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## Whitty's Drug Store a north Florida landmark

Hampton Dunn

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## WHITTY'S DRUG STORE A NORTH FLORIDA LANDMARK

By HAMPTON DUNN

LEE --- If you'll slow down a bit when whizzing through this tiny town on U.S. 90 in Madison County, you can see an interesting landmark. It's not right "downtown" in Lee, but is on a side street where the heart of the community used to be.

There you'll see an ancient old wooden building that houses Whitty's Drug Store, today, just as it has since 1910. The large two-story structure was built by the late Shellie E. (Doc) Whitty back in the hey-dey of Lee, when it was the burgeoning era of cotton and timber. "Doc" died in 1962 and his widow, Mrs. Lola Whitty, took over the business and continued doing business at the same old stand. Of course, she discontinued prescription filling which "Doc" used to do.

Decades before our modern drug stores took on the look of a small department or variety store, Whitty's Drug Store in Lee carried just about anything a person could want. A local historian, Edwin B. Browning Sr., of Madison, reports that at one time "Doc" Whitty sold drugs to cure people on the ground floor of his emporium --- and coffins to bury them on the second floor! But offering the latter items proved to be more service than the local folk wanted. When word got out about those coffins, the customers began to dwindle, maybe it was superstition. So "Doc" got out of the casket concession, and his faithful patrons returned and have stayed with him through the years.

The old building, looking as if it is about ready to collapse, belies its somewhat dilapidated appearance. It was constructed of lumber cut from original growth yellow pine.

