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Hampton Dunn
OLD BRANDON HOME IS BRANDON LANDMARK

By HAMPTON DUNN

BRANDON --- The pretty two-story house with wide verandahs sitting under giant, shady oak trees at the western entrance to Brandon is a landmark nearing 100 years of age.

It’s the old Jim Brandon home which a few years ago was converted into a mortuary as Stowers Funeral Home. In tip-top condition, the attractive structure is built beside busy State Road 60.

This community, now a suburb of Tampa but for many decades a rural area, was founded in 1856 when John and Martha Brandon and their eight children came from Mississippi and settled in a log house here. Among his sons were Jim, who built the large white house about 1876. It later was owned by Issac Brandon.

One of the descendants told a newspaper reporter the house was built painstakingly with the family planing the logs. The lumber is heart of pine and this descendant remembered her father trying to remodel the pantry and "he bent a 20-penny nail." It has ten huge rooms. Bathrooms were not added until generations after the first owners. Modern air conditioning and heating were added by the funeral home.

The Brandons homesteaded 160 acres and in 1877 put out seedling orange trees, according to local historian Pat Patten. Mrs. Martha Brandon was credited with wanting a town laid out here and C. S. Noble, a civil engineer with the old Florida Peninsula Railroad made the town’s first map and named the community Brandon. At the time, Tampa itself was a small village. There was a fort at nearby Dover where whites hid when the Indians went on the warpath.