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great physician was born and died here

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



A GREAT PHYSICIAN WAS BORN AND DIED HERE

By HAMPTON DUNN

KEY WEST --- The handsome old home at Caroline and Duval Streets, with its cool verandahs and gingerbread trimmings, is typical Key West architecture. It's also a historic structure.

For it was in this house that Dr. Joseph Yates-Porter was born, lived and died. He was born there on Oct. 21, 1847 --- which means the building is an ante-bellum home, built before the Civil War --- and he died March 16, 1927, in Key West in the same house and the same room in which he was born 80 years before.

The Florida Medical Association is often given to superlatives in referring to medicos, but Dr. Porter stands out as such a hero in the state's medical history, he rates a flowery description on a marker erected at the Porter House in May, 1968, by the F.M.A. It proclaims:

". . .First health officer of the State of Florida, 1889-1917. Thirteenth President of the Florida Medical Association. Under his farsighted leadership, yellow fever and other epidemic diseases were eradicated. Perhaps no other person has exerted more influence upon the health of this state than Dr. Porter."

The famed Floridian earned his Doctorate in Medicine at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1870. And according to the Florida State Board of Health, "The year of his graduation he was appointed acting assistant surgeon of the U.S. Army and was assigned to Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas where the martyred Dr. Mudd served so nobly." For 19 years he was in the Medical Corps of the Army.

Dr. Porter was the first State health officer, a post he held 28 years. He gained fame fighting "yellowjack" or yellow fever in the 1880's.

