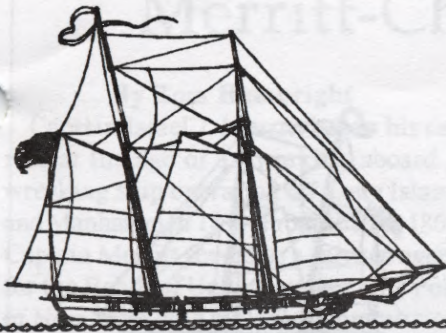




Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal

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SUMMER 2000

OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE KEY WEST MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fishing: Florida's First Industry

By James C. Cato and
Donald E. Sweat
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This paper was presented at the "Conference on Florida's Maritime Heritage" held on March 22 and 23, 1980, and is reprinted with permission of the authors.

Introduction

Fishing is often called the first industry and probably rightly so. Commercial fishing in Florida may be more than 2,000 years old, as substantiated by the results of archeological diggings in Dade County as reported in Roberts (1979). References in the Bible also point to the fishing industry of early times:

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad."

Matthew 13:47, 48.

Then, as well as now, problems exist related to the lack of use of nontraditional species. Since the earliest days of the colonies, fishing has been a big business and the U.S. has occupied the top position in fisheries. Settlement of the port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, as a fishing port in the 1620's means our nation's fishing industry is about 360 years old. Florida's "modern" fishing industry is younger, being at best a "business enterprise" 160 years old. Key West was settled in 1822 and, from the very beginning of its existence, fishing formed one of its principal industries, as pointed out in Schroeder (1924). Most recorded documentations about Florida's fisheries concern the last 100 years. This paper ad-



A Key West fisherman repairs his net during the 1930's. Photo credit: Library of Congress.

dresses the recent period of history of the Florida fisheries. We will discuss the "modern" history of both commercial and sports fisheries in Florida. More recorded history is available on the commercial fisheries and thus they will receive the emphasis

One objective of this conference is to identify articles relating to maritime history and their potential for preservation. In regard to fisheries, two problems exist. Many articles used in early fishing are undoubtedly housed in many private col-

lections and local museums.¹ Second, the fishing industry as known today is not extremely "historic" due to its relatively young age. Consequently, the identification of "preservable" items to report on in this paper is minor and would require a much more extensive effort than time allowed.

Early Commercial Fishing

The Early Spaniards

Fishermen from Cuba and other Spanish colonial settlements who first sailed their

(Continued on page 10)

Society News

By John Viele

Commerative Cruise May 21

A group of Society members joined Key West Propellor Club members aboard the schooner *Western Union* on a cruise to observe National Maritime Day and honor America's merchant seamen who fought and died for their country in two World Wars. The schooner sailed out the main ship channel, the same channel that so many merchant vessels followed on their way to the U-boat infested waters of the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. Merili and Sonny McCoy, Winifred Frizell, Don Lowe, Dr. Herman Moore, and ex-Navy man Vince Botta recounted their memories of wartime days in Key West. Flowers

were scattered on the water, and an honor guard fired a salute.

Harbor Tour May 28

Approximately thirty Society members enjoyed a historic tour of Key West harbor aboard the 50-foot sightseeing motor vessel *Reef Explorer* on Sunday May 28. Society member Sheri Lohr made arrangements for the tour which was provided with the compliments of Subtropic Dive Center. During the one and one-half hour trip, Sheri gave a most interesting narration of the history of sites along the Key West waterfront from the Coast Guard Base to Fort Zachary Taylor.

In Memory of Wright Langley

Wright Langley, long-time member, director, and enthusiastic supporter of the Key West Maritime Historical Society, passed away unexpectedly on August 12, 2000.

Wright chronicled the history of Key West and the Florida Keys through photographs and books. With his wife Joan, he was the co-author of two pictorial history books: *Key West - Images of the Past* and *Key West and the Spanish-American War*. With co-author Stan Windhorn, he produced two other pictorial histories: *Yesterday's Key West* and *Yesterday's Florida Keys*.

After moving to Key West in 1965, Wright worked as a reporter for the *Key West Citizen* and then became Key West bureau chief of the *Miami Herald*. In 1977, he was appointed director of the Historic Florida Keys Preservation Board. During his fifteen years as director, he established the first book preservation program among the Preservation Boards of Florida and obtained seed grants leading to multi-million-dollar restorations of the San Carlos Institute, the Armory, the Bat

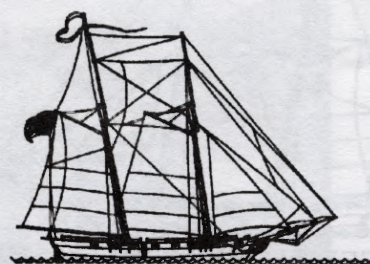
Tower, and Old City Hall. He also helped to raise funds for the preservation of the Key West-built schooner *Western Union*, served on the Little White House Advisory Committee, was a life-member of the Sculpture Garden Memorial Selection Committee, a member of the USS *Maine* Commission, and a director of the Old Firehouse Museum project.

For the Key West Maritime Historical Society, Wright provided photographs from his personal collection which were used in the Society's exhibition of the history of the Key West Bight. He became a director of the Society in November, 1999 and was working on a project to develop signs to tell the history of the Key West Seaport to be placed along the Harbor Walk.

In an interview for the *Key West Citizen*, Tom Hambricht described Wright as "a lively spirit and a wonderful historian and author. He wrote many books and was quite forthcoming with his knowledge. He left a legacy of history for Key West." His cheery smile and good works will be greatly missed by the Society, by his loved ones, and by the entire community of Key West.

New Members

Pedro and Judy Vallejo, Key Colony Beach; Jeanne C. Brookman, Federal Way, WA.



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Editor: Lynda Hambricht

Production: Tom Hambricht

Letters and articles are welcome. Please write to: Editor, Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal, KWMHS, P.O. Box 695, Key West, FL 33041 (305) 292-7903.

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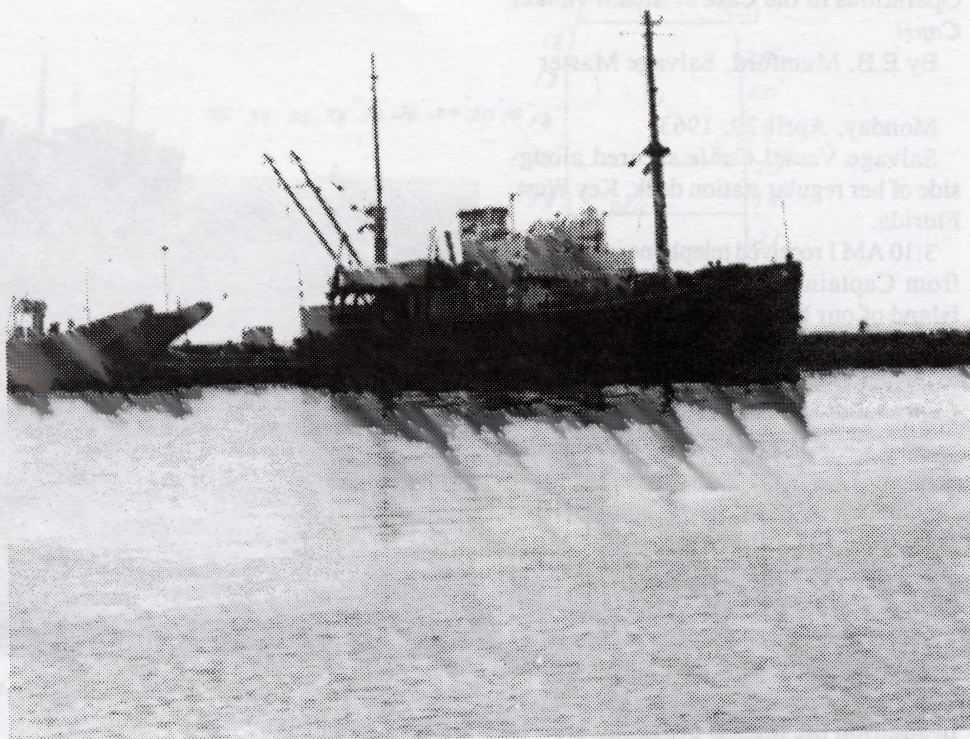
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Merritt-Chapman & Scott Corporation

By Tom Hambright

Captain Israel J. Merritt began his career at the age of 15 working aboard a wrecking ship operating off Long Island and Manhattan in 1835. From 1853 to 1860 Captain Merritt served as a salvage agent for the Board of Underwriters of the Port of New York with a blanket commission to go to any vessel in distress. In May 1860, the underwriters formed the Coast Wrecking Company with Merritt at its head. Captain Merritt bought the company in 1880 and renamed it the Merritt Wrecking Company. Unlike many other wreckers the Merritt company was able to change from sail to steam-propelled craft. He expanded to a second base at Norfolk in 1885. The company joined with the Chapman Derrick & Wrecking Company of Brooklyn in 1897 and with T.A. Scott Company of New London in 1922. The resulting Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corporation became the leading salvage firm in the United States. In July 1967, the company was acquired by Murphy Pacific Marine Salvage, a San Francisco Bay company. Murphy Pacific went out of business in 1979.

The first record found of the Merritt Wrecking Company in Key West was in 1898. After the Battleship *Maine* was destroyed in Havana, Harbor the Merritt Company was contracted by the Navy to conduct salvage on the ship in March and April of 1898. The Merritt salvage ships operated out of Key West during this time. After the turn of the new century the company worked a number of wrecks in the Florida Keys and by 1911 had stationed the wrecking tug *Relief* at Key West. After World War One the *Relief* was replaced by the *Warbler*. As World War II approached the tug *Willet* was also assigned to Key West. Both tugs worked the Keys and Caribbean during the war. In 1947 the *Cable* assumed the duties at Key West. The Tug *Curb* replaced the *Cable* in 1974. The *Curb* remained in Key West until 1978 when the company ended salvage work. This was the end of Key West as a major salvage port, a tradition that began 1823 when the city was first founded. The *Warbler*, *Willet*, *Cable* and *Curb* were owned by the Navy and operated under contract to the salvage company. The *Curb* was declared surplus by the Navy and in 1983 was sunk as an artificial reef in 180



MERRITT-CHAPMAN & SCOTT CORPORATION SALVAGE DEPARTMENT

SEA
SALVORS



SINCE
1860

NEW YORK

Top: The Wrecking Tug *Cable* at her berth at the Naval Station. Bottom: The Black Horse was letterhead, company flag and stack insignia of Merritt-Chapman and Scott Company. The Black Horse dates from the days the New York Underwriters maintained a vigil along the northeast coast. Their agents were stationed along the coast with orders to leap to their horse to carry the news of any vessel in distress to headquarters with orders to "get the word to headquarters even if you have to kill the horse."

feet of water south of Key West.

The company's last wrecking master in Key West was Captain Hilary Crusoe. He joined the company in 1945 and worked until the company closed its Key West operations in 1978. Over the years he saved the wreck reports that were filed after each

operation. Captain Crusoe donated these reports to the Monroe County Library. The report on the salvage of the American Tanker *Capri* appears in this issue. Other reports will be published in future issues of The Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal.

Salvage of the Steam Tanker *Capri*

Salvage Master's Report of Salvage Operations in the Case of Steam Tanker *Capri*

By E.B. Mumford, Salvage Master

Monday, April 29, 1963.

Salvage Vessel *Cable* secured alongside of her regular station dock, Key West, Florida.

3:10 AM I received telephone instruction from Captain F.A. Shepherd in Staten Island of our New York office to prepare *Cable* for sea and sail as soon as possible to the assistance of the stranded oil tanker *Capri* ashore on Molasses Reef Straits of Florida. He also advised me that the pump room was reported to be flooded. Preparations for sailing were immediately started.

5:30 AM Sailing preparations having been completed; *Cable* cast off her station pier and proceeded with best possible speed toward the stranded tanker *Capri*. There were onboard the *Cable* at this time in addition the regular operating crew of 23 men, a salvage crew of nine, consisting of Salvage Master, E.B. Mumford, Salvage Foreman, One Pump Engineer, two Divers and one Diver's Tender, also one Carpenter and two Salvagemen, all skilled in salvage operations.

6:05 AM Key West sea buoy abeam. Fresh easterly breeze and rough sea. Ship pitching heavily.

8:00 AM Note: At the present time, the sea is too rough to get gear out on deck and the conditions remained the same until we anchored.

1:00 PM Sighted the stranded tanker *Capri*.

1:45 PM *Cable* stopped off the stranded tanker and lowered a motor boat.

2:00 PM Launch ready. I with salvage Foreman and Pump Engineer left in launch to board the stranded tanker. Weather: fresh east southeast wind, heavy sea and cloudy.

2:05 PM Water was cutting the tanker *Capri* draft marks at 16'00" forward and 20'00" aft.

2:10 PM I boarded the stranded tanker and found as follows: I was informed by the Master of the *Capri* (Gerard H. Bassett) that his vessel was enroute from Providence, R.I. toward Smith Buff, Texas. The vessel had stranded at 11:52 PM on April



The oil tanker *Capri* ashore on Molasses Reef. Photo credit: Captain E.B. Mumford, Salvage Master

27th, 1963 on Molasses Reef, Florida Straits. Position of the stranded vessel was found to be: Latitude 25-00.8 North, Longitude 80-22.3 West and his present heading was 237 degrees by gyro. The vessel was resting on hard sand, coral and scattered rocks. He also informed me that his vessel was in ballast with about 8,059 tons aboard, also 200 tons of fuel oil and 173 tons of fresh water. I was informed that his main pump room aft had holed and filled to sea level at time of stranding and that all pumps and valves under water in the pump room. He also stated that some of the cargo tanks bulkheads were leaking from one tank to another. The stranding draft of the vessel was reported to be at time of stranding: 14'06" forward and 24'06" aft- present draft was found to be 16'00" forward and 20'00" aft. At this time the sea was too rough to take soundings around and off the stranded tanker, also to boat gear from *Cable* to tanker *Capri*.

3:00 PM Master of the tanker *Capri* signed Lloyds No Cure No Pay Contract.

3:30 PM Called our New York office by radiophone on the *Capri* and reported conditions as I found them.

4:00 PM Due to the heavy and rough sea, sent launch to *Cable* to be hoisted and for the men to assist in getting two sets

of beach gear on deck of the *Cable* ready to plant as soon as the weather permits. I remained on board the tanker *Capri*.

Tuesday, April 30, 1963. Day begins with the *Cable* anchored close by the stranded tanker *Capri*.

4:00 AM Moderate east southeast wind and sea, partly cloudy weather.

6:00 AM Deck and salvage crew aboard the *Cable* resumed work. Launch lowered and part of salvage personnel boarded the *Capri*.

6:30 AM Sent launch back to the *Cable* for load of beach gear.

6:45 AM Launch alongside of the *Capri* with part of two sets of beach gear, same was taken onboard on the starboard side.

7:15 AM Launch alongside *Capri* with balance of beach gear, same was taken aboard and salvage personnel started to rig up to two sets of heavy beach gear blocks and falls on the stern of the tanker.

7:30 AM Salvage crew boarded the *Cable* for breakfast.

8:00 AM Moderate east southeast wind, moderate sea and sell, cloudy.

8:15 AM Salvage crew returned to the tanker and started to rig up beach gear on the vessel's stern.

8:20 AM Vessel's draft marks now show 16'00 forward and 19'10 aft.

8:25 AM Part of salvage crew in launch they proceeded to take sounding around and off the stranded tanker.

9:30 AM Salvage crew finished taking soundings around and off the tanker. Sounding sheet on this page.

10:30 AM Sent launch to **Cable** for one three inch and one four inch steam pump together with suction and discharge hose.

11:00 AM Launch alongside with two inch and four inch steam pumps, suction and discharge hoses, came taken onboard and placed near the after pump room.

11:48 AM Launch left with salvage personnel to board **Cable** for lunch.

12:00 AM Weather, moderate southeast wind and sea, partly cloudy.

12:30 PM All deck and salvage personnel on **Cable** resumed work shifting set of beach gear wires and chain from port side to starboard side to lay to tanker. Change over due to the change of tide.

1:30 PM Salvage crew boarded tanker **Capri**. Preparing to lay beach gear.

1:55 PM Sent launch to **Cable** for running line.

2:05 PM End of running line onboard. Salvage personnel started to heave end of number one set of gear onboard through the after stern chock on the starboard side.

2:23 PM End of number wire cable onboard and fast to carpenter stopper on bits.

2:33 PM **Cable** hove up anchor to plant gear.

2:51 PM **Cable** planted one set of gear on ranges about 40 degrees on port quarter of stern in 100 feet of water. This set of gear consisted of: 2 - 100 fathom 1 5/8 wire cable; 1 - 8,000 pound anchor; 1 - 15 fathom length of 2 1/2 spring chain; 1 set of heavy beach fall blocks; 1 - 1,000 of 5/8 beach fall wire; 2 heavy 1 - 5/8 carpenter stoppers; 1 - 5/8 carpenter stopper; 2 large cable shackles; 2 large connecting link plates; 2 - 12 inch lang 1 - 5/8 wire strops and 1 cable buoy and 50 feet of 5/8 wire secured to end of wire cable on tanker.

3:00 PM **Cable** anchored. Sent part of salvage crew from tanker to **Cable** to assist in preparing the number two set of beach gear.

4:00 PM Gentle southerly wind, small sea and clear weather.

5:00 PM **Cable** anchored in position to put out number 2 set of beach gear.

5:03 PM Sent end of running line to **Cable** for end of number 2 set of beach gear.

Diagram showing water depth and position of beach gear and tow line. Photo credit: Captain E.B. Mumford, Salvage Master

5:16 PM End of two set of beach gear fast to port quarter of stern, **Cable** preparing to plant gear.

5:30 PM **Cable** hove up anchor and proceeded out on ranges to plant gear. **Cable** planted number 2 set of beach gear approximately 60 degrees off port quarter of stern in 100 feet of water. The number 2 set of gear consists of the same as the number 1 set.

5:35 PM Salvage crew left in launch for **Cable** for supper.

6:00 PM Deck and salvage personnel resumed work getting on deck of **Cable** third set of gear ready to lay tomorrow morning.

6:15 PM Part of salvage crew returned to tanker **Capri** and set up on the beach gear.

6:40 PM Finished setting up on beach gears.

6:42 PM Salvage personnel started to place and rig up with suction and dis-

charge the three inch and four inch steam pumps in the after pump room of the tanker which is flooded to sea level. (Approximately 20 feet of water in the pump room).

9:30 PM Launch alongside of tanker with Mate and three men from the **Cable** with three cable buoys and 50 feet of 5/8" wire crown ropes to secure to ends of beach gear cables onboard. Place two of the buoys on stern. They then started to assist placing steam pumps in pump room.

10:45 PM Finished placing three and four inch steam pumps in pump room.

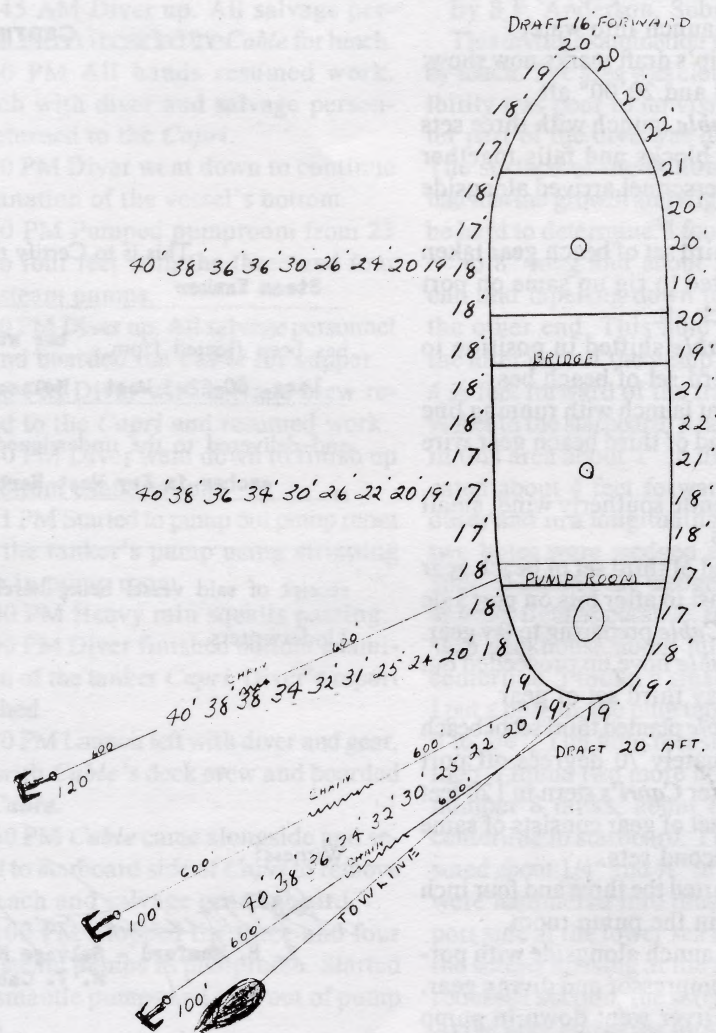
10:47 Deck and salvage personnel onboard tanker **Capri** left in launch, hoisted launch and secured for the day.

Wednesday, May 1

Day begins with **Cable** anchored near by the stranded tanker **Capri**, Molasses Reef, Florida Straits.

6:00 AM All hands on **Cable** resumed

(Continued on page 6)



(*Capri* from page 5)

work. Lower launch into water.

6:30 AM Ship's draft marks now show: 16'6" forward and 20'00" aft.

6:22 AM *Cable* launch with three sets of beach gear blocks and falls together with salvage personnel arrived alongside of the *Capri*.

6:30 AM Third set of beach gear taken onboard. Started to rig up same on port side, main deck aft.

7:45 AM *Cable* shifted in position to put out the third set of beach gear.

7:58 AM Sent launch with running line to *Cable* for end of third beach gear wire cable.

8:00 AM Gentle southerly wind, small sea and swells.

8:15 AM End of third set of beach gear onboard and fast to after bits on port side of main deck. *Cable* preparing to lay gear.

8:24 AM *Cable* hove up proceeded out on ranges to lay third set of gear.

8:50 AM *Cable* planted third set of beach gear approximately 70 degrees off port side of the tanker *Capri's* stern in 120 feet of water. The set of gear consists of same as first and second sets.

8:53 AM Started the three and four inch steam pumps in the pump room.

10:20 AM Launch alongside with portable diving compressor and diving gear.

10:50 AM Diver went down in pump room with wet suit and face mask to open seven valves in the flooded pump room and for gravitating ballast water from cargo tanks, also lining up valves to pump out ballast from cargo tanks.

11:20 AM Diver up. Completed job of opening valves.

11:25 AM Sent end of running line to *Cable* for end of two inch wire towline.

12:00 AM *Cable's* towline onboard and fast to the stern of the tanker *Capri*.

12:05 PM Ship's draft makers show 16'00" forward and 20'00" aft.

12:08 PM Salvage personnel boarded *Cable* for lunch.

12:15 PM Started to gravitate ballast water from the tanker *Capri* cargo tanks to lighten tanker for re-floating.

12:30 PM Salvage and part of deck personnel from *Cable* boarded the tanker and set up a heavy strain on all three sets of beach gears.

12:40 PM Stopped the three and four inch steam pumps in pump room, leakage is too great for these pumps.

12:45 PM *Cable* hove up anchor and paid out towline.

CERTIFICATE OF DELIVERY

Key West, Fla.

May 4 19 63

This is to Certify that the American

Steam Tanker

Capri

has been floated from her stranded position Lat. 25-00.8 North

Long. 80-22.3 West Molasses Reef Straits of Florida

and delivered to the undersigned on May 4 19 63

at anchor in Key West Harbor Key West, Fla.

by MERRITT-CHAPMAN & SCOTT CORPORATION,

receipt of said vessel being hereby acknowledged on behalf of the Owners and/or Underwriters.

Steam Tanker *Capri*

By Gerard H. Bassett

Title Master

Witness:

E. B. Mumford - Salvage Master
M. V. Cable

The Certificate of Delivery signed by Gerard H. Bassett, Mater of the steam tanker *Capri*.

1:00 PM *Cable* started to pull full speed on the tanker *Capri*.

1:40 PM Stopped gravitating ballast water.

1:45 PM Diver went down in pump room to close valves so to use tanker's cargo pumps to de-water ballast tanks for re-floating.

1:53 PM Diver up, finished closing valves.

1:53 PM Started to de-water tanker's cargo tanks with vessel's own cargo pump.

2:20 Vessel's draft marks show: 16'8" forward and 21'3" aft.

2:36 PM High water at this time and date at this position.

3:10 PM Ship's draft marks show: 15'10" forward and 21'3" aft.

4:00 PM Light southerly winds, clear weather and smooth sea.

4:05 PM Ship's draft marks show: 14'8" forward and 21'2" aft.

4:30 PM Note Discharged from the *Capri's* cargo tanks approximately 1,246

barrels of ballast water to lighten tanker.

5:00 PM Ship's draft marks now show: 14'3" forward and 21' a" aft.

5:30 PM Supper being served to all salvage personnel in relays.

6:00 PM Ship's draft marks now show: 13'6" forward and 20'2" aft.

6:20 PM Floated the tanker *Capri*.

6:23 PM Let go all cables from tanker; *Cable* towing tanker clear of reef.

6:30 PM Ship's floating draft: 13'3" forward and 20'00" aft.

6:40 PM *Cable's* towline let go from the tanker *Capri*.

6:42 PM Tanker *Capri* proceeded under her own power to anchorage off Molasses Reef light.

6:55 PM Tanker *Capri* anchored in 35 fathoms of water off Molasses Reef light for the night to check leakage, also to await the *Cable* to recover her beach gear and anchors.

7:20 PM *Cable* anchored close by the *Capri*; awaiting daylight to recover gears.

8:30 PM Called Captain Shepherd from the tanker *Capri* and reported the re-floatation of *Capri*. I was advised to hold the tanker *Capri* at the present position until *Cable* had recovered all the beach gears and then proceed to Key West harbor and conduct the diver's examination there of the *Capri's* bottom.

9:00 PM All salvage gear made up on deck of the tanker ready to be transferred back to the *Cable*.

9:03 PM Sent all salvage personnel back to *Cable* for the night. Hoisted launch and secured for the day. Checking all cargo tanks on the *Capri* each hour through out the night.

Thursday, May 2

Day begins with the *Cable* and tanker *Capri* anchored off Molasses Reef light.

6:00 AM All hands on *Cable* turned to preparing to recover beach gear at scene of stranding.

8:00 AM Soundings of all cargo tanks and compartments onboard the *Capri* show no noticeable change, only bulkheads leaking between tanks.

11:45 AM *Cable* finished recovering all beach gear. Hoisted launch.

11:58 AM Ship's draft marks now show: 12'6" forward and 23'6" aft.

12:00 AM Tanker *Capri* started to heave up bow anchor.

12:16 PM Tanker *Capri* and the *Cable* underway for Key West, Florida for diving examination of tanker's bottom.

7:50 PM Pilot boarded tanker *Capri* off Key West sea buoy.

8:37 PM Tanker *Capri* anchored in Key West harbor.

8:42 PM *Cable* anchored close by the tanker *Capri* for the night.

Friday, May 3.

Day begins with *Cable* and *Capri* at anchor in Key West harbor.

6:18 AM Launch from *Cable* with salvage and diving crew alongside *Capri*.

7:18 AM Diver went down in after pump room to locate leakage in same.

8:45 AM Started the three inch and four inch steam pumps in pump room to put suction on bottom to help diver locate hole in bottom shell plating.

9:00 AM Diver located the leak in pump room in keel plate, hole found is approximately 6" long and 5" wide and tapered to about 1/2". Diver started to wedge the above hole and to make it water-tight as possible.

10:15 AM Diver completed wedging hole as tight as possible. Diver then contin-

ued the bottom examination.

11:45 AM Diver up. All salvage personnel left and boarded the *Cable* for lunch.

1:00 PM All hands resumed work. Launch with diver and salvage personnel returned to the *Capri*.

1:20 PM Diver went down to continue examination of the vessel's bottom.

4:00 PM Pumped pumproom from 23 feet to four feet with the three and four inch steam pumps.

4:50 PM Diver up. All salvage personnel left and boarded the *Cable* for supper.

5:20 PM Diver with salvage crew returned to the *Capri* and resumed work.

5:30 PM Diver went down to finish up the bottom examination.

5:31 PM Started to pump out pump room with the tanker's pump using stripping pump in pump room.

6:00 PM Heavy rain squalls passing.

8:00 PM Diver finished bottom examination of the tanker *Capri*. Diver's report attached.

8:10 PM Launch left with diver and gear, also with *Cable's* deck crew and boarded the *Cable*.

8:50 PM *Cable* came alongside and secured to starboard side of *Capri* to remove all beach and salvage gear onboard.

11:00 PM Stopped the three and four inch steam pumps in pumproom. Started to dismantle pumps and take out of pump room.

11:15 PM Port Engineer, Mr. Hopkins and myself left in pilot launch to go ashore in Key West and telephone.

12:00 PM I called Mr. Varnum at home in Staten Island and reported, I was instructed to deliver the tanker *Capri* to the master and for *Cable* to return to her station dock in Key West, Fla.

Saturday, May 4.

Day begins with the *Cable* secured alongside of the tanker *Capri* anchored in Key West harbor.

12:40 AM I boarded the *Cable* from shore.

12:50 AM Master of *Capri* signed Certificate of Delivery. While the *Cable* was alongside the tanker *Capri* forty tons of fresh water was furnished to same.

1:00 AM All beach and salvage gear off tanker *Capri*.

1:05 AM *Cable* cast off from alongside tanker *Capri* and proceeded to her regular berth in the Naval Station, Key West, Fla.

2:00 AM *Cable* secured to her berth Key West, Fla.

Diver report on the tanker *Capri*

By S.P. Anderson, Submarine Diver

This diving examination was done mostly by touch. The area was cloudy and the visibility was poor to no visibility. The latter part of the dive was done after dark. The surface of the bottom of the tanker had marine growth and slight cracks would be hard to determine. I found a hole about 6" to 8" long and about 5" wide at one end and tapering down to about 1/2" on the other end. This hole was located at the after part of the pump room, or about 4 1/2 feet forward of the transducer and 1 1/2 feet to the starboard. Another small hole in this area about 1" in diameter and located about 4 feet forward of the transducer and in a longitudinal line above the two holes were wedged and oakum was applied around the wedges to make them as water tight as possible. Beneath the mid-ship deckhouse about midway and near centerline, I found a small hole and this I put a plug in, the plug tapered from about 0 to 3/4", The hole measured about 1/4" inch. I found two more holes beneath the number 8 tanks, about 8 feet from the centerline to starboard. These holes measured about 1/4" and 1/2" in diameter. Plugs were hammered into these holes. On the port side at the lower sea suction, I found the screen missing at the starboard pump room sea suction, the screen was stove in. At the after end of the forward pump room at the sea suction, the screen was missing. The collar on the upper part of the rudder post had fallen. The bilge keels on both sides were partially gone and the remaining parts were distorted and torn. During the dive and examination of the bottom, I found numerous dents and corrugations but nowhere did I find the bottom to be more than three inches out of fair. All measurements of set-ins are approximate.

The crew of the *Cable* during this salvage were: W.G. Reese, C.A. Achesen, U.E. Sweeting, L.J. Staab, E.C. Mallory, J. Nere, E.F. Sawyer, T. Evans, W. Bethel, H.J. Spencer, W.C. Damaschensz, C.J. Ingraham, P. Sosa, W.F. Searcy, R. Rebel, H.L. Thompson, H.L. Kessen, G.M. Reynold, W.B. Lanier, George Trapp, C. Johnson, P. Kushman, McCloud, P. Matterson, E. Dickerson and O. Rogel.

The following were members of the salvage crew: E.B. Mumford, H.A. Crusoe, L.W. Roberts, S.P. Anderson, J.T. Glynn, D.C. Reynold, A. Brischnik, R.G. Stirrup and J.R. Menendez.

Civil War Days in Key West

By Lewis G. Schmid
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PART 9 (July 1864 thru April 1865)

There were 22 burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in July; eight from the 2nd USCT, twelve from the 110th New York, one US Navy and one from the 30th Massachusetts. Nineteen other men died at the Marine Hospital, among them at least four from the USS *Nita*, four from the USS *Julia*, two from the US machine shop, and two from the USS *Dale*.

The schooner *Tortugas* was regularly assisting the *Matchless* in delivering mail and supplies between Key West and the Dry Tortugas during this period.

On July 4, Maj. Wilder reported that "There is a gentleman here by the name of Capt Curtis, an old resident of the place, a man of wealth & a thorough Unionist and an abolitionist. He told me yesterday he was going North...He is one of our best friends in town, quite intelligent & very gentlemanly...Yesterday I [Maj. Wilder] called Mr Hicks. He received me very civilly indeed & invited me to his house where I mean to call. He too is going North this summer...did not inquire whether he was North or not."

"This is the rainy season. It rains nearly every day...To day we fire 35 guns [one for each state, including West Virginia] from the Fort in honor of our independence. Have a parade before the General & the people of the town, dine on roast kid & other good things, iced wine & dessert of fruits."

"Yellow fever still rages here in the town [on July 10], but we have had no new cases among the officers of our regt [2nd USCT] for some weeks...We have lost one third of our officers who are here...One company [110th New York's Company K] of white troops here have lost just one third so far, & it is probably not over with them. Even citizens do not escape. No vessels lie at the wharves that can help it. It almost looks comical to see great ships of war lying off the island 3 or 4 miles away, afraid to land their crews or communicate with the land...Yellow fever will abate in October...Next summer we shall probably have none at all. It does not come here oftener generally than once in some 6 or 7 years."

On July 17, "The pestilence still rages

here. Among others who have died is a son of Abbott, the writer, who was Asst Dist Attorney here. He has a young wife who is naturally much distressed. It rains here now nearly every day, which is supposed to be one cause of the unusual mortality...It is too hot to drill, or to walk, or to ride except under very favorable conditions, so we do little or nothing."

"While I write I can hear the powerful & sonorous voice of 'Old Jacob' rising on his ladder of prayer to heaven, wrestling with the Lord & I think effectually. Old Jacob is a Sergeant of my old Company [A, 2nd USCT] & I think the nearest representative of Uncle Tom I ever saw. He is perhaps the best man I ever saw. He is certainly without an equal in the regiment or among all the contrabands...He is a fervent Methodist & is lame in one leg...His character is full of dignity, kindness & sincerity. He has a right to go up on his own ladder [to Heaven] to the place 'where the good niggers go', if ever a man had."

"Our barracks are so situated to command a fine sea view—all the steamers from New York & New Orleans pass within sight & we get our glasses & speculate as soon as a vessel appears whether she brings a mail or no. Pretty soon a pilot boat or a steam tug runs out to her, & if she hoists the American Ensign on her return we know she has a mail...We have not one officer to a company for the companies that are here...Our once noble regiment of over 900 men & some 40 officers is now reduced to 6 officers on Dress Parade...Don't imagine all our officers are dead, many are scattered on various duties."

On July 27, Adm Bailey reported "My worst fears have been more than realized, and for more than two months the disease [yellow fever] has held its course without abatement and is now as virulent as at any time. The season of epidemic lasted in 1862 nearly to the 1st of November...the yellow fever has been raging at this post with a violence that has exceeded that of 1862, or I believe of any previous year."

"The vessels that have been detained here perforce have suffered severely. The steamer *Nita* was under repairs that rendered it impossible for her to get away. Every person on board but two officers has been taken ill of the fever and so far

some ten or more have died. On the ordnance ship *Dale* I believe every person has been taken excepting Commander Handy and a boatswain's mate [four of the officers and four of the barge's crew] who were on board, and others of the *Dale's* crew died. The *Wanderer* had but three men; all were taken; one died; the others are in critical condition. The guard schooner *Eugenie* has also lost perhaps one-fourth of her men."

"On shore the sickness and mortality have been even greater. The provost-guard of 45 men has lost more than half its number, and the mortality among the citizens and refugees has been alarmingly great. Almost every unacclimated person on the island has been attacked...The mortality on the island I am told has reached as high as 12 to 15 in a day...[Adm. Bailey ordered] those vessels that needed to communicate with me to anchor at Sand Key and sending out the tug *Marigold* to them...The *Huntsville* has had from 20 to 30 cases. Her sick list for to-day shows 14 cases...The *Merrimac*...at present 8 cases...The other vessels in which the disease has appeared are the *Honduras*, the *Iuka*, the *Marigold*, the *Honeysuckle*, and the *San Jacinto*. When I last heard from the *San Jacinto* she had but four cases [the *San Jacinto* would have 27 cases of yellow fever by August 12 when she arrived in the North]...The squadron is much crippled."

In writing of the 2nd USCT, Maj. Wilder reported that because of sickness, deaths and furloughs, "We now have some companies without any officers at all. Yet it would be murder to send any down here to die of yellow fever as they almost certainly would. There are only two of us left who have not had a severe attack of fever—half of those attacked die."

There were nine burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in August; three members of the 2nd USCT, two 110th New York, two USA, one Engineer and one 93rd Ohio. Five other men died at the Marine Hospital.

A review of the St. Paul's death records for June through August, reveal 53 yellow fever deaths in the military and other non-residents; and during the same period, 31 Key West citizens died, 15 listed as yellow fever victims.

There were six burials in the Key West Post cemetery in September; three members of the 2nd USCT, two from the navy and one member of the 110th New York. Nine other men died at the Marine Hospital, two of them from the USS *Honeysuckle*.

It was reported on September 19 that "Last night died Lieut Carpenter, one of our best officers, a fine fellow only two weeks from the North or thereabouts, where he had been all summer on sick leave. Poor fellow he had been in 22 pitched battles & skirmishes numberless, & came down here to die of yellow fever after all. I do hope this may finish the list, tho there is one lying in the next room to me [Lt. Col. Wilder, 2nd USCT] who has had a touch & a go. He too came down with Carpenter & at one time we expected them both to go, but the old negro nurse who waited on him, when he was at the last gasp, brought up a live fowl & cutting it in half placed half on each foot & drew the fever as she says away from the bowels & after that time he began to recover & we think now he is out of danger. In this disease it dont take long for a man to know whether he is going to be 'rubbed out' or not, 3 or 4 days generally settles the matter."

There were two burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in October, both members of the 2nd USCT. Six other men died at the Marine Hospital, two of them members of the crew of the brig *Woodland*. There was one burial in the Key West Post Cemetery in November, and one man died at the Marine Hospital.

On November 1, Lt. Col. Wilder of the 2nd USCT was "ordered on a Court Martial which commences in session Nov 1st...The Court Martial has some interesting cases before it, one in particular. I am President of it by the way. Major Weeks is now my prisoner on a charge of murder &c &c. His brother is a Boston man of large wealth, he does business on Milk Street, India Rubber manufacturer. He, together the Major's wife (a fine English girl) are all here. Also a lawyer from New York named Fuller, and a Boston detective. The Major denies the murder & the detective who is a very sharp fellow thinks he has found the murderer. They are all very fine people, cultivated and spend money like water. I should like to tell you many curious incidents connected with this case if I had time but must wait until we meet."

"It is a singular case indeed. In it I have made the friendship & acquaintance of

some very agreeable & influential persons. The fees of counsel in the case will amount to \$10,000 probably or more."

Lt. Col. Wilder would report the following January 16 that "Our Court Martial is over & terminated [not surprisingly] in an acquittal of the Major on all the charges."

Henry Hamilton, and possibly Darius Stokes, both members of the 2nd USCT, were sentenced to be shot or hung at Key West on Friday, November 4, for a mutiny that previously occurred at Ship Island, Mississippi on December 27, 1863. Neither man had any effects. Henry was 23 years old, and had been enrolled in Baltimore, Maryland, as did Stokes. He was born in Easton, Maryland.

Although an account of the execution has not been discovered, information regarding the effects of the two men, would seem to indicate the execution of Darius Stokes was carried out at an unknown location at Key West on December 16. Their burials have not been located, but were most likely in unknown graves at the African Cemetery, or doubtfully at the US Post Cemetery, or even at sea by one of the many ships in harbor.

Henry Hamilton's Court Martial sentenced him to "be shot to death with musketry, in the presence of the 2d Regiment U.S. Colored Troops, between the hours of sun rise and sun set, on the fourth day of November, 1864. The Commanding Officer of the District of Key West and Tortugas, is charged with the execution of this sentence, and will designate the place of execution."

"The enormity and character of the crimes proven in this case do not admit of Executive clemency. It is hoped that the sad fate of this man, which is as just as it is severe, may have a salutary effect in deterring others from the fatal error into which he has fallen."

Lt. Col. Wilder, who was a member of the court that heard the charges, questioned the War Department's Bureau of Military Justice by letter on the previous October 28th, regarding legal technicalities involving the areas of responsibility of the courts in the matter of the trials of Hamilton and Stokes. He received an answer on November 10 that it was a "legally constituted tribunal".

An additional communication from the Bureau of Military Justice on the following December 14th, now expressed a view "that the sentences pronounced against Stokes

and Hamilton were inoperative, and their execution unwarranted by law. In consequence of the delay in the transmittal of your communication upon the subject, it having reached this Bureau only on the 12th instant [December], no interposition in behalf of Stokes can be of any avail...the hope is indulged that the objection of the validity of the proceedings in Stokes' case has been perceived by the Authority upon whom rests the execution of the sentence, in season to spare his life."

There was one burial in the Key West Post Cemetery in December, and three men died at the Marine Hospital.

Darius Stokes of the 2nd USCT, sentenced for shooting his company sergeant while at Ship Island, Mississippi, was hung at Key West on Friday, December 16. The hanging probably took place on the "Fort Taylor Lands", adjacent to and south of the causeway leading to Fort Taylor. He was probably buried in the "African Cemetery" on the south beach at White St.

On the 20th, Lt. Col. Wilder would report that "We had last week a capital punishment. One of my men was hanged for murder of another. He died most bravely & firmly. Poor fellow, I pitied him."

There were seven burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in January; four from the 2nd USCT, two from the 2nd Florida Cavalry and one member of the 3rd Pennsylvania Artillery. One addition burial took place at the "US Army Cemetery", probably another name for the post cemetery. Five other men died at the Marine Hospital, two of them members of the crew of the USS *Monongahela*.

A party was held at Fort Taylor on Tuesday evening, January 17.

There were three burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in February; one each from the 2nd USCT, 2nd Florida Cavalry and 110th New York. There were no reported deaths at the Marine Hospital.

Writing from Fort Taylor on February 11, Lt. Col. Wilder reported that he had his photograph taken "to oblige a lady whose husband recently died and at whose funeral I was one of the pall bearers."

At Key West on February 22, "The kindness of Admiral Stribling having placed at our disposal the steamer *Magnolia*, the Ninety-ninth U.S. Colored Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel Pearsall, was embarked, destined for Punta Rassa [near Fort Myers on the west coast]. In the meantime the steamer *Honduras* arrived from Punta

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(Fishing from page 1)

smacks into the waters of Charlotte Harbor and Tampa Bay recognized that the bays, inlets, and rivers of the area abounded in edible fish and green turtle which could be taken at minimal risk and perhaps with substantial profit. Hammond (1973) makes the reasonable assumption that commercial fishing, at least on a small scale, was carried on in Charlotte Harbor in the latter part of the seventeenth and the early years of eighteenth centuries, although evidence of such operations is meager. The fishing camps or "ranchos" extended from Boca Grande southward to San Carlos Bay and the Caloosahatchee River.

Several writers of 1765 and 1772, as quoted by Hammond (1973), make reference to the Spanish fisherman living on the Mullet Keys and near what is today Boca Grande. These writers describe the salting and drying of fish which supplied Havana and other Spanish settlements in the West Indies during the Lent season. It appears that 12 to 14 Spanish fishing vessels annually plied the waters of Charlotte Harbor during the 1780's. The fishermen, who apparently peacefully co-existed with the Indians, were left undisturbed during the British occupation of Florida from 1763 to 1793.

During the 1830's various accounts report that 130 to 600 men, women, and children worked in the Charlotte Harbor fishery. About half were Indian. During 1831, pressures for direct control of the fisheries by the territorial government began to mount and by 1836, after a number of confrontations the occupation of Charlotte Harbor by Spanish fishermen was ended. However, the struggle to contain the Indians was only the beginning and the area took on a basically military population. Hammond's (1973) work presents a very interesting account of the evolution of these fisheries and of the political and settlement pressures brought to bear on them.

The Development of Commercial Fishing

Florida's earliest-sought seafood commodity was finfish. Before the technology of netting reached the South, the hook-and-line method was successfully employed to take reef fishes of all types, as well as some of the coastal pelagics such as king mackerel and Spanish mackerel.

Fishing was a principal industry at Key West from the very beginning of its settlement in 1822 when great clipper ships made

it a port second only to New York. Fishermen from St. Augustine came to Key West to fish eight months of the year and regularly sold their catches to Havana markets.

During the late 1800's ice was either unavailable or only sparingly available in the form of winter block ice, shipped in by schooner from the northeast. Consequently, most of the reef fishes, such as snapper, grouper, grunt, triggerfish, etc. were kept alive by placing them into what was called a live well—a water-filled, boxlike structure built directly into the hull of the boat with openings drilled throughout to facilitate water transfer. These fishes were kept alive until they were later sold locally.

The larger reef fish landings were made early on in the Key West area, although Florida's panhandle region was not far behind Key West as a primary producer. The fishing fleet in Key West was composed mainly of small boats, some with sails only, some with gasoline engines, and some with both. Most fished close to shore, as reported in Schroeder (1924). Ice became available in the Panhandle much earlier than in South Florida and aided in rapidly expanding fishery for Pensacola, Panama City, and Apalachicola.

After netting practices were established in the early 1900's, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, and mullet were produced in quantity for the first time. The lower southeast Florida coast and the Keys produced many pounds of both king and Spanish mackerel while the Cape Sable region quickly became the established leader in mullet production which, by 1918, was 35-million pound per year industry (Schroeder, 1924).

Because of the shortage of ice and cold storage facilities prior to the early 1920's, most of the pelagics (which could not be kept alive in a live well) were split, salted and sold in Cuba, where salted fish was an acceptable staple.

The biggest breakthrough for Florida's fisheries came in 1950, with the discovery of pink shrimp on the famous Tortugas grounds. Until the discovery of deep water shrimp in the Dry Tortugas, mullet was the prime commercial seafood catch in Florida. At one time, mullet fishermen actually threw away shrimp caught on their nets because there was little market for them.

Jacksonville, popularly known as "the gateway to Florida," supported no extensive

commercial fisheries in the early 1900's (Fiedler, 1928). However, Jacksonville area fishery trade was extensive, in that many assemblers and distributors handled fish, principally mullet, Spanish mackerel, seatrout, fresh water bream, and shrimp. Distribution was made to 25 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada, with New York the leading market. Fiedler (1928) gives a very detailed "market channel" study of the fish trade in the mid-1920's.

The industry has grown with the state but in many ways is still depictive of days past. The independent fisherman is still the primary economic unit, compared to the fleet and large vessel operations of some other U.S. fisheries and those of foreign countries. This paper concentrates on the development of several of the currently and/or historically important individual commercial fisheries in Florida.

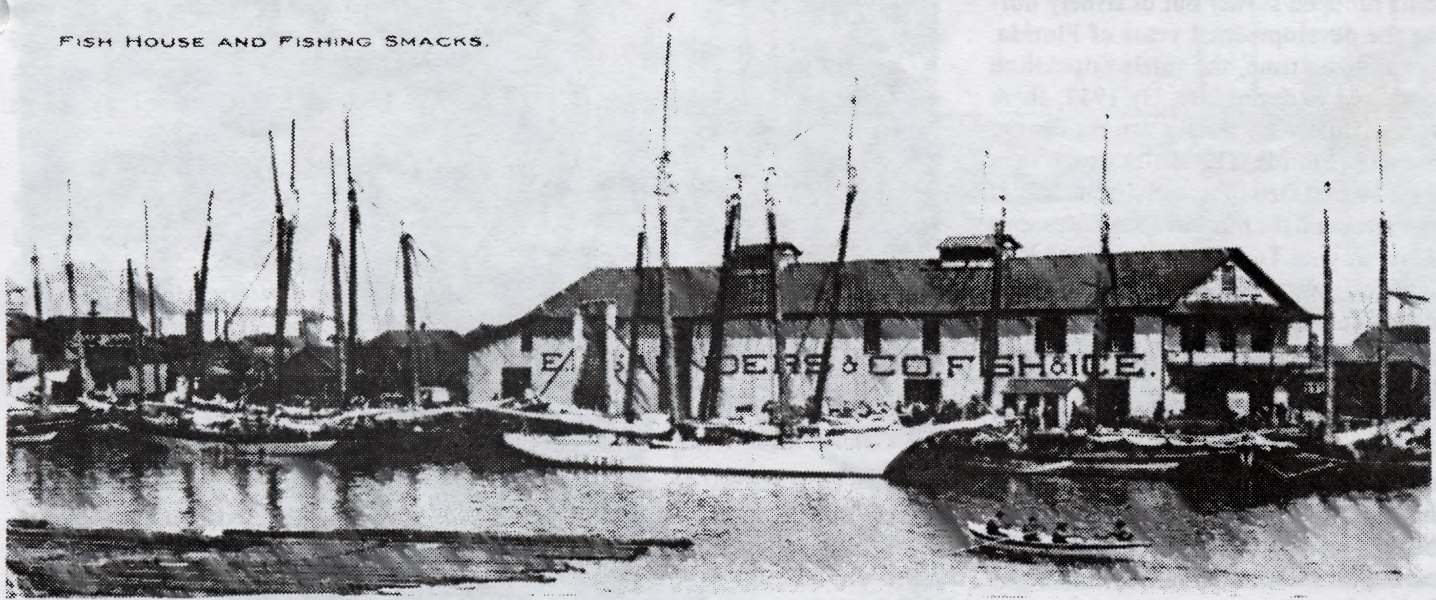
Sponges—Almost coincidentally, a small sponge industry began with the settlement of Key West. These sponges were used only for local domestic use until the year 1849 when William Kemp sent a sample shipment of sponges to New York and found a ready market, as reported in Roberts (1979). Immediate expansion of the industry began and, by 1890, Key West (which at this time was the largest city in Florida) held almost an absolute monopoly of the trade in the United States. Three hundred and fifty vessels, employing up to 1,400 men, sold some three quarters of a million dollars worth of sponges in that year. Nearly all of these sponges were collected from shallow water by means of a pole with a hook on the end.

Schroeder (1924) reports that in 1905, the first colony of Greek sponge divers had been established at Tarpon Springs. The Greek divers brought with them the technology of hardhat diving and this quickly became the accepted method of collecting sponges.

At the Key West sponging grounds were by this time becoming depleted, Tarpon Springs quickly took over the lead in sponge production. This remained the case until 1947 when a blight, thought to be the result of a red tide outbreak, virtually wiped out the sponge beds. Around this same time the synthetic sponge was introduced. The combination of these two circumstances virtually eliminated Florida's sponging industry.

Red Snappers—The red snapper (and grouper) fishery in the Gulf of Mexico

FISH HOUSE AND FISHING SMACKS.



HARBOR SCENE, PENSACOLA, FLA.

Saunders & Company Fish and Ice House in Pensacola. Photo credit: Florida State Archives.

started in northwest Florida about 15 to 20 years before the Civil War, as reported by Collins in Camber (1955). The men who engaged in the red snapper fishery were originally from New England. Fishing at this time was within the forty fathom line between Mobile, Alabama, and Fort Walton, Florida. Pensacola became the dominant center of the fishery when the first company handling primarily red snappers was formed there in 1872. Jarvis (1935) reports that the first fish house for handling and shipping red snappers was built by S.C. Cobb under the name Pensacola Fish Company. Later A.F. Warren was brought in as a partner. After several ownership changes and company formations, two companies the Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Company, became the dominant red snapper companies.

During the 1880's, the larger vessels began to fish southward to the Florida Middle Grounds and the Dry Tortugas. By the late 1890's vessels were fishing off the Campeche Banks of Mexico. Live wells were used until 1895 when ice became available from ice plants in Pensacola. Fishing was continued in these areas along with the development of the party boat sport fishery, primarily for the red snapper along the entire Florida West Coast.

Vessels used were primarily of two types-smacks and chings. Smacks were large

sailing schooners of between 50 and 60 tons with auxiliary engines. Each carried 8 to 11 men and had about 20 tons of ice capacity.² These vessels spent up to 32 days at sea. They were 60 to 100 feet long. Smacks operated primarily out of Pensacola and Tampa, although Jarvis (1935) reports they sailed from 5 ports and about 58 were believed in use in 1935. Chings were smaller, near-shore sailing vessels of between 5 and 20 tons which carried 4 to 5 fishermen and also ice for the catch. These vessels sailed primarily from Tampa, Pensacola, Panama City, Apalachicola, and Carabelle on maximum ten-day trips. Handlines were the primary gear employed until the early 1950's when power and hand-driven reels were introduced, along with diesel engines, depth recorders, and radios. The earliest year any landings were statistically recorded was 1880 when 1.5 million pounds of red snappers were landed.

The majority of fishermen in the red snapper fishery were not native to the region. The largest single group was Scandinavian in origin. There were also Italians, Germans, Nova Scotians, and Newfoundlanders, besides men from other parts of the U.S. A great many of the smaller chings were also operated by entirely black crews, as noted by Jarvis (1935).

Clams-Off the southwest coast of Florida, in the region of the Ten Thousand Islands,

was an area of approximately 150 square miles which comprised Florida's early clam fishery. This area was described by Schroeder (1924) as "probably the largest bed of hard clams in the United States."

The industry began around 1880 and, until the arrival of the first mechanical dredges in 1905, digging clams by hand was the sole method used. The reason given for not using traditional tongs was that the clams were too abundant and accessible. Two canneries were built to process these abundant clams one at Marco and one at Caxalmbus in Lee County. By the early 1920's the Marco facility had an annual capacity of 100,000 cases of clam products. The Caxalmbus was reported as being somewhat smaller. Canned products from both of these facilities were usually transported by freight boat to Key West for transfer to larger coastal steamships for further distribution.

In 1945, a devastating red tide virtually killed off the clam beds and, to this date, the industry has been slow to revive.

Turtles-The turtle industry of Florida dates back to the late 1800's. Rebel (1974) recorded a small scale turtle fishery in the Indian River district as early as 1885. Other primary areas were the Cedar Key region on the west central coast and the Keys-particularly Islamorada and Key West.

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Early turtling in Florida was done from small boats utilizing two-men crews. These boats dropped slowly out of fishery during the developmental years of Florida. At the same time, the turtle population continued to depreciate. By 1947, there were virtually no turtles caught for the market in Florida. The turtles which were landed were taken by large schooners from waters around the Moskitos Keys area, east of Nicaragua. These vessels unloaded at Key West several times a year and the thriving industry flourished up until 1971 when the animals came to be classified as endangered by conservationists worldwide. The last turtle schooner to unload at Key West was the A. M. Adams-probably the most recognized schooner in the Florida industry. This vessel later fin fished off the north coast of South America and today lies sunk at the docks in St. Laurent, French Guiana.

Oysters-Oystering has been a business in Apalachicola for at least 100 years. This "land beyond the river" has devoted a large part of the last century to harvesting oysters as well as shrimp and fish. Ingle and Dawson (1953a) report that oysters were harvested in Apalachicola Bay for human consumption long before the arrival of the white men, as is indicated by the shell mounds or middens in Franklin County. Attempts were made to can oysters in 1860 in Apalachicola, the first time canning was attempted in Florida. This attempt, and another in 1883, was abandoned, although some canning did occur in the 1890's. There were some oyster producers who were in favor of leasing bottoms for private cultivation in 1898, but apparently no lease program was put in effect.

Almost all oysters were harvested initially from natural beds rather than leased beds. Roberts (1979) notes records of a man named Popham who tried to sell shares on the Apalachicola oyster beds in the early 1920's; however, his plan failed-he didn't own the beds. In 1920, there were four canneries and nearly a dozen raw houses. There was a small oyster business at Carabelle and some beds at Cedar Key and light oystering during this time period, as noted by a number of authors and cited by Ingle and Dawson (1953b). Oyster depletion was noted as a problem even in these early writings. Churchill (1920) reports that a few oysters were canned at Fernandina with a few other small local oyster businesses existing around the state.



Felix and John Salvador discovers of the Key West shrimp beds checking the number of shrimp per pound. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

Most oysters were collected by hand tongs whose basic physical configuration has changed little and which are still in use today. Small sloops about 40 to 50 feet were used for tonging under sail power with small auxiliary gasoline engine. These sloops stored oysters in shallow holds and on the open deck Churchill (1920) gives a complete description of oystering with pictures of the early vessels and gear used in oystering.

Shrimp-Shrimp fishing is an old industry. Since ancient times shrimp has been a delicacy in the Orient. Traps, small tide nets, and occasionally seines were first used in California by the Chinese who brought over the technology in the mid-1800's. The pioneer of the shrimp industry in the Gulf area was Lee Yin, from Canton, China. In the 1860's. Yin built the first drying platform in Louisiana and started processing dried shrimp, mostly for export to Hawaii, the Philippines, and China, as reported in Hamilton (1951). The first statistics on the shrimp industry for the United States were gathered during the 1880's. The total catch was about 10 million pounds. By 1905 it had risen to 24 million pounds.

In Florida, the year 1902 marks the

beginning of the shrimp industry. In that year Sallecito Salvador, a Sicilian immigrant, began fishing and seining along the Fernandina beaches. By 1906, Mr. Salvador and few of his fellow fishermen had established the nucleus of today's shrimping industry in Florida.

Introduction of the otter trawl in 1912 marked the beginning of a great expansion in shrimp fishing since the otter trawl enabled the fishermen to fish in deep water and drag where the concentration of shrimp is the heaviest. In 1922, Mr. Salvador moved his firm to St. Augustine nearer good grounds. Here production climbed rapidly until 1929 when the Depression hit the industry.

By 1934, the catch was restored to its former high level and continued to increase until 1940. Around 1949 another decline in production was one reason for the exploration of new grounds which resulted in the development of Key West as the chief shrimp port of Florida. John Salvador (the son of Sallecito) discovered the Key West grounds in 1950 when, while examining a daylight trawl at about dusk, he found many more shrimp than normal in his catch, prompting him to put the nets back overboard. This second trawl was

filled with shrimp and "pink gold" had been discovered. Some 300 boats, quickly came to Key West, and the first full season, 1950-1951, produced 15 million pounds. Before the Key West discoveries, Apalachicola was the main shrimp-producing center on the Florida Gulf Coast.

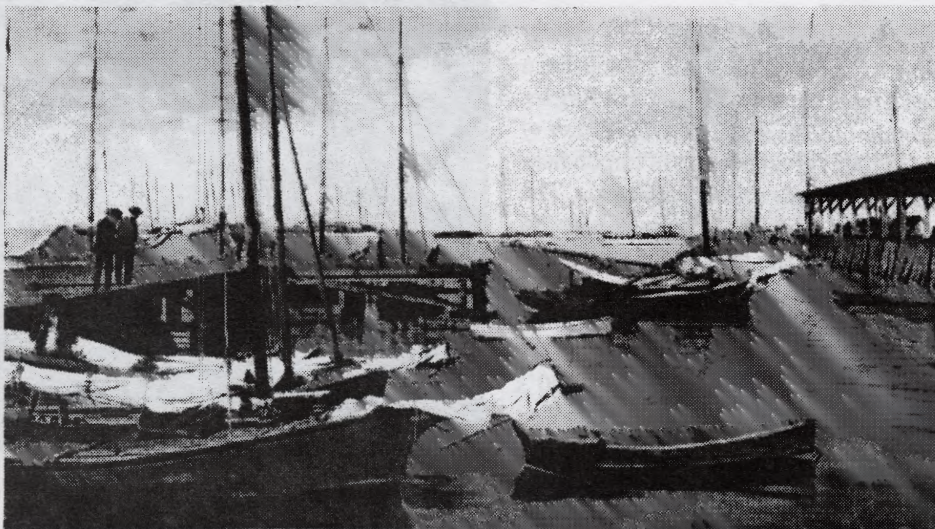
Sports Fishing

Sports fishing also has a maritime heritage in Florida, although documented reports of the industry are not nearly as abundant as those for commercial fishing. Interestingly, the earliest reports point up the same commercial-sport conflict that exists today. An excellent historical survey on this issue is given by Herbert (1980) who reports from Gregg (1902) that the fish in Florida had declined since the advent of "the steamboat," the railway, and last but not least the ice factory, which were followed by the "man with the net." Gregg added that in some areas the "man with the net" had been restricted and fishing in those parts was still good. The same issues are prevalent in today's fishery.

Gregg (1902), reporting on his frequent visits to Florida beginning in 1885, spent most of his time at various angling resorts on both the Eastern and Western Coasts. Gregg's book contains references to Frank Forester, *Fish and Fisheries*, 1859; Thaddeus Norris, *American Anglers' Book* 1864; Genio C. Scott, *Fishing in American Waters*, 1869; *Camp Life in Florida*, edited by Charles Hallock, 1877; and *Camping and Cruising in Florida*, James A. Henshall, 1884. These books, according to Gregg, furnished to the visiting anglers a wealth of information as to where to fish in Florida.³

Fishing "tourists" were not numerous in the late 1800's. Parties visiting the West Coast were obliged to go steamer up the St. Johns River, and by stage or wagon across to the coast, or by rail to Cedar Key, and then north or south to their destination by small steamers or small sailing craft. Parties bound for the East Coast could go from Jacksonville to New Smyrna by steamer or sailboat, then up or down the inside or outside waters to their destinations on sailboats, or could take a steamer up the St. Johns to Sanford or Enterprise, and a stage or wagon to New Smyrna or Titusville, then a small sailboat up or down the coast.

According to Gregg, the leading fishing resorts on the East Coast during the late 1800's were located at Oak Hill, New Smyrna, and Ponce Park. Between 1890



Fishing boats Key West Harbor. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

and 1897, Gregg reports trips to the following locations (among others) for sport fishing: Lake Worth, Mayport, Indian River, Biscayne Bay, Coconut Grove, Cape Florida, Soldier Key, Ragged Keys, Sands Cut, Long's Key, Cape Sable, Whitewater Bay, Chuckaluska, Charlotte Harbor, Marco, Homosassa, Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Clearwater, Johns Pass, Pass a Grille, St. Petersburg, Port Tampa, Sarasota, St. James City, Punta Gorda, and Ft. Myers.

Gregg (1902) quotes, Barton W. Evermann, ichthyologist of the U.S. Fish Commission, from a paper at the Fishery Congress in 1898, as saying, "There is perhaps no state in the union whose fishes have attracted more attention than those of Florida. The interest in the fishes of this state is shared by the commercial fishermen, the angler and the ichthyologist. The number of species that are sought because of their commercial value is far greater than in my other section of America."

Gregg goes on to say, "I have fished in every State and territory in the union but three, and from Siberia and the Behring Sea to the Gulfs of California and Mexico, and, all things considered, regard Florida as unequalled in the richness and variety of its attractions for all sorts of sport with rod and reel." Gregg concludes his work with an extensive species-by-species treatment of his personal (and others') experience in catching fish in Florida prior to 1902, a description of gear with pictures and prices of tackle used, and lists of available boarding houses.

Reiger (1973) also provides an excellent history of saltwater angling. Although not specifically about Florida, this book

reviews the sport from its origins in commercial fishing centuries ago to its development in the nineteenth century resulting from the rise of a new leisure class devoted to science as well as sport and to its flowering in the twentieth century because of new technologies. Reiger remarks that the chief consequence of the American Civil War for saltwater sportsmen was that it delayed the angling exploration of much of the southern coast. Some regions, such as the Florida Panhandle, Reiger remarks, remained relatively unknown to sport fishermen well into the twentieth century.

The reputation of Florida as a fishermen's mecca goes back before the Civil War. Coastal schooners and packet steamers trading between northern ports and southern destinations such as Havana, New Orleans, and Tampico Mexico, often stopped in Florida's uncharted inlets, caught fish, and returned north with tales of angling paradise. After the Civil War, many sporting expeditions into Florida were undertaken. Between 1873 and 1875 two expeditions were sponsored by the weekly *Forest and Stream* newspaper. From these expeditions came the first description of gamefish that would later be the springboard for the development of big game angling-tarpon fishing. Credit for the first tarpon caught on rod and reel in Florida generally goes to a Mr. W.H. Wood of New York City in 1885. Other anglers have claimed in their writing the taking of tarpon in 1882 and 1878. News of tarpon fishing spread to London by 1886 and in subsequent decades British anglers made a considerable contribution to the devel-

(Continued on page 14)

(Fishing from page 13)

opment of sport fishing along southern United States coasts. *The English Angler in Florida* (1898) and *The Giant Fish of Florida* (1902) give accounts of tarpon fishing in Punta Gorda and Boca Grande. The international fame of tarpon fishing in Florida marked the beginning of the development of specialized saltwater tackle capable of handling all the larger seafishes. Fishing reels were produced in New York as early as 1857, but not until the 1890's was a "striped bass or tarpon. reel" advertised. By 1910 in Florida, Henry Flagler's East Coast Railway had lured some anglers away from the West Coast and the tarpon shared the Atlantic lime-light with the sailfish, king mackerel, barracuda, and other fishes.

Summary

Originating from an early and colorful past, both commercial and sport fishing in Florida are thriving and important industries to the state. The commercial fisheries provide incomes to the people who fish and market the fish and enjoyment to the many consumers who partake of Florida seafood. Sports anglers furnish themselves with the enjoyment of fishing, food for their own table, and while doing so also create jobs and incomes for Florida's citizens. Both uses of Florida's resources will continue to provide future generations with a maritime heritage.

Footnotes

1. For example, the Eight Flags Museum of Nassau County is currently sponsoring a museum project on the role of Fernandina Beach as the birthplace of the Florida shrimping industry.

2. One of the few remaining snapper-grouper "smacks," the "Buccaneer," has been docked in Pensacola harbor the last few years and is in seriously bad need of repair.

3. These books are not referenced nor cited elsewhere in this paper.

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Sponge being moved to the warehouse. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

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(Civil War from page 9)

Rassa...and communicated the intelligence of the retreat of the enemy from Fort Myers...The troops [were] to be landed at Tampa or Cedar Key, in order to cut off the force of the enemy sent to the lower peninsula, or else to proceed to the neighborhood of Saint Mark's for a raid or sudden expedition, in which the co-operation of the Navy was promised."

Aboard the *Honduras* was Jacob J. Lewis of the 59th Ohio Regiment. He had been captured by the Confederates and imprisoned at Thomasville, Georgia, making his escape from there on the previous December 10. He was recaptured at Madison, Florida on December 16, making his escape from that confinement on January 11 and reaching the coast (probably near St. Mark's) and boarding the *Honduras* on February 13. Jacob remained in Key West until March 2, when he sailed north on the *Bermuda*.

There were ten burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in March; six from the 2nd USCT and the others from miscellaneous units. An additional two burials were listed in the "US Army Cemetery", probably another name for the post cemetery. Five other men died at the Marine Hospital, three of them from the crew of the USS *Nep-tune*.

In the Florida Panhandle, south of Tallahassee, the battle of Natural Bridge was fought on March 5th and 6th. One of the last engagements of the Civil War, and the last of significance in Florida. Many members of the 2nd USCT were killed or wounded in the battle, some of whom were hospitalized in Key West, and those who subsequently died were buried in the Post cemetery.

There were four burials in the Key West Post Cemetery in April; two of the men were members of the 99th USCT, and one each from the 2nd USCT and 2nd Maine Regiments. Another burial was recorded for the "US Army Cemetery", probably another name for the post cemetery. One other man died at the Marine Hospital.

Confederate Gen. Lee surrendered to the Union's Gen. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9.

And on April 10, a 30 gun salute was fired at noon from Fort Taylor, in celebration of the capture of Richmond.

President Lincoln was assassinated on April 14.

On April 20, having received the news of Lee's surrender, "There was a great cel-

ebration in Key West. One hundred guns were fired, and there was an illumination, with a procession; even the secessionists lighted their candles and hung out the stars and stripes. One prominent citizen gave the excuse that he had no flag to unfurl, whereupon a number of persons contributed and presented him with a Union flag, which he swung to the breeze over his store."

And on the 21st at Key West, General Order #13 announced the death of President Lincoln. "In view of this National Calamity, all flags at this post will be displayed at half mast to morrow, and a gun will be fired from Fort Taylor at intervals of every half hour."

On the 25th, "It having been brought to the attention of the Commanding General that instances of misconduct and outrage to citizens have been committed by enlisted men permitted to visit the town...": no enlisted men were allowed in town without passes, and no more than three at a time from each company, and none after retreat; no enlisted men were allowed to take their muskets from their quarters unless detailed for duty.

Additional instructions were issued at Key West on April 26 regarding the mourning period for President Lincoln. Officers were to wear badges of mourning, and 13 guns were to be fired at dawn, then one gun every half hour until the close of day, when the 35 gun national salute was to be fired.

It was apparent that the troops were celebrating the end of hostilities during this period of mourning, and Civil War Key West was in the process of becoming a civilian community again. Many troops and naval forces would remain on station in Key West and the Dry Tortugas throughout 1865, but a gradual reduction was beginning to take place. The 2nd US Colored Regiment would not leave Key West until January of 1866 when the regiment was mustered out.

Lewis G. Schmidt is a resident of Allentown, PA. Since he retired in 1979 from Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania, he has been able to pursue his study of history. He has published "The Civil War in Florida A Military History" a four volume set (six books, 4,559 pages, 19,433 endnote). He also published "Civil War History of the 47th Regiment of Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers" and a study of the Military Cemetery Key West. This is the ninth and final Key West in the Civil War taken from the above volumes.

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One of the earliest known photographs of Key West, dated 1849. The photo was taken from one of the lookout towers along Front Street. In the upper left is the Baptist Church that was in the 500 block of Eaton Street. Photo credit: Florida State Archives.

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