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## Louisville publisher pioneered Naples Hampton Dunn collection

Hampton Dunn

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## LOUISVILLE PUBLISHER PIONEERED NAPLES

By HAMPTON DUNN

NAPLES --- Walter N. Haldeman, who was owner and publisher of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, is credited with being the "discoverer" and founder of this lovely city on the lower Gulf coast. Together with nearly a dozen others, Haldeman was first associated as a partner in the Naples Town Improvement Company founded in 1887 to develop the community.

The old publisher wouldn't recognize it today, but his beloved Florida home still stands, located on the beach at 13th Avenue South. It's been kept updated, modernized and remodeled through the years and is an attractive a retreat now as it was in the pioneer days when the only means of transportation to Naples was via boat.

The founding group included Gen. John S. Williams, also a Kentuckian and a Confederate Army officer, who liked the warm clime here and envisioned the possibility of growing two crops of tobacco a year. It never produced that, but the land was developed by Williams and his cohorts. Haldeman had first spotted this exotic site in 1885 and decided it would make a fine resort. Others interested in Naples in those pioneer days included the famed editor of the Courier-Journal, Henry ("Marse Henry") Watterson.

The real estate company built the Naples Hotel in 1889. A pier was built on the site where the present modern pier stretches 1,000 feet into the Gulf waters. The first pier was not an accommodation for anglers so much as it was a wharf for freight and passenger boats, the town's only link with the outside world.

