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Copy of letter from Mrs. William H. McCall, RD #2, Cambridge, N.Y. 12816 to
Eloise L. Robeson, 5025 28th Av. s, Gulfport, May 11, 1974

When my husband and I came to Boca Ciega Inn in 1946, there already were quite a few there who were real old timers. It was like a big family.

The first night I arrived at Boca Ciega Inn I heard Paul Camp Sr. call "Major, bring the Colonel his ice" and I thought it odd that a Major should bring the Colonel ice for his cocktail. I found out next day the Major was not a military man but one of the finest additions to the Inn- he was in charge of all the comforts of the guests.

The food was the best I ever had any place and Bess Camp (Mrs. Paul Camp Sr.) was responsible for the kitchen. She made up the menus for the day, supervised the cooking, although they had an excellent chef. Bess could take over at a minute's notice and prepare all the meals if necessary.

Paul Sr. went to market every morning and if any guests wanted to go to the City with him they could and then take the trolley back. Fruits, vegetables, eggs etc. were bought fresh every day by crate and case. It was no place to be on a diet!

The trolley in those days came down the center of Beach Blvd. after turning from 22nd Av. I believe there was a switch where you waited midway down the lovely green area for the car that was at the end of the line in front of the Casino. On a hot day in St. Pete it felt at least 10 or 15 degrees cooler the minute you hit Beach Boulevard and that nice stretch of green grass in the middle and the breeze coming up from the Bay.

The evenings were spent in learning to smock, crochet, knit, do cross stitch etc. which Bess taught all who wanted to learn. Bess never wanted to sit with idle hands. Wednesday night was party night and all the ladies wore lovely evening dresses and the men, black ties. We played bridge and Bess had a prize for every

table- items that came from her shop in the basement of the Inn.

Bess and a gal named Ella who ran the shop, did its shopping when they went North in May on their way to York Beach, Maine. Bess later opened a shop on Beach Blvd. near the Post Office.

Christmas was a wonderful time for we had a beautiful tree and everyone got a gift from the Camps- selected from their Shop- and others exchanged gifts around the tree. Ellis and his family and Bob from Miami and his family came up- Paul Jr. was not married at that time. Ellis stayed most of the Winter.

The fishing pier of course was an attraction especially for my husband who spent every day there. He was lame and did not come back for lunch but Major brought him sandwiches etc. He would dress for breakfast, go back to our rooms and put on his fishing togs and go to the Pier. He came back about five without any fish because he had given them away and then he would dress for dinner.

We had an art teacher who came and gave lessons to those who wanted to learn to paint. We sat on the lawn facing the water. I spent many dollars on painting equipment but never became an artist. However, it was fun!

Of course bridge was played a great deal but bingo and other games were also enjoyed. Sometimes we would go over to the Casino and watch the dancers but not many of us joined them. Some belonged to a shuffleboard club, some just sat around and visited with each other. Fishing and swimming of course were enjoyed by many. I corresponded with many of these people for a while.

There were a few romances which were of interest to everyone. Since we were like a large family each was interested in what the others did. About once in three weeks we would get up a group and go over to Tampa to one of the Spanish restaurants. Those who had cars were very generous in taking us for trips during the day.

There was one old gentleman who may have been one of the millionaires Paul Jr.

mentioned in the article in "The Gabber". He wanted everyone's attention and disliked very much our interest in "schmooching" as he called it. He had been coming there years before I did.

At that time the black people who worked in homes etc. had to be at the front of the Casino at nine o'clock to get the trolley back to St. Pete. There was a policeman there who knew all of them. Thank God that sort of thing no longer exists.

This chit-chat will be of interest only to those who knew the Inn in those happy days. I haven't been back to Gulfport for three years and I know I will miss the Inn where I had so many happy days.