

1897

\*The foregoing was a reorganization of the old Jacksonville Bar Association, which was originally organized May 5, 1887.

March 2: Jacksonville City Council passed resolutions condemning Spain for the cruelties in Cuba. This was said to be the first official action of the character in the United States.

### Gato Murder

Miss Louise Gato, a beautiful young woman, was shot as she was entering the gate of her father's home in North Springfield (Laura and Eleventh Streets) about dusk April 20, 1897. She died within 24 hours and in her dying statement accused a friend, Edward Pitzer, of doing the shooting. Pitzer was arrested and his trial was one of the most sensational in Jacksonville's history. It lasted nearly two weeks amidst many spectacular incidents and court excitements. Morning, noon, and night the court-room was crowded with interested spectators and general interest prevailed throughout the city. The lawyers in the case were, prosecuting, State's Attorney A. G. Hartridge assisted by D. U. Fletcher and A. W. Cockrell; defense, Alexander St. Clair Abrams with D. C. Campbell and F. W. Pope as associates. Judge R. M. Call was the trial judge and D. Plummer foreman of the jury. In his concluding argument for the defense Mr. Abrams made a heart-appealing speech which ended dramatically as he fainted and fell into the arms of a deputy sheriff. The defense was based on an alibi. The jury was out 22 hours and returned a verdict of acquittal. Pitzer left Jacksonville soon afterward to make his home in the North. An outstanding feature of this case was the interest taken in the prisoner while in jail, mostly by women, who loaded his cell with flowers and kept him supplied with every delicacy. Another feature was the prompt trial of the case, May 26 to June 5, 1897.

June: Gardner building, Jacksonville's first sky-scraper of six stories, was completed. (This building was on the north side of Bay Street between Main and Laura. It was destroyed in the fire of May 3, 1901.)

July 2: First moving picture shown in Jacksonville, called then an Edison Projectoscope. The picture was shown