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Monticello has oldest brick building in state

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



MONTICELLO HAS OLDEST BRICK BUILDING IN STATE

By HAMPTON DUNN

MONTICELLO --- The handsome brick school building with enormous white pillars that sits beside busy U.S. 90 here has a distinction --- and a history.

Now Jefferson County High School, the nucleus of the structure is the old Jefferson Academy and it is the oldest brick building of continuous use still standing in Florida.

The Academy was the first brick school house in the state. Back in the early 1800s, Monticello was a community of highly intelligent, well-educated men and women living on beautiful plantations. They strove to provide educational facilities for their children, many having private tutors, others sending their young to private schools.

In 1832, the newly formed Legislative Council granted a charter to the trustees of Jefferson Academy and property lying south of Jefferson Street was reserved for the school.

The Academy developed and by 1852 there was a need for a permanent home. Spearheading a drive that year to provide this was Hiram Masonic: Lodge, which contributed much of the hard cash needed. The bricks were made locally, moulded from clay dug from the George Taylor plantation and burned in the Bailey brick kiln.

Additions and remodeling to the old structure came in 1915. The high school, built by Negro slaves, was integrated for the first time in September, 1965.

