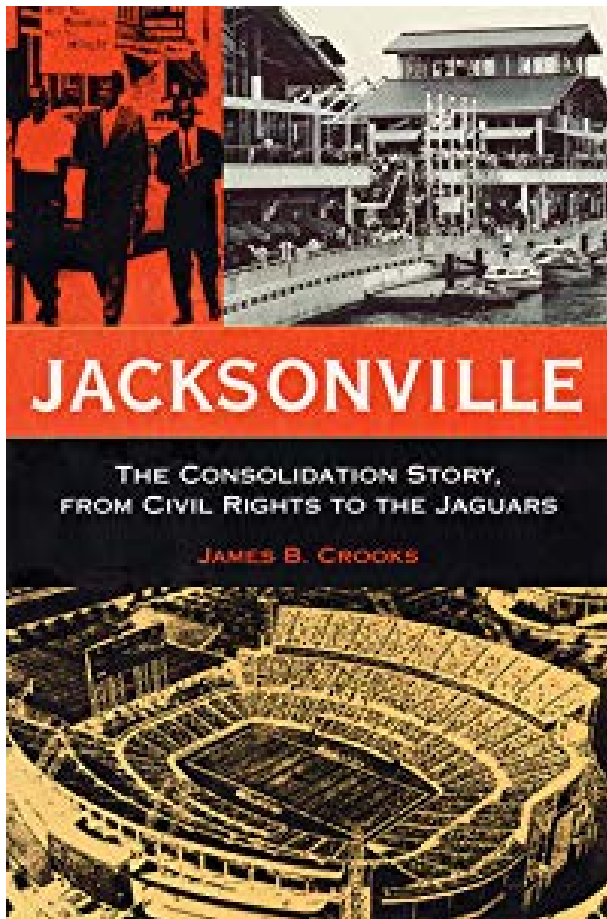


Jacksonville: The Consolidation Story, from Civil Rights to the Jaguars



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"A fascinating account of how the city of Jacksonville met the major challenges of the last half of the 20th century, from those posed by race relations to downtown development to the environment. Crooks has provided a well-written, clear, and thoughtful analysis of the need for and movement to establish a consolidated government, and the early years of that government. His understanding of Jacksonville and of the times is impressive."--Joan S. Carver, Jacksonville University In the 1950s and '60s Jacksonville faced daunting problems. Critics described city government as boss-ridden, expensive, and corrupt.

African Americans challenged racial segregation, and public high schools were discredited. The St. Johns River and its tributaries were heavily polluted.

Downtown development had succumbed to suburban sprawl. Consolidation, endorsed by an almost two-to-one majority in 1967, became the catalyst for change. The city's decision to consolidate with surrounding Duval County began the transformation of this conservative, Deep South, backwater city into a prosperous, mainstream metropolis. James B. Crooks introduces readers to preconsolidation Jacksonville and then focuses on three major issues that confronted the expanded city: racial relations, environmental pollution,

and the revitalization of downtown. He shows the successes and setbacks of four mayors--Hans G. Tanzler, Jake Godbold, Tommy Hazouri, and Ed Austin—in responding to these issues. He also compares Jacksonville's experience with that of another Florida metropolis, Tampa, which in 1967 decided against consolidation with surrounding Hillsborough County. Consolidation has not been a panacea for all the city's ills, Crooks concludes.

Yet the city emerges in the 21st century with increased support for art and education, new economic initiatives, substantial achievements in downtown renewal, and laudable efforts to improve race relations and address environmental problems. Readers familiar with Jacksonville over the last 40 years will recognize events like the St. Johns River cleanup, the building of the Jacksonville Landing, the ending of odor pollution, and the arrival of the Jaguars NFL franchise.

During the administration of Mayor Hazouri from 1987 to 1991, Crooks was Jacksonville historian-in-residence at City Hall. Combining observations from this period with extensive interviews and documents (including a cache of files from the mezzanine of the old City Hall parking garage that contained 44 cabinets of letters, memos, and reports), he has written an urban history that will fascinate scholars of politics and governmental reform as well as residents of the First Coast city. James B. Crooks is emeritus professor of history at the University of North Florida