

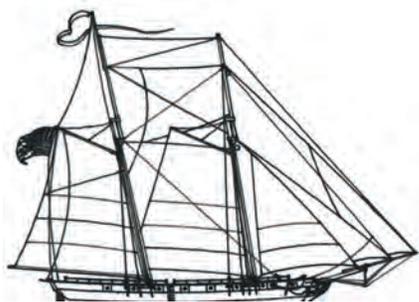
# Florida Keys

## Sea Heritage Journal

VOL. 21 NO. 1

FALL 2010

USS SHARK




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 OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE KEY WEST MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 

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# The Lakes Passage Stilt Houses, Fishing Shacks, and Shelters

By J. Gregory Griffin  
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President Theodore Roosevelt established The Key West National Wildlife Refuge in 1908 as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds and other wildlife. This preserve was one of the earliest Federal refuges in the United States and is located in the Gulf of Mexico beginning a few miles west of Key West. The refuge encompasses more than 200,000 acres with only 2,000 acres of land. The area is home to more than 250 species of birds and is important for sea turtle nesting. The islands are predominately mangrove with a few beaches and salt ponds. The Lakes Passage region is part of the Refuge.

The first stilt houses were built in the early 1960's approximately seven miles west of Key West in the Gulf of Mexico in the shallow waters of a portion of the Refuge known to Key Westers as the Lakes Passage, or simply the Lakes. There were seventeen stilt houses in total, and seven were situated in the Boca Grande section (also known as Bo' Grande) of the Lakes. Three existed off Ballast Key, and four were built around Man Key. The



*The Nora and John Koenig Stilt House off Man Key. Photo credit: Koenig Family.*

others were scattered throughout. This tranquil region is protected by Man, Woman, Crawfish and Ballast Keys on the south, and the shoals and rock jetties of the Northwest Channel to the north. The waters in the Lakes area are relatively calm save during the most violent storms. The average depth of the

sea water in the navigable areas is five feet. Extensive local knowledge is required to safely make way in this pristine preserve as the salt water can shallow-up very quickly on the sides of the winding natural channels.

(Continued on page 3)

## SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

by Tom Hambright



*A stilt house near Boca Grande. Photo credit: Dale McDonald Collection  
Monroe County Public Library.*

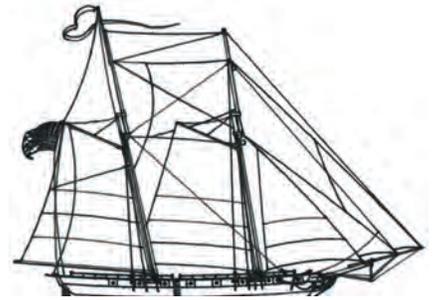
When we started the Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal 20+ years ago we wanted a platform to record Florida Keys History patricianly the stories that been forgotten or never told. As part of the mission we have tried record recent history before it fads from memory. The story of the shacks in the lakes to the west of Key West is such a story. They played an important part in maritime history, boating history and the social life the Keys of the 1960s and 70s. They were a social center particularly on the weekends and holidays. It was common for guest to spend the weekend cook dinner of fresh seafood. Also the boating community would often stop by to socialize and maybe share a cold refreshment. The one house I remember visiting was the one owned by Mr. Ramos. At the time he owned the Budweiser distributorship for the Keys and his sales person often used the shack on the weekend. And they always had a supply of the material they sold during the week. Some of the houses near Boca Grande were

used by commercial fisherman to stay near the fishing grounds. They also built some platforms for lobster and crab traps.

We found while doing this story that there is very few photographs of the houses. The Koenig family had a few their house and the Dale McDonnell collection at the Library had some. So if you have any photographs on the community of houses in the lakes or any other you would like to share bring them by the library I can scan them and give you the originals back and we will have a permanent record of what it used to be like in the good old days.

The Library Collection is nearly 200,000 photos and we have over 8,000 on web site. The staff and volunteers are working to expand the on-line collection but it takes about 15 minutes of work to scan, add description, clean up the photo and upload. In September we added about 800 photos of the railroad. So keep checking the site to see what's new. Make sure you have Keyslibraries.org as one of you favorites.

New Member  
Gary Walmer, Key Largo.



The Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal is published quarterly. Subscription is available through membership. Copyright 2010 by the Key West Maritime Historical Society of the Florida Keys, Inc. The art on the masthead, the USS Shark, was drawn by Bill Muir.

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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Captain Chet Alexander's Marine Salvage crew installing the pilings for the Koenig stilt house. Photo credit: Koenig Family.

(Stilt houses from page 1)

Many stilt houses were solidly constructed using thick wharf timbers, or telephone poles, driven into the sandy sea bed by pile drivers rolled onto barges and later brought to the Lakes by Chet Alexander, a famous wrecker, and salvor in Key West. After leaving Key West, or Stock Island, the barge, pushed

by a tugboat, would sail on the south side of the Keys around Boca Grande where it would enter the Lakes area. The soft bottom provided a suitable foundation for pile driving. Workers attached solid decking about four feet above mean high tide levels creating a first level to which an owner may moor his boat and jump to the stability of the first floor. Walls, doors and

windows were then added as well as a second similar story but with railings around an outer walkway. Other structures in the area were not as elaborately constructed and were made from salvaged building materials and plywood cobbled together from construction areas in Key West. Some of the owners

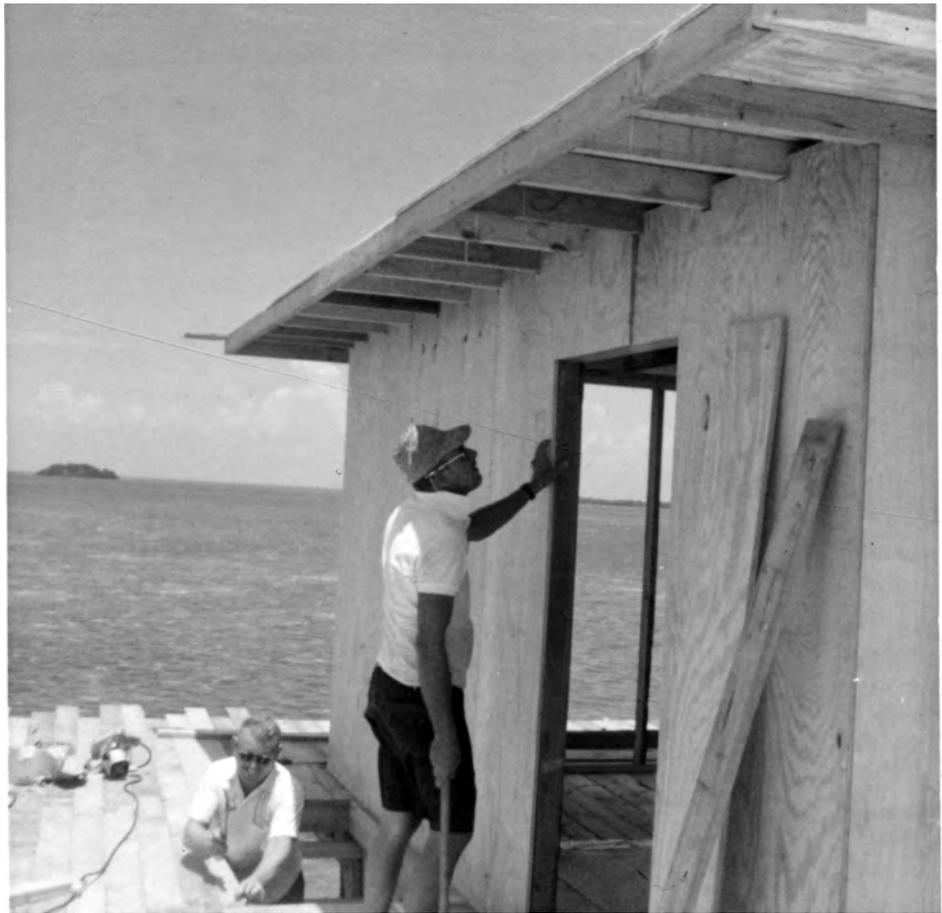
(Continued on page 4)

(Stilt house from page 3)

pounded thin pilings into the seabed with heavy sledge hammers in order to establish a somewhat secure base for their over-the-water shanties. These humble structures were known as “fishing shacks.”

There were some simple structures erected on the land at Boca Grande. In the early 1950’s, the Key West Outboard Club, a powerboat racing organization, disassembled a derelict plumbing shack at Sigsby Park, loaded the pieces on boats, and motored them to the west side of Boca Grande where they reassembled the parts into a twelve foot by twenty foot shack placed on the up shore area facing the Marquesas. There were military style bunk beds within the shack together with a pizza cooker. There, the members enjoyed cooking enchilado (enchilao) and many other Conch style meals.

Later, the Key West Power Squadron constructed and maintained several shelters directly on the land of that Key (one on Mud Key, as well) in the late 1950’s. The first shelter was replaced after a water spout picked up the building about ten feet in the air with picnickers in it. The building materials were strewn over the island with no one hurt. The members erected another shelter setting telephone poles in cement blocks in the ground and using sheet metal for a roof. Vandals often caused great damage by hacking out and removing any wood from these structures for campfires. This boating social group conducted festive outings during the spring and summer months under this shelter. They would gather at 9 a.m. on the boat ramp on Simonton Street in Key West, Gulf Side. The organizers requested the members



*House under construction. Photo credit: Koeing Family.*

and their guests bring a covered dish, but suggested that all cold drinks would be available. The Power Squadron announced a Dutch treat rendezvous for July 3 and 4, 1960 at their pavilion on Boca Grande Key. The members erected additions on the building to accommodate the large crowd expected for the event. Nelson Davenport donated a “Jungle Jim” for the kiddies. The organizers scheduled a cruise through the Marquesas Lakes as one of the events during the outing.

Lobstermen, crabbers, and commercial fishermen built plywood shacks on the land at Boca Grande, together with makeshift piers running from the land into the water so they could tie up their boats and load and unload their catch, traps, and equipment.

The proprietors constructed

these weekend retreats during a period when the Key West National Wildlife Refuge was both underfunded and under staffed by Congress. The Lakes area was not patrolled by the authorities and it appeared to the individuals in Key West to be an open, uncontrolled territory for anyone’s use and enjoyment. Initially, locals erected these buildings without a thought of intervention by the Federal or State authorities.

The owners, and their friends and families, used and enjoyed these weekend havens in many ways; as a half way point for next-morning fishing in the Marquesas Keys, as a stable fishing platform, as a summer residence, as a party location, and as a romantic honeymoon get-away. The locals would catch fresh fish and lobster, and cook a stew or chowder on the premises. Some



*Dinner with friends. Photo credit: Koenig Family.*

buildings contained generators for lights and refrigerators, and propane gas stoves or barbeques for cooking steaks and fresh fish caught by the revelers. People often spotted twirling water spouts during the rainy season. The colorful sunrises and sunsets and the quiet starlit nights with dolphin spouting nearby were also treats for the patrons. The owners enjoyed these structures for many years only

having to ask an occasional group of hippies to vacate the premises when the locals arrived.

The Nora and John Koenig  
Stilt House off Man Key

After obtaining the first ever lease from the State of Florida, Department of Natural Resources, John Koenig built a stilt house off

Man Key in the 1960's. The edifice cost approximately ten thousand dollars to build excluding the personal labor cost of the owner and friends. Mr. Koenig chose the site very thoughtfully in that the structure would face the prevailing winds well off shore from any land to minimize mosquito and gnat

(Continued on page 6)



*Cooking dinner. Photo credit: Dale McDonald Collection Monroe County Library.*

(Stilt houses from page 5)

contact yet provide access to the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic for fishing, his cherished sport. There was a shallow flat, exposed at low tide, on the back side of the house, and a ten foot natural channel at mean low tide on the front. Mr. Koenig constructed it with his close friend, Russ Albury, a carpenter and master builder. Russ's wife, Shirley, and John Koenig's wife, Nora, went to school together at Mary Immaculate in Key West. The social ties among all four were strong. Mr. Koenig hired a barge with a pile driver on it to pound telephone poles into the sea bed to serve as

a sturdy foundation for the upper floors. The first floor had a kitchen with a propane refrigerator and stove and a wooden cable spool for a table. The second floor was one large room with 8 sets of bunk beds (16 beds in all) with a large table in the center.

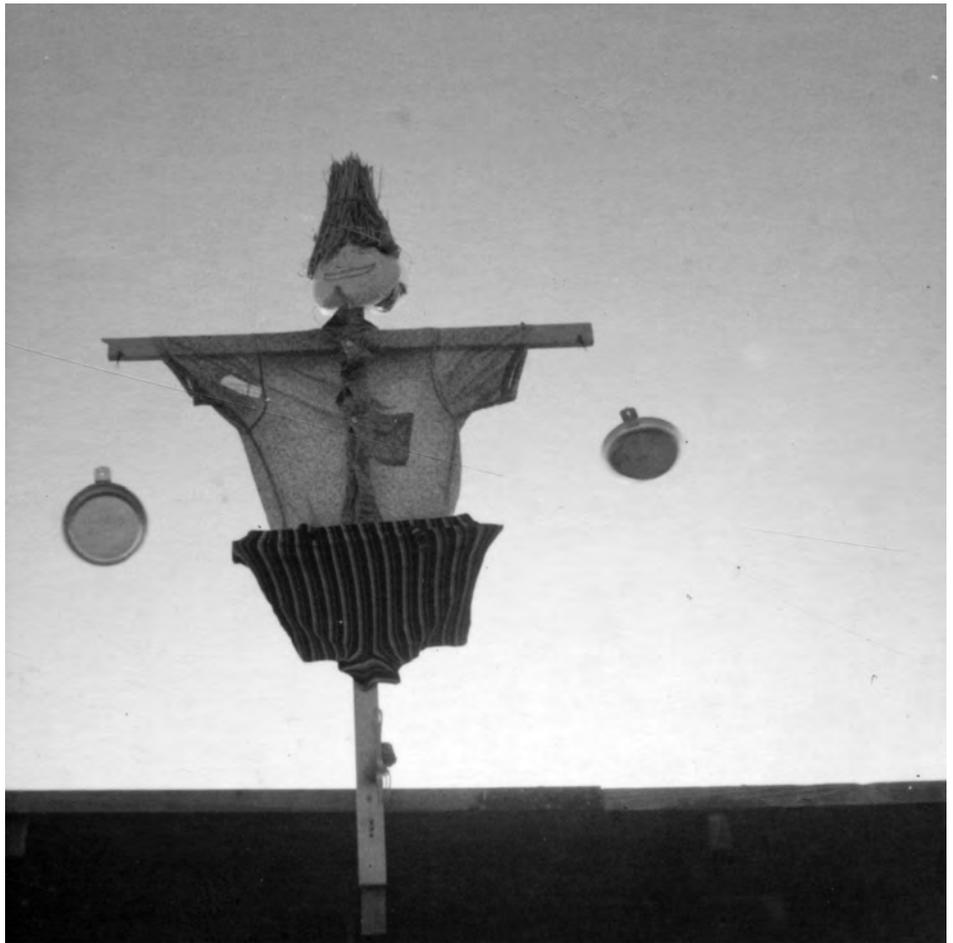
There were three other stilt homes in the Man Key area. Fred Losley built the closest building to the Koenig house, however, this one had steel pilings driven into the sea bed as a foundation. These metal members were later reinforced with treated wooden posts. The Losley house had two floors and 8 bunk beds as well. The Koenig and Losley families were also very close, and

there was a twenty foot rope linking both structures. Individuals utilized this line to pull themselves on a small boat from one house to the other. Donald Scribner was the first person to erect a stilt house in this locale. William Hannum also held a lease from the State of Florida for his stilt house. Both men resided and worked in Key West, but owned these houses next to finger channels in the Man Key area.

The Koenig children, Mary Frances, Patrick, John Michael, and Timothy, spent all summer (and other school vacations) living in the stilt house while their father commuted back and forth to Key West for work in the "Nora K"

which he tied up at a fishing club later to become the Key West Yacht Club on North Roosevelt Drive in Key West. J. Eugene Sherertz was the dock master at that time. Mrs. Koenig enjoyed the outdoors and was a naturalist. She and the children would explore the nearby islands, beachcombing and viewing the wildlife in this idyllic setting. These explorers crafted furniture from items they found on the islands. Tim, the youngest child, would awaken early so he could use the small motorized skiff, "Big Mama," before his older brothers seized it. The children learned to swim in the Lakes area; they also mastered fishing and hunting for crawfish and conch, both of which were plentiful. In addition, the family hooked many large jewfish and sharks. The youngsters used cleaned fish carcasses for shark bait. Mrs. Koenig would cook the freshly caught fish for lunch and dinner together with conch chowder and crawfish enchilada (enchelau). Waterskiing and boating also occupied their summers. Occasionally, father, sons, and friends would venture on long boat trips to fish for the big ones in Rebecca Channel far to the west of the house, or to Ellis Rock, New Ground, and many other locations including the reef. From miles away, the family watched the Light House and Pilot Station now known as the "Hemingway House" on the south side of the Northwest Channel burn during the dark hours of August 29, 1971.

Over the years there were many regular visitors to the house. Often there would be four, or more, boats rafted together on the deep water side. Locals would go fishing for the day, and on the way back to Key West they would stop to socialize and to drink a beverage with a fried fish snack and a cup of conch



*Scarecrow to keep the birds off the house. Photo credit: Koenig Family.*

chowder. The Koenig children would frequently ask the guests to adjust their boats so the boys could jump off the upper floor deck to the water below. Once Governor Claude Kirk paid a visit to the house, but most often locals only showed up including the nuns from Mary Immaculate donning street cloths, and running skiffs aground in the flats. Sister Eileen was raised near a lake.

It all came to an end on March 13, 1972, when a burglary and a fire occurred at the Koenig stilt house. The fire consumed the entire structure and its contents except for the charred telephone poles. Sheriff R. L. Brown reported questioning several suspects concerning the arson and the theft of an electric generator at the remote site. Investigators reported a three horse power generator was brought back

to Key West and sold to a local businessman together with a small boat which the suspects had taken from Garrison Bight in order to reach the house. A second break-in was reported at the Losley stilt house where beer and small articles were stolen.

Gary Sherertz, Richard Hines, and Vance Hines were later charged by the State of Florida in the Monroe County 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court, and all negotiated a plea of guilty and sentenced to short periods of incarceration and monetary restitution to John Koenig. Subsequently, on April 30, 1973, in the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of Florida, the Honorable W. O. Mehrtens, in a habeas corpus hearing, vacated the judgment and

(Continued on page 8)



*Stilt houses near Boca Grande. The platform was used for trap stowage. Photo credit: Dale McDonald Collection Monroe County Library.*

(Stilt house from page 7)

conviction of Gary Sherertz as the judge felt his plea was coerced by the remarks and actions of the State Court trial judge, William T. Chappell.

#### Federal Legal Matters

During the 1960's, the conservation movement gained public favor and the Federal Government took on a more active role in managing its public lands. All leases for the stilt houses were not renewed, although they had been many times in the past. A dispute arose during September of 1970 when the U.S. Department

of the Interior's Bureau of Sports Fisheries filed a formal protest concerning the ecological effect of the structures since no sanitary facilities were available in these buildings. Since that time several attempts were made to force the owners to remove the part-time dwellings accessible only by boat. Notices were posted on each house in February of 1971 by the Corps of Engineers and the Trustees of the Improvement Trust Fund of Florida ordering the immediate removal of the stilt cabins. However, a delay was granted as the owners sought vainly to obtain state and federal

permits for the offending retreats. In 1972 this idyllic situation in the Lakes dramatically changed as the United States Army Corps of Engineers posted final notice on all stilt cabins that each had to be removed from the Refuge by December 31, 1972 or a Federal Court action would be instituted against the owners. The Chief Counsel for the Corps of Engineers, William E. Welsh, notified each owner in writing on December 19, 1972 that each owner faced a fine of up to \$2,500 and could be ordered by the Court to demolish the structures, unless the houses

were removed by the December 31, 1972. Attorney Welsh told the owners civil and criminal actions would be filed against each owner early in 1973 unless the stilt houses, and all other existing structures, were removed. The owners had not razed the offending structures by January 31, 1972.

Furthermore, The Interior Department's biologists stated that the Lakes area serve as important habitat for a wide variety of birds, including some endangered species. Waters in the area support fishery and shellfish of an exceptional variety and quality. In addition, Army Engineers and the Florida Trustees contend that the stilt houses encroach on the public domain, violate the wildlife refuge, cause adverse effects on fish and wildlife management programs, mar the seascape, and contribute to pollution problems since no sewage or garbage disposal capabilities were present in the buildings.

In an effort to seize the initiative, William B. Hannum, President of the

### **Owners of the Houses on the chart on page 16.**

- 1 Fred Losley
- 2 Donald Scribner
- 3 John Koenig
- 4 William Hannum
- 5 Edmond Sawyer
- 6 Gene Harin
- 7 Howard Norris
- 8 Gonzaldo Labrada, Henry Rojas, Jose Nunez  
Hilario Ramos, Rene Rojas
- 9 Curtis A. Haggard, Fred Riowaty  
Joe Akerman, Robert Edwards
- 10 Delio Cobo
- 11 Bert Cates
- 12 Robert Williams
- 13 Robert M. Daniels
- 14 Otto Anderson, Harry Knight, Davis T. Yates



*Friends visiting. Photo credit: Koenig Family.*

Key West Chamber of Commerce, and owner of a stilt house off Man Key, filed a suit seeking injunctive relief against the Army Corps of Engineers' order that Hannum's house, and eleven others, be taken down. Judge William O. Mehrrens, sitting in the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida in Key West ruled that "the stilt houses were located in waters that are navigable and on submerged lands which are themselves below mean high tide." Judge Mehrrens ordered Mr. Hannum to remove the house "in its entirety including all pilings to the ground line." Mr. Hannum had to pay the costs incurred by the Government in defending the suit, and unless he takes down the house, the judge decreed that he would be liable for damages equal to the cost of removal. The Army Engineers, in

their counter action, testified that the house was not lighted at night and had two privies over the water situated close to natural navigation channels. Because of their location, the houses were a hazard to navigation. The Court also ruled that the continued existence of this, and the other stilt houses, adversely affected the ecological balance of the Key West National Wildlife Refuge. In accordance with this decision and precedent, all owners demolished and removed their buildings from Federal land and waters by the end of 1974.

*The author, J. Gregory Griffin, moved to Key West in 1996 from Cambridge, Massachusetts. He wishes to acknowledge the contributions which Attorney Timothy Koenig made to this article.*

# Northwest Channel Lighthouse

By Tom Hambright

Another stilt house was often referred to as the “Hemingway House” or “pilot station” which was the abandoned Northwest Channel Lighthouse. The lighthouse was destroyed by fire on August 30, 1971 within a year of the arson of the Koenig house and the same time the government was forcing the removal of all the houses in the lakes.

The Northwest Channel Lighthouse was authorized by Congress in 1853 appropriated \$12,000. The wooden house and the iron pile foundation were built in Philadelphia and shipped to Key West and erected on site. The light with a fifth-order Fresnel lens was first lighted March 5, 1855. William Richardson was the keeper. Time and the elements damaged the house and in 1878 a new house was constructed and the fourth-order Fresnel lens was first lighted on June 30, 1879. In October 1913 the light was automated and the keepers position discontinued. The light was decommissioned on June 30, 1921.

The Key West Harbor Pilots may have used the lighthouse for shelter while waiting for ship arriving from Gulf ports. This has not been documented but would have been possible while it was a lighthouse and after when it was not being used.

Hemingway may have visited the house in his fishing boat would have passed the Northwest Channel when he went to the Marquesas or the Dry Tortugas. I doubt that he every wrote at the house. Hemingway was a very disciplined writer and would normally write the first thing in the morning and kept a record of how many words



*Northwest Channel Lighthouse. Photo credit: Florida Photographic Collection .*

he done each day.

The report of the fire from the Key West Citizen on August 31, 1971 follows.

“The abandoned lighthouse at the entrance to the northwest channel, frequently referred to as one of the houses used by the late Ernest Hemingway when he lived here, burned to charred splinters Friday night, the Coast Guard reported.

“Lt. Cmdr. R. J. Clements said the Base got a call about 9:30 p.m. from the Naval Air which had just heard from two jet aircraft in the area that “a ship was on fire out there”.

“The 40-footer from the Base was dispatched within three minutes and by the time the men arrived at the site the “place was completely up in flames and out of control.”

“As they approached the “house on stilts,” crewmen on the Coast Guard craft said they noticed a small open boat ‘heading out into the flats, away from the fire.’”

“The boat disappeared into the night and has not been found, although the Coast Guard suspects if came back to Key West.

“Whether or not there was any connection between the fire and the escaping boat, the Coast Guard could not say.

“The old wooden frame structure has been destroyed and its remain can be seen on top of the steel platform and supports in the northwest channel.”

*Tom Hambright is the Monroe County Historian at the Monroe County Library.*

# 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 February and March 1857.*

Saturday, February 7. Rose at 6 having been awake since 5. Went to the Post Office and got letters from Mother and Solicitor of the Treasury. Matilda heard from the girls. My magazines did not come and I must write about them. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.51, thermometer 73, wind east northeast, clouds 5. a rain squall at 6 a.m. At 4 p.m. went down to Oliver O'Hara's house and attended the funeral of Charles M. Wells, age 58, as one of the mourners at the grave after the church service was finished. The Masons who had marched in the procession performed their burial service at the grave, the first time I ever saw it. Matilda felt badly and went to bed early. I went round to Mary Ann Porter's for Hatty who had spent the evening there and sat till near 9 and I went over to Captain Cornelius Curtis' for Charlotte who had spent the day but had gone home.

Sunday, February 8. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.52, thermometer 73, wind northeast 1, clouds 8. Spring seems to be lame all over or sore that he could not follow me but awaited my return. Gave him Rhus. Read papers. Wrote Solicitor of Treasury. After tea Matilda and I went to Mary A. Porter's. The night clear and pleasant with full moon.

Monday, February 9. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.64, thermometer 73.5, wind north by east 2, clouds

1. Spring seems better though he can not stand, gave him Nux and Brionis. At Judge Thomas F. King's room at 11. He refused the motion to grant leave to file a supplementary bill or to allow further testimony to be taken or filed saying though that he did not believe that was the proper mode of introducing deeds but set the first day of next term of the Circuit Court for the trial of the case and directed that a supplementary bill be defending to the deeds lately found and to the act of the Legislature be filed a copy thereof to be served on the defendants's solicitor. In the afternoon commenced a copy of the deed to be sent to Gordon to get executed granting the fee simple to the end of Greene Street to Perkins in trust for the Holy Alliance. Gave Spring oil and milk.

Tuesday, February 10. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9:15 a.m. barometer 29.73, thermometer 73, wind north northeast 4, clouds 10, raw and damp with every appearance of rain. Finished the deed and gave it to James Filor. Wrote to Mother. Bought seven yards of blue flannel to make me a suit of clothes. The steamer **Isabel** came in late there being a gale from the north northeast with heavy seas. The schooner **Dart** came down from up the reef and says the wreck is broken up and no part of her is above water. A portion of her keel is driven up on a dry reef near by.

Wednesday, February 11. Made a fire in the stove though it was not very cold yet the wind blows a gale from the north northeast. Asa F. Tift went in the steamer **Isabel**. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.70.5, thermometer 69.5, wind north northeast 7, clouds 5. I wore a thick

coat down and find it pleasant as the wind is fresh. Walked to the Fort with Matilda and Mrs. Tift.

Thursday, February 12. Rose before 6. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.73, thermometer 69.5, wind north northeast 6, clouds 5. Spring is nearly dead, I can do nothing for him, he must have been poisoned. The steamer **Fashion** from Punta Rasa, J.P. Smith master, came in about 10 a.m. bound to Fort Dallas. General Harney is out on a scout with a large body of men. Mr. Jenkins, Live Oak Agent, came to see me and asked my advice. a ship arrived from Mobile with 5,300 bales of cotton came in leaky and Smith towed her up opposite Tift's Wharf, to whom she is consigned. Spring is better he ate heartily.

Friday, February 13. Rose at 6. At 8:45 a.m. barometer 29.70.5, thermometer 71, wind northeast 5, clouds 6 with haze. During the night it blew hard. Read papers.

Saturday, February 14. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.63, thermometer 71.5, wind northeast 4, clouds 7. Read papers. After tea to Alexander Patterson's with Matilda.

Sunday, February 15. Rose at 5:15 and walked to Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:40 a.m. barometer 29.55, thermometer 73, clouds 7. Read Lake Ngami which I borrowed of Flex Senac. Drew up a petition for C.P. Williams and Silas Denison for salvage of schooner **Roseneath**.

Monday, February 16. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond. Could get no water to bathe. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.57, thermometer 76.5, wind southeast 2, clouds 7.

(Continued on page 12)

(Hackley from page 11)

The steamer **Tennessee** came in yesterday from Aspinwall and Greytown about 10 a.m. Walker is still fighting and it is said all right but I doubt it. She coaled and got off about 3 a.m. Governor Bigler of California is on board.

Tuesday, February 17. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9:15 a.m. barometer 29.60, thermometer 77, wind east southeast 2, clouds 4. The steamer **Fashion** with General Harney on board came in about 7 a.m. Saw the General and Captain Pleasanton, his aid. Tried the case of the schooner **Roseneath**. The **Fashion** went out about 11 a.m. I felt unwell all day, I think from the southeast wind.

Wednesday, February 18. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. thermometer 77, wind east northeast 1, clouds 1, with haze. Read Agriculturalist.

Thursday, February 19. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.55 thermometer 77, wind east northeast 2, clouds 1 with haze. Read papers. Father Osgood and Mrs. Herrick, Charles and Mrs. Tift, Captain and Mrs. Cornelius Curtis took tea with us.

Friday, February 20. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9 a.m. barometer 29.55, thermometer 76, wind east southeast, clouds 6. Read Household Words. The wreckers came up in the forenoon and I got their statement about the wrecking of the ship **Crown**. Winer Bethel and I are both employed. The sewing machine had got out of order and I worked more than two hours before I could get it going again. During the morning I felt quite sick and did not go down

town. After breakfast I took four drops of Camphor in two doses, felt better. After eating some rice and milk went to Sister Sarah Patterson's where Matilda had taken tea and sat till after 9.

Saturday, February 21. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:15 a.m. barometer 29.60, thermometer 76, wind east 2, clouds 5. Read Law Register.

Sunday, February 22. Rose at 5:30 and went to the Post Office but the steamer **Isabel** was not in sight, she got in about 7. At 10:30 a.m. barometer 29.60.5, thermometer 77.5, wind east northeast 2, clouds 9. Got \$45.00 Treasury Warrant for per diem and a letter from sewing machine man with needles. Got Porter's Spirit of the Times from number 1 to 22, January and February of Harper's and January Knickerbocker, but not Putnam's magazine or Godey's. There must be a missing mail. The **Isabel** was detained in Charleston by fog and tide and did not sail till evening.

Monday, February 23. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. wind east 3, clouds 10. Wrote the Treasurer of the United States. Winer Bethel drawing up the libel in the case of the ship **Crown**. Read papers.

Tuesday, February 24. Rose at 5 and walked half way to the Salt Pond having Spring with me. He seemed tired, it is the first time he has been out since he was taken sick. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.57, thermometer 66.5, wind east, clouds 7. Drew up a claim for a man named John Braman, who was a teamster with the Army. Wrote a letter to Stephen Mallory for Charles M. Johnston which he signed asking him to try and get Johnston a berth as master or pilot in one of the New

Orleans steamers. Filed the libel in the ship **Crown**. At night went to Alexander Patterson's but my eyes were so painful that I could not sit in the parlor where Captain Cornelius Curtis and Father Osgood and Mrs. Herrick and Miss Wager where Matilda had taken tea there but I ate some cheese at dinner which gave me a violent attack of dyspepsia and I ate no supper and was quite sick.

Wednesday, February 25. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.65, thermometer 78, wind east southeast 3, clouds 4. Wrote to J.L.S. Smith 424 Broadway, NY for some Golb to be sent by mail and enclosed \$1.00. The steamer **Isabel** got in about 4 p.m.

Thursday, February 26, Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:20 a.m. barometer 29.70, thermometer 78, wind northeast 3, clouds 4. The steamer **Fashion** came in with mules and provisions for Fort Dallas and soon went on. Tried the case of R. Curry et als vs. cargo and materials of the ship **Crown** took us till near 3 p.m. and I remained at home nearly all evening. Sister Sarah and Alexander Patterson and Mrs. Clark dined and spent the evening at Mary Ann Porter's.

Friday, February 27. Rose at 5 and walked nearly to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.68, thermometer 77, wind northeast 2, clouds 3. Read papers. Latter part of the day cloudy.

Saturday, February 28. Rose at 5 and walked across the Key and home by the South Beach. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.56, thermometer 77, wind northeast 2, clouds 8. Read papers. Some rain fell in the forenoon.

Sunday, March 1. Rose at

5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.43, thermometer 74, wind west 1, clouds 3. The roads above the bare rocks are quite wet showing that considerable rain fell in the upper part of the island while in town the streets are as dusty as ever. Read Porter's Spirit of the Time.

Monday, March 2. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. thermometer 74, wind north northwest 3, clouds 4. Read Porter's Spirit of the Time. p.m. Smoky.

Tuesday, March 3. Rose at 4:45 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.52, thermometer 70, wind northeast 5, clouds 4 and smoky. Read Porter's Spirit of the Times.

Wednesday, March 4. Rose at 4:45 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.60, thermometer 71, wind north northeast 3, clouds 2 and smoky. Judge William Marvin read his decree in the case of the schooner **Roseneath** giving \$3,800 salvage to the schooner **Dart** \$225, smack \$75 saying that neither were wanted. At night the town was illuminated but I did not illuminate my house as I saw no occasion for it.

Thursday, March 5. Rose at 4:45 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.52, thermometer 73, wind southeast, clouds 2 with haze. Read papers.

Friday, March 6. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.49, thermometer 77, wind nearly calm, clouds 2. There was considerable fog early this morning. The steamer **Fashion** came in last night. She is bound to Texas via New Orleans. Read

Harpers magazine.

Saturday, March 7. Rose at 5 and went down to get letters but found that the steamer **Isabel** had not got in. At 8:20 a.m. barometer 29.55, thermometer 78, wind north northeast 3, clouds 3. The **Isabel** got in about 10 a.m. Got papers and third number of Putnam's, no Godey I must write. Read papers.

Sunday, March 8. Rose at 4 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.39, thermometer 78.5, wind south 5, clouds 10. Commenced raining about 10 and rained for nearly two hours, when after a fresh squall from the south, the wind got to the southwest and west and cleared up. Toward night the wind was northwest 3.

Monday, March 9. Rose at 5:30 and walked by the Fort and South Beach, returned home and bathed. At 8:20 a.m. thermometer 73.5, wind north northeast 3, clouds 10 with a light drizzle. Wrote to O.R. Porter declining to answer their letter until they pay me the \$50.00 due for last year. Wrote to J. Livingston declining to become a member of his association. Wrote to the Editor of Godey's Ladies Book asking him to send April number 1856, to George Wilds for 23rd number of Porter's Spirit lost. To C.D. Derby for Godey's and the picture not received. Mrs. Louise Porter in answer to one from her letter book, page 80 and Fielding Patterson asking him to call on C.W. Bennett to know why I had received the Reporter and Digest.

Tuesday, March 10. Rose at 4:45 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.50, thermometer 71.5, wind northeast 2, clouds 2. Answered a letter from James Covuly, St. Marks, Florida, which accompanied some

venison hams. Answered an official communication from the Spanish Consul and copied it in my official letter book. Read Harper magazine. Wrote to J. Williams and sent a claim for bounty lands for John Braman who served as teamster in the Mexican War.

Wednesday, March 11. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Ponds, returned home and bathed. At 8:15 a.m. barometer 29.47, thermometer 76, wind south 2, clouds 3. Read papers and Harper's magazine. P.M. at Osgood Herricks.

Thursday, March 12. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 9 a.m. barometer 29.53, thermometer 79, wind southwest 1, clouds 2. A party composed of Charles Tift wife and two children; self and wife and three children; Reverend Osgood Herrick wife and Miss H. Wager; Mr. Briggs' wife and her mother; Mrs. Cushing, Captain Stark and wife, Mr. George Mygatt and Mrs. Smith a relative of Mrs. Herrick left in the schooner **Dart** for Sand Key and a pleasant day got home about dark.

Friday, March 13. Rose at 4 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.55.5, thermometer 81.5, wind east southeast 1, clouds 6. Read papers and Knickerbocker magazine. I felt rather sore and nearly all the party complained of the same thing caused I supposed by climbing up the long stairway. Went to the Fort with Matilda and Reverend Herrick's family.

Saturday, March 14. When I woke at 4:30 it was raining slightly and I lay till near 6. At 8:20 a.m. barometer 29.55, thermometer 73, clouds 8. Read papers and Knickerbocker magazine. The divers came down from the ship

(Continued on page 14)

(Hackley from page 13)

**Isaac Allerton** and say there is a great deal of cargo on her yet. They got the two capitals and other things.

Sunday, March 15. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.55.5, thermometer 76.5, wind north northeast 3, clouds 9. The steamer **Tennessee** came in about 9 from Greytown. She reports that Walker still holds his own and has had several fights. Clouds with light rain at intervals throughout the day. Soon after dark a very large flight of big Snipe passed the Key, I could her them for some time.

Monday, March 16. Rose at 4:30 and took my gun thinking that some snipe may have stopped on the Key but saw none. Walked by the Fort and up the South Beach. At 8:15 a.m. barometer 29.53, thermometer 75, wind west northwest 2, clouds 9. Judge William Marvin read his decision in the case of John Curry vs. ship **Crown** giving 19 per cent of \$123,000 at which he had valued the cargo which is not its true value by a great deal. He numbered up many English cases to find low salvage but the cases he quoted did not sustain him. I filed notice of appeal but do not think it will be perfected.

Tuesday, March 17. Rose at 4:30 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.50, thermometer 71.5, wind north northeast 1, clouds 1. Bought of Robert P. Campbell nine volumes of Harper's story books and one Burrets Astronomy at \$.40 per volume and \$.50 for a total of \$4.10. Read Knickerbocker magazine.

Wednesday, March 18. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.51, thermometer

73.5, wind north northeast 1, clouds 3 with haze. Read Putnam's magazine.

Thursday, March 19. Overslept myself and did not go to walk. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.52, thermometer 75.5, wind northwest 1, clouds 6. Read Putnam's magazine.

Friday, March 20. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:15 a.m. barometer 29.58, thermometer 72, wind north northwest 2, clouds 3. Read Putnam's magazine. Settled with Walberg. Received of Tift \$167.50 being my fee in the case of the bark **James Hale**. Spent the evening at Captain Cornelius Curtis'.

Saturday, March 21. Rose at 5:30 and bathed. At 8:20 a.m. barometer 29.60, thermometer 75, wind northeast 2, clouds 8. The brig **Tavianier** came in from New York. There is a report of a ship anchored on Cay Sal Banks laden with cotton and full of water and abandoned. All vessels in port have gone to hunt for her.

Sunday, March 22. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home bathed. At 9 a.m. barometer 29.60, wind northeast 3, clouds 1 with haze. Got letter and papers. The steamer **Isabel** having got in last night. Senator Stephen Mallory came in her. Read papers.

Monday, March 23. Rose at 5 and walked part of the way to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.60, thermometer 78, wind east northeast 3, clouds 4 with haze, a little rain last night. Matilda was quite sick with a sore throat and cold yesterday evening and all night. Gave her Acon and Bell alternate. She is not much better this morning. The vessels that went over to the Cay Sal Banks have returned but could not find the

wreck. Brought of William Wall and Company one double gun for \$8.00, it is a wire twist, gage 14 and the guard is broken off. It is a gun that was wrecked in the **Crescent City**. Read papers.

Tuesday, March 24. Rose at 5 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.58, thermometer 77.5, wind east 2, clouds 10 with light rain. Philip H.W. Fontane has been appointed a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corp from February 22. Commission is signed by James Buchanan. His father showed it to me. Felix Senac is ordered to report for duty in the Pacific Squadron and leaves in the steamer **Isabel**. Rain nearly all day and a good deal of water fell. Miss Hortense Lattine was married to Lieutenant M.S. Walkins, U.S. Navy. I was invited up to call on the bride but did not go.

Wednesday, March 25. Rose at 5 and walked on South Beach, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.46, thermometer 75, wind east southeast 3, clouds 10. The USS Steamer **Grey Cloud** with apart of the regiments of artillery came in about 9 a.m. and the men went on the steamer **Isabel**, the regiment is ordered north. Wrote to Mother and to Aletta. The **Isabel**

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came in at her usual hour. Felix Senac and Mr. Husted went in her.

Thursday, March 26. Rose at 4:30 and walked on the beach, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.39, thermometer 75, wind north 3, clouds 6. It was so cloudy yesterday that the eclipse could not be seen. Alexander Patterson, Charles Tift and I went down to Woman's Key in the schooner **Dart**. Patterson got one chance at a flock of snipe and killed 11 there were very few on the island but as the tide fell saw a number on the sand bar to the west. I expect that there would be good shooting at the Marquesas. Got home about dark.

Friday, March 27. Rose at 4:30 and waked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:15 a.m. barometer 29.50, thermometer 76, wind northeast 2, clouds 2. The USS **Grey Cloud** went out the morning for Tampa. Read papers and Harper's magazine.

Saturday, March 28. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. barometer 29.52, thermometer 75, wind northeast 1, clouds 1 with haze. Saw a small flock of teal fly over me on my return. The steamer **Texas** from Aspinwall via Greytown came in about 7. Reports that Walker had beat off the Costa Ricans killing over 300 and losing 30 of his own men. Read papers.

Sunday, March 29. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.50, thermometer 76, wind northwest 1, clouds 4 with hazy. Read papers. The wind backed to the west southwest.

Monday, March 30. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.51, thermometer 77, wind northwest 2, clouds 4 with

haze. Read papers. Loaned Charles Tift for Asa F. Tift \$250.00 for which he gave me a due bill and made out Tift's account from books. I find that he owned me \$953.53, but I know that he has an account for things purchased for several hundred dollars and he promises to make out the accounts at once.

Tuesday, March 31. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.57, thermometer 75, wind north northeast 4, clouds 3 with haze. Yesterday afternoon the weather was thick and smokey. About 9 left the wharf in the schooner **Dart** for Sand Key with a large party on board, after getting half way down the sea was so rough that the ladies were all getting seasick and we turned back and ran up to Fleming Key and anchored in smooth water where we got dinner and got back about 3 p.m. having spent a pleasant day.

Wednesday, April 1. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8:30 a.m. wind east southeast 3, clouds 7 with haze. Received of J.B. Browne \$356.62 being my fee in the case of the ship **Crown**. Settled with Charles Howe for Ed A. Folker's estate and paid him \$20.20 balance due on his account, the amount due Matilda from Ed's estate is \$188.96. Paid Oliver O'Hara \$60.00 being three months rent to date for Lucy Boston's house. Read Household Words.

Thursday, April 2. Rose at 4:30 and walked to the Salt Pond, returned home and bathed. At 8 a.m. barometer 29.36, thermometer 75.5, wind south 2, clouds 9. After dinner rained and I remained at home and packed up a number of blankets in a whiskey barrel.

Friday, April 3. Rose at 4:30 and walked on the beach, returned home

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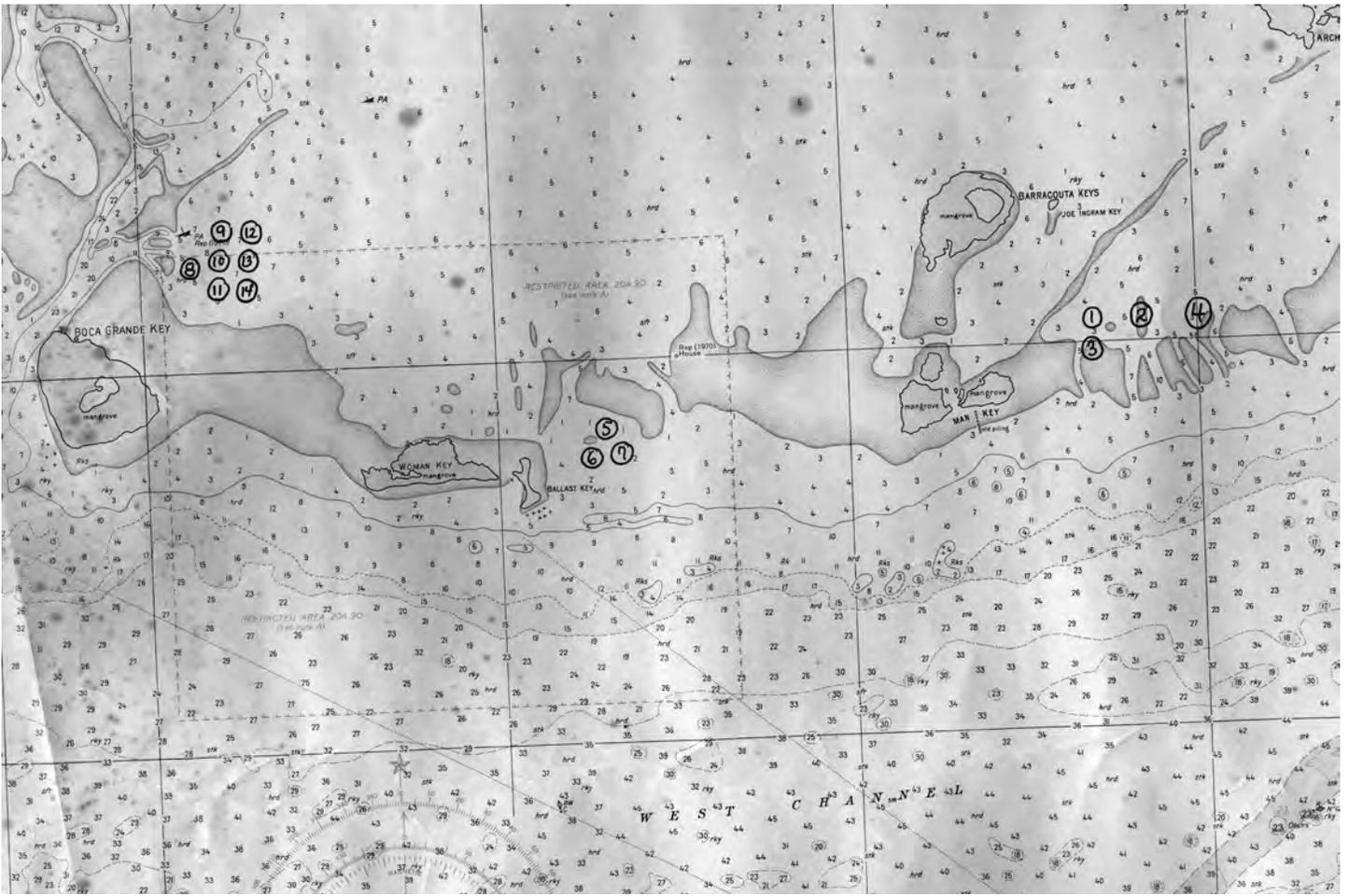


Chart of the Lakes showing the location of the stilt house. The owners are listed on page > Photo credit: Koenig Family.

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