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Historic old Drew Mansion rots away

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



HISTORIC OLD DREW MANSION ROTS AWAY

By HAMPTON DUNN

ELLAVILLE --- Perched on the banks of the fabled Suwanee River near Ellaville, which is near Madison, is a ghostly mansion which was the former home of Gov. George Franklin Drew. He was the first governor to defeat the Carpetbaggers during Reconstruction.

Governor Drew was a well-to-do lumberman and he operated a sawmill on the west side of the Withlacoochee River just above its confluence with the Suwannee. While he was Governor (1877-81), he commuted by train to Tallahassee from his home.

There have been serious efforts to save the old homestead here. The State owned it for awhile and spent \$10,000 trying to save it. The building was in bad shape and a survey showed that the structure was stripped of all fireplaces, windows and hardware. The old frame home was just a shell, the heavy timbers beneath it were rotten and several times the river flooded the house to a level of three feet above the first floor.

This old home stood in almost regal majesty and was the cultural center of North Florida.

The region's historian, Edwin B. Browning of Madison told newsmen recently that the old house has been fenced and posted, but it's just sitting there, rotting rotting.

"A stranger passing there in a few years can say 'this too has gone with the wind,'" Browning said.

