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That 'little woman who started a great war'

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MARDIN --- Abraham Lincoln tabbed her "that little woman who started a great big war."
And after Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the world-wide best-seller, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, her name
was anathema in Dixie.

But the gifted writer became one of Florida's most distinguished residents, and a drum-beater for
the Sunshine State far more effective than the most exhuberant Chamber of Commerce press
agent.

The Stowe family came to this picturesque spot on the St. Johns River below Jacksonville in
1867, during Reconstruction days. Both her husband, clergyman Calvin Ellis Stowe, and son,
Frederick, had health problems. Her prolific and imaginative pen made her the breadwinner. She
also did philantropy among the Negroes.

The author was the No. 1 attraction to travelers aboard the river boats passing Mandarin. The old
home place was destroyed by fire a few years ago. But the carriage house (photo) still stands, on
property owned by retired Pan American and Navy pilot, Carl F. Tauch. It's been remodeled into
a handsome guest house, but originally provided shelter for five carriages on the ground floor.
The upper floor originally was a nicely-furnished apartment for the Negro footman.

Here, amid the orange trees, live oaks, birds, animals and attractions of the river, Mrs. Stowe
wrote Palmetto Leaves, in 1873. This was a volume of tranquil sketches describing the area and
boosting Florida. Her other Reconstruction Era writings were for the most part violent polemics.