1-1-1960

Room & board, $2 - You furnish meat

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/2835

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.
"ROOM & BOARD, $2 ---YOU FURNISH MEAT"

By HAMPTON DUNN

MARCO ISLAND --- An early tariff schedule for the old Marco Island Inn here tells of $2 per day room rates with dinner at 6 P.M. sharp for those who provided their own fish or fowl.

This ancient hostelry, still doing business at the same old stand nearly 100 years after its erection, is truly a landmark on colorful Marco Island. The Island underwent a face-lifting when the sophisticated Mackle Brothers developed the attractive retreat area in the 1960's and 70s.

The historic Inn was originally constructed in 1883 by Capt. W.D. (Bill) Collier, son of an early pioneer. It originally was called the Marco Hotel, later changed to Inn. All of the material for the building was brought in by schooner from Boca Grande, then the nearest railroad terminal. In fact, in those days practically the only means of reaching Marco Island was by water. The old hotel had 20 sleeping rooms, a parlor, a dining room and a bathroom. Bill Collier operated the hotel, complete with dock and trading post for several years.

Several years later, George Ruppert, brother of Jacob Ruppert, and of the New York beer and baseball family, purchased the building with his in-law, a Mrs. Erickson, and turned it into a private fishing lodge. George Ruppert died in 1942 at the beginning of World War II. Later in the war the U.S. armed forces took over the Inn, constructed nearby barracks and a dock and turned it into an air-sea rescue base for crash boats operating in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1946 a syndicate leased the property from the Ruppert estate and opened the building again as a commercial hotel, the Marco Island Inn.

A previously obscure aspect of the old Inn was uncovered during a recent remodeling when an array of antique bottles were discovered under the attic floorboards. How many remember the likes of "Old Malurey Export Whiskey" or "Monograph High Grade Celebrated Alcohol?"