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# *Photouring Florida*

By HAMPTON DUNN



## KEY WEST HOUSE ONCE A PIRATES' HIDEOUT

By HAMPTON DUNN

KEY WEST --- There's a lot of fiction, and a lot of truth, too, to all these stories you hear about Key West and the pirates.

There's no doubt there were real buccaneers who used to operate from this strategic spot. And soon after Florida became a state in 1821 Congress appropriated \$160,000 and directed a fleet commanded by Commodore David Porter to chase away the pirates.

There's an old house with an authentic pirate history at 306 Elizabeth St. It is reported that this present building was erected in 1848 but some of the original structure still exists. There is an old well whose age is not known. Some say the Indians built the well and that this fresh water was one of the attractions for pirates in later years.

One rogue whose name is associated with the house is that of John Gomez, regarded as one of the cruelest men in his business. Gomez' sword is on display, along with a collection of other pirate instruments including many torture tools. There was supposed to be a dungeon to the original home.

A later resident of the home was said to be Dr. Odet Phillipi, a boyhood pal of Napoleon Bonaparte and one-time chief surgeon for the French Army. After the Battle of Trafalgar, the Doctor was sent by the British to the Bahamas as a prisoner. He subsequently wound up in Key West, where he supposedly befriended Gomez and treated him for a tropical illness.

