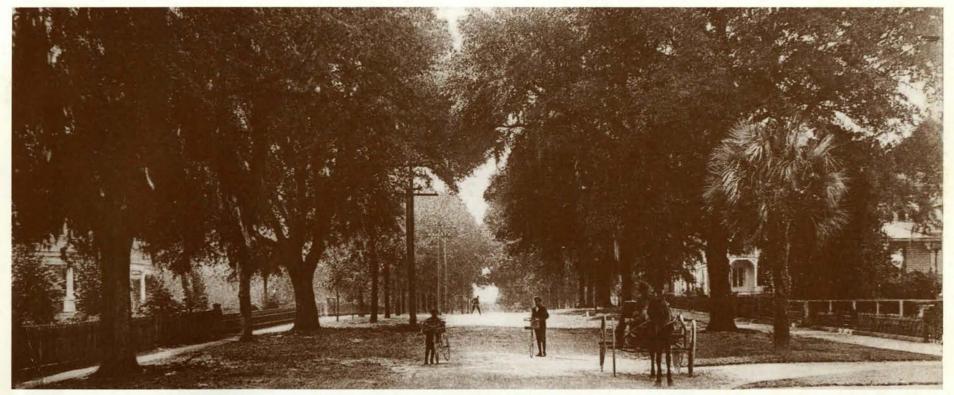
### The Living Heritage of Riverside & Avondale



WAYNE W. WOOD





THE LIVING HERITAGE

Riverside Rvandal

Wayne W. Wood

Photography by Judy Davis

and from the Riverside Avondale Preservation Archives



### INTRODUCTION

The roots of the Cummer Gallery of Art grow deeply in Riverside & Avondale.

Soon after Ninah May Holden and Arthur Gerrish Cummer married in 1897, they moved to this neighborhood and began a life together that has enriched the city of Jacksonville ever since. Both were deeply involved in community projects, but it was Ninah's passion for art and culture that has provided the family's greatest legacy.

The Cummers began collecting art in 1906 after the death of their only child, DeEtte Holden Cummer. Purchasing outstanding works of art became their lifelong interest, and Mrs. Cummer continued building the collection until her death in 1958, fifteen years after her husband's passing. She bequeathed the bulk of her estate for the creation and maintenance of an art museum, resulting in the construction of the Cummer Gallery of Art in 1961.

It is altogether fitting that the Cummer Gallery of Art should showcase the historic and architectural heritage of this remarkable neighborhood that the Cummer family loved so much. It is a pleasure for me to present this exhibition at the Cummer Gallery along with its companion book, celebrating "The Living Heritage of Riverside & Avondale." Together, they tell the story of a neighborhood that has enriched its future by preserving the beauty of its past.

Henry Adams, Ph.D.

Director, The Cummer Gallery of Art





### THE RIVER AND THE FIRE



IRST there was the river. And then came the fire. Above all else, these two great elemental forces framed the destiny of the neighborhood that is now known as

Riverside & Avondale.

In ancient days, long before the arrival of Europeans, native Americans flourished along the river. The narrowest point of the river, where it makes a broad S-shaped curve, was the natural place for these early inhabitants to establish a crossing and later a village. Livestock, as well as human traffic, forded the swift current here, and they gave it the name *Wacca Pilatka*, translated as "the place of the cows crossing."

Spanish settlers replaced the Indians at this crossing, followed by the British, who renamed it Cowford. Within a year after the United States took ownership of Florida in 1821, the name of the settlement at Cowford was changed to Jacksonville.

Located in the southernmost territory of the United States, Jacksonville soon began attracting Northern visitors. Traders and settlers traveled on ships down the Atlantic coast and up the St. Johns River to the city. Federal troops came to Jacksonville during the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842. And a few decades later during the Civil War, thousands of Union soldiers occupied Jacksonville four different times.

No doubt those visitors went home and told their friends about this pleasant southern locale where the winters were warm and the riverfront scenery was inviting. By 1869, just four years after the War Between the States, Jacksonville had become a full-fledged tourist mecca. Great steamer ships and paddlewheelers plied the waters of the St. Johns River, bringing thousands of tourists from the Northeast to Jacksonville each winter season. Elaborate hotels sprang up and commerce expanded to accommodate these Yankee visitors. They called it "The Winter City in Summer Land."

However, malaria epidemics and Henry Flagler's new railway (which lured tourists to St. Augustine and other points further south) effectively quashed Jacksonville's reputation as the prime winter vacation destination for Northerners after 1889. Nonetheless, by the turn of the century, Jacksonville had become a city of respectable size. Most of its 28,000 population lived near the business district on the north bank of the river.

So, in 1901 when the big fire occurred in the downtown area, it wiped out the city's largest residential neighborhood.



HE spring months had been dry. Workers at the Cleveland Fibre Factory on the northwestern edge of Jacksonville went about their business as on any other day,

taking bundles of Spanish moss fibers from vats in the factory and spreading them on outdoor platforms to dry. The moss would then be packed in bales and piled high in the adjacent wooden factory building, later to be processed into stuffing for cushions and mattresses. Upon occasion, a small pile of moss in the yard would catch on fire due to drifting sparks from cookstoves in the nearby residences. A bucket of water was kept on hand for the workers to douse these errant blazes. Unfortunately, when the spark landed on that third day of May, 1901, the workers were taking a lunch break.

The Great Fire swept across the city, igniting the Windsor Hotel (left) and then the St. James Hotel (right).



The flames quickly spread across the yard and ignited the tinder–filled factory. The ramshackle building erupted like a furnace and then collapsed with a roar, casting a rain of burning debris onto the wooden roofs of the nearby homes. Fanned by a rising wind from the west, the flames created a fiery vortex that became a firestorm moving across the city, with the fire jumping from block to block and consuming everything in its path.

By 3:20 p.m. the great Windsor Hotel was ablaze. A few minutes later the St. James Hotel, the pride of the city, was a mass of flames. Mayhem reigned on the streets, and the city's fire department was no match for the inferno. Thousands of residents evacuated their homes in desperation, clinging to whatever personal goods they could carry. Carts and wagons careened madly down the streets, piled high with steamer trunks and furniture. Side by side, the wealthy and poor streamed out of the central city, away from the wall of fire.

The plume of smoke from the blaze could be seen as far away as Raleigh, North Carolina. As the fire burned through the day, the glow of flames could be seen in the evening sky in Savannah, Georgia. A ship's captain in Key West saw what appeared to be two sunsets — one was in the west, and one was in the north. The one in the north was Jacksonville, burning.

On May 4, 1901, most of the residences and businesses in Downtown Jacksonville were gone. Only blackened chimneys, scarred stubs of trees, and brick rubble remained in the fire zone. The blaze had been curtailed by the river on the south and by

the swampy area around Hogan's Creek on the east and north. But before its fury had ended, the fire consumed 2,368 Jacksonville buildings and left nearly 9,000 people homeless. Miraculously, only seven persons died. It was one of the worst urban fires in this nation's history.

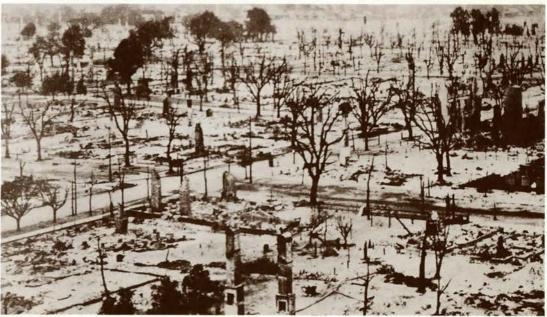
Throughout the Northeast, there was great interest in Jacksonville's calamity. The lead headline in the *New York Times* proclaimed "Jacksonville, Fla., Swept by Flames." Citizens of Baltimore sent a trainload of relief supplies. Architects, builders, investors and entrepreneurs from northern states made their way to Jacksonville, hoping to cash in on the rebuilding of a city from scratch.

Before the fire, Jacksonville had several suburban residential neighborhoods in the outlying areas beyond the central city. The city limits had been expanded in 1887 to include Springfield, Riverside, Brooklyn and Fairfield. These emerging neighborhoods remained only sparsely populated, and the majority of Jacksonville's citizenry lived downtown at the time of the fire.

The 1901 Fire caused major changes in the city's residential pattern. Many families who had lived downtown rebuilt their homes in the suburbs, causing a building boom that brought many new residents to the area. This influx further contributed to the growth of Jacksonville's suburban neighborhoods. None benefitted from this surge of growth more than Riverside.



Above, fleeing the inferno, throngs of people rushed to safety across Hogans Creek. Below, in the aftermath of the blaze, Downtown was a city of ashes.



RAP Archives

### FROM PLANTATIONS TO HOMESITES



ITTLE is known about the prehistoric occupation of the area now known as Riverside & Avondale. Most of Duval County's documented archaeological

sites lie north and east of this area. Map's from the 1700's show the land to be occupied by pine forests and marshland. The earliest known building here was a home constructed at the foot of present-day Lancaster Street for David Courvoisier. He had received a land grant from the British government for the area now known as Winter Point, just north of Memorial Park. The birthday of King George III was celebrated with a boat race at this point on June 4, 1776.

Miles Price platted Brooklyn, the neighborhood between Riverside

In 1868 Confederate veteran

and Downtown.

In 1783 the Spanish regained control of East Florida from England. Anxious to attract new settlers, in 1790 the government began granting

MAP Stages Granty & Site and L EAST FLORIDA Lumpelon & Co MILES PRICE ESQ SAINT JOHNS RIVER

tracts of land to prospective residents. The area known today as Riverside & Avondale is based on two such grants, one to Philip Dell and the other to Robert Hutcheson.

Dell's 1801 grant of 800 acres included all of the land along the river between McCoys Creek and a point midway between Barrs and King Streets. Known as "Dell's Bluff," this property changed hands several times until 1847, when it was purchased by James Winter, who operated an extensive plantation there.

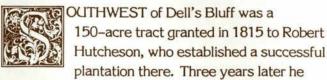
When Winter died in 1857, the entire estate was advertised for sale in the newspaper advertisement.

This tract of land is valuable not only for planting purposes but, owing to its immediate vicinity to the flourishing and growing Town of Jacksonville, is well adapted for private residences -- its position being on the River -- the Bluff high and commanding an extensive view of the River St. Johns. That portion adjacent to the Town of Jacksonville and lying on McCoy's Creek will at once find ready purchasers at good prices, if lots are laid out and offered for sale.

Most of the tract was purchased by Confederate veteran Miles Price, who heeded the advertisement's advice and began to sell off the plantation land. Price kept about a hundred acres bounded by McCoy's Creek and the river, which he platted as "Brooklyn." Although Price did manage to sell most of his lots, he was unsuccessful in turning this prime piece of real estate adjacent to Downtown into a fancy residential development.

Twenty five years later Brooklyn contained nearly 250 buildings, mostly small tightly-spaced wooden houses mixed with a number of factories and warehouses. Only on the large riverfront lots along Commercial Street (renamed Riverside Avenue in 1893) were some imposing residences constructed. A handful of prominent citizens built towering mansions along the waterfront in Brooklyn, including Mayor J. C. Greeley, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Francis Elias Spinner, Frederick M. Robinson, J. K. Russell, and publisher Horace Drew. These few great homes were only a foretaste of what was going to happen a half-mile further down Commercial Street over the next few years.

Miles Price was quite pleased with his bargain when he sold a huge chunk of his property — the southern 500 acres of Dell's Bluff — for \$10,000 in gold in 1868. This part of his land was so far away from the city, it could never amount to much. To make the deal even sweeter for Price, a die—hard Confederate veteran, the purchaser of this doubtful real estate was a Yankee, Edward M. Cheney. Little did Price know that Cheney and his backer, John M. Forbes of Boston, had a vision of a residential community that would far surpass anything the city had ever seen. They named it "Riverside."



obtained another 350 acres, extending his holdings to the south. This entire tract of land came into the ownership of William McKay in 1836, who named it "Magnolia Plantation." Producing sea island cotton, the plantation worked fifty slaves.





Elias G. Jaudon came to Jacksonville from Hilton Head, S.C., in the late 1830's. He bought Magnolia Plantation in 1850, it included 550 acres extending from what is now Powell Place all the way to Fishweir Creek. By 1855 his plantation had grown to over 1,000 acres, producing sea island cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, cattle, and sheep. Jaudon had six children, and in 1857 his eldest son Elias "Gabriel" Jaudon, Jr., married Sarah Curry. Jaudon gave the newlyweds a tract of about 150 acres in what later became the New Riverside subdivision, roughly the area to the west of the King Street shopping district. He also built a house for Gabriel and Sarah, believed to be the two-story frame house now located at 2793 Lydia Street, the oldest known house in Riverside.

After Elias Jaudon's death in 1871, Magnolia Plantation was divided among his wife and four remaining children. The land was gradually sold off as farmland and later as real estate developments.

The six-story residence of Mayor Jonathan Greeley (above left) was the most prominent landmark in Brooklyn and was probably the most outrageously ornate home ever built in Duval County.

Frederick M. Robinson's home (above right) was originally built as a guest hotel called "Rochester House" in about 1870. Before World War I, the house was barged up the river to a new location, 2107 River Blvd., where it remains today.



Jaudon's Magnolia Plantation farmhouse as it appears today.

Captain William James' farmhouse was on St. Johns Avenue.





FTER the Civil War, Jacksonville was faced with rebuilding after the devastating effects of the long conflict.

Northern visitors looking for Florida real

estate and investments were generally welcomed by the local populace, which encouraged the infusion of cash even if it came from Yankees. Two such Northern transplants were Elwell Jamison and Captain William James.

Jamison bought 100 acres of the old Jaudon plantation in 1869, in an area stretching from what is now Powell Place to near Elizabeth Place. He soon sold the southeastern 35 acres to Captain James. Instead of the crops such as cotton, cattle and sugarcane which typified the plantation era, Jamison grew rice, peaches and citrus. He became well known for his Scuppernong grapes, and his homemade wines won prizes at the state fair. William James was praised for his large strawberry farm.

By the turn of the century, these Yankee farmers had grown tired of farming and began selling off their holdings, subdividing the property for homesites. Captain James' original farmhouse survived into the 1970's, when it was demolished for condominiums. It was located on St. Johns Avenue near James Street, which was named after him.

By 1887 the Jacksonville City limits were expanded to present–day Donald Street, and almost immediately the residential expansion pushed well into the former Jaudon plantation lands. The most extensive and well promoted of these residential developments were Riverside Annex and New Riverside.



OHN Murray Forbes was a New England railroad magnate, friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson and prominent in Boston society. In 1852 he began visiting

Florida, where his family ties ran deep. His father was born in St. Augustine, during the time that his grandfather was rector of the Episcopal church in that city from 1764 to 1783. His uncle was mayor of St. Augustine in the early 1800's.

Like many well-to-do Northerners, Forbes came to Florida in the winter for its healthy climate. He no doubt first spotted the high, dry land of Dell's Bluff as he sailed up the St. Johns River on one of his vacation trips to Enterprise, near Sanford, or the village of Magnolia, north of Green Cove Springs. He empowered his friend Edward Cheney to buy the 500-acre tract, which stretched from what is now Forest Street to just past Barrs Street. In February, 1869, the land was platted for residential lots, with 14 acres reserved for a public park.

Cheney came to Jacksonville soon after the Civil War and quickly became a prominent citizen in his own right. Like Forbes, he was one of the many Northerners who had settled in the city during this era. Forbes served as National Chairman of the Republican Executive Committee, and Cheney held the chairmanship position for the Florida Republican Party. He was active in the Jacksonville Union–Republican Club, formed during the Civil War to establish a government loyal to the Union. The club was one of the first and most powerful political organizations in the city, and it became an advocate for black suffrage, Reconstruction, and Florida's



John Murray Forbes, the founder of Riverside, was a Boston millionaire who bought the former plantation lands stretching from Forest Street to Barrs Street for ten grand in gold.

readmission to the Union after the war. Native Southerners had a name for these "meddling Yankees" who came South after the war. They were the "Carpetbaggers."

In 1867 Cheney became editor, publisher and owner of the *Florida Union*. This weekly newspaper was the mouthpiece for Republicanism in the state and was the progenitor of the *Florida Times-Union*. Cheney was a leader in the drive to have free public education in Jacksonville. In 1873 he sold his newspaper and resumed his practice of law. Six years later he became the City Attorney, and by 1885 he was appointed U.S. Attorney.



U. S. Senator Wilkinson Call's home.

When they subdivided the land that was to become Riverside, both Cheney and Forbes reserved prominent riverfront lots on which they built their own residences. For the next thirty years, the two men's homes were the only dwellings in the block bounded by Commercial Street (later Riverside Avenue), Fisk and Gillmore Streets, and the river. Perhaps even then they envisioned that this location would be the epicenter of culture in Riverside. They were among the earliest residents of what would become known as "The Row."

John L. Requa's home was on what is now the site of Computer Power, Inc. Note the greenhouse in the front yard and the ornate pavilion on the riverfront.





Y including the suburb of Riverside in the expansion of its city limits in 1887, the City of Jacksonville only gained 555 new residents. Although Riverside was

platted for residential development 18 years earlier, it was still not densely populated. Among the first to join Forbes and Cheney in moving into the neighborhood were U.S. Senator Wilkinson Call and John Livingston Requa. All four of these neighbors were active in politics.

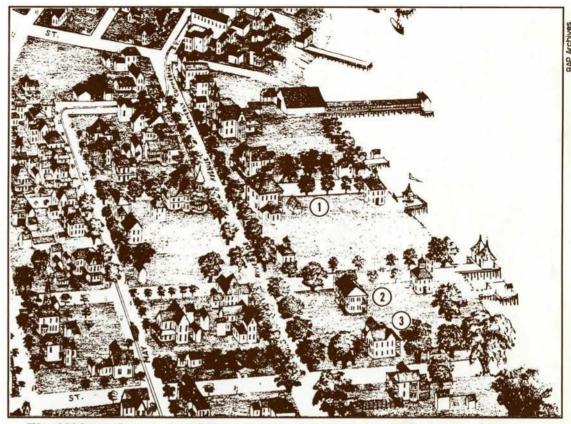
Wilkinson Call was a member of the politically well-connected Call family, which included a governor and a U.S. District Judge. Call moved into a wooden cottage built around 1870 on the site of what is now the Woman's Club. He served as a U.S. Senator from 1879 to 1897. Later he headed the Jacksonville Ortega Town Company which purchased the former Ortega Plantation in 1902, using \$50,000 borrowed from financier J. Pierpoint Morgan. With his health failing and the new Ortega development faltering, Senator Call sold the Ortgea tract to J.N.C. Stockton in 1906.

Immediately on the other side of Forbes and Cheney's homes was Requa's residence. John Requa came to Jacksonville a few years after the Civil War from New York. In 1868 he bought several downtown parcels of land, including one of the city's most prominent buildings, the three–story Sammis Building on Bay Street where he set up his law office. He made an unsuccessful bid for election to the U.S. Senate. In 1874 he built an ornate two–story house on the corner of Commercial and Rosselle Streets, with a large greenhouse in the front

yard and a wooden promenade and gazebo out over the river. Six years later he sold the house and moved to California.

As more prominent citizens constructed large riverfront estates, the character and quality of Riverside set it apart from other outlying neighborhoods. In 1885 Riverside was described as "... one of the most flourishing suburbs of Jacksonville, where are located some of the finest residences in this vicinity." With the extension of the street car line to the end of May Street in 1886 and its inclusion in the Jacksonville city limits the following year, Riverside's growth began to accelerate.

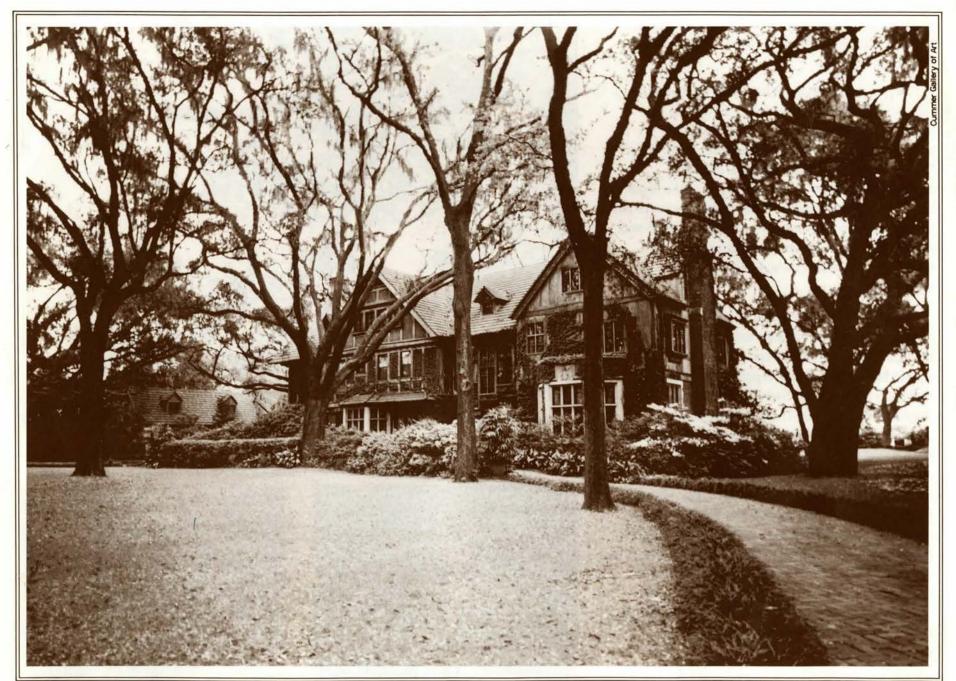
Forbes sold his Riverside Avenue home in 1889 but retained his financial interest in the Riverside development until 1892, when the remainder of unsold lots and the 14-acre park were sold to Benjamin S. Brigg and Swire Smith of Keichley, England, for \$95,000. The two Englishmen marketed their new subdivision heavily as "a suburb of beautiful modern houses and exclusively respectable citizens . . . enjoying a prosperity not equalled by any other portion of the city." Three years later, most of Riverside Avenue had been paved with vitrified bricks, and the neighborhood's population had grown to 2,500. It had indeed become Jacksonville's most desirable residential area, as reported in Brown's Book of Jacksonville: "Jacksonville has a number of attractive and growing suburbs, but the choicest one for residential purposes perhaps is Riverside."



This 1893 aerial perspective drawing shows several homes along Riverside Avenue:
(1) John Requa residence – see page 12; (2) John Forbes residence – see below left as it appeared in 1954 and also page 18, top right; (3) Edward Cheney residence – see below right.







Arthur and Ninah Cummer's residence

### THE CUMMER COMPOUND



HEN wealthy lumberman Wellington W.

Cummer decided to move from Michigan to Jacksonville in 1896, it was only natural that he selected Riverside for his

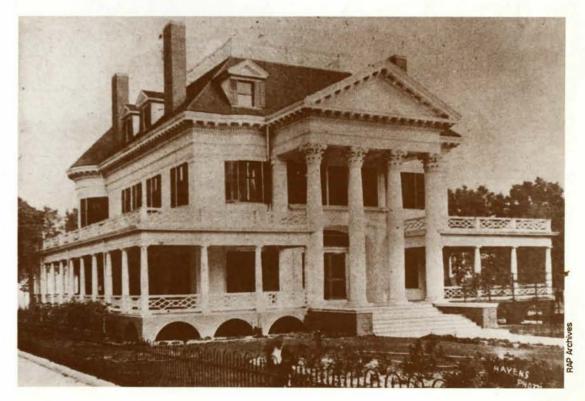
residence. He purchased a huge chunk of riverfront property between the former homes of Senator Call and Edward Cheney. Fifteen years earlier he had started a lumber business in Cadillac, Michigan, and by 1890 he had begun investing in timberland in the South. He expanded his business soon after arriving in Jacksonville, building a large modern lumber mill in Panama Park. He also constructed a railroad nearly 100 miles in length to haul lumber and phosphate from his operations west of Gainesville.

Mr. Cummer's new home on the corner of Riverside Avenue and Fisk Street was one of the grandest in the neighborhood, if not the city. Designed by Michigan architect William Williamson, the house cost \$25,000. Four massive two-story Corinthian columns were crowned by a highly detailed portico, and a one-story colonnade wrapped around the sides of the white and yellow house. With a huge reception room and a vast wine cellar, it was a fitting mansion for one of Florida's industrial leaders. The "Cummer Compound" (as it soon came to be known) also included a house on either side, occupied by Wellington Cummer's two sons, Waldo and Arthur, who were also active in the family business.

Waldo Cummer and his wife Clara moved into the old Cheney house across Fisk Street from his parents in 1898. Waldo made some modifications to



Wellington W. Cummer (left) owned vast amounts of timberland across north Florida. His residence (below) was the largest in Riverside.



Waldo Cummer remodeled the old Cheney residence, but it was still "old-fashioned."



The former Cheney house is shown here on a Cummer Lumber Co. barge, getting ready for its trip up the river to Willow Branch Creek.



The Cummer/Cheney house as it appears today, with its front facing sideways.



the old house to make it look more "modern," but within a few years he decided he should build a finer home to fit with the other fashionable residences being built along Riverside Avenue. He moved the old Cheney house nearly 200 feet closer to the river's edge. Waldo and his family continued to live in this relocated house until his new white stucco Spanish-style home was completed in 1908. He then put the older wooden house on a Cummer Lumber Company barge and floated it up the river to Willow Branch Creek, where it was then moved to its present location at 2959 Riverside Avenue. However, the house was too wide to fit properly on the new site, forcing Cummer to turn it sideways and to exclaim in exasperation, "It is so far out in the country, no one will ever notice!" And so it stands today, with its front door facing the neighbor's side yard.

Arthur married Nina May Holden in 1897, a few years after they both had graduated from the University of Michigan. The couple immediately moved to a duplex at Gillmore and Oak Streets, three blocks from Arthur's parents. Within four

years, Ninah and Arthur began construction of a \$20,000 Tudor style home in the Cummer Compound. Ninah was tremendously interested in arts and culture, and it did not take long for their home to become a showplace filled with lavish furnishings and *objets d'art*.

In 1910 Ninah's love of horticulture prompted her to landscape their river frontage in the style of a formal English garden, featuring a curved arbor and wisteria. She remodeled the house in 1931, adding "The Tudor Room," a large drawing room richly adorned with mahogany paneling, an ornate ceiling and European antiques. In that same year she also redesigned a major portion of the yard as an Italian garden, following a visit to the Villa Gamberaia Gardens in Florence, Italy. She added two blue reflecting pools and shrub-lined brick paths, accented by carved stone chairs, a fountain and statuary purchased in Italy. The centerpiece of the garden is an ancient oak tree, with limbs that spread over 130 feet.

A moving force in the city's cultural scene, Ninah Cummer was the founder and president the first garden club in Florida, the Garden Club of Jacksonville. She was instrumental in the development of Memorial Park, convincing the Olmsted Brothers (the sons of famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted) to design the park. Upon her death in 1958, she willed her extensive art collection and created a museum foundation that gave birth to the Cummer Gallery of Art in 1961 on the site of her old home. Nina Cummer's Tudor Room and Italian gardens have been preserved as part of the museum's rich heritage.



Ninah Holden Cummer (left) began her art collection in 1906 and traveled throughout the world over the next 50 years collecting masterpieces. Her husband Arthur Garrish Cummer is shown below with canine friends at the depot at Cummer Lumber Mills. His favorite dog was "Tom," who frequently accompanied Mr. Cummer on walks down Riverside Ave.



mmer Gallery of A



J.E.T. Bowden was mayor of Jacksonville at the time of the Great Fire. The columns on the front porch of his home (right) were solid mahogany. John Murray Forbes' old home can be seen to the right of Bowden's.

Architect Rutledge Holmes designed this exotic house (right) for Col. Raymond Cay in 1905. In the 1950's it became the Jacksonville Art Center, forerunner of the Jacksonville Art Museum. The great Southern Colonial home shown at the far right was the residence of Episcopal Bishop Edwin G. Weed.



### THE ROW



EFORE the arrival of the Cummer family, only about twenty large homes had been constructed along Riverside Avenue between Date Street (now Edison

Avenue) and the end of May Street, where the street car line ended. As part of the migration to the suburbs after the Great Fire of 1901, many prominent citizens built fashionable residences along this section of Riverside Avenue. Only ten years after the fire, it was the undisputed residential showplace of the city. Over fifty elegant mansions lined Riverside Avenue, and some referred to it as "one of the most beautiful streets in America." Those who lived there simply called it "The Row". Sadly, all but two of these great mansions have been demolished.



AAP Archives



"The Row" was lined with elegant mansions in 1902.



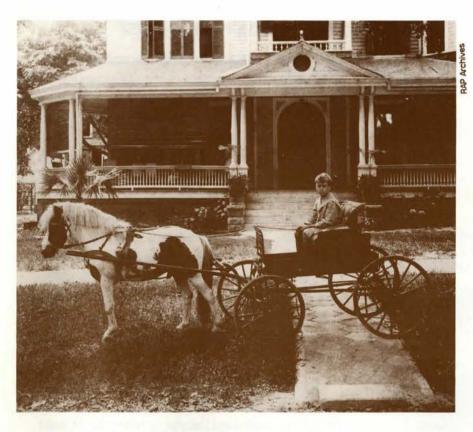
Right, the Frank G. Russell residence on Riverside between Gillmore & Fisk (built 1907); below, L-R, Charles Garner/William Kay residence, Riverside at Gillmore (built 1901); Edward Lane residence, Riverside between Roselle & Gillmore (designed by Klutho, 1907); L. A. Wilson residence, Riverside at Lomax (built ca. 1904)













Clockwise from left: J. Dobbin Holmes residence on the corner of Riverside at Fisk (built ca. 1901); John E. Hartridge residence, Riverside at Gillmore (built ca. 1896); Edward A. Champlain residence, Riverside at Roselle (built 1902); Samuel B. Hubbard residence, Riverside at Gillmore (built ca. 1902).





### BAP Actives

Top, looking south on
Riverside Avenue, 1918. The
"picnic grounds" on the left
would later become Memorial
Park. Right, Memorial Park
soon after completion in 1924.
Note the eagle statue (far
right) and the absence of the
Park Lane. Bottom, the Park
Lane Apartments nearing
completion in 1926, using
wooden scaffolding to erect the
stucco-over-hollow-tile
construction.





### **GROWTH ALONG THE RIVER**



LTHOUGH the 1887 expansion of Jacksonville's city limits extended all the way to Donald Street, only a few homes were built beyond the terminus of the

street car line at May Street and Riverside Avenue before the Great Fire. Most of this area remained rural in character, until the extension of the street car tracks to Willow Branch was completed in 1901, just about the time the fire was creating an exodus from Downtown. The trolley line was a major impetus to development. The original mule–drawn street cars were replaced with an electrified system in 1895, allowing Riverside residents to travel to Downtown in less than fifteen minutes. By 1909 the Riverside line connected with another line that ran all the way to Ortega.

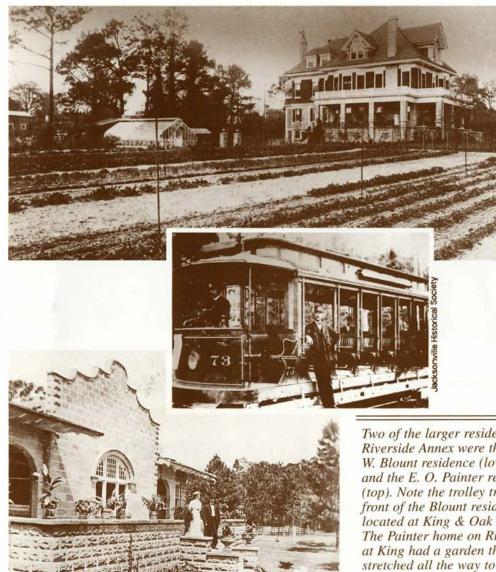
Riverside's growth accelerated rapidly from the time of the fire until World War I, with development advancing southward parallel to the river. In most cases construction first occurred on the land within a few blocks of the river, with large homes built by prominent citizens on the riverfront lots. Houses gradually filled in the land further away from the river, with their size and cost generally declining with their distance away from Riverside Avenue.

As Riverside became more populated, there was a clamor to build more parks. The original 14-acre Riverside Park set aside by Forbes and Cheney was cleared and landscaped by 1894, including the construction of several artificial lakes. The entire park was fenced in, to keep out roaming cattle. Willow Branch Park was acquired by the city in 1916

to provide recreation space further out in the neighborhood. Riverside's signature park, Memorial Park, was not completed until 1924, with the unveiling of its great bronze statue known as "Life" or "Winged Victory."

While Riverside prospered, the western part of the old Magnolia Plantation remained thickly wooded with a few scattered farms. As early as 1884 a portion of the Jaudon estate was purchased for development as a residential community by a group of northerners, led by James Randall Challen, William Harksheimer, and John H. Talbott. Named "Edgewood," the development extended from the river to present-day Roosevelt Boulevard, along Challen, Edgewood, and Talbot Avenues. The land was platted for homesites, but only a few residences, mostly farmhouses, were constructed there. During World War I, hunters were still shooting wild game in this vicinity.





Two of the larger residences in Riverside Annex were the Bryan W. Blount residence (lower left) and the E. O. Painter residence (top). Note the trolley tracks in front of the Blount residence, located at King & Oak Streets. The Painter home on Riverside at King had a garden that stretched all the way to St. Johns Avenue. Lower right, Casper and Ida Beerbower built their own home "way out in the woods" on the corner of Challen and Riverside in 1909. Eleven years later, Avondale had grown up around them.



### -AND THEIR OWN HOME IN AVONDALE

Il ready and waiting for the happy return. No landlord to consult; no annual lease; no moving van bugaboo; but a home which is *theirs* from cellar to attic, from plans to pictures

From the Avondale sales brochure, 1922.

### "CORRECT" AVONDALE



Y the summer of 1920, several wealthy investors led by Telfair Stockton had assembled a large tract of land including the former Edgewood subdivision and the

adjoining property to the north, at a cost of over \$500,000. They created an exclusive residential community that would overshadow all of the smaller developments around it. Stockton chose the name "Avondale" after a subdivision near James R. Challen's former home in Cincinnati. Avondale was advertised as "Riverside's Residential Ideal," where only the "correct" and "well to do" people would live. Boasting that "Avondale is desirable because the right kind of people have recognized its worth and because the wrong kind of people can find property more to their liking elsewhere," the Avondale Company sold 402 of the total 720 lots and completed nearly two hundred homes in its first two years.

As the most elaborately planned development in Jacksonville at that time, Avondale lived up to its publicity. Sidewalks, sewerage, city water, gas, electricity, and telephone lines were installed before lots were offered for sale. Gently curving roadways and sixteen parks were laid out by William Pitkin, a well known landscape architect from Ohio. Restrictive covenants regulated types of construction in order to maintain the exclusive nature of the residential development. Most of the houses were two-stories tall. Adopting the architectural style that would saturate Florida during the booming years of the 1920's, a large proportion of the early

RAP Archives







Houses under construction along Avondale Circle, 1925

Avondale residences were built in the Mediterranean Revival style. The Better Homes Company, a subsidiary of the Avondale Company, did much of the actual construction, insuring a uniformity of building quality.

Initially considered part of Riverside, Avondale quickly developed its own identity. The original Avondale subdivision was long and narrow, only five blocks wide (from Seminole Road to just beyond Talbot) and one mile long (from the river to Roosevelt Boulevard). Although contiguous developments such as Windsor Place, Ingleside Heights, St. Johns Heights, Shadowlawn, and Arden sprang up, the mystique of Avondale prevailed: the entire area from McDuff Avenue to Fishweir Creek is today generally known as "Avondale." By the time the Florida building boom fizzled in 1928, virtually all of this area had been developed.

Avondale Shopping Center in the 1930's





Members of the Champlain family, ca. 1905

Paving Herschel Street, between Seminole and Avondale, ca. 1926



### A LIVING HERITAGE



URING the peak years of Riverside & Avondale's development from the early 1890's to 1929, a profusion of residential building styles gained popularity across

the nation. With the influx of building tradesmen who came to the city after the Great Fire, the neighborhood became a laboratory for aspiring architects and competing residential fashions. It now has the distinction of having the largest variety of architectural styles of any neighborhood in Florida. In 1985 Riverside was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Jacksonville's first Historic District, and Avondale joined the National Register four years later.

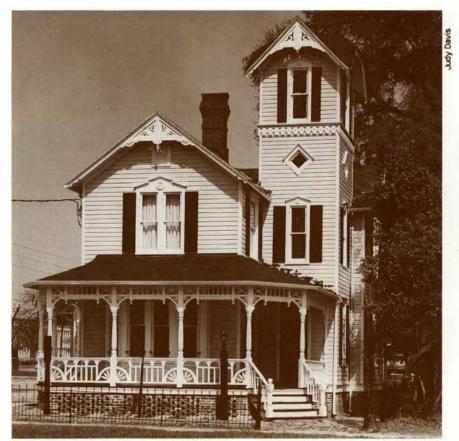
Today Riverside & Avondale form one of this state's unique neighborhoods. The riverfront setting, the ample parks, and the tree-canopied streets blend with the varied architecture to produce a pleasing tapestry. Its citizens are a diverse mixture of ages and incomes, yet a strong sense of community pervades this neighborhood.

Riverside & Avondale residents have been at the forefront of historic preservation in Jacksonville. They appreciate the character of homes with beveled–glass windows, inlaid wood floors, sculpted fireplaces and other works of architectural art that were created in less–hurried times when craftsmanship was taken for granted. They understand that historic preservation is not an attempt to live in the past, but is instead a rational survival technique for living in a modern word. It is the celebration of living in a place that has a rich and valuable heritage, a heritage that is very much alive.

### ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

### QUEEN ANNE STYLE

The most ornate and richly textured architecture of the Victorian era was the Queen Anne style. Its inspiration came from the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) in England, where eclectic tastes allowed classical ornamentation to be grafted onto medieval building forms. Queen Anne architecture spread quickly throughout the United States in the 1870's. Fervently asymmetrical and combining a variety of forms, colors, and materials, this style manifested itself in every type of residential structure from mansions to cottages. Corner turrets, verandas, balconies, and elaborate gingerbread are but a few of the ornamental features which typify the Queen Anne style. In Riverside as elsewhere, this style was in its heyday from the 1870's to about 1905. Consequently, most of the exemplary houses of this style were between Forest and Margaret Streets, where most development occurred during that period.



The Ernest Ricker Residence/"The Queen Victoria," 717 Post St. (1893)



632 May St. (built ca. 1901-03)



543 Lomax St. (built 1902), demolished in 1975



Hedrick Residence on Lomax St. (1893)

## sva Davis

The Emanuel Gale Residence, 1116-1126 Acosta St. (built ca. 1912)

### COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE

The Colonial Revival style represents a nostalgic return to the architecture of a younger America. Although various colonial residential types are reprised and often combined within this style, the most common revivals found in Jacksonville are Georgian and Neo-Classical designs. Symmetrical facades, classical detailing, and a portico or veranda are almost always present. Typically, the porch columns are of a classic order and are one story in height. However, monumental two-story columns may be found on more extravagant homes, which are often referred to as "Southern Colonial." Colonial Revival residences were popular as commodious, respectable dwellings for middle and upper class Americans from the 1870's through the 1920's. Hybrids which combine late Queen Anne features with the Colonial Revival style are common throughout Riverside & Avondale.

1630 Copeland St. (built ca. 1906)



729 Lomax St. (built 1908), now removed



3105 St. Johns Ave. (built 1910)



-

### **GEORGIAN REVIVAL STYLE**

Much of the colonial American architecture under Kings George I, II, and III was characterized by an academic formality, enriched by classical detail. Although this "Georgian" style quickly faded after the Revolutionary War, it was revived a century later by Northern architects such as McKim, Mead, and White, who sought to restore order to American architecture. Typical features of Georgian Revival buildings are the highly symmetrical facades, Palladian windows, central pedimented pavilions, belt courses, and eaves detailed as classical cornices. The typical expression of this style in Riverside & Avondale is a dark-red brick house with sharply contrasting, crisp classical details, constructed from about 1905 to the 1930's.



Left, 1854
Montgomery Pl. (built 1928-29)
Below, the
Bisbee/Coachman
Residence, Riverside
Ave. at Bishop Gate
Lane, now covered over
by a modern office
building

3248 Riverside Ave.





## RAP Accinives

James Munoz Residence, Riverside Ave. at Post St., demolished (built 1902)



2717 Riverside Ave. (built 1914)

### SHINGLE STYLE

Originated in the seacoast towns of New England, the Shingle Style became a popular alternative to the exuberance of the Queen Anne mode. Nearly the entire building is uniformly covered with wooden shingles. Even porch posts may be shingled, although rough-cut stone and brick is sometimes used for piers and other elements at ground level to complement the texture of the shingles. Although lacking the busy ornamentation of the Queen Anne, Shingle Style houses often share the same asymmetrical massing, balconies and rounded turrets, but in more subdued fashion. Various roof formats include long sloping gables, gambrel types, and multi-planed ridges. The eaves are usually abbreviated. Locally, cypress was most commonly used to make the shingles on these houses, due to the ready availability of this material.

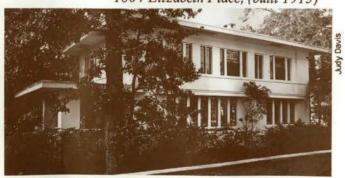


2799 Riverside Ave. (built 1911)

### PRAIRIE STYLE

A small group of young Chicago architects, led by Frank Lloyd Wright and inspired by Louis Sullivan, produced an outburst of creativity in the early 1900's that was brief but unrivaled. This movement later became known as the "Prairie School," for its architecture was inspired by the Midwestern landscape. Rejecting the currently popular revival trends, these architects strove for a new American aesthetic in building design. Broad overhanging roofs and strongly defined horizontal lines are the most easily recognized elements of Prairie Style residences. Flowing internal spaces, building materials which blend with nature, and horizontal bands of windows are commonly used. Ornamentation is usually simple and abstract. Architect Henry Klutho brought this style to Jacksonville, and other local architects experimented with it until the early 1920's. They adapted the style to the local climate and building materials, utilizing brick and stucco construction with low-pitched tile roofs. Riverside Avenue has more Prairie Style buildings than any other street outside of the Midwest.

1804 Elizabeth Place, (built 1913)





2821 Riverside Ave. (built 1913)

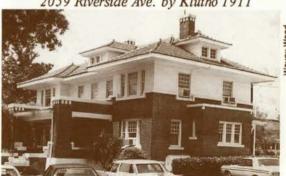
3037 Riverside Ave (built ca. 1914)



2254 Riverside Ave. (built 1916)



2059 Riverside Ave. by Klutho 1911



### The house at the right was Riverside's first bungalow, designed by architect Mellen Greeley as his own residence in 1905. Located at 2561 Oak St., it has now been greatly altered from this original design.



**RAP Archives** 





1432 Belvedere Ave. (Tudor style)



2830 Post St. (California style)



1355 Hollywood Ave. (Colonial style)

### THE BUNGALOW

The bungalow was probably America's most common residential style constructed from the early 1900's through the 1930's. Popularized in magazines and touted for their functional simplicity, bungalows were mass-produced for the growing number of middle-class home owners. A major promoter of this style was Gustav Stickley, a furniture designer and publisher who led the Arts and Crafts Movement and greatly influenced popular thinking with his 1909 book, Craftsman Homes. Although elements were often borrowed from other styles, the basic plan of a bungalow is fairly consistent. It has one-and-a-half stories, with a gently pitched gable usually facing the street. There is always a porch, often sheltered by a secondary gable and supported by tapered piers. Rafters and wooden trim are exposed. Various materials, including brick, stones, wood siding and shingles frequently appear on the same facade. Riverside & Avondale has the largest collection of bungalows of any neighborhood in Florida.



2770 Oak St. (Prairie style)

### **GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE**

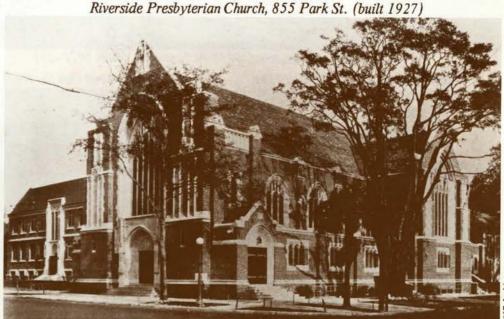
Revivals of medieval styles have been recurrent in American architecture since the early 19th century. Imported largely from England, the Gothic Revivals have displayed numerous sub-types, all of which share the common features of pointed arches and an emphasis on vertical lines with upward thrust. The Gothic Revival style is most frequently used in ecclesiastical and educational buildings. Asymmetrical in plan and devoid of classical ornamentation, examples of this style often feature ornate window tracery, buttresses, and ornamental cast-stone decorations.



Church of the Good Shepherd, 1100 Stockton St. (built 1917-29)

Riverside Christian Church, 2841 Riverside Ave. (built 1922)



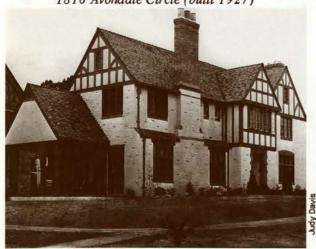


# Sup Actives

The Edward Lane Residence, 3730 Richmond St. (built 1927-28)

1816 Avondale Circle (built 1927)

2160 Oak St. (built 1903)





### **TUDOR REVIVAL STYLE**

Among the flurry of revival modes at the turn of the twentieth century was the Tudor Revival style. An unmistakable feature of this style is half-timbering, thin strips of wood set between the stucco panels of the upper story walls. The often whimsical patterns of the Tudor Revival half-timbering are only superficial decorations, never structural components like the Elizabethan originals. Other features borrowed from the late architecture of the Tudor reign in England (1485–1603) include prominent pairs of gables, oriel windows, massive chimney stacks, brick or stone first stories, and the pointed elliptical Tudor arch. This style reached its peak in the 1920's when "Olde English" residences were highly popular in Avondale.

3855 St. Johns Ave. (built 1925-26)



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### JACOBETHAN REVIVAL STYLE

Jacobethan Revival was another of the styles that stemmed from English precedents, and it is closely akin in spirit and chronology to Tudor Revival. Its name is a compound of Jacobean and Elizabethan, indicating that it was derived from architecture of the reigns of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-1625). Brick is the most common building material, with lighter stone trim used extensively for window and door frames, quoins, parapets, rounded arches, and other decorative details. Windows are usually grouped and are divided into rectangular lights by stone mullions. The tall chimneys are also distinctive, with shafts grouped in stacks or lined up in diagonal rows. The majestic and restrained Jacobethan demeanor is often used in educational buildings, churches and elegant mansions.



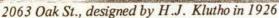
1822 Edgewood Ave. (built 1927)

The Leon Cheek Mansion, 2263 River Blvd. (built 1928-29)





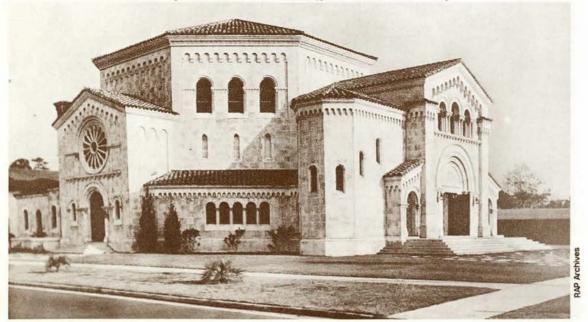
Judy Davis





3404 St. Johns Ave. (built 1928-29)

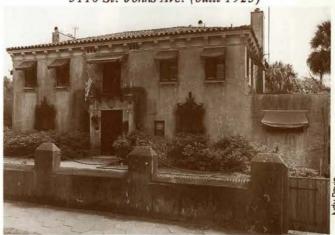
Riverside Baptist Church, Park & King Sts. (built 1924-25)



### MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL STYLE

Although architect Addison Mizner did not invent this style, he glamourized it to the extent that it became the pervasive architectural theme of Florida during the 1920's real estate boom. It is now called "Mediterranean Revival," reflecting its synthesis of both Italian and Spanish motifs. It has also been known variously as Spanish Colonial and "Mongrel Spanish." Ornate low-relief stonework and tile roofs are the hallmarks of this style. A profusion of arches, columns, parapets, and wrought-iron details is often present. Exterior walls are sometimes made of buff-colored bricks but are more commonly composed of hollow tile blocks covered with stucco. In Avondale, like other subdivisions whose peak years of development were in the 1920's (San Marco, San Jose, Venetia, Granada, etc.), this style became a pervasive theme. Riverside south of Margaret Street also has several examples of this style, all built in the 1920's.

3116 St. Johns Ave. (built 1923)



Judy Davi

### ART DECO & ART MODERNE

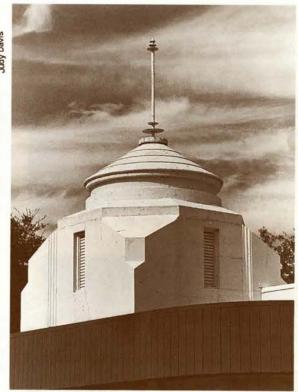
Inspired by the Exposition des Decoratifs in Paris in 1925, Art Deco was a movement toward modernism that encompassed jewelry, art, clothing, and furniture, as well as architecture. Breaking with revivalist traditions and embodying the motifs of the machine age, Art Deco architecture is essentially a style of ornamentation. Its details are highly stylized, largely angular and geometric, including zigzags, chevrons, and foliate forms sculpted in hard-edged low relief. Art Moderne was an outgrowth of the Art Deco style, with emphasis on streamlined and gently curving surfaces. Geometric forms still predominate the ornamentation, but without the hard-edged cubism of the earlier phases of Art Deco. Curved walls and window panels, glass bricks, and stylized towers are often integral parts of the composition. In many buildings the Art Deco and Moderne traits are combined, resulting in the common usage of the term "Art Deco" to include both categories. This style remained popular from the late 1920's into the 1940's.



Fire Station #14, 4242 Herschel St. (built 1933)



3225 St. Johns Ave., by Klutho (built 1936)



2753 Park St. (built 1941)

2665 Park St., designed 1942 by Marsh & Saxelbye



### Sive Salver

2743 Park St., home of architect James Walsh



Transitional Colonial/Queen Anne



1819 Goodwin St., by Henrietta Dozier



Spanish Bungalow Deco - 2776 Lydia St.



2100 Myra St. (moved from 1523 Oak)



Col. Cay's Carriage House, 1545 May St.

### **ECLECTICS & EXOTICS**

Some buildings defy being fitted into a neat stylistic category. In fact, many structures in Riverside & Avondale do not exemplify any single style, but exhibit characteristics of several styles. These hybrids are described as "eclectic," and quite often they are the result of an inventive merger of the features and concepts of differing architectural modes. Sometimes one historic style may have an influence on another subsequent style, and the result is a "transitional" building. A common example of this in Riverside is the combination of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles - asymmetrical two-story houses with classic-columned verandas, ornamental windows and decorative gables and dormers. Still other buildings are such a personal invention by their designer that it is difficult to match them with historical precedents. Overall, these architectural permutations contribute much to the neighborhood context. Their eclecticism does not detract from their beauty or significance - rather, it gives Riverside & Avondale a delightful texture and variety.



St. Johns Ave. at Mallory (demolished)

### The Cummer Gallery of Art

In the 97 years since Ninah Holden Cummer moved to Riverside in 1897, her spirit has been a guiding force in the arts and culture of the neighborhood. Among her many civic contributions, the greatest legacy was her creation of the DeEtte Holden Cummer Museum Foundation. Upon her death in 1958, Mrs. Cummer bequeathed her considerable art collection and resources to establish a museum "for educational and cultural purposes for the benefit of all the people of Jacksonville."

Since it opened on November 11, 1961, The Cummer Gallery of Art has enlarged the original Cummer collection to include over 2,000 works of art, ranging from the 5th century B.C. to the present. Among the museum's outstanding collection of paintings, sculpture, graphics, furniture and the decorative arts is one of the largest and rarest collections of Early Meissen Porcelain, which draws visitors and scholars from throughout the world. Its collection of paintings and sculpture by European, American and oriental masters has contributed to the Cummer Gallery's national reputation.

The Gallery stands on the site of the former Cummer house on Riverside Avenue, and it retains Mrs. Cummer's formal gardens bordering the St. Johns River. Rising like a canopy above the terraces, nooks and ornate foliage is a magnificent oak tree with a crown spread of 130 feet.

The heritage of Ninah Holden Cummer lives on in the Cummer Gallery of Art, which has fulfilled her dream of becoming "a center of beauty and culture worthy of the community."

### Riverside Avondale Preservation, Inc.

Since it was founded 20 years ago in 1974, Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) has become one of the largest neighborhood preservation organizations in the South.

From its headquarters in a restored 1909
Colonial Revival house at 2623 Herschel Street,
RAP's professional staff and volunteers coordinate
and facilitate hundreds of projects throughout the
neighborhood. RAP members are involved in such
diverse activities as tree planting, restoration
seminars, repaving brick streets, home ownership
programs, monitoring zoning, rescuing historic
buildings from demolition, political forums, fostering
improvements in neighborhood schools and
businesses, crime prevention, and restoration of our
parks.

RAP annually sponsors a highly acclaimed Tour of Homes, produces one of the region's largest art festivals, and presents a spectacular Christmas Luminaria that lights up the neighborhood's streets with over 30,000 candles. In 1985, RAP volunteers completed a 5-year research project which led to Riverside's being listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Jacksonville's first Historic District. RAP has championed the cause of preservation throughout the city.

Most important, RAP has awakened a consciousness in Riverside & Avondale residents to work together to ensure a high quality of life and to preserve the historic beauty of this neighborhood. After 20 years, RAP's work is still vital and ongoing.



The Cummer Gallery of Art and Riverside Avondale Preservation are proud to join their energies to present the exhibit, "The Living Heritage of Riverside & Avondale," and this companion book.



### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks to these special contributors to this book:

Rick Bowers
Steven Cargile
Judy Davis
Jean Hall Dodd
Bonnie Grissett
Carol Harris
Jacksonville Historical Society
Jacksonville Preservation Commission

Joel McEachín
Daniel L. Schafer
Vance Shrum
Stephen J. Tool, Jr.
David Vedas
Shirley Webb
Ray Wiley
Jacksonville Preservation Commission

### THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The old photographs in this book are from the RAP Archives. We are very grateful to the many people who have contributed photos to this collection.

The introductory/closing photos for this book Include:

Front cover: Wellington W. Cummer residence, 1902, at Riverside Avenue and Fisk Street.

Inside front cover: The family of J.N.C. Stockton and their home on the corner of Riverside Avenue and Stockton Street (demolished in the 1920's).

Page 1: Riverside Avenue at Gilmore Street, 1905.

Page 2: The kindergarten class at Mrs. Buckland's French Primary School, 1922. Left to right, Rosalind Lambert Koons, Robert Kloeppel, Jr., Martin Hughes, Elizabeth Hamilton, Theodosis Shine, Katherine Bacon, Howe Edward Moredock, Jr., William Yates, John Calvin Wells, Jr., Virginia Peyton & Betty Nooney.

Page 3: Front door, 1499 Edgewood Avenue South, designed by Marsh & Saxelbye, 1924.

Inside back cover: In front of the E. A. Champlain residence, ca. 1905, Riverside Avenue at Rosselle.

Outside back cover: The J. O. Chamblis residence, 1914, at Lemon (now College) and Margaret Streets.

### JUDY DAVIS, PHOTOGRAPHER

Most of the contemporary photographs in this book and in the Cummer Gallery of Art exhibit, "The Living Heritage of Riverside & Avondale," are the work of Judy Davis. These photos were taken from 1982 to 1989 as part of a project for the Jacksonville Historic Landmarks Commission to illustrate the book "Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage." She was assisted in creating these photographs by David Vedas. Judy Davis is widely recognized as Jacksonville's foremost architectural photographer, and we are very grateful for her contributions.

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### **ENDNOTES**

PAGE 5 — Davis pp. 24-28, 39, 52-58, 76-81, 116-196; Martin pp. 2-9, 26-29, 81-94; Ward pp.19-33, 133-136, 155-158, 167-170.

PAGES 6-7 — Broward pp. 4-9, 13-16; Davis pp. 219-227, 315-317; Hallam p. 27; Harrison; Ward pp. 174-176.

PAGE 8-9 — Abstract of Riverside p.3-12; Archibald Plat Books; Brown p. 139; Charter & Ordinances of the City, 1893; Davis pp. 42, 44-45, 48; Esgate pp. 24, 87-88, 113, 143; Gold pp. 70, 101; Hallam, pp. 5-8, 11-20, 100-101; The News, Dec. 16, 1858; Werndli, "Riverside" pp. 2-8, 19; Wood, Jacksonville's, pp. 105-107, 130, 149.

PAGE 10-11 — Davis pp. 143, 315-317, 453; Gold pp. 159, 165, 169; Hallam pp. 5-8, 104-109; Werndli, "Riverside" pp. 5-8; Wood, Jacksonville's p. 381.

PAGE 12-13 — Archibald Plat Books; Brown pp. 55, 139; Census 1870, 1880; City Directories 1870-1889; Craig p.42; Gold p. 159; Koch Map, 1893; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1893, 1897, 1903; Webb p. 192; Werndli, "Riverside" pp. 5-8.

PAGE 15-17 — Gold pp. 159, 186, 191, 196, 208, 212; Hallam pp. 20-21, 55-56, 106-109; Koch Map, 1893; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1897, 1903.

PAGE 18 -- Hallam pp. 46-85, 112-113.

PAGE 22-23 — Brown pp. 55-56; City Directories 1901-1920; Craig pp93-98; Davis p. 374; Esgate pp. 21, 27, 101; Greater Jacksonville News; Hallam pp. 27-35, 95; Koch Map 1893; LeBaron Map 1885, 1887; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1893, 1897, 1903, 1913; Webb pp. 192-193.

PAGE 24-25 — Archibald Plat Books; Avondale brochure pp. 4, 8, 15, 17; Davis p. 279; Duplicate Abstract of Avondale pp. 11-14, 18-24, 29-34, 51-53, 81-83, 93; Esgate pp. 27, 101; FTU 1-6-21; Hallam pp. 47, 95-96; Sales Map of Avondale, Oct. 1, 1923; Webb pp. 192-193; Wood, Jacksonville's pp. 111.

