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"It is not anybody's damn business..."

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



"IT IS NOT ANYBODY'S DAMN BUSINESS..."

By HAMPTON DUNN

FT. GEORGE ISLAND - A distinctive personality in Florida history was Zephaniah Kingsley, a native Scotsman who came to this country as a boy and migrated to Laurel Grove, Fla., in 1803.

The well-educated Kingsley was a coffee buyer at one time but was best known as a shrewd slave trader. He fell in love and married Anna Madgigene Jai, daughter of a chief of Senegal, on the east coast of Africa. His father-in-law assisted him in procuring slaves.

Kingsley moved to Florida, then under the Spanish flag because he foresaw the U.S. would outlaw the importation of slaves. This happened in 1807. The slave trader acquired Ft. George Island, near the mouth of St. Johns River, in 1817. He paid only \$ 7, 000 for it, a bargain even then.

Several houses used by the family still stand and are part of a State Park here. Kingsley believed in taking good care of his slaves and in training them well. They always brought premium prices on the market because of their skill.

Kingsley was described by a high official as a "classical scholar" and he was appointed by the U.S. President to the second Legislative Council. Kingsley's niece was Anna Matilda McNeill Whistler, the "Mother" in the famous painting by her son, James Whistler.

Mrs. Whistler was one of the heirs who challenged the will of Kingsley who left his property to his African wife noting "It is not anybody's damn business what I do with it..."

