

After the return of the Southern families to Jacksonville at the close of the war, the old system of private instruction was gradually revived. In most cases, the people were too poor to send their children to pay schools, and they were taught at home or by some member of the family, who acted as tutor on the principle of community teacher. As the people became better off financially, the pay-school system again became established.^b

The State constitution of 1868 contained a provision for a system of public instruction, but provided no revenue for maintaining it. A school law was passed in 1869, taking care of the deficiency. The general situation in the following few years is described by T. E. Cochran, in Bulletin No. 1, History of Public School Education in Florida:

The State and County superintendents of schools were appointed by the executive heads of the State. Consequently, there was a temptation to play politics at the expense of the schools, and too often this temptation proved irresistible. Men were chosen not on the basis of fitness for service, but with reference to party affiliation, thereby working disastrous results in respect to the educational welfare of the youth of the State. This is especially true from June 8, 1868, until January 1, 1877, during which time the government of the State was in the hands of a political party that was neither elected by, nor in favor with, the majority of the intelligent voters and property owners of the State. Hence there were a great many who did not cooperate in the educational movements.

It is difficult to determine just what was done in the way of public instruction in Jacksonville during the period 1869-1875, as school records during this time were either not kept at all or were destroyed, and such as are preserved in fragmentary official reports are clearly "colored". Already taxed beyond their power to pay for the operations of the local government, the Southern people of Jacksonville were bitterly opposed to the additional school tax of 3 to 5 mills, especially as 80% of the revenue derived from it was devoted to negro schools.^d All that the white people of Jacksonville ever got out of this string of taxation for public education, was a small, two-story, plain, brick building, erected in 1871, on the lot next to the northwest corner of Liberty and Church Streets, facing Church. The school was labeled "Duval Graded and High School", but the courses of study were extremely elementary. This school afterward developed into