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Keg on roof alerted 'Yankee' danger

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



KEG ON ROOF ALERTED 'YANKEE' DANGER

By HAMPTON DUNN

APALACHICOLA --- In the 1830s, this picturesque community at the mouth of the Apalachicola River was a swinging place. It had become a top cotton-producing and cotton-shipping center in the South.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, "Apalach" became the second largest cotton-shipping port on the Gulf of Mexico. The original name of the town was "Cottontown", later it was called West Point when incorporated in 1827, and finally it adopted its present name in 1831 when a post office was established. A distinguished Postmaster was Dr. John Gorrie, famed inventor of the ice-making machine.

It was a boom town because of prosperity, complete with saloons and gambling halls. Real estate came high: Between 1834 and 1836 business lots sold for as much as \$3,000.

During this period many fine mansions were built, and a number of them still grace the city today. One of these is the "Orman House," built by Thomas Orman in 1836. It is on 5th Street and is a two-story frame dwelling on an elevation overlooking the scenic river. It has slave quarters in the rear.

There's a bit of Civil War lore revolving around the Orman House. It is reported that the lady of the house, Mrs. Sarah Orman, was a fiery secessionist and she placed a keg on the roof of the house as a signal to warn Confederate soldiers returning on furlough that Federal troops were in the city.

Descendants of the Orman family still occupy the home.

