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## Steamboat 'Madison' rests in the Suwannee

Hampton Dunn

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## STEAMBOAT 'MADISON' RESTS IN THE SUWANNEE

By HAMPTON DUNN

MAYO --- For more than 100 years now, the remains of the colorful river steamboat, "Madison," have rested on the bottom of famed Suwannee River at Troy Springs near here. When the water is low and clear, the hull can be photographed (Accompanying photo is by E. K. Hamilton, of Luraville, retired manager of the Suwannee County Chamber of Commerce and a regional historian.)

The "Madison" was one of many boats that used to ply the Suwannee back before there was much of a road network, and the waterway was about the only means of communication. This particular boat stood out because of it's shrill and noisy whistle which alerted the countryside when it was in the vicinity.

A fearless and adventuresome captain, James Tucker, was skipper of the vessel. He knew the Gulf coast well from Key West to New Orleans, as well as the Atlantic coast to New York. He liked to go up the Suwannee and once rammed the Madison through thick underbrush and other obstacles to prove that he could run as far up as White Springs, and thus to have the river declared navigable that far.

Came the Civil War, and Tucker joined the Confederate Army. The Madison was being used to transport Confederate troops, but it was feared the Federals would capture it. One day in 1863, Captain Tucker decided to scuttle his boat. He pulled the plug and watched her sink.

