

## CHAPTER V

## COUNTY AFFAIRS

Duval County was created August 12, 1822, by the first council under Governor William P. Duval's administration. Its original boundaries were: Suwanee River on the west; a line drawn from the mouth of the Suwanee River to the foot of Liberty Street in Jacksonville (designated in the Act as the Cow Ford), thence down the St. Johns River as it meanders to the ocean was the southern boundary, while the St. Marys River and the Georgia line constituted the northern boundary.<sup>a</sup> Jacksonville was selected as the county seat of the new county.

The governing board of the county comprised four justices, one of whom was the presiding justice. While it was termed a county court its jurisdiction was extremely limited in that respect and the name county commissioners would have been more appropriate for the duties performed. As a court their jurisdiction did not approach the importance of our present justices of the peace.<sup>b</sup> The first meeting of this court was in Jacksonville on December 16, 1822. The justices were: Thomas Reynolds, presiding; William G. Dawson, Rignon Brown, and Britton Knight. George Gibbs was the clerk.<sup>c</sup> They proceeded to lay off the county into road districts, apportioned the work of building the roads, and attended to other matters of a like sort.<sup>b</sup> James Dell was the first sheriff of the county, but he did not serve long; Daniel C. Hart was his successor, being later appointed U. S. marshal and holding both positions until his death.<sup>c</sup>

## First Regular Court

The half a dozen houses comprising the Town of Jacksonville, in 1823, were all situated in plain sight of the Kings road that led down to the ferry at the foot of Liberty Street. Travelers coming and going, or stopping for awhile, produced no exceptional stir; but on the last day of November, 1823, which was Sunday, it became evident that an event of unusual importance was about to transpire. People had been coming in all day looking for a place to lodge. Mrs. Sarah Waterman's Inn was filled to the limit. Joseph Andrews had