

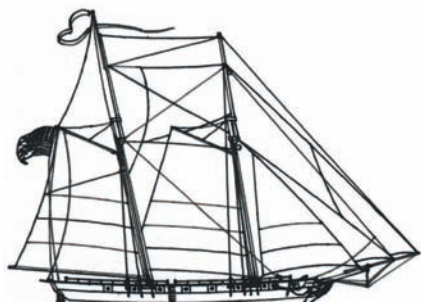
Florida Keys

Sea Heritage Journal

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SPRING 2010

USS SHARK



 OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE KEY WEST MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

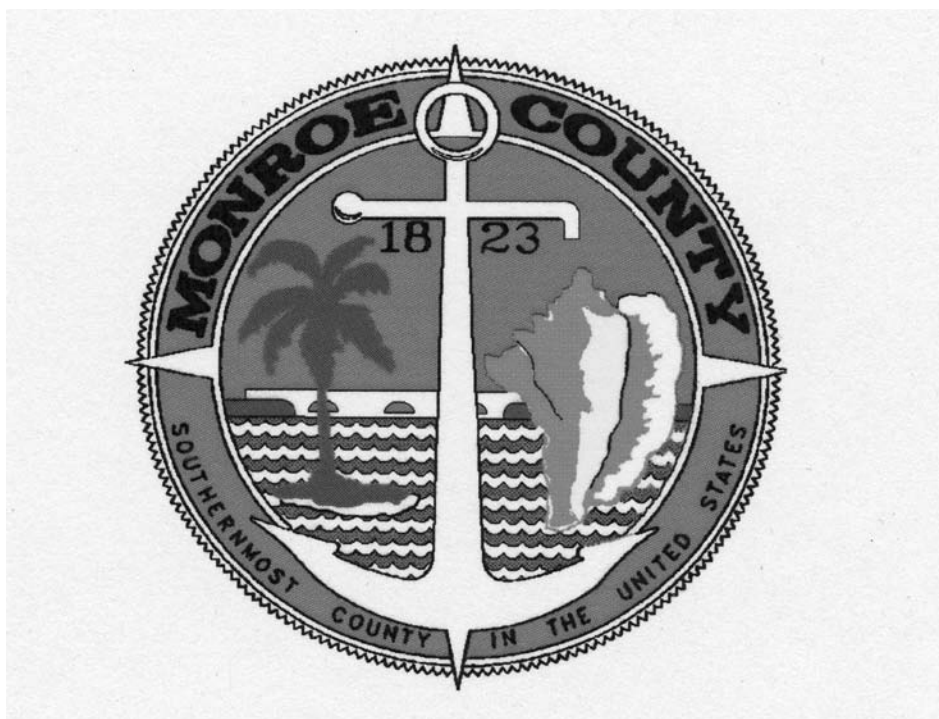
Monroe County

By Tom Hambright
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Monroe County, the sixth county in Florida, was established by an act of the territorial legislature on July 2, 1823. It was signed by Governor William P. Duval on July 3, 1823. The county was named for President James Monroe.

The original boundaries of the county included the southern part of Florida and were described as “all that land lying south of a line commencing at Boca Gasparilla River on the Gulf of Mexico and extending up to the northern margin of Charlotte Harbor to the north of Charlotte River; thence up the northern margin of that river to Lake Macaco (as Lake Okeechobee was then named); thence along the northern margin of that lake to its most eastern limits; thence in a direct line to the headwaters of the Potomas river; thence down that river to its entrance into the ocean, together with all the Keys and islands of the Cape of Florida.” Other counties formed from the original boundaries are: Dade, Broward, Collier, Lee, Henry and parts of Charlotte, Glades, and Palm Beach.

The City of Key West, which had been named county seat, was incorporated on January 8, 1828.



The Seal of Monroe County. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

A county courthouse was erected at Jackson Square in Key West before the city was surveyed. By 1830, the population had grown to 517 persons, almost all living in Key West. The main industries were salvaging shipwrecks on the reef and catching live fish for the Havana market.

In February 1836, Dade County was established with Indian Key as county seat. The southern boundary “commenced at the western end of Bahia Honda and ran in a direct line to Cape Sable; thence in a direct line

to Lake Okeechobee,” thus cutting off from Monroe County all the Keys to the east and north of Bahia Honda and all the eastern portions of southern mainland Florida.

On October 11, 1846, a major hurricane struck Key West. The storm damaged or destroyed every building in town and smashed the stone lighthouses at Key West and Sand Key. The city was able to rapidly rebuild because of a strong economy created by the wrecking industry.

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SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

by John Viele



Western Union lecture in February. Photo credit: Ed Little.

In January, Admiral Sir Edward Vernon, British Navy, (portrayed by Randy McDonald) presented the history of naval rum complete with samples of grog as issued to British sailors. The talk was so popular that a few latecomers had to be turned away because the auditorium was full.

In February, Leon Poindexter, master shipwright in charge of reconstructing the Key West schooner **Western Union**, told about the process of identifying, removing, and replacing the decayed frames and planking. His presentation included photos of the various steps in the restoration work and samples of the many different woodworking tools used. Once again, there was a full house.

Our guest speaker in March was Captain Kevin Foley, master of the

schooner **Hindu**. Captain Foley related how he found **Hindu** rotting away in a boatyard in Fairhaven, Mass. and how he restored her, with help from friends, over a two-year period, while subsisting on peanut-butter sandwiches. He also told of some of his experiences sailing her and other schooners he has captained.

Change in Mailing Procedures

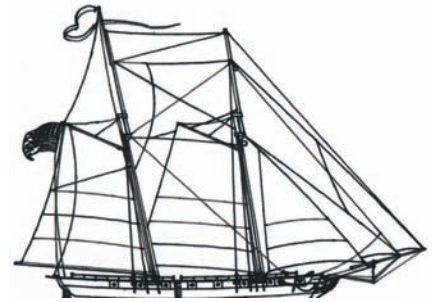
Because of difficulties in using bulk mail, in the future, flyers will be sent by first-class mail, only to members residing in the Keys. The quarterly Sea Heritage Journal will continue to be mailed to all members.

Notice of upcoming lectures, field trips, and other events will be published on the Society's website: www.kywestmaritime.org.

New Member

Valarie Chelley, Key West; Robert Cook, Harvey's Lake, PA; Ron & Mary Demes, Sugarloaf Key; Lawrence Douglas, Key West; Rick Finnin, Key West; Deb Forese, Washington, CT; Christine Geary, Key West; Michael D. Green, Chapel Hill, NC; Ed & Carol Haggett, New Bern, NC; Cliff

Hartman, Key West; Bob & Hazel Hoas, Key West; Laura Lynne Kennedy, Islamorada; Tom Milone, Key West; Patrick & Rosi Raheer, Washington, DC. Mark Reinnoldt, Key West; Patrick Tiffany, Key West; Curtis J. Tindel, Tecumseh, MO; Reif & Diana Udo, Key West; Kurt Vess, Tampa.



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Editor: Tom Hambright

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

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The Northwest Channel Jetties

By J. Gregory Griffin
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Over one hundred years ago, a private contractor to the United States Government built two rock jetties, one on each side of a section of the Northwest Channel, to protect it from shallowing due to silt deposits caused by four daily tidal movements. The strategic objective was to create a shorter, safer trade route between the product rich ports in the Gulf of Mexico, and the prosperous populations of the Atlantic seaboard. A newspaper of the period chronicled this motivation, and provided anecdotal information concerning the actual day-to-day local construction activities. At the Federal level, the Army Engineers' reports to the Secretary of War and Congress provided progress information, a justification for funding, and requests for further appropriations as the initiative was of national importance.

On June 29, 1891, Mr. George W. Allen, vice president presiding, convened a very important meeting of the Board of Trade of Key West principally for the purpose of appointing a committee to collect statistics relative to the commercial importance of the Northwest Channel (N24-38' 80"; W81-53' 91"). The committee developed information for the use of Captain Black of the United States Engineering Department who would present the data to the next Congress when larger appropriations for deepening the Channel will be sought. With this data Captain Black will better represent the matter to Congress, and facilitate the passage of further appropriations. The gathering heard testimony as to the importance of the Northwest Channel to shipping

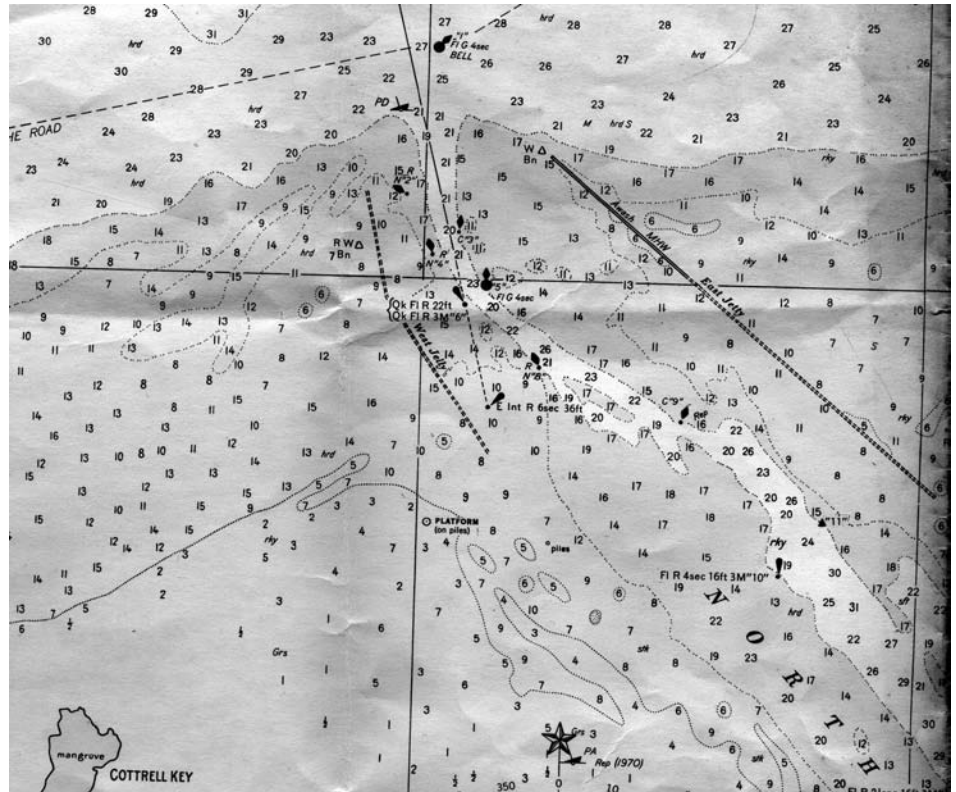


Chart showing the Northwest Channel Jetties. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

between the Gulf Coast and the Atlantic Ocean. A deep passageway would shorten the distance from one to the other, and it would bring trade to Key West. Without a navigable channel, large steam ships and schooners from Tampa, Tallahassee, New Orleans, and Mobile would need to sail around the shallows of Rebecca Shoal to enter the Port of Key West through the Main Ship Channel adding about 160 miles to the journey. Their destinations would be the rich markets along the East Coast of the United States- Charleston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and Boston. Key West would economically benefit from this shortened trade route as Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway extension to Key West, the Florida Overseas Railroad, would not be completed until 1912. In those days, the only way to access

the island of Key West was by ship, the port also provided a safe haven for vessels heading north to trade.

U.S. Government Contracts for Local Limestone

In a very early attempt to control the tidal current in the channel, Captain Ross used local stone which was actually limestone (oolite) from the nearby Keys. Under the terms of this June 1891 contract, workmen brought equipment and personnel to Man Key to quarry the limestone. The laborers processed two thousand tons in all. However, someone informed Mr. G. B. Patterson, the local District Attorney, of this and he notified Captain Ross that the island belonged to the United States Government and was intended for military purposes, and none of that soft sandstone was carried away. Subsequently, Captain Ross

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moved his equipment to Sawyer Key which was considered to be State land and had permission from the State of Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Mr. Wombwell, to quarry what rock he may need. However, it turned out that Sawyer Key was not vacant land, but, once again, belongs to the United States Government. As a consequence, Captain Ross had to move his plant a second time. It seemed that quarrying useless stone, delay, and the added expense of moving his plant from island to island, the contractor's profit will be much lessened. Mr. Harper and Mr. Brown, civil engineers in the employ of the United States Engineering Department under Captain Black, had been nicely fixed at Fort Taylor where they had their office, but were now obliged to camp on Sawyer Key where they will have for evening pastime plenty of fun killing mosquitoes.

The steam tug, **J.E. Stevens**, arrived from Ballast Key on June 15, 1891, at Taylor's Wharf in Key West with a scow load of soft stones in tow to be used on the jetty work in the Northwest Channel. The next morning some fifteen or sixteen laborers employed on the scow informed the Superintendent, J. B. Durham that they must have their pay increased from \$30 per month to \$1.50 per day and board. This was refused, and a general strike ensued. Mr. Durham was kept busy all day employing new men, which he found but little difficulty in securing. He offered the strikers \$35.00 per month and board, but they refused preferring to loaf around the city and drink mean whiskey.

Col. Emmet Houser of Jacksonville arrived in Key West on September 21, 1897 to have repairs

made on Captain Ross's property on Boca Chica, preparatory to beginning the contract for placing native stone on the north jetty. Work began under the contract on December 1, 1897. On June 2, 1898, work was suspended by the authority of the Secretary of War, at the request of the contractor, during the hostilities with Spain in the Spanish-American War. Work resumed on October 6, 1898. To this day, the rusted remains of the narrow-gauge rail system used to transport the quarried limestone to waiting boats, remains on Boca Chica. On November 6, of the same year, Col. W. H. Benyuard of St. Augustine and Captain R.G. Ross of Jacksonville arrived on the **Mascotte**. Captain Ross had the contract for work on the Northwest Channel jetties, while Colonel Benyuard inspected the work for the Government. The United States Engineering Department awarded Captain Roderick G. Ross of Jacksonville, Florida a contract to create two jetties one on each side of the Northwest Passage for the purpose of preventing the tides and storms from depositing silt and sediment in the waterway. The natural tidal action, if unchecked, would eventually shallow up the passageway causing many ships to run aground.

On June 16, 1899, the Florida Times Union reported that the Government contract work at Fort Taylor and on the northwest jetties has commenced, and will be pushed. This work was stopped on account of the quarantine. The work by the Government engineers has not commenced yet, as the appropriation has run out, but as soon as Congress passes the appropriation bill, work will be resumed.

On Saturday, April 8, 1899, eighteen laborers left Boca Chica

rock quarry in a small boat sailing for Key West. When the boat left she was so crowded that two of the men in it became alarmed and got out, but two others took their place. These men were in the employ of Captain Ross digging coral rock for the Northwest jetties. The laborers usually came to Key West on Saturday nights for recreation. A heavy wind was blowing at the time of their leaving, and, not knowing how to maneuver a boat, it is supposed she went to sea and was lost. Captain Brown, who was in charge of the works on Boca Chica, reported the vessel was seen foundering off Cow Key. A boat was sent on Sunday and returned on Monday having seen nothing of the missing craft or the men. The following names were some of the men lost: A. McQueen, Tom Stokes, Dock Bird, Ben Bolton, J. Harris, A. Gibbs, Henry Hamilton, and George Hawkins.

The last work on the Northwest jetties of the present contract of Captain R. G. Ross concluded on January 15, 1900. Captain R. G. Ross has been, at different times, on the Northwest Channel for the past two years and has made great improvements, but there is considerable work to be done.

The daily tidal action continues to dissolve, erode and wash away the soft limestone quarried from local Keys and deposited on both sides of the Northwest Channel by Captain Ross and his workmen. In all, 43,396.6 tons of local marl has been employed.

The tug, **Albert F. Dewey**, arrived in Key West in the morning of August 25, 1900 with a mud digger and two scows in tow to dredge the Northwest Channel. This work is being done by the Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company, a private enterprise, for its own benefit. On September 6, 1900 the

Florida Times Union reported that the dredge has now been at work for several days commencing from the inside of the channel and working toward the Gulf. When the work is completed vessels of large draft can come through this channel saving many miles when going up or down the Gulf.

During the afternoon of June 13, 1902 the steamer, **Mascotte**, while crossing the Northwest Pass, ran aground because of low water, and remained there until 9:30 p.m. when the tide was full again. The mail steamer is often compelled to remain on the bar for want of deep water. These delays from time to time show the necessity of properly protecting and dredging the channel.

On September 3, 1903, Captain Francis R. Shunk, chief of this district, arrived on the **Mascotte** on his annual visit of inspection. Captain Shunk indicated that a large dredge was being built to deepen the Northwest Channel, and when work is completed, there will be twenty-six feet of water on the bar. The soundings in the harbor indicate that the bottom is of a sand or mud formation and that the depth of forty feet can be had by dredging.

Many deep-drafted vessels have temporarily run aground in the Northwest Channel since the first two jetties were built on the bar to mitigate the semi-diurnal tidal influence causing a shallowing of the channel with sand. Shoal water is on both sides of the channel, and the tides wash the sand from the shoal areas into the channel thus choking it up the passageway and making navigation uncertain. The channel is now ten feet deep. With two high and low tides per day, the soft limestone has dissolved and has been pushed off the apex of the jetty by strong tropical storms and tidal movement. More effort has to be contracted for to strengthening the jetties to prohibit silting in the



The Northwest Channel Lighthouse. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

channel.

The Granite Contract

The United States Engineering Department entered into a contract with the R.G. Ross Construction Company in June 1908 for depositing upon the jetty approximately 30,000 tons of granite from the Rockport Granite Company located in Rockport, Massachusetts. (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/northeast/halb.htm>). However, most of the work was not started until November of 1908 due to a severe hurricane season. It was estimated the work will take six to eight months to complete. Captain A.B. Potter arrived in Key West from Jacksonville; he was a Superintendent with the R.G. Ross Company, and he directed the work of reinforcing the east jetty. He was assisted by Mr. A. M. Goehring who performed the office work. On November 12, 1908 the tug, **Martha Ellen**, came into port with a large dredge and two scows to do the jetty work in the Northwest Channel.

With the Channel deepening to 25 feet, the shipping going down and up the Gulf could pass through this channel saving sixty-five miles, and avoiding the dangerous Rebecca Shoal reefs between Sand Key and the Tortugas Lights.

On January 1, 1909, very active operations on construction at the northwest entrance to Key West harbor resumed when the steamship, **Wilhelmina**, Captain Gammon, arrived from Rockport laden with 2,400 tons of rip-rap stone. Captain Potter, who has charge of the work, stated that the Ross Company has two other vessels now in route to Key West with approximately 3300 tons of stone and other ships are being loaded at the quarries in Massachusetts as fast as they can be chartered. Twenty-one four-masted schooners and one steamer were used, in all, to transport the granite. It should be remembered that the schooner, **Horace W. Macomber** that was bound to this port with its cargo of stone for the

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jetty work wrecked off the Bimini banks causing a delay of almost a month in the operation at the Key West end.

The four-masted schooner, **Edgar W. Murdock**, with Captain Frank McGuire, arrived on June 7, 1909 from Rockport with a cargo of stone for the R.G. Ross jetty project. This is the last load of stone that will be received by the Ross Company for the present contract.

In Congress

A survey of the entrance to the channel was made as early as 1868 and again in 1881. In 1882, Congress made an appropriation of \$25,000 for dredging a channel three hundred feet wide and seventeen feet deep across the bar. This appropriation was expended in 1883 in dredging a channel across the bar 60 feet wide and 15 feet deep at mean low tide. In the nature of things, this improvement was only temporary.

In Washington D.C., the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army reported to the Secretary of War in 1896 concerning the improvement to the Northwest Channel leading to Key West Harbor. Lieut. Col. Benyaurd writing the report stated that, in accordance with the provisions of the River and Harbor Act of August 11, 1888, the project contemplated maintaining a depth in the channel of seventeen feet at mean low water by the construction of a jetty on the northeast side of the passage, to be supplemented, if considered necessary, by a jetty on the west side, and by dredging the bar. The Board estimated the cost for construction of the east jetty only at \$500,000. Before beginning the contract, surveys showed a channel depth over the bar of 10.5 feet at mean low water. Overall, between 1869 and 1930, there were



The Rockport Quarry. Photo credit: Halibut State Park.

many yearly River and Harbor Acts in Congress which financed hundreds of east coast and gulf maritime projects.

In the Act of August 11, 1888, Congress appropriated \$25,000 for this work with the proviso that the Secretary of War appoint a board of three engineers who should report on the advisability of continuing the work under this project, and that he should submit the report, together with the views of himself thereon, to Congress at its next session. The final report of the Board was submitted in November 1889. The Board was of the opinion that the work was of national importance. It recommended that the improvement be begun by the immediate construction of a jetty on the northeast side of the passage and should be supplemented, as work progresses, by a jetty on the western side. It was thought also that dredging operations might be necessary. The depth of the water to be obtained is seventeen feet.

Under this project 51,815 cubic yards, or about 60,000 tons, of soft limestone quarried from Keys in the vicinity, was placed along the line of the projected jetty for a distance of

11,354 feet. However, the limestone was so light and soft that, although it answered well for the base, it would not resist the force of storm waves with certainty. Accordingly, with subsequent appropriations, Congress decided to build up the outer portion with heavier stone. In doing this, 17,916 tons of granite was used.

The report affirms that the Northwest Channel is of very great importance. When the project for its improvement is completed, a short cut for deep-draft vessels entering and departing from Key West will be created. The work should be pushed forward as rapidly as practicable, and with this end in view, it is recommended that \$225,000 be made available for the work during fiscal year ending June 30, 1898.

In order to justify large Congressional appropriations over the years for the channel project, the engineers set forth a detailed list of commercial goods and ships entering and leaving the port of Key West. The following is an example:

Commercial Statistics
Commerce of Key West, Florida
during the year ending

December 31, 1895
 [Furnished by Jefferson Browne,
 collector of customs]

Articles	Gross Tonnage	Estimated Value
Cigars	700	\$6,500,000
Cattle	3,000	\$210,000
Fruits	6,000	\$130,000
Grain	7,100	\$210,000
Hides	225	\$10,946
Honey, syrup	115	\$9,000
Lumber Rough	7,000	\$70,000
Lumber Dressed	3,000	\$400,000
Merchandise	42,500	\$4,250,000
\Oranges	50	\$10,000
Pineapples	20,000	\$450,000
Ship stores	1,500	\$156,250
Vegetables	2,500	\$257,352
Fish and Oyster	500	\$30,000
Tobacco	1,000	\$1,350,000
Hay	2,200	\$50,000
Sponges	125	\$500,000
Wine and Liquors	500	\$150,000
Total	98,015	\$14,743,748

Kind	Arrivals and Departures of Vessels for year ending December 31, 1895	
	Arrivals	Departures
Steamer	421	466
Tons	496.993	527,762
Sailing	159	117
Tons	37,657	17,918



The Rockport Quarry. Photo credit: Halibut State Park.

Yachts	22	22
Tons	2,200	2,200
Totals	602	605
Tons	536,850	547,910

The estimated number of passengers carried by water was 49,760. The estimated percentage of total trade of Key West carried by water was 100. Trade would be enormously increased when the improvement is completed, as the entire trade of the Gulf of Mexico would pass through the Northwest Passage instead of going around the dangerous reefs of the Tortugas.

The following is information taken from the Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army concerning the Arrivals and Departures of vessels at the port of Key West, Florida, during the year ending December 31, 1898 showing the negative commercial impact of the Spanish-American conflict, but utilized to justify further Congressional appropriations:

Kind	Arrivals	Departures
Steamer	527	490
Tons	421,797	372,689
Sailing	330	306
Tons	102,900	72,137

Value of Imports 1898: 214,413

Value of Exports 1898: 769,205

The estimated number of passengers carried by water was: 17,988 (Furnished by the collector of Customs).

The regular transportation lines in operation during the year were the Plant Steamship Line, which ran three steamers per week between Tampa, Havana, and Key West; the Florida East Coast Steamship Line, which ran three steamers between New York and Galveston, one of which stopped weekly at Key West; and the Morgan Line running between New Orleans and Havana, one steamer per week stopping at Key West. These lines partly suspended operations during the continuance of the war with Spain.

While today large ships docking in Key West use the Main Ship channel for access, the Northwest Channel remains a busy waterway for shrimp boats, commercial fishermen, work boats, and private yachts travelling to and from the Gulf of Mexico. Dive and snorkel vessels also use the Northwest Channel for access to various sights of interest to their passengers when trips to the reef are ill advised due to stormy weather.

J. Gregory Griffin before coming to Key West in 1996 practiced law in Cambridge, MA.

William Hackley's Diary

William Hackley practiced law in Key West from 1829 to 1857. He kept a diary for part of the time he was in Key West. Here is the diary for parts of January and February 1857.

Friday, January 9. I was up nearly all night, Lucia having a high fever and sore mouth, gave her Acon and Bell and put a wet bandage on for two hours. Fever remained all night but has gone off nearly since sunrise gave her Arsinicom. Matilda ironed yesterday and had a severe headache all night, gave her Ipec and Ver, but it has worn off. I want her to take Arsinicom for a week six globs at bedtime. Harriet has a sore throat. Made a fire in the stove. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.70.5, thermometer 70, wind east northeast 3, clouds 1 with haze as yesterday. Colonel James Polk of Baltimore came in early and sat all morning. He is an agent for the claims against the Government. He says that F.A. Browne as a agent has paid about \$2,000 tonnage money on Spanish vessels which can be got back. That he will get it for one half or if given now one fourth of the amount in cash for the claim. The money does not belong to Mr. Browne's estate but there is but little probability that the owners will appear in which case Beverly will have it. J.B. Browne will take out papers of administration for the purpose of making an agreement with Colonel Polk and we think it will be best to take one half. Lucia's throat is very sore as well as her mouth and she has fever thought not very high. I went down to Ossin B. Hart's and was introduced to a Dr. Seily of Cleveland, who is a Homeopath and Hydropathy, he is the head of a large water cure in Ohio and was an Allopath. I told him that I was a loss and that I did not like

to send for an Allopath and he went up and saw Babe, He said that I had been doing right and probably the prompt action had saved her from putrid throat and advised to stop Acon and Bell and give Mer Viv four globs every hour during the night she took five dozes. The other times we were all asleep. I did not take off my clothes and compresses on throat and chest. Harriet is better but I ordered compresses to throat and four globs Bell.

Saturday, January 10. Rose at 6 and walked the piazza. The babe is much better but her mouth is so sore that she cannot eat. Hatty much better but gave her four globs of Bell. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.60, thermometer 72, wind east southeast 2, clouds 4. Wrote to Solicitor of the Treasury saying that upon further consideration I thought that it was best not to prosecute Captain J.M. Merrill of the ship **Lady Arbella** as he has nothing out of which the fine can be made and he cannot be imprisoned. The steamer **Isabel** got in about the usual time. The Babe went to see the doctor who ordered one dose of Briony. I went to see him after tea. Lucia had no fever and he advised sulphur and compresses about chest and throat which was done. About midnight she had considerable fever and I gave her one dose of Bell and two of Acon and the fever left her before day.

Sunday, January 11. Rose at 5 and walked up by the Barracks and across by the Long Road to South Beach and home by Porter's Spring. The road's bad from the rain yesterday evening and the spring tide last night. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.54, thermometer 74, wind northwest 3, clouds 9. The wind came out of the northwest about half past 6 this morning and

appearances we will have a severe northern. The Babe is clear of fever but mouth is sore. Read papers. In the evening made a fire in the stove. Gave Babe Acon and Bell as her fever was coming on which stopped it and before bedtime she was free of fever sent for Dr. Seily who came up and prescribed Mirviv three globs at intervals of five hours to remedy the flow of saliva.

Monday, January 12. Rose at 5 and made a fire in the stove and sat by it. The Babe had no fever during the night nor this morning but she did not sleep well and her month is filled with white blisters or ulcers. We cannot examine them well and her tongue is coated with a thick white fur. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.62, thermometer 63, wind north northwest 3, clouds 6, very cloudy and raw all day yesterday but no rain fell and today there is no appearance of any rain today. Today was set for the trial by jury of the issue ordered by Judge King in the decree in the matter of the wharf proprietors. I was notified and I started to go to the Court House but upon meeting Ossin Hart he said that on presenting the order for a jury to Judge King he would not sign it so then here the matter stands. The Babe better but her mouth is very sore but no fever. Gave her 1 dose of Mirviv and one sulphur

Tuesday, January 13. Rose at 5 and made a fire in the stove and sat till daylight when I walked the piazza for near an hour I did not like to leave the stove with a fresh fire in it with no one to attend to it so I did not walk. At 9 A.M. the barometer 29.57, wind north northwest 3, clouds 1 with haze. Read papers. Colonel Polk sailed at 3 P.M. in the schooner **Wye** for Havana. Babe quite dull all day and night some fever for which I gave Acon, at 10

gave her a second dose of Acon when we found her getting hotter and fever increasing. Gave her another two globs of Nuxx which soon cooled her off and she slept after 1, tolerably well the early part of the night. She would not leave her Mother. Put wet compress on her throat and chest.

Wednesday, January 14. Rose at 5 and went to market and on my return made a fire in the stove. The Babe much better, she is quite lively but she will not eat her mouth does not seem so sore nor is the inflammation as great. Her breath smells as if she had been salivated though she never took a dose of calomel. At 8:40 A.M. barometer 29.57, thermometer 64, wind north northeast 2, clouds 4. Read papers. Mary Ann Porter and her mother spent the day. I walked to South Beach with Matilda and Mary Ann. James Filer and family came from Tallahassee in a brig. A Mr. Conely who married a Miss Combs niece of Mrs. and Captain Peter Swain of St. Marks who stayed about a week with us some years ago sent Matilda a note and six venison hams. The Babe is better.

Thursday, January 15. Rose at 6 and made a fire in the stove the morning cool through nearly calm. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.66, thermometer 66, wind northeast 1, clouds 3. Read papers. Babe much better.

Friday, January 16. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.47.5, thermometer 67, wind east northeast by north 2, clouds 0 with haze. The sloop **M.H. Williams** came in with 154 bales cotton which was taken from the ship **Calvin** on the reef. The ship got off and proceeded on her voyage. Read papers. In the afternoon walked to the Fort with Matilda.

Saturday, January 17. Rose at 5:40 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.68, thermometer 69, wind east northeast 2, clouds. Read papers. The schooner **Chestnut** came in laden with a part of the cotton taken from the ship **Calvin**. Samuel Douglas libeled on behalf of owners and underwriters and Thomas F. King is employed by wreckers. Joseph Packer and Christian Boye who have the largest interest in the wharf case have the control and I have no doubt gave the case to King to influence the decision and I have no doubt but that he was influenced by his interest or at any rate blinded, this is one great reason why the Judge should not practice that he is subject to misconstruction.

Sunday, January 18. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9:20 A.M. barometer 29.52, thermometer 72, wind west southwest 3, clouds 8. The steamer **Adger** came in during the night from Greytown. She brings the news that a Yankee, Somus by name who had been employed as mate on one of the lake steamers has joined the Costa Rican's and has taken all the steamers on Lake Nicaragua, he drifted down on them separately in the night on a raft and surprised them. Walker is on the west side of the lake with 1,000 men and there are some on this side but he has no transportation. The transit lines are closed. Spent the morning in looking over old diaries. About 1 P.M. the wind came out of the northwest with slight rain and blew so hard that the **Adger** could not be got away from the wharf.

Monday, January 19. Rose at 6 and made a fire in the stove. The wind was so far round last night that it blew on the back piazza and I slept in the room. At 9:45 A.M. barometer 29.66.5, thermometer 61,

wind northwest by north 7, clouds 9. The steamer **Adger** was got off about 8 A.M. Thermometer at house in the front piazza 56. Went up home about 11 and remained the rest of the day sitting by the fire. Mary A. Porter came in about 5 and we all walked to South Beach. I went home with her and sat a short time.

Tuesday, January 20. Rose at 5 and attempted to make a fire but the boy bringing bituminous coal without my knowing it I had to take the stove out of doors and throw out all the fire and commence again. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.66, thermometer 55, wind northeast by north 2, clouds 3. At 5 A.M. thermometer 48, thermometer 47 in passageway with free circulation of air. Taxed the costs in the case of the ship **Isaac Allerton**. The Judge ordered bill for division, proctors fee and other bills to be paid out of the gross sum so as to simplify the division, refused Bowne and Curry's bill for \$1,000 as agents on the grounds that were interested in the salvage and could not act as agents. In the afternoon he allowed Douglas and King to file bills for \$300.00 each as proctors for the insurance companies that are quarreling for the residue, and that after his order all bills be filed before 10 A.M. and Winer Bethel and the Judge had some hard words. I was not present.

Wednesday, January 21. Rose at 5:30 and made a fire and sat by it till breakfast. a 9:30 A.M. barometer 29.60, thermometer 61, wind northwest 1, clouds 7. The wind has just changed having been northeast about day break. In court till 3 P.M. trying the claim of Archer, Williams and Pyfrom to extra shares in the salvage in ship **Isaac Allerton** and did not go down after dinner.

(Continued on page 10)

(Hackley from page 9)

Thursday, January 22. Rose at 6 and made a fire the wind having got to the northwest in the night. The steamer **Isabel** got in about 2 and reports a large English ship laden with cotton ashore at Caesars Creek. She had been ashore three days and is bilged. No wrecker had been to her. All the vessels in port started for her. At sunrise went down to the post office and got letters and papers. Read papers.

Friday, January 23. Rose at 5:30 and made a fire in the stove. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.66, thermometer 53, wind north northwest 1, clouds 3 with haze. The sun has but little strength. The weather feels as cold as it has done this winter. Got a letter from J.P. Smith by Joseph Stickney. He is in command of the **Fashion**. General Harney is on a scout and the white flags are pulled down. Smith has gone to New Orleans for the Seminole Chiefs who have promised to try and get the Indians to move.

Saturday, January 24. Rose at 6 and made a fire in the stove and read papers. At 9 A.M. thermometer 61, wind northeast 2, clouds 2 with hazy. The schooner **Relampago** got in yesterday from the wreck with cotton. The Captain has been here before and has consigned to William Wall. Wrote to C.W. Bennet, Washington, DC enclosing \$3.00 for Reporter and Digest. Wrote to George Wilks, No. 348 Broadway, NY enclosing \$5.00 for a subscription to Porter's Spirit of the Times with back numbers. Sent to Wheeler and Wilson Mfg. Company sending \$1.00 for needles. Wrote to O.R. Potter and Company for the \$50.00 due me. Wrote to Luther Tucker and Sons for the January number of the Cultivator. Wrote to Samuel Huston, 348 Broadway for two missing numbers of

Knickerbocker magazine.

Sunday, January 25. Rose at 6 and walked the piazza till sunrise when I read the papers. At 9:40 A.M. barometer 29.78, thermometer 65, wind northeast 2, clouds 0 with haze. I asked Fernando Moreno to write Stephen Mallory to try and get me an office in some of the new states or territories, preferring Kansas. He said he would do it with pleasure. Wrote a postscript to a letter of Charlotte to her Grandmother and sent on Treasury draft for \$50.00 a quarters salary. Read papers. In afternoon walked to the Fort with Harriet. The steamer **Isabel** came in about 4 and left about 6. The schooners **Champion** and **Dart** arrived from the wreck.

Monday, January 26. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed thought there was but little water in the wells and spring dry nearly dry from the northerly winds. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.50, thermometer 66, wind north northeast 3, clouds 2 with haze. At 5 A.M. the wind was about east by north. Read papers. After tea went to Captain Cornelius Curtis by invitation. Found Colonel and Mrs. Winder, Miss Eagle, Mr. Husted and wife, Mrs. And Lt. Reynolds, topography engineer in charge of lighthouse construction and Mrs. R.W. Welch. Sat till 10.

Tuesday, January 27. Rose at 5:15 and walked to the Salt Pond and did not bathe because there was no water. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.74, thermometer 68, wind northeast 3, clouds 1. Received my fee in the case of the ship **Isaac Allerton** amounting to \$1,669.47 from J.B. Browne and paid Wall and Company bill of \$100.00, Robert P. Campbell bill \$239.26, Bowne and Curry bill \$144.22 and Oliver O'Hara for six months house rent to December 31, 1856 \$120.00.

Wednesday, January 28. Rose

at 5:40 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.46, wind northeast 3, clouds 3. The sloop **Texas** came down from the wreck and brings the news of the loss of the schooner **Florida** by fire. The **Florida** lay alongside the ship and had 164 bales on board. The mate or carpenter of the wrecked ship was by the mainmast taking a count of the cargo by the light of a globe lamp which hung by the mainmast when in moving about he fell and knocked the globe down and the lamp set fire to the cotton and in an instant the schooner was covered with blaze. The sloop **Texas** which lay along side of the **Florida** was got clear with difficulty by cutting adrift one bale of cotton having caught. The **Florida** was out loose from the ship and the wind being fresh drifted up on the reef and burnt to the water's edge everything on board was lost, the crew saving nothing. Dined at Douglass' and went home about 8. I went home earlier but returned for Matilda.

Thursday, January 29. Rose at 5:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.57, thermometer 70.5, wind southeast 2, clouds 5. Brought of Bowne and Curry a piece of red flannel for \$6.00 and a piece of cotton flannel for \$1.25.

Friday, January 30. Rose at 6 and walked by the Fort and home by Porter's Spring. Bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.49.5, thermometer 71.5, wind southeast 2, clouds 8. Found that Dan had been stealing money for Lucy Haley. I had suspected him for some days. Whipped him severely but could not make him confess any thing so I took him to the jail and desired the jailor to lock him up by himself in a darken room

to see if he would confess. I must sell him, he will lie and steal and is a great rascal but a very smart boy it is with great reluctance that I find I must sell and I do not like the idea of selling a Negro. I cannot manage a young man and if I ever buy another I must get a grown one. Read papers.

Saturday, January 31. Rose at 6 and walked as yesterday, returned home and bathed. At 8:45 A.M. barometer 29.41.5, clouds 3. Last night about 11 there was a slight rain. Lucia woke at that time and kept me awake for more than an hour. Mr. Norcom had an examination to which we were invited but the light is so painful to my eyes at night that we did not go. There are but 11 inches of water in the cistern. Got a chain and cuff pin from Walberg and paid him for mending the same \$.63. About 3 P.M. a heavy rain fell. It came from the northwest and rained near an hour and laid the dust which has been very troublesome for several weeks. I had but 11 inches of water in the cistern and water is very scarce on the Key. Took Dan out of jail, he seems penance. Paid Clark \$.50 for keeping him. About 8 the wind had come out from the south and the barometer had fallen again to what it was in the morning it having risen previously to the northwest squall considerably. On Saturday I gave Lucy Hale \$5.00 being \$2.50 Hatty found in the street, \$2.50 Sophy Walton brought me said to have been given by Dan to her boy John. I do not know more about it than that the money is not mine so I gave it to Lucy, she said she had lost \$12.00.

Sunday, February 1. Rose at 6 and walked as yesterday, returned home and bathed. At 9 A.M. barometer 29.50, thermometer 72, wind north northwest 3, clouds 8. Read Cultivator. Pleasant all day

with moderate wind from the north northwest.

Monday, February 2. Rose at 6 and made a fire in the stove. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.50, wind north northwest 3, clouds 1. Oriana leaves today and have got old Catalina to come home and cook until we can get a servant. Paid Robert P. Campbell \$27.75 for Oriana's wages for the months of November, December and January deducting \$2.25 for amount paid for washing the last two weeks.. Bought one dozen white socks of Henry Mulrennan for \$2.50 and a common mug for Babe for \$.12 ½. At 4 P.M. attended the funeral of Mrs. Seely who died at 5 A.M. yesterday at Ossin B. Hart's, Esquire. Walked part of the way to the grave.

Tuesday, February 3. Rose at 5:45 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.67, thermometer 67, wind east northeast 2, clouds 2. The schooner **Dart** came in last night with a cargo from the schooner **Roseneath** ashore on Looe Key. At 11 went to Judge Thomas F. King's office and on a motion by Ossin B. Hart set a day for the trial by jury. I showed the Judge a copy of the law granting the right of the State to riparian owners. The Judge said that he would be governed by the law and that if I could show that any of the parties to the bill were the owners of the fee simple in Greene Street he would grant the injunction. I found that a deed from Gordon, as a agent for Pinkney drew up by the direction of Stephen Mallory, for the land from low water mark to the channel and that none of the parties had any title. I never examined the pleadings as Douglas drew them and spoke to them I confining myself to the law point. I was to blame in not examining the whole papers myself and not to trust so much to my associate. After dinner James

Filor, Oliver O'Hara, Asa Tift and William Curry came up to my office and consulted about the matter and I drew up a deed from W.C. Greene to his undivided one-fourth interest in the end of Greene Street. Went to Captain Cornelius Curtis' to tea where Father Herrick and family, and Mr. Duckett were and after tea Winer Bethel's family and Norcom came in as did Mr. Salas. We remained until 10 P.M.

Wednesday, February 4. Rose at 5:15 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.71, wind northeast 3, clouds 7. Read Law Register. At 11 up at Judge Thomas F. King's office and argued the motion in the wharf case presented Greene's deed and the Judge said he thought a supplemental bill would be filed but continued the case until tomorrow. All afternoon hunting up authorities.

Thursday, February 5. Rose at 6 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.63, thermometer 71, wind east 3, clouds 5. Went up to Judge Thomas F. King's office and argued the points made yesterday. Went to the Fort with Matilda and the children. The work is progressing rapidly. Read Law Register.

Friday, February 6. Rose at 5:30 and went to the market. Walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 A.M. barometer 29.57, thermometer 72, wind east southeast 4, clouds 6. Several showers of rain fell during the night but not much water. Sister Sarah Patterson and Mrs. Cornelius Curtis spent the day and Captain Curtis and Alexander Patterson took dinner. Charles M. Wells died . He took a bad cold some time since and it increased his cough and weakened him so that he died very unexpectedly to most persons. •

(Monroe County for page 1)

The boundaries were changed again in 1859 when part of the county was cut to form the southern part of the new Manatee County. This area would later be part of Charlotte County.

During the Civil War, Key West and Monroe County were the only southern governments to remain in the Union throughout the war. As a result of the war time population increase, Key West became the largest city in Florida. The population of the county in 1870 was 5,657, and all but 641 lived in Key West.

By an act of the legislature in 1866, the northern boundaries were changed again giving the county all the Keys from Key Largo south. The southwest part of the mainland remained in Monroe County.

On August 12, 1885, the town of Fort Myers was incorporated making it the second town in the county. On May 13, 1887, Lee County was created out of the northwestern part of the county. This is the boundary still in use as the dividing line between Monroe and Collier counties, which was created out of the southern part of Lee County.

After the Civil War, the first significant settlements developed on the Upper Keys growing pineapples and winter vegetables. The farming was mostly on Key Largo, Plantation Key and Upper and Lower Matecumbe Keys. A large Cuban refugee influx in the 1870s and 1880s fueled a population increase and by 1890 Key West was again the largest city in Florida with a population of 18,080. Population of the rest of the county, even with the farming, was only 706.

Cuban hand-rolled cigars became the major industry in the last 30 years of the century.



The first Overseas Highway alongside the Florida East Coast Railroad.

Wrecking was a dying industry as new lighthouses were built on the reef. A strong maritime industry remained supported by fishing, turtling, shipping and sponging.

Disaster struck Key West on April 1, 1886, when a fire burned out of control for 12 hours destroying downtown including most of the cigar factories. The damage was estimated at more than \$2 million. The strong economy again allowed a rapid recovery. As a result of the fire, Monroe County funded a fire station at Jackson Square to augment the Key West Fire Department.

The first jail was built in 1832 and was replaced in 1845, which was replaced in turn in 1880. A new courthouse was dedicated in 1890. All these were located at Jackson Square.

The population and physical characteristics of the Keys were forever changed by Henry Flagler's decision in 1903 to build the railroad to Key West. The railroad would reach Marathon in 1908, which would be the terminus and port for sailing to Havana until January 22, 1912 when Henry Flagler would see his dream come true and ride into Key West on the first train. The population of the county in 1910

reached a high of 21,563 of which 19,945 lived in Key West.

In 1917, Monroe County issued the first bond to build single lane dirt roads on Key Largo and Big Pine Key, and a bridge to Stock Island with a short road. In 1922, another county bond was issued to build a road from Key Largo to Lower Matecumbe. At the same time, Dade County built a road from Homestead to Key Largo via the Card Sound Bridge. Additional county bonds and construction projects were authorized between 1923 and 1928 for road work and auto ferries. The first highway with auto ferries opened on January 25, 1928.

The new century brought a series of destructive hurricanes. The first struck during October 17 and 18, 1906, causing major damage to the work completed on the railroad on the Upper Keys with at least 193 deaths, most of whom were railroad workers. The Keys were struck by a major storm on October 11, 1909, which caused major damage in Key West. The next year on October 17 and 18 another storm passed near Key West with less damage. The "Great Hurricane" of 1919 passed west of Key West on September 9

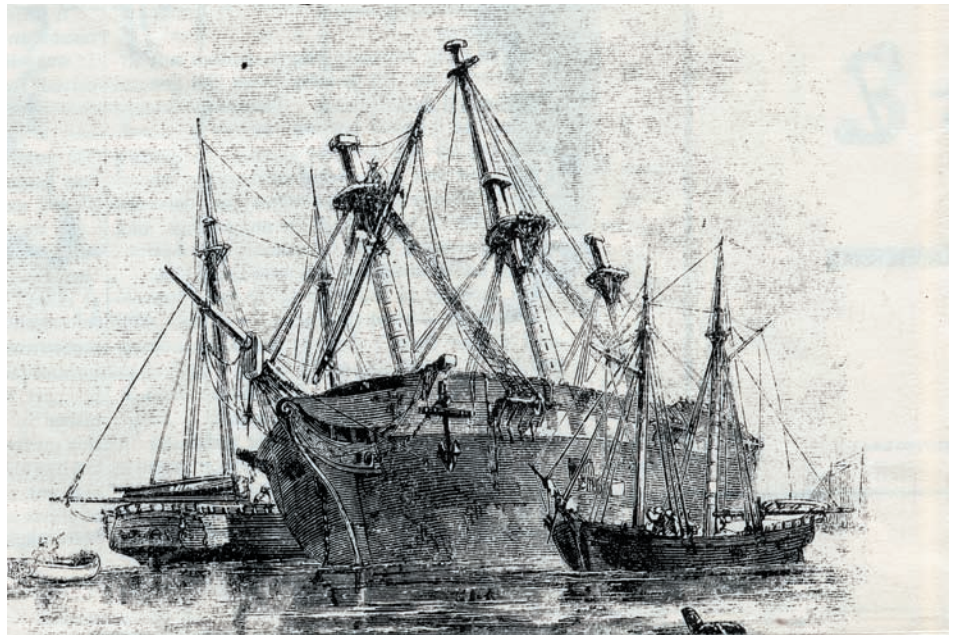
and 10 causing serious damage in the city. The greatest tragedy was the loss of the Spanish ship Valbanera 40 miles west of Key West. More than 500 passengers and crew died when the ship sank.

The highway and railroad did not bring the hoped for prosperity. Keys farming failed from disease and increased competition from mainland and overseas farms. The cigar industry disappeared as American's taste changed to cigarettes. The Great Depression destroyed the rest of the economy. By 1930, the county's population dropped to 13,624, of which 12,831 lived in Key West.

The federal government took control of the bankrupt Monroe County and Key West governments during the Great Depression and began to develop a tourist economy. The Hurricane of 1935, which struck the Middle and Upper Keys, caused massive destruction with more than 400 dead and part of the railroad destroyed. The railroad did not rebuild. The federal and state governments built a new highway to Key West using the railroad bridges to eliminate the auto ferries.

World War II revitalized the economy and made Key West a major military base that would remain after the war. Of all the war construction, the most lasting impact was the waterline from Florida City to Key West. This solved the age-old problem of a plentiful supply of fresh water. In 1967, a desalinization plant was added to augment the pipeline.

The discovery of the rich shrimp beds in 1949 and a growing tourist industry, aided by President Truman's visits to Key West, added to an already booming military economy. In 1950, the population reached a new high of 29,957, of which 26,433 lived in Key West. In 1960, Key West reached an all time high population of 33,956 with



Keys Wreckers at work. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

13,965 residents in the rest of the county.

The growing tourist economy, increased availability of electricity and air conditioning and a reliable supply of fresh water led to explosive growth in the Florida Keys during the 1950s and through the 1970s. The census of 1980 shows the population of Monroe County, outside of Key West reached 38,806, which for the first time was more than the Southernmost City.

Key West's population dropped to 24,832 as a result of military cuts in the 1970s. To meet the needs of the changing population, Monroe County dedicated courthouses in Marathon and Plantation Key and a new courthouse annex and jail in Key West. On March 23, 1971, the county commission held its first meeting outside of Key West at the Plantation courthouse.

The expanding population led to the incorporation of some cities. The first city turned out to be the most unusual. The City of North Key Largo Beach incorporated in 1955 and became known as the Phantom City where no one ever

lived. The Riley-Field Company, a real estate firm, owned the 1,500 acres near the intersection of Card Sound Bridge and Ocean Reef Road and planned to build a city. The officers of the real estate firm served as mayor and councilmen for the city. The only official action taken by the city was to arrange a bond issue to build the new Card Sound Bridge in 1960. The city remained on the books until the early 1980s when the state bought part of the land and the Florida legislature revoked the charter.

Two cities created during this time still remain and one was overturned by court order. The City of Key Colony Beach was formed when the 11 qualified voters met on September 24, 1957 and unanimously approved incorporation and elected F.P. Sadowski mayor. The City of Layton was created on September 18, 1963 when all 25 residents gathered at the Little Italy Restaurant and voted to incorporate. They also voted 25-0 to name Del Layton mayor. The City of Stock Island was formed when the voters overwhelmingly

(Continued on page 14)

(Monroe County from page 13)

approved incorporation in a special election on July 30, 1963. A total of 92 votes were cast. At the same time a city council was elected which in turn elected one of its members, Jesse Slone, mayor. On March 26, 1964, the short life of the City of Stock Island ended when Circuit Judge Aquilino Lopez, Jr. signed an order stating that the referendum by which the city was established was not properly conducted.

The post-war years again saw hurricanes cause problems in the Keys. In 1948, the Keys were hit with two storms. The first, a category three storm, struck on September 21 and 22. A smaller storm followed on October 5. On September 10, 1960, Hurricane Donna swept over the Middle Keys causing major damage in Marathon and the Upper Keys. Hurricane Betsy passed over the Upper Keys on September 8, 1965. The worst damage was caused by tides as much as nine feet above normal.

In 1977, Congress appropriated \$109 million to build new bridges to replace the old railroad bridges. With additional money from the state, the new highway was completed in 1982. The highway to the mainland now has 43 bridges which have a total of 19.39 miles.

In the early 1980s, the old Navy waterline and desalinization plant could no longer meet the demand for fresh water. The Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority constructed a large new transmission pipeline that was completed in 1982.

The continued growth of the Keys led the state of Florida to declare the Keys an "Area of Critical State Concern" in 1975. This led to the county adoption of a land use plan and a policy of reduced growth and greater preservation. To handle an increasing number of employees,



The Overseas Highway being constructed over the Florida East Coast Railway bridge. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

the county acquired the old Monroe County General Hospital on Stock Island for offices

The 1980s and '90s saw a large number of Cuban refugees landing in the Keys. During the spring and summer of 1980 more than 130,000 landed in the Keys from Mariel, Cuba. The adverse publicity caused a serious decrease in the number of tourists in the early 1980s. As a result of the refugee crisis, the federal government established a road block on the mainland, forcing all Monroe County citizens to prove they were American citizens in order to leave the county. To counter the massive traffic jams that were destroying the tourist trade, the mythical Conch Republic was created and the publicity forced the government to do what could not be done in court, remove the road block.

With new bridges and a water pipeline, the population of the Keys continued to grow. The 1990 United States Census shows a total population of 79,435.

The increasing size of government created a demand for more office space. A new courthouse, Lester Government

center, was added at Jackson Square in 1986. The Marathon Government Center was built in 1993. The increase in population led to an increase in crime creating a need for a new jail, which opened on Stock Island in February, 1994, followed by a new sheriff's office in 1995 at the same location. More county offices were added at the Harvey Government Center at Historic Truman School in September 1997. To replace the outdated Stock Island Offices the headquarters of the county moved to the restored Gato building on Simonton Street in January 2002.

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President Truman with the Monroe County Commission. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

Major hurricanes again visited the Keys in the 1990s. On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck Dade County causing damage on Upper Key Largo primarily to Ocean Reef. On September 25 1998, Hurricane Georges swept over the Keys causing serious damage in the Middle and Lower Keys. On November 4, Tropical Storm Mitch moved quickly through the Upper Keys causing isolated damage.

In the 1990s, the changing population and a desire for local control led to more cities incorporating. On November 5, 1997 Islamorada voted to incorporate as a city and the first officers were elected in March, 1999. The election on November 3, 1999 resulted in Marathon voting to incorporate and the residents of Key Largo saying no to incorporation.

The population of the county continued to grow with the U.S. Census of 2000 recording a total population of 79,589 in the county with Key West increasing to 26,215. The other cities in the county reported 10,391 in Marathon, 6,993 in Islamorada, 836 in Key Colony Beach and 195 in Layton.

The economy took a major set back in 2005 when Hurricanes

Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma affected the county with Hurricane Wilma in October caused major flooding and damage from Key Largo to Key West. As the county was recovering from the hurricanes the national economy began a decline that resulted in the worst recession since the Great Depression. The resulting bank crisis and falling real estate prices caused the county to institute cuts in budget and personnel. Despite the national slow down the tourist continued to find the Keys but were spending less and the local economy with some pain survived the recession.

In 2009 the county opened two building that construction had started before the recession. The Murray Nelson Center on Key Largo opened to meet an urgent need for office space on the Upper Keys. The Freeman Justice Center in Key West was opened to replace the aging County Courthouse.

As the new decade begins the main employment in the county is in the tourist industry followed by retail services, commercial fishing and government work. The outlook for the tourist industry looks bright.

Tom Hambright is the Monroe County Historian at the Monroe County Library in Key West

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The Shrimp Fleet in Key West Bight. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

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