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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



GENERAL GRANT DIDN'T BUILD THAT INTERESTING HOUSE

By HAMPTON DUNN

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS --- As you whiz through this village on State Road 436 near Interstate 4, you spy an interesting old house by the side of the road. The pulse of a history buff rises when local folk repeat the rumor that the house was built by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, the former President, in his last years and this is where he wrote his memoirs.

Then you check the library at the Orlando Sentinel and find a clipping saying this was, indeed, "General Grant's House." But digging a bit deeper into the files later news stories turn up that debunk the Grant story. An enterprising reporter in 1967 talked to the General's grandson, retired Army Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant III, who states flatly the story is not true.

Be that as it may, the house itself still is interesting. The 12-room, three-story structure is swallowed by a thicket of trees and shrubbery. Her cupolas are reminiscent of past grandeur. Late occupants of the house is an artist.

The Grant story got started, according to one theory, by an alleged "social climber" who also was trying to sell the house. Thus, the name-dropping.

The old house probably was built along with other similar ornate structures back in the 1870s near a fashionable resort hotel of the day, known as the Altamonte Hotel.

General Grant did visit Florida after retiring---but it's doubtful he stopped off at Altamonte, let alone build a house here!

