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Modern Tallahassee surrounds slave quarters

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



MODERN TALLAHASSEE SURROUNDS SLAVE QUARTERS

By HAMPTON DUNN

TALLAHASSEE --- Truly a distinctive landmark, hidden away in the maze of modern Tallahassee is the Old Slave Quarters behind another historic structure, The Columns.

They go together, the lovely mansion which was built in the early territorial days, and the accompanying slave quarters which served both as living quarters for the servants, and as an area for preparing bountiful meals for the "big house." Both buildings are at 105 West Park Street at Adams on property owned by the First Baptist Church, but were scheduled for removal in 1971.

It's doubtful there are other typical slave cabins like this one anywhere else in Florida. This, even though the vast Tallahassee area originally thrived on great cotton farms, an activity which depended so much in those days on slave labor.

The Columns, and probably the slave cottage behind it, was built by Benjamin Chaires who came to pioneer Florida in the territorial days, and was completed about 1835. At the time, it was the largest and perhaps swankiest house in the capitol city. The house and the neighboring First Presbyterian Church were sometimes used as a refuge against mairauding Indians.

Chaires was a leading figure in Florida's first financial institution, the Union Bank. Also involved in the bank and a purchaser of The Columns was a millionaire, William Williams, whose nickname was "Money" Williams because he is supposed to have arrived here with a wagonload of money which was used to get the bank started.

