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Hampton Dunn
LITTLE SCHOOL HOUSE OVER 100 YEARS OLD

By HAMPTON DUNN

TAMPA -- The Historic School House in Plant Park, more than a century old, is the proud showplace of DeSoto Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Situated under the shade trees at the rear of McKay Auditorium, the attractive frame was restored from the original which was built in 1850. It was built by Gen. Jesse Carter, who wanted a school house for his daughter, Josephine. Carter, a native Floridian, was one of the original trustees when Tampa was incorporated. He had the contract to bring the mail in from Gainesville by stagecoach.

The school was the first west of the Hillsborough River. Pupils, other than Josephine, were Mary Lesley (Bird), Jane Givens (Wells), Lizzie Spencer (Henderson), Mary Eugenia Spencer (Mitchell) and Mary Kelly (Rumley).

Col. Stephen M. Sparkman, who represented the First District in Congress from 1894 to 1917, as a young man, studied law in the little house. He was a protege of Henry Laurens Mitchell, later Governor of Florida.

The building passed from hand to hand and at one time was used as a tool shed. Restoration began in 1932, when the original building was repaired and about 20 feet added to the structure, using the same materials and tools for building. Miss Marion McKay, who was born in the house, was instrumental in bringing about its restoration through the D. A. R.