CHAPTER XXII

PARENT CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS
(In the order of their establishment)

So far as known, religious services were first held in Jacksonville over a store at the northwest corner of Bay and Newnan Streets; this was about 1825, and the services were general rather than denominational. Services were held irregularly at one place and another, and occasionally at the court house, until the block house was built, when that seems to have become the place for general worship, except for the Episcopalians, who continued to use the court house. Early in the 1840's the several denominations took steps to provide for themselves separate houses of worship. The first church building erected in the town was built by the Baptists, on the east side of the lot at the northeast corner of Duval and Newnan Streets in 1840. The Baptists sold this property to the Presbyterians in 1844, and two years later the Presbyterians sold it to the Methodists. This building stood on the site now occupied by the Methodist School of Christian Education.

Methodist

The Methodists seem to have been the pioneers in organized Church work in Jacksonville. In 1823-4, several missionaries were sent to East Florida with headquarters at St. Augustine, among them Rev. John Jerry. Jacksonville was on Mr. Jerry's circuit. "From St. Augustine to the Cow Ford he traveled on horseback, carrying his change of clothing, books, lunch, and sack of corn to feed his horse".

The following extracts taken from the diary of Rev. Isaac Boring indicate that there was a regularly organized Methodist society in Jacksonville in 1829:

Sunday, March 8, 1829. Preached at Jacksonville and dined with Mrs. Hart, and heard that some members of our church had been dancing.

Sunday, April 19, 1829. Preached at Jacksonville, filling all the appointments of the week.

Sunday, May 17, 1829. Preached at Jacksonville. For the first time I was allowed to preach in the court house. During divine services, a drunken man made so much noise that Mr. Hart very politely led