20, 1868. Of the 46 delegates comprising it, 43 were Republicans, and of these 18 were colored. As might be expected, the delegates soon split into factions, when there came about a “serio-comic presentation of politics” the record of which makes history ludicrous.

The constitution, known as the constitution of 1868, eventually framed by this convention, granted universal suffrage. It provided for election by the people of governor, lieutenant-governor, legislature, and constables; the judges and all other State officers were to be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the State senate. The legislature elected under the provisions of the constitution, met in June and ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. On July 4th, 1868, the ceremony of the transfer of government was accomplished, from the military into the hands of the civil authorities, which proved to be the agents of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and a class of persons newly arrived from the North and called by the Southern people “Carpet-baggers”.

Florida was a sub-district of the Third Military District as constituted by the “Reconstruction” act. Colonel John T. Sprague was appointed the military governor of the State. His headquarters were in Jacksonville most of the time. Colonel Sprague was a gentleman of pleasant manners and conservative views, and though invested with autocratic power, he sought no opportunity to exercise it in a harsh or oppressive manner. He was not a stranger in this community, for he had been here before as an officer in the Seminole war, when he became acquainted with many of the residents. And now, when he saw the injustice heaped upon the Southern people, he did everything that he could to lessen their burdens. Florida, indeed, was fortunate in having him as the military governor. The character of this officer was the softening factor in the relative lack of animosity of the local people toward the military, in contrast with their utter distrust of the Northern political forces operating here after the war. When the time came for the U. S. troops to leave Jacksonville, the Southern people here, sent a petition to Washington asking that they be retained for the purpose of protection.