



Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



UNION STATION WAS 'OUT IN THE BOONDOCKS'

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TAMPA --- When they opened Tampa's attractive Union Station in 1912 there was a lot of grumbling about it being too far from "downtown," some claimed it was "way out in the boondocks." Indeed, there were no street car tracks connecting with the new facility and the "streets" hardly deserved the name, they were sand paths.

Be that as it may, there had been a long standing need for a central station where the Seaboard Air Line, the Atlantic Coast Line and the Tampa Northern could discharge passengers. (Today Seaboard and ACL are one, and Tampa Northern is long gone). Historian Karl H. Grismer reported "Construction of the depot was a victory for the Tampa Tribune which had fought for it for year."

Contemporary newspapers reported that with the new station, "Tampa is all the rage right now with excursions arriving from Georgia and Alabama." The facility was described as luxurious "with smoking rooms for men, and retiring rooms for ladies, and a ceiling that reaches the roof." A contract for a depot to cost \$100,000 was awarded to W. C. Hobbs and the structure was completed May 15, 1912.

There had been a demand for a union station for 20 years or more before it was realized. The Tampa Union Station Company was organized with the late Col. Peter O. Knight, noted attorney and early developer.

Through two World Wars, and several lesser conflicts, the Union Station has been the scene of many poignant farewells, the meeting place of many happy reunions.

