

History of County

In 1565 the first settlement was at St. Augustine. Florida was ceded to Great Britain in 1763.

In April of 1773 William Bartram started his four years' journey of the southern parts of America. Dr. Fothergill of London, England had hired Bartram to explore Florida for an "*account of the soil and Natural Productions.*" In his journey, he comes to an Indian village on the east side of the Suwannee River. Here he stays for several days. Bartram crosses the river into present day Dixie County. He describes the land, trees, Indian villages and trails. He tells of "*large handsome canoes, which they form out of the trunks of Cypress trees, some of them commodious enough to accommodate twenty to thirty warriors. In these large canoes they descend the river on hunting and trading expeditions--sometimes cross the gulph (gulf)--to the Bahama islands and even to Cuba.*"

In 1783 Florida was ceded to Spain. April of 1818, General Andrew Jackson led the largest army ever to invade Florida, to the Old Town, Dixie County, Florida area to push the Indians south of the Suwannee River. This caused such an uproar with England and Spain that in 1819 Florida was purchased by the United States.

In 1822 the Florida Territory was organized and General Andrew Jackson was appointed Florida's first Territorial Governor. 1845_ State of Florida was admitted under the Union, making it the 27th state to join the union. At this time, Madison County, Florida extended from the Florida/Georgia State line south to the Gulf and west from the Suwannee River to the Aucilla River. In 1856 the lower half of Madison County would be divided into Taylor and Lafayette Counties. James W. McQueen, House of Representatives, from Madison County (lived in Old Town) introduced this bill on December 12, 1856 to create the two new counties. It passed.

Lafayette County was named for the State Senator James Lafayette Fletcher Conttrell of Old Town, Dixie County. April 1921 the lower half of Lafayette County was elected to be divided from Lafayette County. With the work of Florida House of Representative McQueen, Chaires and others, Dixie County was created. Governor Hardee signed the bill and appointed Thomas P. Chaires and George W. Overstreet to finish out their elected terms of Lafayette County Commissioners as Dixie County Commissioners. Cross City was voted to be the County Seat of Dixie County. The new County had two newspapers, The Advocate, established 1921 by W P Chavous and the Dixie County News, established by LB George in 1927. Dixie County was, then and now, considered the very best in hunting sections. It probably had the largest area of virgin pine timber in Florida and nearly half a million gallons of turpentine and 43,866 barrels of rosin during the year ending June 30, 1932. The late 1927 and early 1928 brought Putnam Lumber Company to Dixie County.