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Railroad men built Venice for retirement

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



RAILROAD MEN BUILT VENICE FOR RETIREMENT

By HAMPTON DUNN

VENICE --- This modern community, with its wide boulevards and beautifully landscaped parkways, is one of the best-planned cities in the country. John Noland, of Boston, the outstanding city planner in his day, laid out Venice during the Florida real estate "boom."

Originally a piece of the four million acre land sale to Hamilton Disston in 1880 (25 cents an acre!), later owners included the late Potter Palmer, Chicago hotel magnate, and Dr. Fred H. Albee, famed orthopedic surgeon. In 1911 the Seaboard Air Line railroad reached this then sleepy village.

Crews who visited the resort were impressed and in the early 1920s, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers chose Venice as the site for an ideal retirement haven for its older members. The wealthy union poured \$14 million and hired 2,000 workmen developing the community. But the "boom" collapsed and the B.L.E. abruptly stopped building.

The attractive rail station reflected the pretty Mediterranean architecture of Venice. The sturdy arched train shed is over 400 feet long. At one time there was a Campanile Tower.

Venice was the original name of the section now known as Nokomis. The railroad carried the name of Venice to the end of the line. Nokomis then was for awhile named Potter, in honor of Mrs. Honore Potter. Then it was changed to Dunwood, for the Dunn family. Later it was called Nokomis, and still later, it was part of two names linked as Venice-Nokomis. Finally, the twin towns were dehyphenated.

