



The Past...

The Present...

The Future.



Mayport



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"*Mayport* is something we don't have anymore...An

untouched place...You can go home again."

"*Mayport* has a pull on you...if you leave here, you always

want to come back."

"A friendly small town feeling...Feels Southern,has good

Southern values."

"Like being at the end of the world, leaving everything behind

you...Heritage...Indian and fishing history."

"It has a real way of living...Everyone here works."

...From the *Mayport* Village Visioning Sessions:

July 1998



Mayport History

(Its Past)



*A Timucuan Village sketched by
French Artist Jacques Le Moyne.
(Florida Historical Society)*

Mayport's history began with the Timucuan Indians, who had been living in the southeastern United States for over 5,000 years. These Indians were considered to have evolved to a very high level of technological achievement in comparison to other Indian cultures of North America. Their lifestyles was captured by Jacques Le Moyne, an artist who accompanied French Explorer Jean Ribault. When Le Moyne returned to France, he set down a near complete history of these Indians.

The area of Mayport and the St. Johns River was first explored by Jean Ribault, who landed in Northeast Florida. His approximate landing site was Batten Island, across from present day Mayport Village. Ribault entered the river on the first day of May in 1562 with three ships. Upon Ribault's arrival he was met by the Timucuans led by their Chief Satouriba. The French were later forced out by Spain who ruled Florida until 1821 when it was then ceded to the United States. From that date on, the settlement began to grow along the St. Johns River.

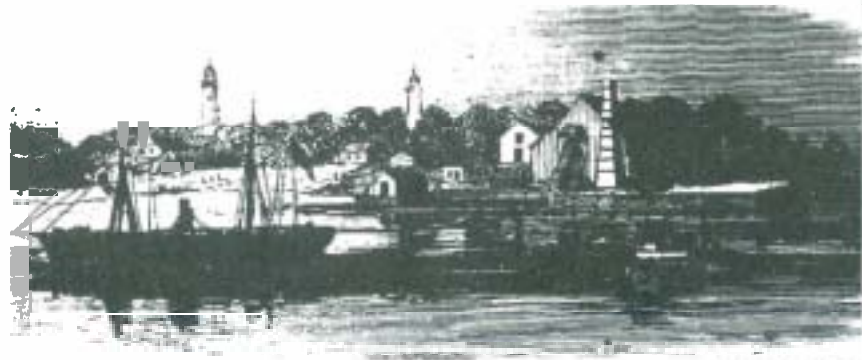
Mayport History

(Its Past)

Historians writing about the development of Mayport Village have no recorded dates as to when the settlement began. Earliest dates recorded are 1562 and 1828. Early settlers of Mayport came from France, Portugal and the Isle of Minorca. These people were fishermen and there early beginning as a fishing village has thrived due to the close proximity to the continental shelf and large quantities of fish. Fishing has therefore been the major economic base of Maypon

Mayport prospered nor only in fishing but also in the lumber industry. For a short while Mayport Mills was the name of the fishing village until the end of the Civil War Mayport also became a well known resort town during the 1800's. It received a bold reputation with its hotels, prize fighters and taverns. Tourists would leave Jacksonville by boat on a cruise up the St. Johns River for a scenic ride along the Mayport coast. Boats would dock and the passengers would dine or stay overnight

Up until 1899 boat transportation was a major access into and out of Maypon. Since Mayport was important for incoming and outgoing cargo, the Jacksonville and Atlantic Railroad was soon built to connect Jacksonville and Mayport. A railroad dock was built where cargo would be transhipped inland. The dock stood where the present day U.S. Coast Guard Station now stands.



Mayport Mills, 1892
Florida State Archives



Mayport History

(Its Past)



The railroad lasted until 1919 and was soon abandoned. The fishing village became semi-isolated until World War II with the construction of the U.S. Naval Air Station.



In Mayport's recent history another mode of travel to the village developed in 1950 with the operation of the ferry. The ferry is still in operation today connecting Mayport Village with the Buccaneer Trail. Also, in its recent past the village was noted for its fine restaurants, fishing industry and sport fishing.

Mayport Today

(Its Present)

Mayport today still retains some of its past character, history and charm. The lighthouse that was built in 1828 still stands. There is also the King house that was built in the late 1800's with its fine example of Victorian architecture. The first original owner of this house was responsible for building several of the hotels in the village. The Mayport Presbyterian Church built in 1887 boasts of a congregation of 60 members. A visit inside reveals the original hand carved pews and woodwork.

However, even with its present day charm, the Mayport Village of today had lost a lot of its nostalgia. Several of its restaurants have closed. Not too long ago the State of Florida had contemplated closing the ferry due to lack of travel and loss of money. It took an outcry from local citizens and communities to keep the ferry going. The State had turned the ferry service over to the City of Jacksonville. The City turned to a private company for operation. The ferry now makes money and travel use is increasing.

The village has several commercial properties that are abandoned, vacant and need repair. One problem that businesses contend with is maintaining their own waste treatment systems. Where businesses are customer intensive, waste treatment systems are expensive to install and operate. They also reduce business profit margins. However, some businesses are well managed and making a profit.



Mayport Today

(Its Present)



The condition in the residential zone is similar as well. Some
are maintained and well kept. Others are in need of
extensive repair or should be torn down.

The fishing village is somewhat isolated from the rest of the
City of Jacksonville. This is due primarily to its location.

The Village is surrounded by the Navy Base and the St.
Johns River. Also Mayport Village is quite small, 60+ acres
with a small population of 200+ people that has been
steadily decreasing during the years. Often in the past, the

Mayport residents felt neglected by the rest of the City.

However, because of the Village's isolation and past
obscurity, this little forgotten corner of the City of
Jacksonville, did not experience the vast change that is
going on in most areas of Metropolitan Jacksonville. This

obscurity and isolation will be the saving grace of

Mayport Village.



Mayport Tomorrow

(Its Future--The Vision)

In the Future, Mayport is a quaint and beautiful little community with houses and businesses that look more like the past than the future. It is a prosperous little Waterfront village with fishing as a mainstay of the economy. However, it is also a destination spot and a stopping station for people who are passing through.

Some visitors may stay the night at the local hotel. Others come to dine at one of the fine restaurants that dot the waterfront. They reached Mayport by car via the Buccaneer Trail and ferry. Some come by cruise boat from Downtown Jacksonville looking for a nostalgia trip down river as passengers had done in the 1800's. While customers are dining on the restaurant's seafood specialty or the local catch of the day, they enjoy watching ships going by to deliver their cargo upriver.

After lunch or dinner visitors can walk along the waterfront to the docks and observe the local fishing boats unload their catch to one of the fish houses. People also walk along Ocean Street to browse the local shops and galleries. The street is landscaped, has sidewalks on both sides and has excellent lighting for strolling at night. You can tell the businesses are proud of their little community and take pride in their buildings and surrounding property.



Mayport Tomorrow

(Its Future--The Vision)



The residents of the village feel the same way. They know they live in a unique village setting that sets them apart from the rest of the city of Jacksonville.

The people of Jacksonville are also proud of their fishing village for they know that they have something from the past that has remained unchanged compared to the rest of the city. School children often take trips to observe and learn. They visit the lighthouse, the Marine Science Center, the Maritime/Cultural Museum and the fishing industry. Some people come to go deep sea fishing while others go bird watching at the nearby Timucuan National Park Preserve. Others go whale watching. This little village brings in tourist dollars. Tourists may spend the day at Mayport but they also visit attractions on both sides of the St. Johns River.



The Visioning Sessions

In July of 1998, a large group of people got together on three different evenings to discuss the future of Mayport. The participants represented various organizations, businesses, concerned citizens and government. They identified Mayport's strengths and weaknesses. They also had visions of Mayport's future. The participants felt that with attention and focus, Mayport can be a revitalized thriving little waterfront community. Below are some of the strengths and weaknesses that were identified by the visioning session participants.

Mayport Village Strengths

Lighthouse	Fishing industry
Historic buildings	Waterfront community
River Ferry	Buccaneer Trail (A1A)
Marine Science Education Center	Seafood restaurants
Recreational fishing	Close proximity to Navy Base
Small close-knit Community	Close proximity to Timucuan Preserve
Near Little Jetties & Hanna Park	Coast Guard Base
St. Johns River	Rich in history & natural heritage

Mayport Village Weaknesses

Run down appearance	Lack of commerce
No sanitary sewer lines	Lack of police presence
Small land area (60+ acres)	Lack of drainage
Poor traffic flow through village	Lack of landscaping
Need better lodging	Docks, seawalls & piers are deteriorating
Lack of parking	Lack of Street lighting
Hodgepodge zoning along riverfront	Not pedestrian friendly

Although Mayport has some weaknesses, the village also has many strengths to build upon. It was felt that focusing attention on Mayport's strengths will create opportunities for the revitalization of the fishing village.



The Program

The City of Atlantic Beach and the City of Jacksonville passed resolutions to work cooperatively in the rejuvenation of Mayport. With that spirit of cooperation, the Mayport Waterfront Partnership was formed. The Partnership's responsibility is to develop a revitalization plan for the Community and oversee the redevelopment. The goal and objective of this organization is to achieve "Mayport's Tomorrow"; the vision of the future.



The Waterfront Florida Partnership selects waterfront communities and oversees the special area management planning for the project areas. Mayport was selected to participate as one of the first three waterfront community projects in the State of Florida. The initiation program runs for two years. During the program, the Mayport Waterfront Partnership received a \$10,000 for the first year and a \$25,000 second year grant for a special area management plan. The Partnership also received an additional \$50,000 grant to be used for the "Mayport Waterfront Revitalization Plan". Grant money for this program was dispensed from the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Coastal Management Programs and funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The grants are administered by the City of Atlantic Beach and the City of Jacksonville.

The Plan

(Goals and Objectives)

Although, **Mayport** is part of the **City** of Jacksonville, the fishing village's **charm sets it** apart from the **rest** of Jacksonville. The present zoning in the **village** is not **conducive** to Mayport's unique character. **The** Partnership feels **that** the **village will** need to have it's own zoning (overlay zone). This new zone will be incorporated into the **Mayport** Waterfront Revitalization Plan that will aide in the future development, growth and revitalization of the Village. The plan will also address **architecture, ecotourism, landscaping, parking and recreation**, as well as other issues. **The** plan will be used by the Partnership to **achieve** the goals and objectives, that **were derived** from the visioning sessions; the "**Mayport of the Future: the Mayport of the Past**"

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The Plan

(Goals and Objectives)

Participating Organizations

City of Atlantic Beach

- Office of the Mayor
- Atlantic Beach City Council

City of Jacksonville

- Office of the Mayor
- Jacksonville City Council
- Department of Planning and Development
- Department of Parks, Recreation and Entertainment
- Neighborhood Services Division
- Jacksonville Electric Authority
- Jacksonville Transportation Authority
- Sheriff's Office

Duval County School Board

City of Neptune Beach

State of Florida

- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Community Affairs

St. Johns River Water Management District

United States Government

- Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Department of Interior, National Parks Services
- Department of Defense, U. S. Navy
- Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard

Beaches Business Association

Chamber of Commerce

Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville

Heckscher Drive Community Club

Jacksonville and the Beaches Convention Visitors Bureau

Jacksonville Maritime Museum Society

Marine Science Education Center

Mayport Civic Association

Mayport Lighthouse Association

Mayport Merchants Association

Mayport Preservation Society

St. Johns Bar Pilot Association

Waterfronts Florida Partnership



Woodrow Wayport

*A Special Thanks To All
Concerned & Interested
Citizens Of Jacksonville
& Atlantic Beach*



This Visioning document was prepared by the City of Jacksonville,
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