1-1-1960

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A RETREAT FOR A RACKETEER

By HAMPTON DUNN

MIAMI BEACH --- Al Capone once said: "I have a wife and a boy I idolize and a beautiful home at Palm Island, Florida. If I could go there and forget it all I would be the happiest man in the world."

There's no doubt about his home at 93 Palm Island in Biscayne Bay being a magnificent mansion. This was one of his rewards for becoming king of the underworld in Chicago back in the Roaring Twenties.

The luxurious abode was built in 1922 and the original owner was Clarence M. Busch of the brewery family. "Scarface" Capone arranged for purchasing the estate while he was a prisoner serving a Federal sentence on income tax evasion. This was in the late 20s. "The Big Fellow," as he was called by his associates, moved into the Florida retreat in 1930. Well-armed bodyguards and sentries always were on hand to make it hot for any snoopers or prowlers or revenge-seekers.

Capone added a swimming pool and a two-story cabana to the property.

It was in this secluded paradise that the mobster passed away in 1947. The bedroom where he died is said to be just as it was when Capone lived there.

The fabulous stucco castle was put up for sale in 1967.

Though Capone had many possessions and loved ones, it's doubtful he ever found the peace which he professed to seek when he tried to get out of the rackets.