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CHANGING FACE OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA: 1900-1910

by JAMES B. CROOKS

COMPELLED by a devastating fire, May 3, 1901, that laid waste to most of downtown, Jacksonville not only rebuilt, but changed notably in other ways during the first decade of the twentieth century. Its population more than doubled. New or expanding suburbs, skyscrapers, hotels, theaters, automobiles, streetcar lines, parks, and city services reflected urban development. Substantial economic growth took place in banking, trade, and transportation. Public and private efforts to provide health, education, and human services increased. In addition, the community's popular culture became more diversified.

Jacksonville's population of 28,429 in 1900 made it Florida's largest city. By comparison with neighboring southeastern cities, however, it ranked behind Savannah, Charleston, Augusta, Atlanta, Birmingham, and Mobile. Jacksonville's 16,236 Afro-American residents comprised fifty-seven per cent of the population. Most blacks lived in poverty on the fringe of the downtown area, with a large concentration in the Hansontown slum, and smaller settlements in Oakland, LaVilla, and Brooklyn. Black youngsters attended seven segregated elementary schools. There were no public high schools open to them in 1900, but four private academies—Edward Waters College, Cookman Institute, Florida Baptist Academy, and Boylan Industrial School—provided secondary educational opportunities for a limited number of older youth. Edward Waters, Cookman, and Florida Baptist also trained clergy.¹

Most adult Jacksonville blacks did menial work, but a small

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1. U.S. Bureau of Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Census Bulletin No. 70* (Washington., 1900), table 9; *Twelfth Census of the United States, Census Bulletin No. 72* (Washington, 1901), table 5; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union and Citizen*, July 27, 1901; J. Irving E. Scott, *The Education of Black People in Florida* (Philadelphia, 1974), 41-43, 49-53.

middle class included fifty-nine ministers, forty-one public school teachers, three doctors, two lawyers, one dentist, and 176 mostly small business men and women operating boarding houses, barber shops, restaurants, retail groceries, meat markets, and dress-making establishments. Skilled carpenters and a few others in the building trades belonged to local unions. In government, two city council members were elected from the predominantly black sixth ward.²

Besides the churches, blacks belonged to thirteen black lodges, seven black Knights of Pythias lodges, and several mutual aid societies like the Daughters of Gethsemane, Daughters of Israel, and Bethel Aid Society. In sum, black Jacksonville, despite varying degrees of segregation, discrimination, and exclusion from voting, education, entertainment, and work opportunities, pursued a varied civic life reflecting the community's vitality.³

Minority white Jacksonville fared better, controlling city government and the wholesale, retail, banking, shipping, and other business enterprises. More affluent whites lived in fine houses in town, in the Springfield area, or in the developing suburb of Riverside. Within the white community, a small but powerful elite dominated Jacksonville. The 1904 Social Register, an indicator of respectability, listed 1,386 people who comprised less than five per cent of the total population. Among their number were all of the mayors elected after 1900: J. E. T. Bowden, Duncan Fletcher, George Nolan, William H. Baker, William H. Sebring, and William S. Jordan. Of the fifty-five city council members from 1901 to 1911, the names of eighteen (one-third) appeared. Eight of the nine members of the influential Board of Bond Trustees were listed. This council-appointed board administered bond issues and supervised the construction of the municipally-owned electric lighting plant, water works, and other public improvements.⁴

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2. J. L. Wiggins and Company, *Jacksonville City Directory For 1901* (Jacksonville, 1901), 479-99, passim.
 3. *Ibid.*; for a more pessimistic view of black Jacksonville prior to 1900, see Barbara Ann Richardson, *A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895: A Socio-Economic and Political Study* (Ann Arbor, 1975), chap. VI.
 4. Anna Hardy Daniel, comp., *Social Register Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville, 1904); Anna Hardy Daniel, comp., *Jacksonville Social Register* (Jacksonville, 1909). Obviously not all power resided in the elite. Two-thirds of the city council and almost half the members of the Board of

Perhaps the most influential organization in Jacksonville was the Board of Trade, forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce. Of its 370 members, more than half were listed in the *Social Register*, along with seven of its ten officers. The board was a major force in securing funding to deepen the St. Johns River channel, rebuild Jacksonville after the fire, untangle railroad congestion at the port, support public health programs, and secure new business, improved roads, Congressional appropriations, and charter reforms. In addition, more than half the members of the Woman's Club, initiator of most of the social reforms of the decade, were listed in the *Social Register*.⁵

Thus as the century began, Jacksonville was a city with a black majority population, but with power and wealth (supported by the Flagler-owned *Florida Times-Union and Citizen*) centered in a relatively small white elite whose stewardship of that power during the reform-oriented Progressive Era was crucial to the changes taking place in the community.

While government and business had begun to modernize before the fire, the process accelerated as a result of the conflagration. Most of the downtown area had been devastated, including all of the local government buildings, banks, office blocks, warehouses, shops, schools, and churches. In all 2,368 buildings, covering 140 blocks, valued at \$15,000,000 were destroyed. Over half the tax base was gone. Almost 10,000 people were homeless, though only five died.⁶

Rebuilding began immediately. By mid-June, the *Times-Union* reported a boom underway. In July, Judge Morris A. Dzialynski, president of the Ahavath Chesed congregation, announced plans to rebuild the Jewish temple; Father (later Bishop) William J. Kenney revealed plans for a new Church

Trade and Woman's Club were not listed in the social register. White Jacksonville was not a closed society for middle class whites. They had access to power and mobility. At the same time not all 1,386 members of the social register shaped urban policy. Only a fraction did and the power elite, to the extent one existed, was a much smaller number. Still, there was a disproportionate number of wealthier or establishment Jacksonvillians providing political, economic, and social leadership in the city. They did not have total power, but their influence was real, if not paramount. A recent discussion of this topic is Edward Pessen, et. al., "Social Structure and Politics in American History," *American Historical Review*, LXXXVII (December 1982), 1,290-341.

5. Daniel, comp., *Social Register*, 1904 and 1909.

6. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 4, 5, and 6, 1901; Benjamin Harrison, *Acres of Ashes* (Jacksonville, 1901).

of the Immaculate Conception; and the officers of the First Presbyterian Church authorized construction of their new sanctuary. In August, architect Henry J. Klutho, recently arrived from New York, began work on the six-story Dyal-Upchurch building, at the corner of Bay and Main streets, the city's first skyscraper and the first in Klutho's series of important buildings in Jacksonville. In September, the city celebrated Labor Day with a large parade, and theatergoers anticipated the completion of a temporary structure for the fall season. Suburban schools opened with double sessions in October to accommodate children displaced from the burnt district. Edward Waters College students attended classes in temporary accommodations in LaVilla. In November, the annual Florida State Fair opened. Within six months of the fire, a major portion of downtown reconstruction was either completed or underway.⁷

The rebuilding was responsible for a substantial boom that continued through the decade. The city grew both outward and upward. Investors like W. A. Bisbee of Savannah financed a ten-story skyscraper designed by Klutho. In the next block on Forsyth Street, the Atlantic National Bank, also started by Savannah investors, was under construction. By 1910, these buildings (still standing in the 1980s) along with the Seminole Hotel, city hall, courthouse, library, YMCA, and a number of churches formed a nucleus of the modern Jacksonville. As the decade closed, Klutho had begun his design of the St. James Building and Cohen Brothers department store opposite Hemming Park. It would become his foremost achievement in downtown Jacksonville.⁸

This prosperity also stimulated suburban growth. To the southwest, Riverside expanded outward toward Willowbranch and beyond, and developers began platting the Ortega suburb. To the west, on both sides of the railroad yards under construction, developers built Murray Hill, Lackawanna, and Grand Park. These were designed primarily as working-class suburbs

7. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, June to December 1901, *passim*.

8. *Ibid.*; for W. A. Bisbee, see May 31, 1908, and April 28, 1909; for Atlantic National Bank, see April 2, 1903, and July 14, 1908; for St. James Building, see March 1, 1910. Downtown construction continued almost until World War I with the Union Terminal, the Florida-Life Building, Heard Bank, and Rhodes-Futch-Collins Building. Thomas Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida, and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (Jacksonville, 1925; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1984), 244-45.

for men employed by the railroads. To the northwest, along Kings Road, development for blacks began in College Park, Northside Park, and Highland Heights. To the north, Springfield expanded beyond the city line to Twenty-first Street, and by the end of the decade to Panama Park. To the northeast, off Talleyrand Avenue near the mills, terminals, and river, additional housing construction was underway. Directly east, Fairfield residents sought further development in their community. Linking all of the suburbs to downtown was the Jacksonville Electric Company, a Boston-owned streetcar line which provided service at five cents a ride.⁹

Across the river, South Jacksonville's more than 2,000 residents secured a city charter from the legislature in 1907. This growth resulted from the ferry service connecting it to downtown Jacksonville, the northern terminus for the Florida East Coast Railroad, the construction of a fertilizer factory, and the opening of Dixieland Amusement Park in 1907. By the end of the decade, South Jacksonville had eight grocery stores, three markets, a bakery, shoe store, dry goods store, barbershop, pool room, dentist, three doctors, and a weekly newspaper. There were two public schools, one for blacks and one for whites, four churches—two Methodist, one Baptist, and one Episcopal—along with a half dozen fraternal orders.¹⁰

Economic development accompanied this urban and suburban growth. Perhaps the two greatest boosts to Jacksonville business during the decade were the deepening of the St. Johns River channel to twenty-four feet and railroad expansion. The impact of the channel deepening could be seen in the trade figures for the period. In 1900 the channel was eighteen feet and only relatively small coastal ships could enter the port. The twenty-four-foot channel was completed in 1907, and within two years shipping had increased from 650,000 to more than 3,000,000 tons,

9. For Ortega, see Dena Snodgrass, *The Island of Ortega: A History* (Jacksonville, 1981), 31, and Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 7, 1902, and May 3, 1909; for Murray Hall, see *ibid.*, September 14, 1906; for the black suburbs, see *ibid.*, September 4, and November 21, 1910, and Jacksonville *Metropolis*, February 2, 1907; for Panama Park, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 21, 1909; for Talleyrand, see *ibid.*, December 18, 1910; for the electric company, see *ibid.*, February 23, 1908, and May 16, 1910.

10. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 14, June 11, and October 27, 1907, and May 26, 1909.

and combined exports and imports from \$266,000 to \$3,000,000. The major products included fertilizers, lumber, and naval stores. Clyde Line passenger ships began daily scheduled trips from Jacksonville to Savannah, Charleston, New York, and Boston; the Baltimore-based Merchant and Miner Company added Jacksonville to its shipping routes; and foreign trade which had been almost nonexistent at the beginning of the century increased substantially with phosphate and lumber shipments to Germany and France. By 1910, the Board of Trade had begun lobbying for a thirty-foot channel, and the *Times-Union* compared Jacksonville's port favorably with that of Savannah.¹¹

Railroads provided another major stimulus to growth. The Seaboard Air Line was already in Jacksonville in 1900. Two years later, the Atlantic Coast Line completed its takeover of the Plant System. Southern Railway bought the Atlantic Valdosta and Western Railroad and took control of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad. Across the St. Johns River, Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad had already made Jacksonville its northern terminus as the line expanded southward to Miami and later Key West.¹²

During the decade the five companies (the GS&F continued as an independent subsidiary of the Southern) expanded their facilities in Jacksonville. West of the city, the Seaboard built a major complex of shops and yards completed in 1908. Just west of downtown, next to the Union Passenger Terminal, Seaboard, FEC, and ACL built warehouses between Bay Street and the river. Southern Railway tracks ran along Bay Street between downtown and the docks. To the east were more FEC, ACL, and Seaboard warehouses. Along Talleyrand Avenue and into northeast Springfield, the Southern established the St. Johns River Terminal Company, and with the GS&F built machine shops, warehouses, and piers down to the water's edge. At one point, the *Times-Union* complained that the riverfront had be-

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11. Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, *Industrial Survey of Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville, 1915), 32; George M. Chapin, "Jacksonville, the Commercial Capital of a Great Commonwealth Rich in Possession and Promise," *Practical Advertising*, VI (February 1909), 6; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 13, 1907, July 6, 26, 1908, June 21, July 1, 1909, and January 1, 1911.
 12. John F. Stover, *The Railroads of the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1955), chap. 12, passim.; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 24, June 23, and July 1, 1902.

come almost completely owned by the railroads and shipping companies.¹³

The impact of port and railroad development stimulated the growth of wholesaling, and to a lesser extent manufacturing for the region. The city served as a distribution center for consumer goods. In 1905, Jacksonville had 180 establishments wholesaling meat, liquor, groceries, drugs, hardware, dry goods, electrical supplies, and machinery. More than 500 retail shops provided goods and services. One observer claimed the wholesale grocery houses alone exceeded in number those of Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans, prompting the Board of Trade to boost Jacksonville as the "Gateway to Florida."¹⁴

Industrial development proceeded more slowly. Most of Jacksonville's manufacturing establishments were small, and growth was limited during the first decade. One exception was Wellington Cummer's lumber mill and phosphate shipping facility north of the city employing 1,150 workers in 1906. Another was the Merrill Stevens Company, which had the largest dry dock south of Newport News, and the largest shipbuilding and marine facility in the southeast. More characteristic of new businesses toward the end of the decade was the opening of branch plants like the Cheek-Neal Coffee Company to manufacture their Maxwell House blend.¹⁵

As the city prospered and grew after the fire, its popular culture became more diversified. Some amusements were passive, involving attendance at vaudeville or minstrel shows; others encouraged active participation on the baseball diamond or grid-iron. Both kinds reflected the increasing affluence and leisure available to the middle and skilled working classes; the poor generally remained excluded. Many city dwellers enjoyed entertainment at places like the race track; others joined clubs or choral groups. Events such as the Gala Week Carnival drew newcomers and older residents together strengthening a city-wide cul-

13. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 19, 1904, July 19, August 19, 1907, June 7, October 8, 1908, May 26, 1909, and April 15, 1910; Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 342-55, passim.

14. Seaboard Air Line, *Mercantile and Industrial Review of Jacksonville, Florida* (Portsmouth, Va., 1907); Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 23, 1908; Charles H. Smith, *Jacksonville and Florida Facts* (Jacksonville, 1906), 11, 23.

15. Seaboard Air Line, *Mercantile and Industrial Review; Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, May 26, 1909, and September 11, 1910.

ture. Some activities, like the church or saloon, had flourished in Jacksonville long before the fire. Others— amusement parks and motion pictures— developed rapidly in the early twentieth century.¹⁶

Probably the most familiar and traditional non-working-time institution was the church. In 1901, there were fifty-nine black churches, twenty-four white churches, and one synagogue in Jacksonville. Nine years later, there were sixty-four black and fifty white churches and two synagogues. Black churches were almost evenly divided between Baptists and Methodists, with one Presbyterian and one Episcopal congregation, the latter added during the decade. Among the white institutions, Methodists were estimated to be the largest denomination in 1906 with 1,850 members followed by 1,200 Episcopalians, 800 Disciples of Christ, 760 Baptists, 680 Presbyterians, 500 Roman Catholics, 400 Lutherans, 150 Jews, and seventy-five Christian Scientists.¹⁷

In addition to attending religious services, church people engaged in a variety of youth, women's, men's, musical, and charitable activities. They sponsored rummage sales and bazaars to raise money, performed concerts, crusaded against strong drink and prostitution, took excursions to the beach, and visited other churches in nearby towns. Blacks celebrated special holidays in their churches like Emancipation Day and Frederick Douglass's birthday. They welcomed visiting dignitaries including Judge Robert H. Terrell from the District of Columbia municipal court and President Theodore Roosevelt. On a visit in 1905, the president spoke at Florida Baptist Academy, a school founded by Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, the oldest and wealthiest black congregation in the city. Among the Methodists, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church provided substantial support for Edward Waters College.¹⁸

16. For other studies of urban popular culture in this era, see Gunther Barth, *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in 19th Century America* (New York, 1980), 3-7, esp. 148-91, passim; Dale A. Somers, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 1850-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1972), 274-96, passim; Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sports, Recreation and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston, 1982), 252-72.

17. Wiggins and Co., *City Directory for 1901*, and Seaboard Air Line, *Mercantile and Industrial Review*; R. L. Polk and Company, *Jacksonville City Directory, 1910*, XI (St. Augustine, 1910), 58, 60.

18. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, January 2, September 28, 1903, January 2, April 9, 1904, October 22, 1905, December 28, 1907, March 21, and

Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches sponsored revivals frequently. In 1905, the Union Revival Association, comprising most of the black and white Protestant denominations in the city, organized a mammoth six-week revival. A 6,500-seat tabernacle was built specially for the occasion in the St. James lot across from Hemming Park. An estimated 6,000 people heard Dr. L. W. Munhall preach what the *Times-Union* called, "the greatest sermon ever heard in Jacksonville . . . to the greatest congregation ever assembled in the city."¹⁹

On the lighter side, Jacksonville residents enjoyed a variety of fraternal orders and clubs during the decade. There were both black and white masonic orders, Knights of Pythias lodges, Odd Fellows halls, and labor unions. German-American residents might belong to the Germania Club, Jews to the Phoenix Club, white women to the Ladies' Friday Musicale or Woman's Club, young white men to the militia companies and their athletic teams, and wealthier white residents to the Florida Country Club, Yacht Club, Seminole Club, or Governors Club.²⁰

Jacksonville was a sports town. Local fans cheered the spring training efforts of the Philadelphia Athletics, Cincinnati Reds, Boston Nationals, and Brooklyn Superbas during the decade. Judge Morris Dzialynski and former Mayor J. E. T. Bowden helped to organize the Jacksonville baseball team that became a charter member of the South Atlantic League in 1904. Attendance for the first year averaged 1,000 fans per game, despite an unimpressive fifty-eight-fifty-nine won-lost record. Four years later, the Jacksonville Scouts won their first Sally League pennant.²¹

In the fall, the militia companies fielded football teams that played in different years against Stetson, Georgia Tech, Florida Agricultural College, East Florida Seminary, South Carolina

November 7, 1909; Jacksonville *Metropolis*, February 7, 16, and March 14, 1907.

19. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, January 18, November 14 and 22, 1904, January 23, March 6, 1905, and February 5, 1906.
20. Wiggins and Co., *City Directory for 1901*, 34-39; Chapin, "Jacksonville, the Commercial Capital," 9, 10; *Souvenir and Tourist Guide of Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville, 1910), 16.
21. For spring training, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 26, 1903, March 10, 1905, March 19, 1906, March 10, 1907, March 15, 1908, and March 8, 1909; for Jacksonville's professional baseball team, see *ibid.*, April 14, 1903, January 12, April 30, September 12, and September 29, 1904, and August 22, 1908.

College, Lake City, Savannah, Macon, and Valdosta. Following the 1909 completion of the YMCA building with a gymnasium, basketball became popular. By the end of the decade, Duval High School teams competed in both sports. For spectators and gamblers, horse racing began in Moncrief Park in 1909, prompting one skeptic to ask why police arrested black people for playing the numbers, but not whites for betting on horses. During the winter months sports fans followed the auto races at Ormond and Daytona Beaches. Locally hunting and fishing remained popular activities for many residents.²²

Among the more exciting diversions in these early years were automobiles. Introduced to Jacksonville at the turn of the century, they attracted immediate attention. Car owners formed a Florida Automobile Association in 1903, which began advocating good roads for Duval County and beyond. Their major effort begun that year was a shell-paved road to the beach. Funding and routing problems, however, delayed completion of Atlantic Boulevard until 1910. Meanwhile the city council passed legislation in 1904 to license autos and to limit their speed. The beaches auto races on Independence Day, 1905 drew 5,000-6,000 fans. A year later, the *Times-Union* considered cars no longer an exceptional sight on the streets of downtown, though only ten per cent of the population owned them.²³

From late spring through summer, Jacksonville's beaches attracted many local residents. When the Florida East Coast Railroad rebuilt a line from Southside to Pablo Beach (later Jacksonville Beach) at the turn of the century, it became the destination for local residents. Following the completion of Flagler's elegant Continental Hotel in 1901, however, wealthier residents went to Atlantic Beach. Over the decade, the Continental became a major summer tourist attraction drawing vacationers from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Alabama. Blacks went to Manhattan Beach which opened in 1907. Located north of Atlantic Beach

22. For football, see *ibid.*, October 25, 1901, September 13, 1902, and November 6, 1904; for Duval High School sports, see *ibid.*, February 13, November 3, 1909, and December 13, 1908; for horse racing and gambling, see *ibid.*, March 28, 1909, and March 22, 1910; for the numbers, see *ibid.*, June 24, July 29, 1901, July 5, 1902, July 3, 1903, July 5, 1905, and July 5, 1906.

23. *Ibid.*, January 5, 1900, February 12, March 25, and June 14, 1903, May 4, 1904, March 16, and July 5, 1905, June 11, 1906, July 29, and November 13, 1910; see also Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 379-80.

below Mayport, it had pavillions, a restaurant, children's playground facilities, and cottages for weekly visitors. On summer weekends, thousands of people headed for the beaches to enjoy baseball games, foot races, parades, dances, and fireworks.²⁴

Summer evenings and weekends in Jacksonville also meant streetcar outings to city parks. The Jacksonville Electric Company developed Phoenix Park northeast of the city on the river, and its facilities at one time included a dance pavillion, bandstand, baseball diamond, a 1,200-seat theater, bathhouses, and various amusement park attractions including a merry-go-round and loop-the-loop. Its popularity ebbed, however, with the opening of Dixieland Amusement Park in 1907, a ferryboat ride across the river in South Jacksonville. The *Times-Union* described Dixieland as "the Coney Island of the South," with its bands, roller coaster, dancing, swings, peanut, ice cream, and candy stands, bronco riders, bamboo slide, photo gallery, aerial trapeze artists, restaurant, and playhouse. Admission to the park was a dime and large crowds came. At the Florida Mid-Winter International Exposition held there in 1908, an estimated 16,000 people enjoyed the amusements, exhibits, and John Philip Sousa's band. Later, a skating rink, baseball park, outdoor moving picture theater, and a 100-foot swimming pool were added. A fire in August 1909 destroyed much of the park, but it reopened the following year. That fall, Selig Polyscope Company of Chicago leased part of the park to make motion pictures using elephants, lions, tigers, and camels. Fifteen Indians on horseback were employed to develop a "real wild west show."²⁵

For black Jacksonvillians a group of black and white businessmen built a streetcar line out Kings Road and opened Mason Park in 1903. It flourished for much of the decade, but following the bankruptcy of the streetcar company, it was subdivided into

24. For the railroad, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 13, 1900, and Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 351; for the Hotel Continental, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 19, August 27, 1901, and July 12, 1904; for Manhattan Beach, see *ibid.*, October 7, 1906.

25. For Phoenix Park, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 6, 1901, February 28, 1902, April 12, 1903, August 7, 1905, September 18, 1906, May 5, 1907, and May 5, 1908; for Dixieland, see *ibid.*, March 10, April 9, and December 17, 1907, January 1, 27, and July 9, 1908, August 25, 1909, January 7, October 23, and November 29, 1910; for more on the burgeoning film industry in Jacksonville, see Richard A. Nelson, *Florida and the American Motion Picture Industry, 1898-1930*, 2 vols. (New York, 1982), I, 131-93, *passim*.

housing lots. Meanwhile the Jacksonville Electric Company opened Lincoln Park west of the city for black residents in 1904. Over the decade it added a roller coaster, dance pavillion, vaudeville shows, food concessions, and Sunday concerts. Though used by local residents, it lacked the range of facilities available to whites at Phoenix Park.²⁶

A popular attraction, the Ostrich Farm, opened at suburban Fairfield in 1898-1899. The *Times-Union* called it the city's principal tourist attraction. In the beginning people paid twenty-five cents to ride in ostrich-drawn carts, ride the birds bareback, or watch them race. Over the decade, however, the park added alligators, sea lions, wild animal shows, bands, ascension ballons, parachutists, high divers, acrobats, and motion pictures to become an amusement park drawing thousands of visitors on weekends.²⁷

Jacksonville residents could also choose from a number of indoor activities during the fall-winter-spring seasons including plays, vaudeville, occasional concerts, and by mid-decade motion pictures. By 1910 eight theaters offered movies, vaudeville, minstrel shows, and touring stock companies. The *Times-Union* exaggerated only a little in describing Main Street as the local "Great White Way." Black theater goers generally sat in segregated balconies, except at the Bijou and Globe theaters which served primarily the black community.²⁸

One of the high points in any Jacksonville entertainment year was the annual carnival, fair, or exposition. The Thanksgiving and Gala Week of November 1902, combined police, military, and floral parades, band concerts, football games, theater, vaudeville, baby shows, bicycle races, a retail grocers convention, and a masquerade ball. It drew crowds in the thousands. Saturday was "Colored Peoples' Day" with a special parade, baseball game, cakewalk, and jubilee at night. In 1903, the Jacksonville Trades Carnival celebrated the rebuilding of the downtown area only eighteen months after the fire. It included a midway, the

26. For Mason Park, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 28, 1902, August 24, 25, 1903, March 22, 1908, and November 21, 1910; for Lincoln Park, see *ibid.*, March 28, August 17, 1904, February 3, 1907, and Jacksonville *Metropolis*, March 16, 1907.

27. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 20, June 11, 1903, December 16, 1906, and February 24, 1908.

28. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1904, August 27, 1905, March 13, 1906, October 6, 1908, and June 11, 1910; *Souvenir and Tourist Guide*, 47.

city's first auto parade of thirty-two cars, concerts, and fireworks. An estimated 25,000 people attended the final evening. There were also carnivals in 1906, 1908, and 1909. Black Jacksonville took part in these festivities, but on a limited basis. Blacks also had carnivals of their own celebrating historical or religious events.²⁹

In addition to other entertainments, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circuses performed in Jacksonville, and local unions celebrated Labor Days with parades, picnics, and excursions to the beach. Annual political campaigns provided their own form of entertainment with rallies, torchlight parades, and candidates declaiming on downtown streetcorners and drawing large crowds.

Less respectable in the eyes of many Jacksonvillians were the saloons, brothels, and opium dens catering to the thirsts and appetites of residents, tourists, and other visitors. The *Tampa Tribune* described Jacksonville as a wide-open town. Its bars kept pace with population growth during the decade, more than doubling in number. Local brothels also flourished. When Carrie Nation brought her temperance crusade to the city in 1908, she made a point of visiting several of the houses in the red light district of LaVilla, including The Court owned by Cora Taylor Crane, widow of novelist Stephen Crane. The *Times-Union* called The Court "palatial," but Crane's biographer claims it was only a substantial home "of quiet good taste." Its staff of thirteen resided in the house, but also worked out of Palmetto Lodge, a seaside annex at Pablo Beach. Crane missed Carrie Nation's visit, and the crusader moved on to other houses. At the Russian Belle's establishment, the *Times-Union* reported she spoke privately with the girls, and they were so impressed by what she said that some were moved to tears.³⁰

Opium dens and cocaine use were also part of the Jacksonville scene. Whites generally used the former and blacks the latter drug. Periodically the press reported police raids and arrests. One historian recently has estimated that Jacksonville's opium

29. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 23 and 26, 1902, July 13, October 25, November 6, 1903, November 5 and 8, 1906, August 25, 1907, January 27, 1908, January 20, and November 21, 1909.

30. Wiggins and Co., *City Directory for 1901*, 495-96; Polk and Co., *City Directory, 1910*, 1,153-154; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 9, 1907 and February 14, 1908; Lillain Gikes, *Cora Crane: A Biography of Mrs. Stephen Crane* (Bloomington, 1960), esp. chap. 8.

addiction rate of 5.5 per thousand in 1912 was one of the highest recorded in the nation. City health officials were sufficiently concerned about conditions a year later to support maintenance programs for addicts of both drugs.³¹

Most leisure-time activities, however, were more constructive. By the end of the decade, the city provided its residents and visitors with an increasing range of things to do, reflecting the plural character of a modernizing city. While some activities offered escapes from daily rigors, others strengthened family ties. Voluntary associations offered opportunities to belong to communities of like-minded people. Black residents were excluded from some and segregated at other events, although they too had a variety of their own activities. The results reflected the vitality of the Jacksonville community.

Another major area of change during the decade came in the provision of health, education, and human services. Nationwide, the years surrounding the turn of the century marked exceptional progress in these fields. Modern medicine, professional school systems, and the transition from volunteer "friendly visitor" to paid social workers date from this era. In medicine, the development of germ theory by Pasteur, Lister, and Koch in the late nineteenth century led to the beginning of modern bacteriology, microbiology, immunology, and a scientific basis for public health reforms. Across the nation, governmental roles expanded as public and private sectors cooperated to advance the health of communities. Jacksonville was no exception.

Public health locally was a serious concern. The recent history of the city with its warm temperatures and its mosquitos and flies showed at least four epidemics of yellow fever, smallpox, and typhoid in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. During the years following the fire, the Board of Health supported by the Board of Trade, Woman's Club, city council, and the media made a major effort to improve the city's health record. Health officials inspected dairies, stables, dumps, restaurants, cafes, and saloons; drained ditches, poured oil on ponds; and cut tall grass; muzzled dogs and banned spitting. They persuaded the city council to pass new laws to control mosquitos,

31. David T. Courtwright, "The Hidden Epidemic: Opiate Addiction and Cocaine Use in the South, 1860-1920," *Journal of Southern History* XLIX (February 1983), 61.

pasteurize milk, and inspect outdoor privies. In 1908, Jacksonville's per capita expenditure on health and sanitation ranked it among the top fifth of cities its size in the country.³²

The results were mixed. According to observers, health conditions improved, partly due to the new buildings and sewers constructed downtown after the fire. There were no epidemics in Jacksonville during the decade, though one threatened in 1905, prompting the cancellation of the annual carnival. Despite the repeated wars on mosquitos, summer comfort still generally required window screens and netting over one's bed. Vital statistics for the decade are incomplete, but those that exist suggest a downward trend in the death rate.³³

The black mortality rate, however, was almost twice that of whites, and the Jacksonville rate for both races was higher than for the rest of the state. Black residents died more often from pneumonia, tuberculosis, and kidney and stomach diseases. They also suffered more typhoid. For most of the decade black deaths exceeded black births. The causes of the greater sickness and deaths among blacks were many, but health officials knew at least one: Hansontown, the largely poor, black community on the northwest fringe of downtown had no sewers in its narrow, crooked, crowded streets. Instead it had pools of stagnant water, overflowing privies, piles of garbage, an abundance of flies, and three-fourths of the typhoid fever cases. This condition did not change during the decade.³⁴

In the private sector, St. Luke's Hospital had some claim to being the city's leading health care institution. Founded by three "establishment" women in the 1870s in East Jacksonville, it suffered financial problems well into the twentieth century. Again and again, the *Times-Union* reported the hospital coffers nearly

32. Richard Albert Martin, *St. Luke's Hospital: A Century of Service, 1873-1973* (Jacksonville, 1973), 70-121, passim; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 2, 1904, August 19, 1905, June 28, July 3, 26, August 14, 28, December 4, 1906, June 2, August 4, September 14, 1908 and February 10, April 15, September 5, 1910.

33. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 20, July 27, and August 19, 1905; the vital statistics can be found in *ibid.*, January 1, 1900, January 6, 1903; Florida Department of Agriculture, *The Third Census of the State of Florida Taken in the Year 1905* (Tallahassee, 1905), table 20; Chapin, "Jacksonville, the Commercial Capital," 7.

34. Florida Department of Agriculture, *The Third Census, 1905*, table 20; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 19, July 31, 1909, and June 25, 1910.

empty. Theaters and businesses sponsored benefits for St. Luke's, and society ladies dressed in nurses uniforms solicited funds on downtown streetcorners. By mid-decade, the hospital's board of governors requested city funding because of the large number of charity patients. In 1906, 100 of 446 patients were treated free. The city council responded slowly, but by 1909 it had begun a \$500 monthly subsidy. Toward the end of the decade St. Luke's governing body reorganized itself preparatory to building a new hospital in Springfield on land provided by the city. Previously directed by women like Mrs. Wellington Cummer, the board now added prominent male citizens, including former Mayor Duncan Fletcher as association president. As the fund raising for the new hospital began, the wealthy men took charge.³⁵

St. Luke's served white Jacksonville along with three smaller institutions: DeSoto Sanitarium (later St. Vincent's Hospital), Rogers (later Riverside) Hospital, and the Keeley Institute. The county hospital at Sand Hill opened in 1903, providing facilities on a segregated basis for poor black and white residents. Brewster Hospital opened in 1901 to serve the black community. Starting from a low base, health care improved after 1900 in Jacksonville, but mostly to the benefit of white and more affluent residents.

Jacksonville's public school system also made limited progress during these years, but mainly for its white constituency. While enrollments rose and new schools were built, funding lagged, and black children received less than an equal share. The supervision of four superintendents fit a traditional mode. The modernization controversies taking place elsewhere in the nation seemed to have had little effect on Jacksonville.³⁶

In 1900, the Duval County Board of Public Instruction under the chairmanship of Duncan Fletcher supervised eight white and

35. Martin, *St. Luke's*, esp. chaps. 4, 5, and 6; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, January 17, February 12, 1901, July 11, 1902, May 11, 1905, July 22, 1906, May 3, July 22, October 7, 1908, and April 14, 1909.

36. David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, 1974), 147-67; Selwyn K. Troen, *The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838-1920* (Columbia, Mo., 1975), 208-26; Marvin Lazerson, *Origins of the Urban School: Public Education in Massachusetts, 1870-1915* (Cambridge, 1971), 241-57; Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973* (New York, 1974), 107-21.

seven black grammar schools, the all-white Duval High School downtown, and a number of one-teacher black or white schools in the rural areas. Youngsters attended school for less than six months during the year. Girls outnumbered boys of both races, especially in high school. Most teachers earned a low wage of \$40.00-\$50.00 per month. They generally had only a high school education, but many took special summer courses to prepare for certification exams.³⁷

The fire in 1901 destroyed Duval High, Central Grammar, and Stanton Graded School. The remaining schools went on double sessions that fall to accommodate the displaced students. The three schools were rebuilt, Stanton as "a large crude, three-story frame" structure, and the white schools as brick buildings.³⁸

Financial support did not keep pace with increasing enrollment during the decade. In 1903, after a school tax lid of five mills had been reduced to three due to the fire, the press reported the schools virtually bankrupt. The Woman's Club led the fight for restoring the two mills, arguing that "there is not the slightest doubt that the educational facilities of Jacksonville are far behind what they should be." The lid was raised, and the resulting revenue provided temporary relief. However, there were continuing complaints about inadequate school funding. Per pupil expenditure had declined from \$20.00 to \$18.00 as a result of increased enrollments without increased funding. There also was overcrowding. Both the Woman's Club and the Board of Trade examined the issue. President Francis Conroy of the Board of Trade was appalled: "Citizens here ought to be ashamed of themselves that such conditions exist," he said. "We must do away with present dilapidated, unsanitary and unsatisfactory buildings."³⁹

The black schools were disproportionately underfunded. For the 1906-1907 academic year, expenditures for thirty-six white schools came to just over \$100,000 compared to \$32,000 for thirty-three black schools. Two years later, the imbalance was

37. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 2, 1900, July 13, 27, and September 25, 1901.

38. *Ibid.*, May 5-14, July 20, and October 4, 1901; James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* (New York, 1933), 184.

39. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 26, April 3, June 27, 1903, and March 14, May 13, November 2, 1910.

greater: \$107,000 to \$31,000. Black male teacher salaries averaged \$44.00 per month compared with white male salaries of \$75.00. Black women earned \$32.00, while white women received \$50.00, reflecting both racial and sexual discrimination. Annual per pupil expenditures from 1905 to 1910 exceeded \$20.00 for each white child and never reached \$9.00 for each black child. The schools began the decade with approximate parity in faculty-student ratios, but by mid-decade black children and teachers worked in substantially more crowded classrooms than did whites.⁴⁰

Despite the racially separate and unequal public education, characteristic of the South in this era, improvements did take place. New schools were built in Murray Hill and Fairfield for white youngsters. In 1903, the school board lengthened the school year to eight months. The Woman's Club organized the first mothers' club anticipating the beginning of parent-teacher associations. In 1908, the school board added night classes for working children. Teacher salaries rose slightly, as did total expenditures for education. Still, Duval County did not keep pace. By the end of the decade at least half a dozen Florida counties were spending more per student on public education than did Duval.⁴¹

In the black community private, church-sponsored schools filled some of the void in education, preparing young people for preaching, teaching, and other careers. Three of the four predominately black private schools were destroyed by the fire in 1901. Edward Waters College resumed operations that fall, sharing facilities with a black grammar school in LaVilla. Rebuilding was delayed due to financial difficulties, but in 1907 the college acquired the site of its current campus on Kings Road and began construction. Cookman Institute remained closed for three years until its sponsoring agency, the Southern Educational Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church built a new campus.

40. For school expenditures, see Florida Department of Education, *Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Florida, 1906-07, and 1908-09* (Tallahassee, 1908 and 1910), tables 22 and 23 for each year; for per pupil expenditures, see *ibid.*, 1905-1909, table 24; for teacher salaries, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 23, 1909; for faculty-student ratios, see *ibid.*, December 2, 1901, August 4, 1906, and July 23, 1909.

41. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 8, April 18, 25, 1903. October 21, 1906, and August 7, 1908; see also *Biennial Reports*, esp. 1909-1910, table 24.

Formally opened during the 1904-1905 academic year, Cookman Institute enrolled 326 students from Georgia and Florida, increasing that enrollment to more than 450 two years later. Florida Baptist Academy was rebuilt under the auspices of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. Boyland Industrial Home and School in East Jacksonville escaped the fire, managing to provide educational opportunities for young black women throughout the decade. Its sponsoring agency, the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, built a new facility in 1910 which could accommodate 100 students preparing for both industrial and professional careers.⁴²

A major informal educational institution in Jacksonville was the Andrew Carnegie Library. Following the fire, Carnegie offered to construct a facility provided the city maintained it. The city council put the issue to local voters in 1902, and it narrowly passed 640 to 627. The following year city council appointed a public library board composed of nine men led by Duncan Fletcher. They in turn hired Henry Klutho to design a neo-classical structure still standing in the 1980s. The library opened in 1905 with 8,000 volumes, and rooms on the second floor for the Florida Historical Society offices and library. A year later, head librarian George Utley reported that 3,423 white and 328 black members had borrowed 46,462 volumes that first year.⁴³

For white Jacksonville, the Carnegie Library worked well. The number of users and the circulation of books increased steadily over the decade. In 1906, Utley estimated that fifteen per cent of the white population used the library, a figure comparable to library use in Martford, New Haven, and Buffalo. Under Utley's direction, the collection available to white readers grew to 20,000 volumes by 1910.⁴⁴

42. For Edward Waters College, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 4, 1901, October 4, 1908, and Jacksonville *Metropolis*, March 21, 1907; for Cookman Institute, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 24, 1904, February 12, 1905, and Jacksonville *Metropolis*, March 6, 1907; for Florida Baptist Academy, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 1, 1902, and October 22, 1905; for Boylan Industrial Home, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 5, 1910. See also Scott, *The Education of Black People in Florida*, esp. chap. VI.

43. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 18, May 21, and November 5, 1902, January 7, May 28, 1905, and May 3, 1906.

44. *First Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public*

For blacks, however, the segregated facilities on the second floor comprised only two rooms and borrowers had access to only 609 books. In effect, there were “separate books, separate rooms, a separate staircase, and separate assistant” to serve the black users. Black cardholders increased in number over the decade, but not surprisingly, black residents did not flock to this separate and unequal facility. Utley recognized the need for a branch library for black Jacksonville, but funds were not available.⁴⁵

Despite the separate and unequal facilities in Jacksonville's schools and libraries, black residents took advantage of educational opportunities during the decade. One rough indicator of the times, the literacy rate, showed that the proportion of literate black adults increased from 78.8 per cent to 85.3 per cent of the population during the decade.⁴⁶

While the public sector initiated many of the health and educational advances during the decade, most of the human services came from private sources. Probably the most significant group working in the area was the Woman's Club, a voluntary association of establishment women, founded in 1897. Its first efforts supported public schools: lengthening the academic year, urging adequate tax funding, and introducing the mothers' clubs. About mid-decade a group of club women formed a social science class and began studying urban problems. Their agenda during the 1906-1907 year included child labor, compulsory education, pure food, juvenile delinquency, civil service reform, and kindergartens for every school. The following spring the Woman's Club petitioned city council for playgrounds, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, swings, and benches in every city park. They cooperated with the ministerial alliance and medical society to organize an

Library, Jacksonville, Florida, for the Year Ending December 31, 1905 (DeLand, 1906), 11, and Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 12, 1910.

45. *First Annual Report*, 18, 19; *Second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library . . . 1906* (DeLand, 1907), 19; *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library . . . 1909* (DeLand, 1910), 20-21; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 15, 1908, February 28, 1909, and March 12, 1910.
46. U.S. Bureau of Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Census Bulletin No. 75, 1900* (Washington, 1900), table 18; U.S. Bureau of Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, vol. 1, *Population*, 1,252. White literacy climbed from 98.6 to over ninety-nine per cent during the decade.

educational campaign about tuberculosis which led to the formation of the Duval County Anti-Tuberculosis Society and plans for a county hospital for consumptives. They enlisted the support of the Board of Trade on public health, juvenile justice, and civic beautification issues.⁴⁷

In 1909, the Woman's Club initiated the formation of Associated Charities, an umbrella organization representing most of the human service agencies in Jacksonville, to expand and coordinate local efforts on behalf of the needy. Its board hired a professional social worker from Minneapolis as executive secretary, the agency began to disburse city relief funds, and volunteers visited the poor. In March 1910, Secretary V. R. Manning announced that Eartha M. M. White had been appointed to raise funds and work with the needy in the black community. By May, a visiting nurse had begun helping poor sick people, and a traveller's aid matron worked at the railroad station. In July, a Colored Relief Committee started to coordinate assistance to blacks. Manning reported affiliations with more than thirty local public and private city agencies as well as with the national Russell Sage Foundation. By the end of its first year, Associated Charities with its "friendly visitors," had become a major force for helping the needy in Jacksonville.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the Woman's Club continued to expand its horizons. A *Times-Union* editorial expressed its views on the club's contribution to the city in 1911: "What organization does the most to make this city what it should be? We are not asking now, what does the most to increase its size, its business, its wealth. To this the answer would unquestionably be the Board of Trade. But what organization does the most to shape the character of the city—morally, educationally, esthetically? Unquestionably the Woman's Club; and since character is more important than size we must rate the Woman's Club first among organizations in Jacksonville."⁴⁹

47. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 16, 1906, April 18, 25, 1903, October 30, 1906, April 23, 1907, June 4, October 15, 1908, and January 18, February 24, 1909.

48. *Ibid.*, June 7, October 27, and December 9, 1909, January 18, April 14, May 14, and July 17, 1910; *First Annual Report of the Associated Charities, Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville, 1910), 7-28, passim.

49. "Annual Report of the President of the Woman's Club of Jacksonville, 1911-1912" (n.p., n.d.), 39, quoting Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 5, 1911.

Jacksonville's advances in the provision of human services came primarily from the private sector and mainly for the white needy. When Associated Charities appointed Eartha White as a volunteer friendly visitor and fund raiser, Manning observed that the black community should be "responsible for their own," but funds were not forthcoming. The black community could not match the contributions of Jacksonville's white citizens, and they supported their own groups, the Colored Children's Rescue Home, and the Women's Interdenominational Relief Association. Still social work had expanded in Jacksonville during the first decade, the city funded a portion of the cost, and public opinion, as seen through the media and different voluntary associations, supported these developments.⁵⁰

A decade after the fire, Jacksonville had changed dramatically. Its population had more than doubled to 57,699. Compared with other cities of the southeast, Jacksonville had passed Mobile and Augusta in population, moved further ahead of Tampa, and gained ground on Charleston and Savannah. The net white population increase of 16,171 (plus 120 per cent) exceeded the net black increase of 13,057 (plus eighty per cent), resulting in an almost numerical balance in the city of 29,293 blacks and 28,329 whites.⁵¹

Downtown skyscrapers, churches, city hall, library, YMCA, and other handsome new buildings suggested a modernizing city. The busy port and busier railways expressed rapid commercial growth. Across the river and out along the streetcar lines, new housing and expanding suburbs suggested improved living standards for many residents. The diversity of entertainment and other leisure-time activities reflected the growing cosmopolitan character of the city. While education advanced only marginally, overall health conditions improved markedly, and the range of human services had been increased. From a citywide perspective, Jacksonville clearly progressed during the decade. Its leadership in city government, the Board of Trade, Woman's Club, and the newspapers could take substantial credit for this progress.

50. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 14, December 6, 1910, and November 7, 1909.

51. U. S. Bureau of Census, *Thirteenth Census, 1910*, vol. I, *Population*, 84-88, 179, 215. There were also seventy-seven Asians in Jacksonville in 1910.

Yet seen from the black perspective comprising one-half the population, Jacksonville's changes appeared quite different. In many ways they were regressive. Racial segregation was extended during the decade from schools, hospitals, theaters, and jails to saloons, streetcars, and even city government. In the 1880s, black political power had been a reality in Jacksonville. The statewide poll tax of 1889 and the all-white primary in 1901 restricted it, but black council members still represented the sixth ward until 1907. That year, however, the Duval legislative delegation gerrymandered ward boundaries to guarantee only white representation. Subsequently, city officials began removing blacks from all supervisory positions in government. Except for menial jobs, city employment became all-white.⁵²

White supremacy led to vigilante violence twice during the decade. In 1909, in northwestern Duval County, a black man allegedly assaulted a white woman. She told her son who rallied the neighbors. They caught a man, identified, and shot him before the sheriff arrived. This lynching went unchallenged by Duval County law enforcement officials. A year later, following heavyweight champion Jack Johnson's victory over Jim Jeffries on July 4th, black residents took to the streets to celebrate. This activity incensed some local whites who began roaming the same streets in gangs attacking blacks. Mayor Jordan called out the police and closed all saloons. During the evening the police arrested forty whites and by daybreak order had been restored. No deaths occurred, but a number of blacks were beaten and black-owned property destroyed. The *Times-Union* condemned the white violence, and the municipal court judge levied fines ranging from \$25.00 to \$50.00 per defendant. There were limits to white supremacy. Mob action which might threaten Jacksonville's image clearly exceeded that limit.⁵³

Perhaps James Weldon Johnson best summed up the black perspective on the changing direction of race relations in Jacksonville during that first decade of the twentieth century when he

52. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 6, 9, 1901, May 25, July 2, 26, 30, October 18, December 7, 8, 1905, February 7, 1906, April 6, 13, 1907, and June 28, 1910.

53. *Ibid.*, May 10, 1909, July 5, 6, 16, 1910. Similar riots took place in other cities across the United States following Johnson's victory, see Al-Tony Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1975), esp. chap. 3.

wrote in his autobiography: "Long after the close of the Reconstruction period, Jacksonville was known far and wide as a good town for Negroes . . . Jacksonville today is a one hundred percent Cracker town." The white establishment doubtless did not agree. Still Johnson's memories of visits with leading Jacksonville citizens during these and subsequent years before World War I support this view. Few whites were able to greet publically this talented educator, writer, and diplomat without evident embarrassment.⁵⁴

Still the black experience was not all negative. As the city improved for white Jacksonville residents during these years, it also brought limited progress for blacks. The literacy rate improved, mortality rates declined, and Associated Charities reached out, however timidly, providing services to the black community. Lincoln Park, Manhattan Beach, and the Bijou and Globe theaters provided recreational opportunities for blacks. There were new residential tracts being developed out Kings Road. Northern white Methodists supported the rebuilding of Cookman Institute, a new campus for the Boylan School, and the opening of Brewster Hospital.

Linked with white support were black initiatives. Black Baptists rebuilt Florida Baptist Academy, and black Methodists began construction of the new Edward Waters campus. Black business activity expanded substantially. The number of black barbers increased from twenty-three to forty-two, retail grocers from forty-five to eighty-three, tailors from three to fourteen. There were in 1910, seven saloons, four undertakers, five contractors (including Joseph H. Blodgett), nine retail druggists, seven real estate firms, and three insurance companies, including the Afro-American Life Insurance Company. The number of physicians increased from three to fifteen, lawyers from two to eight, bankers from zero to two, and dentists from one to two. Overall the 1910 City Directory listed 342 small businesses owned by blacks, almost double the number listed nine years earlier. There also were more churches and fraternal orders. Thus despite segregation, disfranchisement, and discrimination, black Jacksonville had expanded its economic and cultural life during the decade.⁵⁵

54. Johnson, *Along This Way*, 45, 297-300.

55. Polk and Co., *City Directory, 1910*, 1,093-163, passim.

For the entire city the future looked promising. City councilman St. Elmo Acosta proposed an automobile bridge across the St. Johns River. The Board of Trade had begun lobbying for a thirty-foot channel. Suburban land developers platted new subdivisions, and the infant movie industry was beginning to call Jacksonville "home." The Achilles heel, of course, was the omnipresent white supremacy. Jacksonville was not unique in this characteristic, however. Other southern cities, and most northern cities like Chicago and Cleveland, discriminated blatantly against their black minorities. But in Jacksonville, where over half the population received unequal treatment in health care, or had unequal opportunities in education and employment, the results were bound to affect the future growth of the city.