1-1-1960

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TRAGEDY INTERRUPTED BUILDING OF "GOODWOOD"

By HAMPTON DUNN

TALLAHASSEE --- Hardy B. Croom was a wealthy landowner here in the 1830s who spent a lot of time in making botanical expeditions in this state, and distinguished himself in the field of botany.

In 1835, Croom began erecting a mansion for his family on land that was once a part of the Lafayette Grant. He called his dream house, "Goodwood." The ante-bellum home, today a landmark in the capital city, was constructed of brick shipped here from New York and brought in at St. Marks. A feature was huge mahogany doors from the West Indies and these swung on solid silver hinges.

Croom went to New York to bring his large and happy family to Tallahassee to move into their palace. The excited parents and their three children boarded the steamboat "Home" and sailed southward. On the night of Oct. 9, 1837, off Cape Hatteras, a storm came up and the vessel wrecked; the Croom family perished. Litigation followed the disaster and from it was established the rule of American law that, in a common disaster, with no eye witness, the presumption is that the male parent has greater survival powers and therefore his family will inherit.

Croom’s wealthy brother Bryan finished building "Goodwood" and occupied it in 1843. The plantation was sold in 1856 to Arvah Hopkins. In the latter part of the century, it was owned by one of the nation’s wealthiest women, Mrs. Fannie Tiers. A one time it was owned by State Sen. and Mrs. William C. Hodges and today it is the property of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hood.

The house on Miccosoukee Road is listed by the Historic American Buildings Survey as possessing exceptional historical and architectural interest.