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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



ATTRACTIVE KNOTT HOUSE DATES BACK TO 1831

By HAMPTON DUNN

TALLAHASSEE --- One of Florida's oldest --- and most attractive --- houses stands majestically in downtown Tallahassee today just as it has since it was built in 1831. It's now known as the "Knott House," belonging to the family of the late W. V. Knott, long-time political figure, who acquired the structure during the 1920s.

The state was just a struggling young Territory with Tallahassee, then as now, its capital city, when the frame home at East Park Avenue and Calhoun Street, was built. It was the wedding gift that Thomas Holmes Hagner, former United States Minister to London, presented his bride, the former Katherine Gamble of Virginia. Its origin was reported in a beautiful guide booklet issued lately by the Tallahassee Rotary Club. It noted that Mrs. Hagner brought the first japonica plants to Florida. They had been brought from the court of King George by General Mercer as a gift to her mother.

By 1848, the house had been enlarged. There were a number of owners before Knott acquired it. Shortly after he did, Knott removed the one-story porch at the front and replaced, it with a two-story portico and columns. The house fronts on Lewis Park, where stands the famed May Oak, the giant tree that has provided an umbrella for colorful May Day festivities for nearly a century and half. Another landmark was situated across the street from the Knott House; it was the old Cherokee Hotel, favorite lodging for Florida politicians for years, but which has now been torn down. Knott was State Treasurer and State Comptroller and narrowly missed being Governor in a hotly-contested race in 1916.

