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Key West is truly a 'presidential city'

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



KEY WEST IS TRULY A 'PRESIDENTIAL CITY'

By HAMPTON DUNN

KEY WEST --- The first President to discover the delights of this Southernmost City in the U.S. was president Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States of America. He came here in 1867, shortly after his release from prison following the South's defeat.

The first U.S. President to visit here was Ulysses S. Grant, the famed Civil War General, who touched down here on a world tour in 1880. President William Howard Taft came down on Henry Flagler's Overseas Railroad in 1912, with Flagler proudly showing him the sights. Grover Cleveland was one of the early Presidents who liked Key West.

President Hervert Hoover, a real Isaac Walton, loved the Keys and stayed here aboard his yacht often during his Presidency. His successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, came by car on the Overseas Highway and spent a vacation.

But Key West really became the Presidential City with Harry Truman. Old Quarters A on the Naval Station was his "Little White House" and he even had a President's Gate (photo). Seldom opened, the gate was opened for visits by President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy and for astronaut John Glenn. In 1968, when he was 82 years old, President Truman made a sentimental journey here, drove through the Presidential gate as a Marine honor guard stood rigidly at attention.

President Kennedy rushed here during the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 (Cuba is only 90 miles away).

