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Home of "The Tallahassee girl"

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



HOME OF "THE TALLAHASSEE GIRL"

By HAMPTON DUNN

TALLAHASSEE --- To most everyone at the time, Gen. Richard Keith Call was a man to be admired, even idolized. But to the mother of his bride to be, the adventuresome gentleman was "only an Indian fighter" and not worthy of the hand of her aristocratic daughter.

It wasn't Call so much that brought contempt from Mary Kirkman's mother, it was his best friend, Gen. Andrew Jackson. When the future President tried to intercede for his aide, Mrs. Kirkman pulled a shot gun on him and chased him away; a feat not accomplished by anyone else. This happened in Nashville.

Finally, Call and his sweetheart eloped. The "Indian fighter" was determined to build as fine a home in pioneer Florida as his beloved had left in Nashville. So it was in 1825, he built "The Grove" in Tallahassee. It was constructed in a typical neo-classical design. Some ideas were adapted from Jackson's beautiful mansion, The Hermitage, back in Tennessee.

Call became territorial governor of Florida and it was at "The Grove" that their daughter, Ellen Call Long, the first white child born in Tallahassee, grew up. "The Grove" was the setting for Maurice Thompson's novel, "The Tallahassee Girl." The Call family graveyard is at the rear of the mansion.

The elegant estate has remained in the Call family and is now owned by former Gov. and Mrs. LeRoy Collins. She was Mary Call before her marriage. The Collinses lived at The Grove while he was Governor, because the State was building a new Executive Mansion across the street.

