This was the organization of St. Luke’s Hospital Association. The charity met with universal favor, both among the residents of Jacksonville and the tourists that came here for the winter. By successive fairs and generous contributions the association obtained enough money to buy a lot at the northeast corner of Market and Ashley Streets as a site for a hospital building; then the building fund was started. The association had $687 in the Freedmen’s bank, which failed in June, 1874, but the lady managers with renewed effort went ahead and by spring of 1876 had accumulated sufficient funds to build the hospital. Just as the building neared completion and before it was occupied, fire, said to have been of incendiary origin, destroyed it at 3 a.m. July 22, 1876.

After the fire a change of location for the hospital was decided upon. There was $6,000 insurance on the building burned and this with $800 derived from the sale of the lot enabled the association to start the work of rebuilding. The two lots in East Jacksonville near Hogans Creek (on the west side of Palmetto Street running through from Monroe to Duval) were purchased for $800. Within a year the construction of a brick hospital building was begun. The yellow fever epidemic of 1877 interrupted the building operations, but it served to impress upon the people the need of a hospital here. The new St. Luke’s was dedicated February 24, 1878, by Judge Thomas Settle; it was completed at a total cost of $6,350, and opened to the public in December, 1878. So after five years of constant effort and hampered by a number of serious setbacks, St. Luke’s became a firmly established institution of Jacksonville. The association was reorganized in 1882, at which time it adopted its first constitution; its first charter was granted June 10, 1885. In April, 1887, a wing was added to the main building in order to meet the growing needs of the institution. On January 12, 1900, a children’s ward was opened in a small building in the hospital yard, by an organization of little girls known as the “Little Jewels”.

Organized as a non-sectarian, non-sectional charity, St. Luke’s was operated and maintained exclusively by popular subscription until 1908, when the City Council authorized an annual appropriation of $5,000 to help with its support. On August 4, 1908, the City Council by ordinance donated in fee simple without restrictions to St. Luke’s Hospital Asso-