville to Beach Boulevard. The Jacksonville Expressway, parts of which opened in 1953, connected many parts of Jacksonville to both Atlantic and Beach Boulevards. Commuting to work or going to the Beaches became easier. Because it was a State highway, A1A, in 1952, Jacksonville Beach had asked the State government to resurface, curb and gutter Third Street through the city. Then, in the late 1950s, Neptune and Jacksonville Beaches got the State to convert Third Street between Atlantic and Beach Boulevards to four lanes in the late 1950s, thus speeding traffic.

In Jacksonville, the riverfront became more vibrant with the building of a development with Civic Auditorium, a City Hall, a coliseum, a new courthouse, and a massive, deluxe Sears store. The docks were cleaned up and the city got rid of rotten ones. A modern hotel was built downtown. The Prudential Insurance Company built its South Central home office on the river. Jacksonville historian James B. Crooks aptly summarizes the changes:



Figure 5-17 Prudential Building on the south bank

Economic growth came in part from the substantial expansion of the insurance industry following passage of the Regional Home Office Law by the Florida legislature in 1956. The Prudential Insurance Company of America established its Southeast (later to become South Central) regional home office in Jacksonville, and the State Farm Group substantially expanded its facilities there. Other insurance companies establishing home offices in the city included Independent Life, Peninsula Life, American Heritage Life, Gulf Life, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and the Afro-American Life Insurance Company. By the end of the decade, Jacksonville claimed the title of "Insurance Center of the Southeast" with seventeen locally headquartered insurance companies, five regional home offices, and twenty major general insurance agencies. The expansion of banking facilities, the arrival of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad home office (forerunner of CSX Transportation) from Wilmington, North Carolina, and later the expansion of the United States naval presence during the Vietnam War brought additional regional growth.^{[13](#)}

Growth in Jacksonville meant growth at the Beaches which were becoming bedroom communities.

One sees the growth of the Beaches from the aerial photographs taken in October, 1960. The left side of each photograph is the west. Pablo Creek, the west boundary of the island, is clearly visible except for the Mayport photo which shows Ribault Bay And on the upper left, the village of Mayport. Seminole Road runs near the shore from the St. Johns River jetties south to Atlantic Beach. The photographs are shown from north to south, that is, Mayport is the first one. Clicking on a photo will retrieve a larger one. ^{[14](#)}



Figure 5-18 Mayport and Seminole Road



Figure 5-19 Atlantic Beach



Figure 5-20 Neptune Beach



Figure 5-21 From Neptune Beach Through Jacksonville Beach Almost to Ponte Vedra Beach



Figure 5-22 South Jacksonville Beach and Ponte Vedra Beach



Figure 5-23 Ponte Vedra Beach

The face of the Boardwalk and, thus, downtown Jacksonville Beach, changed in the early 1960s. This 1960 photo, looking west, shows downtown Jacksonville Beach from Beach Boulevard (the diagonal highway on the left) north to 10th Avenue N. and Pablo Creek in the background. First, the wooden Coaster Bath House block, the Coaster Block, came down. Gone were rides such as the Wild Mouse and the Bullet; gone was the Guess Your Age and Ring The Bell; gone were games of chance; and gone were places to eat and drink. It was never rebuilt, a clear sign that not enough profit was being earned. Then, on Friday, October 13, 1962, the pier with its dancing pavilion and fishing extension went up in flames. A new pier would be built but only as a fishing pier and farther south. R. L. Williams built a fishing pier at 6th avenue South about ten blocks south and out of the tourist zone in 1963. It lost 192 feet to Hurricane Dora in

September, 1964. A storm caused by Hurricane Floyd damaged it in 1999; it came down in 2001. A new pier opened at 5th Avenue North in 2005.



Figure 5-24 Downtown Jacksonville Beach, 1960



Figure 5-25 Missing The Coaster Block and Pier, 1962

Change would come more rapidly in the 1960s, more change than could have been imagined, even by the best prognosticators. Only the sea was constant and the shifting sands. And the wildlife. But even one pelican knew that all would be turned upside down.



Figure 5-26 Mayport Pelicans

Endnotes

1. Sollee, "Boulevard Required Years of Planning," *Official Dedication Program for Beach Boulevard and B. B. McCormick Bridge*, December 17, 1949.
2. Johnston, pp. 100-101.
3. Frank A. Doggett, *Biography of B. B. McCormick Is History of the Beach*, 1949. Suzanne McCormick Taylor, correspondence with the author. Bill Foley, "Jacksonville Beach goes future modern," *Florida Times-Union*, August 13, 1999.
4. Steve Piscitelli, "Donner Subdivision: The Rhythms of a Community," *Neighborhoods, Florida Times-Union*, January/February, 2000, pp.33-35.
5. Council of Social Agencies, *Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community*. May, 1946, p. 40-53. The author personally observed many disparities in the summer of 1959.

6. Floyd, 50.
7. Floyd, pp. 47, 49-50.
8. Simons, pp. 21-47; Bill Foley, "Millennium Moment: July 8, 1947, Two strikes knocked out Beaches consolidation," *Florida Times-Union*, July 8, 1999.
9. John W. Sutton, *Papa's Memoirs*. Jacksonville Beach, Privately Printed, 2005.
10. Doggett was unusual for a junior-senior high school principal. He was a scholar who served as Fletcher principal from 1937 until 1969 and then as a principal of a Jacksonville high school from 1969-71. University presses published his works on the poet Wallace Stevens. He helped students attend private colleges such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Kenyon, Emory, Sewanee, and Stetson as well as public universities, often helping them obtain jobs to pay for it. His students won national and international scholarships, including the Rhodes Scholarship.
11. Jackson owned a chain of convenience stores. The team was variously known as the Sea Birds and the Seabirds. Treadway's major league record can be found at baseball-reference.com as can that of [Spuds Chandler](http://baseball-reference.com). The teams record can be found at [http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Jacksonville Beach Sea Birds](http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Jacksonville_Beach_Sea_Birds). Bobby Trump's son and Red Treadway's daughter, Laura de Martino, comment on the team at beacheshistory.wetpaint.com. Mike McCann of http://www.geocities.com/big_bunko, in correspondence with the author, said "Treadway was manager of the Fitzgerald Red Legs of the Class D Georgia-Florida League in 1954, Duluth Dukes of the Class C Northern League in 1955 (beginning of season), Ogden Reds of the Class C Pioneer League in 1955 (end of season), and Fitzgerald A's of the Class D Georgia-Florida League in 1956. Chandler was manager of the Spartanburg Peaches of the Class B Tri-State League in 1955, and a coach for the Kansas City A's in 1957-1958." Bill Foley, "Spring Training Dream Endures in N. Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, July 30, 1997. Bill Weiss & Marshall Wright, "TEAM #30 1955 KEOKUK KERNELS (92 - 34)," Minor League Baseball. <http://www.minorleaguebaseball.com/milb/history/top100.jsp?idx=30>.
12. "Stay Cool! Air Conditioning America;" Susanna Robbins, "Keeping Things Cool: Air-Conditioning in the Modern World," *OAH Magazine of History*, 18 (October, 2003); "Interview with [Marsha Ackerman](#) on Talking History; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, [Census of Population: 1960, Vol. 1](#). Florida (Washington, US Government Printing Office), 1961.
13. Johnston, p. 106.; Negro Schools of Duval County, 1955-56, p. 37.
14. James B. Crooks, Jacksonville Before Consolidation," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 77:2 (Fall, 1998), p. 143.
14. [Aerial Photography Florida, Aerial Tiles \(Duval, 1960 \), Flight 1AA](#).

World's Finest Beach

by Donald J. Mabry

6: The Sixties

When the ocean temperature and the land temperature are right, fog rolls in from the sea. Sometimes it is so thick that the world is enveloped in moisture, raining droplets so fine that they seem suspended in mid-air. At times, the blanket of fog is so thick that one can barely see the hood of a car. Eerily beautiful unless one has an accident. The world turns gray; the flaws are masked. Sea fog evokes thoughts of mystery and movies.

The sun comes and burns off the fog. All is revealed. Reality returns—the beauty, the ugly, the benign, the mean—and people have to adjust in the meantime. Only the ocean is constant but even it has moods. Sometimes it caresses the shore in a gentle motion. The sandpipers scurry across the beach; the gulls lift off, fly, land, and do it again. An occasional pelican patrols beyond the surf looking for a meal. A school of porpoise sometimes passes; less often a school of pogey fish causes the surface to flutter. Small sharks feed on the pogey. In a matter of hours, the ocean can change; sometimes it pounds and pounds and pounds the shore. Violent breakers make it forbidding. The beach shifts. Wave and wind are formidable forces.

The Beaches changed in the 1960s; they became a very different place. Signs of change were there but often went unnoticed in the business of everyday life. Some were abrupt, some slow and subtle.

The decision not to rebuild the Coaster block was one. It meant the end of the Boardwalk, the carnival-like midway along the oceanfront that had entertained so many. The Boardwalk was less and less able to compete against theme parks. Disneyland set the standard in 1955. In 1958, Walt Disney decided to build another theme park in central Florida. In 1964-65, the corporation began buying land south of Orlando and lobbying the Florida state legislature for special deals. The Florida Turnpike and Interstate Highway system funneled patrons farther south. The Jacksonville Expressway helped. No one wanted to turn the Boardwalk into a theme park, its only salvation. The midway on the sea, smaller, would only continue a few more years.

Dancing on the pier disappeared. People had danced on the pier to live or recorded music since the 1920s. Many of the rides were for kids. Dancing and drinking on the pier was for adults but many Fletcher students danced there as well. Parents staged an all-night dance for those who went to the prom, serving breakfast at dawn. But it needed repair. When it burned in 1962, there were those who claimed arson. Maybe so but no one stepped forward to rebuild this Beaches institution. Instead, a fishing pier went up in a residential area.

Going to the beach meant getting cooler for the breezes mitigated the summer heat. The wind came ashore in the morning and went to sea in the afternoon, almost always. Florida gets very hot; the breezes were an attraction. In the 1960s, those who could afford it air conditioned. In 1965, for the first time, the majority of automobiles sold in Florida had air conditioning. People demanded it in businesses and homes as well. The Beaches lost a competitive advantage.

Air conditioning changed life almost as much as cars. People stayed inside; youngsters rarely played outside. The sense of

community declined. It was hard to know people you rarely saw and with whom you did not associate. Inside one's air conditioned car, one lived in isolation, not hearing and feeling the outside.

Watching one of the two commercial television channels meant not only isolation from others but also being saturated with the cultural values that big business promulgated to make money. As the decade marched relentlessly on, TV was in living color, more powerful than black and white. Unlike the movies, TV taught that one should buy and buy and buy. Television sets became the idols that people worshipped, almost always having the prominent place in the home. The commercials were often better than the programs. They were more important. Commercials promised that article X would bring love, pain relief, respect, sexual fulfillment, or happiness or some combination thereof. All one had to do was buy. To get one to watch the commercials, the programs featured and taught self indulgence and instant gratification, the efficacy of violence, the supremacy of the U.S., tolerance of divorce and adultery, and that any and all life's problems could be solved in less than half an hour. Serious, complicated information could be reduced to a sound bite or two. Television, a big business, created "The Sixties" and was paid for by other big businesses—General Motors, Proctor & Gamble, Kellogg's, Anheuser-Busch, RCA, Revlon, Maidenform, Marlboro, Coca-Cola, Holiday Inn—to name a few.¹

TV preached consumerism more powerfully than any medium before could have hoped and encouraged a change in family patterns. TV redefined what was a "normal" standard of living. TV characters had material good far out of proportion to what real people made in real life. People did not stop and say that a private detective would not afford those clothes or that car or that a woman working in a Mid Western television station would never be able to afford those clothes or that apartment. Houses were bigger and better furnished than the average person but the fictional character was portrayed as average. Who knows how long "Keeping up with the Jones" had existed but TV blatantly as well as subtlety redefined what the Jones had. Both parents had to go to work to pay for this new standard of living, a standard that was constantly escalating.

National brand names replaced local and regional products as television created a national consumer economy. Expensive, sophisticated, motivational advertising was beyond the financial means of small businessmen and women. Chain motel chains destroyed the family-owned motels and hotels, so common on the Beaches. The same happened to grocery stores, pharmacies, and burger outlets. Such Beaches grocery stores as the A&A grocery stores were doomed. So, too, was the Surf Maid, the iconic drive-in restaurant where teens congregated. Discount stores replaced the 5 & 10 cent store and many other shops. The opening of Regency Square Mall in Arlington in 1967 marked the beginning of the end for downtown Jacksonville and for downtown Jacksonville Beach. Shopping in a mall with its free parking, climate control, wide variety of stores, and wonderful lighting was easier than paying to park and trudging in the weather from store to store. So shoppers quit going downtown. The city centers, both in Jacksonville and in Jacksonville Beach, became hollow.

Baby Boomers, those born from 1946 through 1964, became a cultural tsunami in the United States, changing commerce, attitudes, and politics. The first of the generation turned 18 in 1964. Their parents, in particular, and society, in general, had indulged them, had given them power. Things were done "for the children" instead of "for the marriage" or "for society." They and their older siblings had changed popular music so that reflected their immediate concerns, that is, [rock'n'roll](#). Advertisers, having figured out that teenagers and young adults, had more discretionary income than their parents, designed ad campaigns to get them to buy. Pepsi proclaimed it was the drink of the "Pepsi Generation" and cut into the market share of Coca-Cola. When boomers began to wear underwear as a primary article of clothing, often using it to display a slogan or dying it, that is, the T-Shirt, corporations began the T-Shirt industry. When the boomers modified panel trucks and the like, Detroit began creating the passenger van. As the Boomers created a sexual revolution, society loosened its rules, de facto and de jure, towards sexual practices. When Boomers could not get their way, they threw tantrums on campuses and in the streets. They saw the disconnect between what the US said it was and the everyday reality and believed that they could make things right. And society encouraged them.

Although the Beaches were affected by this social change, the immediate problem in 1964 was Hurricane Dora. On September 10th, it devastated the Beaches. Both piers, Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach were hit and destroyed. Damage to the Atlantic Beach

Hotel was extensive. Although owner Gerry Adams, son of W. H. Adams, Sr., rebuilt it, he sold it in 1969. The hurricane, chain motels, and the growth of tourist destinations further south made it unprofitable. The Adams family had been on the hotel business at the Beaches since early in the century. Le Chateau Restaurant in Atlantic Beach went as well. The Seven Seas Drive-In and other Boardwalk businesses were damaged. Dora damaged a number of other businesses as well as home on the Beaches. The Ponte Vedra Inn and Club was inundated. Dora made some people afraid to live on the ocean. It caused only one fatality but destroyed \$280 million of property, \$1,764,000,000 in 2005 terms.²



Figure 6-1 1964 Atlantic Beach Hotel After Hurricane Dora



Figure 6-2 Atlantic Beach Hotel (photo by Nancy Adams)



Figure 6-3 1964, Hurricane Dora. Le Chateau Restaurant



Figure 6-4 1964, Hurricane Dora. Le Chateau Restaurant



Figure 6-5 Seven Seas Drive-In Restaurant



Figure 6-7 Jacksonville Beach



Figure 6-8 Seaside homes in Jacksonville Beach



Figure 6-9 1964 Ponte Vedra Inn & Club

For Florida, the Cold War came closer to home. The October 4, 1957 launching of the space satellite *Sputnik* by the U.S.S.R. sparked a drive by the United States to surpass their Cold War adversary. Florida benefited by the creation of the major launch site on Cape Canaveral, renamed Cape Kennedy after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1962. U.S. government money spurted into the state. The Jacksonville area Naval bases had been beefed up by the Korean War in the early 1950s. Fidel Castro and a coalition overthrew the [Fulgencio Batista dictatorship](#) in Cuba. On January 1, 1959, 55 officials and family members connected to Fulgencio Batista landed in Jacksonville, including three Batista children and Army chief of Staff Francisco Tabernilla. Within two years, Castro was clearly establishing his own dictatorship albeit an anti-capitalist one. The U.S. sponsored the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#) in 1961; Jacksonville was involved. Cubans who could fled to Florida, becoming the nation's most prosperous ethnic group and a major force in Florida politics. When U.S. got more involved in the Vietnamese civil war to the point that the war became the Vietnam War, Jacksonville was involved. The U.S. government pumped more and more money into Duval County. The Beaches benefited because of Mayport. The military also influenced the area with its attitudes and personnel practices. President Harry Truman had ordered the desegregation of the armed forces in 1948; although change was slower in the Navy, it occurred. Duval County, however, was very segregated.

African-Americans had always been an critical component of Jacksonville's population; they had been a majority in the 1900 and 1910 censuses and a very large minority thereafter. In 1960, they were still 41.1% of the city's population although this figure is deceptive because many "whites" had moved outside the city limits. The percentage of African-Americans was not that high at the Beaches but substantial; besides, what happened in Jacksonville affected the Beaches.

Year	Population	"White"	%	"Black"	%
1900	28,429	12,158	42.8	16,236	57.1
1910	57,699	28,329	49.1	29,293	50.8
1920	91,558	49,972	54.6	41,520	45.3
1930	129,540	81,322	62.8	48,196	37.2
1940	173,065	111,247	64.3	61,782	35.7
1950	204,517	131,988	64.5	72,450	35.4
1960	201,030	118,286	58.8	82,525	41.1
1970 ³	528,865	401,695	77.1	118,158	22.3
1980	540,920	394,756	73.0	137,324	25.4
1990	635,230	456,529	71.9	160,283	25.1

Figure 6-10 City of Jacksonville Population, 1900-1990

Racial discrimination and undemocratic practices became increasingly problematic since 1941 because the United States had been loudly proclaiming its belief in democracy and its opposition to racism. WWII was fought, in part, against German and Japanese racism as well as against totalitarianism. After the war, the U.S. adopted Harry Truman's [Containment Policy](#) against the Soviet Bloc, deciding to stop the expansionism of Communists countries until their internal contradictions destroyed them from within. It was a long-haul policy. The United States argued that liberal democracy produced human happiness, freedom, and wealth whereas Communism produced misery. Much of the Cold War and some hot wars were "fought" in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, areas where people's skin color tended to be darker than "whites" in the United States. American minorities—African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, etc.—saw the contradiction between propaganda and reality and challenged the status quo.

Jacksonville had long been a racist city; the near equal number of "whites" and "blacks" made "whites" fearful that their privileges might end. The Ku Klux Klan had been a force in the 1920s and it had not disappeared. Few "whites" were in the Klan but they resisted desegregation. When Rutledge Pearson led demonstrations in August ,1960 against segregated lunch counters at the downtown Woolworth's, McCrorys, and Kress stores. One day, two "black" youths accidentally knocked a "white" woman into a plate

glass window. Then on another day two women got into a fight. On August 27th, hundreds of Klansmen and other bigots demonstrated in downtown Jacksonville with the police watching. When some young "blacks" tried to get lunch counter service at the Grant's store and were refused, they were attacked by the "white" demonstrators who used ax handles and other weapons. They chased the teenagers into a "black" section of town but were run out by a "black" gang. Police intervention stopped the riot. More "blacks" than "whites" were arrested, of course. The city government of Haydon Burns, even though African-American votes put him in office, was racist. He was a powerful force in Jacksonville affairs as mayor from 1949-1965, when he became governor. Burns was a segregationist so he refused to create a biracial commission to resolve the issues. He was a determined conservative mayor of a conservative city. African-Americans threatened an economic boycott and "white" businessmen, fearing loss of profits, agreed to meet with African-American leaders and work out compromises. Desegregation began. "Green" was a more powerful color than "white" and "black."

Peace lasted a few years when it became clear that what little desegregation that had occurred was nothing more than a token. Pressure to change increased. A boycott was suggested and protests. Some "whites" threatened violence. Then, on February, 16, 1964, a bomb exploded in the home of Iona Godfrey, a civil rights worker whose son had integrated a "white" school. No one was hurt but the incident meant that the civil discourse ceased to exist. The NAACP stepped up demonstrations and effort to integrate businesses. Tensions increased. Then, on March 23, 1964, riots broke out and lasted until calm was restored on March 25th. Even Burns, who was running for governor, finally had to admit that the two sides needed to talk and make accommodations.⁴ Desegregation of businesses, some schools, and some employment ensued. That Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led demonstrations that year in St. Augustine, thirty-miles away, encouraged people in Jacksonville to find solutions.

Jacksonville found a solution to bad government as well, a solution that would transform Duval County, including the Beaches. Burns had been an effective mayor in many respects. He cleaned up downtown and the riverfront. He told "The Jacksonville Story," an effort to attract major corporations to the city and succeeded. "Later, when state law created a favorable environment for insurance companies, Jacksonville's skyline became dominated by insurance-company logos: Prudential, Gulf Life, Independent Life and American Heritage Life."⁵ The Burns administration developed a reputation for corruption. His police department was scandalous. Grand juries began indicting many public officials. "Some thought that electing Burns governor was a great way to get him out of town."⁶

Then the Duval County schools lost their accreditation from the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges in 1965, a major embarrassment. That was the fault of a different government and its elected superintendent, Ish Brant, former football coach, athletic director and assistant principal at Fletcher Junior-Senior High School, and local leaders. The accrediting association tried this desperate measure because Duval County and community leaders persisted in trying to educate on the cheap. Funds were so lacking that schools had not been cleaned in years; current textbooks were in short supply; and the instructional staff was demoralized by low pay and mediocre to bad working conditions. African-Americans students and teachers were the proverbial "red-headed stepchildren" of the system. They got what, if anything, was left over.

Community leaders acted but it took a few years to effect the consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County in 1967-68. Support for the change came from a variety of sources. Brant used the loss of school accreditation to get the funding he had long sought. One television station did the nightly news with a reporter standing in front of the city hall skyscraper telling of the latest city employee to get indicted. Someone devised a very clever way to show the governmental problems in the county, problems that facilitated confusion and corruption. The host of the TV program stood in a bare room with an outline map of the country on the floor. Each time he mentioned a government that existed in the county, he put a stanchion with the name of the entity on the map. By the time the program ended, he had to stand outside the map because there was no room. Voters got the point. The system in Duval County was rotten. In August, 1967, the voters of Jacksonville and Duval County decided, with 65 percent of the votes cast, to consolidate the county and the city. Baldwin to the west and Atlantic, Neptune, and Jacksonville Beaches refused, however. On

October 1, 1968, Jacksonville marched out to Pablo Creek. The Beaches were never the same. They were dwarfed by a government covering 840 square miles, the largest city in land area in the world.⁷

The Beaches, whether the residents liked it or not, had become a bedroom community of Jacksonville. Maintaining independence from Jacksonville was a constant battle. Interlocal agreements between the county (Jacksonville) and the Beaches governments had to be negotiated again and again; imperial Jacksonville wanted control. Deciding the boundaries lines between would, inevitably, be a constant problem even when the Beaches governments won in the Florida Supreme Court. As the land along Atlantic and Beach Boulevards was filled with homes and businesses, cross roads running north and south had to be expanded or built. The J. Turner Butler Boulevard, an expressway opened in 1997, ran across the southern part of Jacksonville. Dubbed by wags as the "road to nowhere" it soon fostered development along its route and in south Jacksonville Beach and in Ponte Vedra Beach. It reinforced the fact that the Beaches were Jacksonville, whether they liked it or not.

The Beaches population grew and grew. In 1964, Duncan U. Fletcher Junior-Senior High School split. The high school moved across the street into Neptune Beach and the former school became a "middle school." The unity of the Beaches was broken. The population growth in northern St. Johns River county, in Ponte Vedra Beach and Palm Valley especially, meant the creation of Nease High School. Private high schools further fragmented the Beaches. They had become simply part of the urban sprawl. They went from tents on the beach to a congested conglomeration of chain stores, expensive houses and condos, and modest dwelling. The last will go; greed, conspicuous consumption. and egotism will conquer the traditionalists, the ones who try to hold onto the past. The Beaches had lost their raison d'etre. Driving on the beach was outlawed in 1979, killing a tradition that had existed since 1906. The seawalls or bulkheads were buried under new sand.



Figure 6-11 The Boardwalk, 2004

Only the ocean and its beach were constant. Upon reflection, the city on the St. Johns River had won; it swallowed the Beaches.



Figure 6-12 Fuller Warren Bridge, Jacksonville

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1. See [Bob Garfield, "Top 100 Advertising Campaigns of the Century"](#); [Randall Rothenberg, "The Advertising Century,"](#) gives a quick overview of the power of television advertising.
 2. [Cost-of-Living Calculator - AIER.](#)
 3. Jacksonville and Duval County became synonymous in 1968 and all the "white" suburbs became part of the city.
 4. Abel A. Bartley, "The 1960 and 1964 Jacksonville Riots: How Struggle Led to Progress," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 78:1, Summer 1999, pp. 46-73. Barley asserts that Pearson, an outstanding athlete, had been signed to play for the Jacksonville Beach Sea Birds but the ballpark was closed to prevent his playing.
 - 5.. [City of Jacksonville Web site.](#)
 6. Bill Foley, [The Jacksonville Story](#)," February 21, 1999.
 7. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville: The Consolidation Story, From Civil Rights to the Jaguars*. 2004., p. 150. See also Richard A. Martin, *A Quiet Revolution: The Consolidation of Jacksonville-Duval County and the Dynamics of Urban Political Reform*. 1993. James B. Crooks, "[An Introduction to the History of Jacksonville Race Relations](#)," Address given to the JCCI Improving Race Relations study committee, October 30, 2001.

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Appendix: Beaches Veterans in World War I

Beaches men were drawn into the "War to End All Wars"^[1] when the United States entered the conflict in April, 1917, and President Woodrow Wilson convinced Congress that men would have to be dragooned into the military because too few were volunteering. Most Americans had opposed being involved in the war when it began in August, 1914, for they had no truck with the conservative empires—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Turkey—involved in the war. There was sympathy for the United Kingdom because the United States was also an English-speaking country and for France without whom the Revolutionary War would have been lost but many Americans considered the war as another example of the corruption of European civilization. Moreover, there were more specific reasons not to get involved. As a neutral nation, people in the United States could profit by not taking sides, selling goods and loaning money to everyone. As Calvin Coolidge would quip in the 1920s, the business of the US was business and, although war was bad for business, there still was money to be made from it. Moreover, it would be difficult to decide on which side the US should enter. The large German-American population had little desire to fight their countrymen or distant relatives. The Irish, of whom there were so very many, wanted independence from British imperialism; many would want to fight the UK if the United States went to war. Many of the other "nationalities" or ethnic groups who had been suppressed by the British felt the same way.

The problems were so serious that the United States government would create a propaganda agency, the [Committee on Public Information](#) headed by George Creel, to whip up anti-German enthusiasm and pro-war sentiment.

Because of the potential problems of reversing US history which had seen the growth of individual rights (conscription meant that the individual had no rights vis-à-vis the state), Congress on May 18, 1917 created a system fairer than the Civil War draft which allowed people with money to buy a substitute. Although there were exemptions—people in the armed forces, state and federal government officials, clergy and theological students, vital occupations, persons morally or physically deficient, and people with dependents, men born between 1872 and 1900, some 24 million registered for the draft in 1917 and 1918. The actual draft was done by lottery.

There were three lotteries. The first was June 5, 1917 for men born 1886-1896, that is, 21 to 31 years of age. The next year, on June 5, 1918, another lottery was held for those born in 1896-97, that is, 21 to 22 year old men. When these lotteries did not produce men to serve in the Army, a third lottery was held on September 12, 1918 but broadened substantially to include those born from 1873 to 1886 (32 to 45 years old) and 1897 to 1900 (17 to 20 years old). The armistice on November 11, 1918 vitiated the need for a draft.

^[2]

Not all were drafted. The Selective Service System, under the office of the Provost Marshal General, worked with district, state and local boards to register men for the lottery and, once selected in the lottery, to get them to a training camp. Health problems, if

proven to a medical advisory board, could get one excluded. Critical occupations were another means of staying out; modern industrial warfare on a mass scale needs farmers and men working in war industries. It did not take long before many of these men were exempted from the draft. They were not drafted as often in 1918. About three-quarters of married men were exempted. There were conscientious objectors. There were shirkers. Between volunteers and draftees, the United States fielded an army of 4.8 million men in 1918-19, a very fast and very impressive mobilization. Most never fought; few faced well-trained, fresh German troops. This pouring of so many fresh soldiers onto the battlefields of Europe doomed the German-led coalition.

The Beaches did their part. We know that at least 106 men in Mayport, Atlantic Beach, Pablo Beach[\[3\]](#), and Palm Valley registered for the draft. Mayport village had 399 people in 1920 but the census precinct, which included Atlantic Beach and East Mayport, had 644. Pablo Beach contained 357; the precinct had 442. Together, there were 1,086 total people. Palm Valley had 162 people in 1925 so it probably had 100 eight years earlier. So the total Beaches population was about 1,186 people, at most. Table 1 lists those identified by Ray Banks as having registered for the draft. The table would not include anyone who was in the military nor does it include men who eventually moved to the Beaches. Forty-eight had Military Service Cards, meaning they served in the military. They are denoted by branch of the military, rank, and an asterisk.

TABLE 1

NAME	BRANCH	RANK	RACE	PLACE	VET	BIRTH
Aiken, William	Army	Private, First Class	C	Mayport	*	1895
Allen, Fred Rainey			W	Pablo Beach		1884
Arnau, Ezekiel			W	East Mayport		1889
Arnau, Franklin	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	*	1895
Arnau, Walter Colman	Army	Private	W	Mayport	*	1897
Atkinson, Ernest	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	*	1889
Baker, Frank Fulton			W	Pablo Beach		1890
Barbour, James Robert	Navy	Coxswain	W	Pablo Beach	*	1899
Barnes, Porter R	Army	Private	C	Pablo Beach	*	1894
Barnes, Samuel G	Army	First Sergeant	C	Pablo Beach	*	1871
Barnhill, Joseph Veal			W	Palm Valley		1876
Beighley, Sidney Lambert			W	Mayport		1893
Bleight, John C	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	*	1888
Booth, Arthur			W	Pablo Beach		1892

Booth, Matthew			W	Palm Valley		1894
Brazeale, William			W	Pablo Beach		1890
Brooks, Clarence			C	Mayport		1889
Brown, Asbury B.			W	Pablo Beach		1894
Brown, Frank B.			W	Pablo Beach		1895
Buford, Otto Ernest	Navy	Lieutenant (jg)	W	Mayport	*	1891
Coward, Clarence	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1893
Daniels, F A	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	*	1896
Daniels, George McCauley	Navy	Fireman 1st Class	W	Mayport	*	1895
Daniels, Neal Florence	Navy	Gunners Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	*	1891
Davis, Claude Sidney	Navy	Lieutenant (jg)	W	Mayport	*	1895
De Grove, John Marton			W	Palm Valley		1898
Dickinson, William Murry			W	Mayport		1893
Doll, Edward Ericson			W	Pablo Beach		1884
Douglass, Archer			C	Palm Valley		1894
Ellis, Walter Andrew			W	Palm Valley		1889
Floyd, Frederick George			W	Mayport		1886
Floyd, James L	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1895
Floyd, Theodore Raphael			W	East Mayport		1889
Floyd, Walter Benedict			W	East Mayport		1891
Furman, Henry Ceaton			W	Pablo Beach		1893
Gilbert, Crawford James	Navy	Ships Cook 1st Class	W	Atlantic Beach	*	1886
Greenlaw, Alonzo C	Navy	Boatswain Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	*	1899

Hall, Herndon Hollingsworth	Army	Captain Infantry	W	Pablo Beach	*	1888
Hardy, Levi			C	Palm Valley		1880
Harris, Herbert	Navy	Chief Machinist	W	Mayport	*	1885
Harris,Milton Lewis	Navy	Machinist Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	*	1895
Haworth, Addison Thomas	Navy	Machinist Mate 1st Class	W	East Mayport	*	1896
Haworth, Fred Dixon	Army	Private	W	East Mayport	*	1888
Hilgersen, George	Army	Private	W	Mayport	*	1895
Hopkins, Fred			C	Mayport		1896
Houston, Joseph Samuel			W	Mayport		1889
Jackson, John	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	*	1895
Jackson, Robert			C	Pablo Beach		1880
Jeffcoat, William Howard	Army	Private	C	Pablo Beach	*	1886
Johns, Lee			W	Pablo Beach		1897
Jones, Charles			W	Mayport		1893
Jones, Thomas			W	Palm Valley		1889
Jones, Tobe			C	Pablo Beach		1876
Jones, William Fletcher	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	*	1895
Killin, Alexander	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	*	1897
King, John Franklin	Navy	Coxswain	W	Mayport	*	1896
King, Joseph Roland			W	Mayport		1887
Kirkland, Alexander	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	*	1893
Knight, Joseph			C	East Mayport		1901
La Mee, Herbert Conrad			W	Mayport		1895
Leek, George Allan	Navy	Fireman	W	Mayport	*	1894

		1st Class				
Leonard, George T	Army	Sergeant	W	Pablo Beach	*	1892
Mickler, Howard P.			W	Palm Valley		1891
Mickler, Jacob Flavin			W	Palm Valley		1889
Mickler, Sidney Alexander	Navy	Seaman	W	Palm Valley	*	1894
Mier, Philip John			W	Mayport		1886
Mier, Robert Antonia			W	Palm Valley		1893
Miller, John Angus			W	Pablo Beach		1875
Mincy, Andrew			C	Pablo Beach		1878
Mosly, Edmund	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1892
Murwin, George William	Army	Private	W	Mayport	*	1896
Nicholas, James			C	Mayport		1895
Norris, Omar Francis			W	Mayport		1896
Oesterreicher, George Laurence			W	Palm Valley		1891
Oesterreicher, Thomas Vanicia			W	Palm Valley		1898
Phillips, Walter Myles			W	Pablo Beach		1882
Pritchard, George Anson			W	Pablo Beach		1881
Register, Robert Lee			W	Pablo Beach		1893
Ruffin, Leroy			C	Mayport		1891
Sallas, Arthur Francis	Navy	Coxswain	W	Mayport	*	1888
Sallas, Camille Andrew			W	Mayport		1892
Sallas, Clarence Leo			W	Mayport		1895
Sallas, Fabian Alexander			W	Mayport		1894
Sallas, Marcus John			W	Mayport		1888
Sheffield, William Munroe			W	Pablo Beach		1876
Singleton, Chauncy J	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	*	1895
Singleton, Holbrook	Army	Private 1st Class	W	East Mayport	*	1896
Singleton, Robert P.	Army	Private	W	Mayport	*	1893
Singleton, Samuel Thomas			W	Mayport		1891

Smith, Carl Ulrich	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	*	1896
Thomas, Ernest			W	East Mayport		1893
Thomas, Leon			W	Mayport		1901
Thompson, Alexander Better	Navy	Seaman	W	Mayport	*	1895
Thompson, Edward E.			W	Mayport		1887
Thompson, Oscar Frederick	Army	Private	W	Mayport	*	1889
Truesdell, Stephen Coleman	Navy	Seaman 2nd Class	W	Mayport	*	1899
Walker, Jeremiah	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1892
Walker, Ralph Cox			W	Palm Valley		1881
Webb, Willie	Army	Corporal	C	Atlantic Beach	*	1894
West, Eddie			W	Palm Valley		1898
Wiggins, Albert			C	Mayport		1890
Williams, General	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1892
Williams, George	Army	Private	C	Mayport	*	1895
Williams, James			C	Pablo Beach		1879
Williams, John McC			W	East Mayport		1893
Zapf, Eugene George	Navy	Machinist Mates 1st Class	W	Pablo Beach	*	1894

Their characteristics were as follows. Fifteen (14%) were from Palm Valley; Five (4.7%) from Atlantic Beach; nine (8.5%) from East Mayport; forty-nine (46.2%) from Mayport; twenty-eight (26.4%) from Pablo Beach; and fifteen (14.2%) from Palm Valley. Why there were a disproportionate number in Mayport and Palm Valley is not explained in the records; perhaps the numbers from the other areas were underreported. Mayport in 1917 was larger than Pablo Beach in 1917. Twenty-six of the 106 (24.5%) were African Americans. /in age, they ranged from 18 to 47 but 23 was the most common age.

World War I Service Cards tell us who served. "Congress ordered that a service record for each person serving between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918 be created and provided to the Adjutant General of each state from which that person entered the service. This record took the form of a card that contained information digested from the service record dossier of each veteran. Clerks in the Department of War (Army) and the Department of the Navy (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) executed the work." The cards for the Army and for the Navy differed slightly but contain the following information.

For each person, the cards provide name; age; serial number; race; place of birth; and residence at time of entering service. some

cards also provide the organizations/ships served (with dates of beginning and transfer); engagements; wounds/injuries sustained in action; time served overseas; discharge notations; and general remarks. The Navy cards note the sailor's rate as well as rank.^[4] Two Beaches cards, one from the Army, one from the Navy, are illustrative.

Aiken, William C		1,350,648	colored	1½
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	(Race: White or colored)	
Residence:		Mayport Duval	FLORIDA	
(Street and house number)		(Town or city)	(County)	(State)
*Enlisted in	Inducted Jacksonville Fla Sept 19/17			
†Born in	Webster Fla 22 5/12 yrs			
Organizations:	Hq Co 124 Inf 306 Trench Motor Btry to June 12/18; Co E 163 Inf to July 14/18; Co A 9 Inf to discharge			
Grades:	Pvt 1cl July 1/19			
Engagements:				
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.				
‡Served overseas:	June 18/18 to Aug 1/19			
§Hon. disch.	Aug 15/19 on demobilization			
Was reported	0% per cent disabled on date of discharge, in view of occupation.			
Remarks:				

Form No. 724-1½, A. G. O. March 12, 1920. 2-7285

*Insert "R. A.", "N. G.", "E. R. C.", "N. A.", as case may be, followed by place and date of enlistment. †Give place of birth and date of birth, or age at enlistment. ‡Give dates of departure from and arrival in the United States. §Give date.

Name	BARBOUR JAMES ROBERT		Service Number	110-53-54	
Enlisted at	NAVY RECRUITING STATION ATLANTA GA.		Date	1-3-17	
Enrolled	XXXX		U. S. N.	XXXXXX.	
Age at Entrance	17 YRS 8 MOS		Rate	APPRENTICE SEAMAN	
Home Address	--		Town	PABLO BEACH	
A	County	--	State	FLA.	
Served at	From	To	Served as	No. Days	
RECEIVING SHIP NORFOLK VA.	4-6-17	4-10-17	SEAMAN 2 CLASS	360	
USS NEW HAMPSHIRE	4-10-17	12-24-17	SEAMAN	153	
RECEIVING SHIP NORFOLK VA.	12-24-17	3-25-18	COXSWAIN	71	
ARMED DRAFT DETAIL NEW YORK N.Y.	3-25-18	6-8-18			
SS LAKE TRAVERSE	6-8-18	10-19-18			
USS LAKE TRAVERSE	10-19-18	11-11-18			
Remarks:					
Date Discharge	12-6-20 HEADQUARTERS 3RD		Rating at Discharge	COXSWAIN	
Place	XXXXXX NAVAL DISTRICT BROOKLYN N.Y.				

The Florida Memory database identifies the veterans as being from Atlantic Beach, Mayport, Pablo Beach, and Palm Valley. That seems straight forward but what about people who lived west of the San Pablo River/Intracoastal Waterway? Should they be included as part of the Beaches veterans? What about people such as Dr. Charles B. Mabry who later lived at the Beaches but was in Jacksonville in 1917 or Walter Edwards Boley whose tombstone in the Tillotson Cemetery in Mayport identifies him as a WWI veteran but no Service Card can be found in the Florida Memory database?

The names of the veterans below are hyperlinked. Some links lead only to the Service Cards. Others have biographical data of the most rudimentary form.

TABLE 2

NAME	BRANCH	RANK	RACE	PLACE	BIRTH
Aiken, William	Army	Private 1st Class	C	Mayport	1895

Arnau, Franklin	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	1895
Arnau, Walter Colman	Army	Private	W	Mayport	1897
Atkinson, Ernest	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	1899
Barbour, James Robert	Navy	Coxswain	W	Pablo Beach	1899
Barnes, Porter R.	Army	Private	C	Pablo Beach	1894
Barnes, Samuel G.	Army	First Sergeant	C	Pablo Beach	1895
Bleight, John C.	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	1889
Buford, Otto Ernest	Navy	Lieutenant	W	Mayport	1891
Coward, Clarence	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1893
Daniels, F. A.	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	1896
Daniels, George McCauley	Navy	Fireman 1st Class	W	Mayport	1895
Daniels, Neal Florence	Navy	Gunners Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	1892
Davis, Claude Sidney	Navy	Lieutenant (jg)	W	Mayport	1895
Floyd, James Lambert	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1895
Gilbert, Crawford James	Navy	Ships Cook 1st Class	W	Atlantic Beach	1885
Greenlaw, Alonzo C.	Navy	Boatswain Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	1899
Hall, Herndon Hollingsworth	Army	Captain Infantry	W	Pablo Beach	1888
Harris, Herbert	Navy	Chief Machinist	W	Mayport	1885
Harris, Milton Lewis	Navy	Machinist Mate 2nd Class	W	Mayport	1895
Haworth, Addison Thomas	Navy	Machinist Mate 1st Class	W	East Mayport	1895
Haworth, Fred Dixon	Army	Private	W	East Mayport	1888
Hilgersen, George	Army	Private	W	Mayport	1895
Jackson, John	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	1895
Jeffcoat, William Howard	Army	Private	C	Pablo Beach	1887
Jones, William Fletcher	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	1895
Killin, Alexander	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	1897
King, John Franklin	Navy	Coxswain	W	Mayport	1896
Kirkland, Alexander	Army	Private	C	Atlantic Beach	1892
Leek, George Allan	Navy	Fireman 1st Class	W	Mayport	1894

Leonard, George T.	Army	Sergeant	W	Pablo Beach	1892
Mickler, Sidney Alexander	Navy	Seaman	W	Palm Valley	1894
Mosly, Edmund	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1892
Murwin, George William	Army	Private	W	Mayport	1896
Sallas, Arthur Francis	Navy	Coxswain	W	Mayport	1889
Singleton, Chauncy J	Army	Private 1st Class	W	Mayport	1897
Singleton, Holbrook Estill	Army	Private 1st Class	W	East Mayport	1896
Singleton, Robert	Army	Private	W	Mayport	1892
Smith, Carl Ulrich	Army	Private	W	Pablo Beach	1896
Thompson, Alexander Better	Navy	Seaman	W	Mayport	1895
Thompson, Oscar Frederick	Army	Private	W	Mayport	1889
Tillotson, Freddie B.	Navy	Machinist Mate, 2n class	W	Mayport	1894
Truesdell, Stephen Coleman	Navy	Seaman 2nd Class	W	Mayport	1899
Walker, Jeremiah	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1892
Webb, Willie	Army	Corporal	C	Atlantic Beach	1894
Williams, General	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1893
Williams, George	Army	Private	C	Mayport	1894
Zapf, Eugene George	Navy	Machinist Mates 1st Class	W	Pablo Beach	1894

What can we learn from the 48 cards? A lot. Three were officers: an Army captain, Herndon Hollingsworth Hall of Pablo Beach, and two Navy Lieutenants Junior Grade (1st Lt. in Army terms): Otto Ernest Buford and Claude Sidney Davis, both of Mayport. Sergeant Samuel G. Barnes was from Pablo Beach. Thirty-one were in the Army (64.6%); seventeen in the Navy. Fifteen were African Americans (31.3%); thirty-three were whites. Five came from Atlantic Beach of whom four were black. Three lived in from East Mayport. Ten were from Pablo Beach. Sidney A. Mickler, a Navy Seaman, was the only person from Palm Valley but only 162 people lived there in 1925. What is now Ponte Vedra did not exist.

From Mayport and East Mayport, there were 32 men, 67% of the Beaches contingent! Twenty-nine were from the village of Mayport and seven of those were African American Army men. Of the blacks, William Aiken, was a Private First Class, the others just privates. Thirteen of Mayport were in the Navy. East Mayport, now swallowed by the Mayport Naval base, contributed three men. Two were in the Army; one in the Navy. Holbrook Estill Singleton was a Private First Class. Many served overseas or on ships. [\[5\]](#)

The number of men from the Beaches who served in the Army and the Navy was miniscule, of course. Some individuals commanded other men; the African American non-commissioned officers only commanded other African Americans, however. That was the order of the day. A disproportionate number of African Americans served but there is no reason to assume that they were more patriotic,

healthier, or skilled than the whites. Eugene George Zapf's parents were German but had naturalized; the son was an American. What happened to them by 1930? Most left the beaches and the two Mayports. Only fourteen (29%) stayed, eleven in the fishing village and river port at the mouth of the St. Johns River. Francis and Neal Daniels lived with their parents, Francis an auto mechanic and Neal a fisherman. Alonzo Greenlaw, his wife, and two children lived with his father-in-law, William Floyd, and Alonzo was an engineer on a steamboat. George Hilgersen supported a wife and three children with odd jobs. Chauncy Singleton, a husband with three offspring, and his brother Robert, married with one child, worked for the U. S. government. Alex Thompson was a married fisherman. General Williams fished. George Williams did as well and had a wife and six children. In East Mayport, the Haworth brothers were still there, married with children. Addison had two offspring and was a marine engineer. Fred, a restaurateur, had one child. In Jacksonville [the former Pablo] Beach, Carl Smith had become City Clerk; Gene Zapf managed the new Casa Marina Hotel. Both were married. Still further south in Palm Valley in neighboring St. Johns County, Sydney Mickler had returned home, married, and sired four children. No doubt some had moved inland to Jacksonville or to some other place. Some may have died.

We know a little about two other veterans who moved to the coast from Jacksonville at a later date. Perhaps their lives give us some insight. Charles B. Mabry, Sr. and Judson A. Clements are atypical however, in being better educated. They had gone to college and trained in the medical field.

Charles B. Mabry, born in Palatka, Florida in 1892 but enlisted in the medical corps in 1918 as a private. After he was discharged, he began a student at the University of Florida, joined Theta Chi fraternity, and graduating in 1920. He became an orthopedic surgeon, serving as the President of the Florida Orthopaedic Society for 1949-50. He married and sired two children Charles Jr. and Peters. He moved to Atlantic Beach where he was a prominent member of Beaches society. He died in 1969. Charles also became a medical doctor and lived in Atlantic Beach.

Labry, Charles B		2 678 307	White
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	(Race: White or colored)
Residence: 1724 Market St Jacksonville, FLORIDA			
(Street and house number)		(Town or city)	(State)
*Enlisted in	ERC Louisville, KY Jan 31, 1918		
†Born in	Palatka Fla 23 3/12 yrs		
Organizations:	M D Surgeon's Office, Chicago, Ill to disch.		
Grades:	Pvt		
Engagements:			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.			
‡Served overseas:	NO		
§Hon. disch.	Aug 20/19 on demobilization		
Was reported	per cent disabled on date of discharge, in view of occupation.		
Remarks:			
Form No. 724-1½, A. C. O. March 12, 1920.			
*Insert "R. A.", "N. G.", "E. R. C.", "N. A.", as case may be, followed by place and date of enlistment. †Give place of birth and date of birth, or age at enlistment. ‡Give dates of departure from and arrival in the United States. §Give date.			

Judson Alvin Clements was born on August 28, 1891 in Gordon, Georgia. He earned the B.S. degree in Pharmacy from Mercer University in Macon GA in 1916. Pharmacy was then a one-year program. As his son Roland explains, he gave up becoming a Medical Doctor because of the primitive training procedures. Pharmacists were among the educated elite of those days and were often called "Doctor." Clements moved to Florida and joined the Florida National Guard in Jacksonville on June 15, 1917 a few months after the United States declared war on Germany.



Clements Judson A		1,304,524	White	1 1/2
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	(Race: White or colored)	
Residence: Jacksonville		FLORIDA		
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County)	(State)	
* Enlisted in	NG at Jacksonville Fla.		June 15/17.	
† Born in	Gordon Ga.		25 10/12 yrs	
Organizations:	MD 1 Inf Fla NG (MD 116 MG Bn) to Oct 27/18; Hq 83 Div 2 I			
	Dep to Nov 12/18; MD 1 Provisional Tng Regt 1 Repl Dep to disch			
Grades:	Sgt July 15/17; Sgt 1cl Feb 27/18			
Engagements:	-			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.				
‡ Served overseas:	Oct 7/18 to Mch 20/19			
§ Hon. disch.	Apr 11/19		on demobilization	
Was reported	0		per cent disabled on date of discharge, in view of occupation.	
Remarks:	-			

Form No. 724-1 1/2, A. G. O. March 12, 1920. 8-7285

*Insert "R. A.", "N. G.", "E. R. C.", "N. A.", as case may be, followed by place and date of enlistment. † Give place of birth and date of birth, or age at enlistment. ‡ Give dates of departure from and arrival in the United States. § Give date.

The Florida National Guard was part of the Army's 31st Division, the "Dixie Division," units from the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The Division underwent extensive training and elements began going overseas on September 15th and continued until November 9th. As they arrived in Europe, troops were siphoned off into other units as replacements needed. Clements arrived October 7th. The Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918. By January, 1919, its members were being rotated home.

Clements was a Sergeant in the Medical Corps assigned to headquarters. He was promoted to Sgt. First Class on February 8, 1918. He returned to the States in late March, 1919 and received an Honorable Discharge on April 19, 1919. He was awarded the Victory Medal [6] with France on April 25, 1921.

Clements' letter to his sister in Georgia reveals some of a soldier's experiences. To preserve the flavor, errors, minor as they are, were

left uncorrected. His trip across the Atlantic was frightening for a German submarine destroyed before it could attack. Moving through France was cumbersome. He heard guns roaring but his assignment kept him from the front. The war was almost over by the time he arrived but he was there in time for the influenza pandemic of 1918-19. It killed more soldiers than the Germans did. It was hard to contain and, before it ended, killed millions in Europe and the United States.

The letter gives us an insight into the experience of an American non-commissioned officer in World War and is worth reading.

Camp d'Auvors, France

December 9th, 1918.

My Dear Sister,

Your letter was received yesterday afternoon and I sure was glad to hear from you for it was the first letter I have had from any one in the U.S. Am glad to know all are well and hope you all don't get the Flu^[7] for I hear there is plenty of it in the States. I write home every week and I know Mother must hear from me and I don't see why I don't hear from home but ower [our] Division and Battalion was busted up and we were transferred all about and into different organizations and Camps, so I guess that is the reason why I have not received any mail.

I will now try and tell all about my trip and the different places I have been to. We departed from the U.S. October 7th and arrived at Brest France October 20th. Was in Brest for three days and then on to Le Mans, France about one hundred and fifty miles in box cars marked 40 men or 8 horses. We were busted up at Le Mans and some of the boys got to go up to the front. I went up to a place called Poulain near Metz and I could see the flash of guns at night and hear the roar all the time, was there two days and then transferred back to Le Mans and from Le Mans to Connerre [Connerré], France to the 2nd Provisional Training Regiment, 83rd. Division and from Connerre to this camp which was a German Prison Camp and guarded by Belgium Soldiers.

We are between Le Mans and Paris, wish I could get the chance to go to Paris but there are so many soldiers there that they wont let any more go in. Was in Le Mans Saturday and Sunday on a 24 Hour pass and went to several shows that were real good but could not understand much of this French talk. The more I see of France the better I like the U.S. for it rains here all the time and is muddy, foggy, damp and wet and the sun never shines. Some parts of France are pretty I guess but I have never seen that part of it.

We had some excitement on ower [our] way over here, about four days from France a submarine came up near us and all of the boats had guns on them and all opened fire and I guess about forty shots were fired at it but I don't think they hit it as I could /see [inserted] very good. We were some what nervous but no excitement as we did not realize the danger we were in. About two days before we landed our Torpedo Boats dropped seven depth bombs on a submarine and sank it for sure as it happened about five oclock in the morning and the boys that were on guard saw it all. It threw all of us out of bed from the force of the explosion and we thought sure we had been hit by a torpedo and believe me I sure came up and out on the deck but it was all over then but no more sleep for me after that.

We all had to sleep in our life belts and clothes all the way over for thirteen days. It was very rough for a few days and after that every thing was real nice. I have not had my clothes off in over two months, sleep in them every night. Have been in barns, hay lofts and on the ground to sleep. A bed would feel good to me now and if I ever do get in one again I think I will stay for a long time.

All we talk about now is going home but I guess it will be a long time as there are so many boys over here to go home that I know it will be my luck to be about the last one to go home. We hear lots of good news about going home and I hope it all is true for I sure do want to get back as I have been in the Army Nineteenth Months which is a long time if you come to think about it.

We are in barracks now and are very well fixed up and if we do have to spend the winter here hope we can stay here for every move we make is a bad one. Lots of the boys have cooties and lice on them and I guess will soon have them. Had my first bath a few says ago in over two months and I am afraid it will make me sick.

Sister there is nothing you can send me as we are issued tobacco. Thanks very much. Wish I could be with you all Xmas and I wish you all a merry Xmas and a happy new year. Tell Marjorie to write me and you all do the same. Write and tell Mother you had a letter from me and that I am well and feeling good and tell her to sent me lots of news papers to read. Remember me to all of the children and Mr. Lester and tell them to write me and I am sure am comming [coming] to see you all when I do get out of this Army.

Lots of love, your brother.

Judson [signature]

Sergeant 1st Class Judson A. Clements

Medical Detach, 2nd. Provisional Training Regiment

A.E.F. A.P.O. 916

France

When he returned to the States, he was finally able to build a life. Between 1920 and 1940, he owned the only wholesale liquor business in the State of Florida. In 1934, he bought this summer house at 110 Cherry Street, Neptune Beach, Florida, living there with his wife, Grace Farrington Clements, and three children, Judson, Roland and Karan until his death in 1968. Grace Farrington had relatives in nearby Mayport. She sold it in 1987, long after his children had reached adulthood and moved on with their lives. Grace remarried to Ralph Kingsley and died on February 25, 2008 at the age of 90.



Judson Clements home, Neptune Beach, Florida 1934

The United States was barely in the First World War but its participation guaranteed the defeat of the conservative Triple Alliance. As we know, the war was not "The War to End All Wars" as many Americans and some others had hoped. Woodrow Wilson dreamed that the world, under United States leadership, could bring peace and democracy to the world. Americans tend to be idealistic even in the 21st century. Hope trumps experience. People are people—selfish and belligerent as well as capable of kindness.

[1] It is also known as the Great War, the [First World War](#), and [WWI](#). The titles reflect the varying towards the conflict. Americans, since the beginning of the Republic, have tended to believe that they are moral whereas everyone else in the world is immoral and that their country has a special mission in human history to right wrongs and spread American ideals and practices. When the Second World War began, the 1914-18 conflict became the First.

[2] Raymond H. Banks, "Historical Background of The World War I Draft ," From <http://archives.gov/genealogy/military/ww1/draft-registration/index.html>, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, M1509.

[3] It became Jacksonville Beach in 1925.

[4] The Florida Memory Project (<http://www.floridamemory.com/>) contains a collection of World War I Service Cards (<http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/WWI/>). No one checked their accuracy unless there was a glaring error.

[5] Raymond H. Banks, "Duval County, Florida - 1917-18 Civilian Draft Registration," USGENWEB (see <http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/fl/duval/military/1917aalb.txt>). The information below was abstracted from by Raymond H. Banks from civilian registration cards completed in 1917-1918." He identifies persons born in Mayport, Pablo Beach, and Palm Valley.

[6] See <http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-medals/victory-medal.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/medals/ww1vic.htm>; and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I_Victory_Medal. The medal was the most widely given medal in U.S. history until World War II but it was still an honor to receive one.

[7] The 1918-19 influenza pandemic killed more soldiers in Europe than did the war and the flu was brought home.

Donald J. Mabry

030607; Revised 0314/08
