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Izaak Walton Lodge a fitting name

Hampton Dunn
IZAAK WALTON LODGE A FITTING NAME

By HAMPTON DUNN

YANKEETOWN --- Izaak Walton himself would have been happy in this little fishing resort on the lower Withlacoochee River. And it was in the handsome, rustic Izaak Walton Lodge that Florida Chapter No. 1 of the Izaak Walton League of America was organized.

Only a few miles from the Gulf of Mexico, this community used to be split between Levy and Citrus Counties, but now it all lies in Levy with the boundaries being changed by the Legislature in 1959.

Yankeetown was born during the dizzying Florida real estate boom of the 1920's by Judge A. F. Knott, who in 1905 had planned the city of Gary, Ind. It was the Knotts who also built the comfortable lodge back in 1923. The lodge from the beginning has attracted sportsmen from all over the nation.

The charter of the Yankeetown chapter of the fishermen's league is signed by Will Dilg, first president of the Izaak Walton League. According to veteran Florida editor, Ernie Lyons of The Stuart News, who was Dilg's fishing guide in South Florida, Dilg was one of the first sportsmen of national repute to go after bigmouth bass with a fly.

When Judge Knotts formed this idyllic village on the water, there was a movement to call it "Knotts." But the natives hereabouts referred to it as "Yankeetown" because there's where the Yankees lived, and the name stayed. A neighboring settlement then was tabbed "Crackertown" by the northerners and that stuck, too, for a long time, but the community is now known as Inglis.

For many years, Izaak Walton Lodge was run by Knotts' son, Eugene, who served as Mayor of Yankeetown for 33 years. Later, Bud Finley took over and served as proprietor for 20 years. In 1970, a young couple who, like Izaak Walton, roamed many places, acquired the property. Their names are Will and Audrey Williams. The Lodge retains its charm and easy-going way of living through all the years and no major changes are contemplated.