

CHAPTER XXIV .

PIONEER ORGANIZATIONS

St. Luke's Hospital, 1873

In the autumn of 1872, an invalid fleeing from the rigors of northern winter arrived at the depot in this city. He took an omnibus and went from hotel to hotel and from house to house, only to find that they were all too full to accommodate him. After hours of fruitless search the sick and wearied traveler did indeed find rest—in this city, on our streets, his spirit fled from Time to Eternity. A short while after this another invalid made weary by many hours of travel finally arrived and he, too, died without the ministrations of human hands. When these circumstances became known they deeply excited the sympathy of the community and offered a few noble women the opportunity of which they availed themselves in the institution of the charity that is now called St. Luke's Hospital.

The noble women referred to were Mrs. Theodore Hartridge, Mrs. Aristides Doggett and Mrs. J. D. Mitchell. They banded themselves together as the Ladies' Benevolent Society for the purpose of finding places that would accommodate the sick and destitute strangers that came to the city; but in a few weeks the demand became so great that it was decided to establish a hospital. In February, 1873, the society held a fair from which sufficient funds were raised to rent two rooms; these were opened March 11, 1873, and named St. Luke's.

The Jacksonville Tri-weekly Union of Tuesday, October 21, 1873, published this note:

St. Luke's

Pursuant to announcement previously made a number of ladies met at Odd Fellows' hall on last Thursday (Oct. 16, 1873) for the purpose of organizing a society to arrange for the holding of a fair sometime during the coming winter, the proceeds of which to be applied to the building of a hospital. The meeting having been duly organized, the following action was taken upon the formation of the society:

Presidents, Mrs. Hartridge and Mrs. Magruder; vice-presidents, Mrs. Burns, Mrs. Doggett, Mrs. Peck, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Greeley; secretary and treasurer, Miss Freeland.