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Rod & Gun Club — hideaway for presidents

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



ROD & GUN CLUB --- HIDEAWAY FOR PRESIDENTS

By HAMPTON DUNN

EVERGLADES CITY --- You don't "just happen" to come upon this little town deep in the Florida Everglades --- you have to plan to get there. The community is on the tail end of State Road 29, four miles off Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41), 35 miles east of Naples.

When Baron G. Collier, the street railway advertising whiz, came here to develop the area in 1922, the only way to travel was by boat. It was called "Everglade" then and was to become headquarters for Collier's far-flung activities.

A landmark here, still standing and as beautiful as ever, is the posh Rod and Gun Club. This massive frame structure, overlooking the waterfront, has been the pleasant hideaway for at least five American Presidents, as well as numerous other celebrities.

President Eisenhower and his wife Mamie fished here while he was still a top general in the U.S. Army. President Harry Truman stayed here when he came here in 1947 to dedicate the Everglades National Park, whose western gateway is nearby.

The fashionable lodge originally was the handsome homestead of a pioneer citizen, built in 1870. Later it became the property of George W. Storter, Jr., who came to these parts in 1887. Storter raised cane (became famous for the sugar cane he grew in the Everglades region), and his wife gave birth to the first white child born here. In 1898, Storter planted the great Madeira tree now growing in front of the Club.

There have been many additions, changes and renovations on the attractive mansion, the latest was in 1968 when new owners took over. Over 50 species of salt and freshwater fish await to be caught by vacationers at Rod & Gun Club.

