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Randall House had first inside bathroom

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



RANDALL HOUSE -HAD FIRST INSIDE BATHROOM

By HAMPTON DUNN

TALLAHASSEE --- The landmark residence stands on shady North Calhoun, a street lined with moss-draped oaks right downtown Tallahassee. It's at 424 N. Calhoun and is called "The Randall House."

The Randall House, according to local authorities, was built for Thomas Randall, a Federal Judge of the Territory of Florida: It was begun about 1837 and completed before 1840.

The house is of modified Georgian design and was constructed by George Proctor, a free Negro who had built the building housing the Tallahassee Garden Center across the street. It followed the raised-cottage style common to the South. The high basement was designed to keep the house cool and dry in the humid coastal area. It once had a windmill and the first running water and inside bathroom in this part of Florida:

Randall House was the town house for Judge Randall, who was appointed to the post by President James Monroe in 1827 and served until 1841. Randall also had a plantation home, according to Tallahassee editor, Malcolm B. Johnson, in Jefferson County, some 20 miles from the capital, which he called "Belmont." This was near the property of his father-in-law, William Wirt. Johnson reported that Wirt once tried unsuccessfully to start an agricultural colony using free German immigrants instead of slave labor.

Wirt was U.S. Attorney General for 12 years --- from 1817 to 1825 --- under Presidents Monroe and John Quincy Adams. He was renowned as the prosecutor of Aaron Burr for treason, as a biographer of Thomas Jefferson and less known as a candidate for President on an anti-Masonic ticket.

The Randall House earned the distinction of having the first in-door plumbing perhaps in all Florida, with water furnished from a windmill in the backyard, when it was owned by George Lewis, a prominent banker here.

