1-1-1960

Ancient home served as a blockhouse

Hampton Dunn

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub

Part of the American Studies Commons, and the Community-based Research Commons

Scholar Commons Citation

http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub/2790

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
ANCIENT HOME SERVED AS A BLOCKHOUSE

By HAMPTON DUNN

MONTICELLO --- Not only is it historic, it's also beautiful, the so-called Palmer-Simpson House on Palmer Mill Road. The magnificent structure has been a handsome landmark here since 1835 when it was built by Martin Palmer II, a direct descendant of Sir Ralph the Palmer, knighted during the Holy Crusades and of Puritan ancestors who came over on the Mayflower.

They built for protection in those days --- the first floor had brick walls two feet thick. And so the house served as a blockhouse and hospital during the Indian raids. There were holes in the walls through which the pioneers shot at the Redmen. The windows also were set in deep embrasures, possibly to repel the Indians. The upper stories are of wood. The colonial plan of a wide entrance hall was used with high ceilings and spacious rooms opening into the hall. The kitchen was placed, as usual in those times, away from the house proper. In later years a porch was added at the rear of the house and a new kitchen and pantry placed on the east side.

The Palmer family has given the world 14 physicians, nine of them have practiced in Florida and three of them have served as president of the Florida Medical Association. It is reported that Dr. T. M. Palmer, son of the builder of the Palmer House, once took as site for a hospital a spot Gen. Robert E. Lee wanted for his own use---and Dr. Palmer didn't budge when confronted by the great Civil War General! The Monticello home remained in the Palmer family until the late 1930s when it was acquired by the late House Speaker, Rep. Richard Simpson.