

# Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal

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OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE KEY WEST MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Navy and the Hurricane of 1919

*The following is the report of Rear Admiral Benton C. Decker, Commandant Seventh Naval District, to the Secretary of the Navy on the effects of the Hurricane of 1919.*

From: Commandant,  
To: Secretary of the Navy,

Report on hurricane which occurred at Key West during September 9th and 10th, 1919.

1. Monday September 8, 1919 the following storm warning signal was received at 10:30-A.M.

"Advisory Washington, D.C. Sept. 8, 1919. Northeast storm warnings displayed ten AM from Jupiter to Key West and at Fort Myers, Fla. Disturbance near or over south western Bahamas apparently moving west northwest strong northeast winds Monday and will probably increase in force to gale force advise great caution until further advises later in the day.

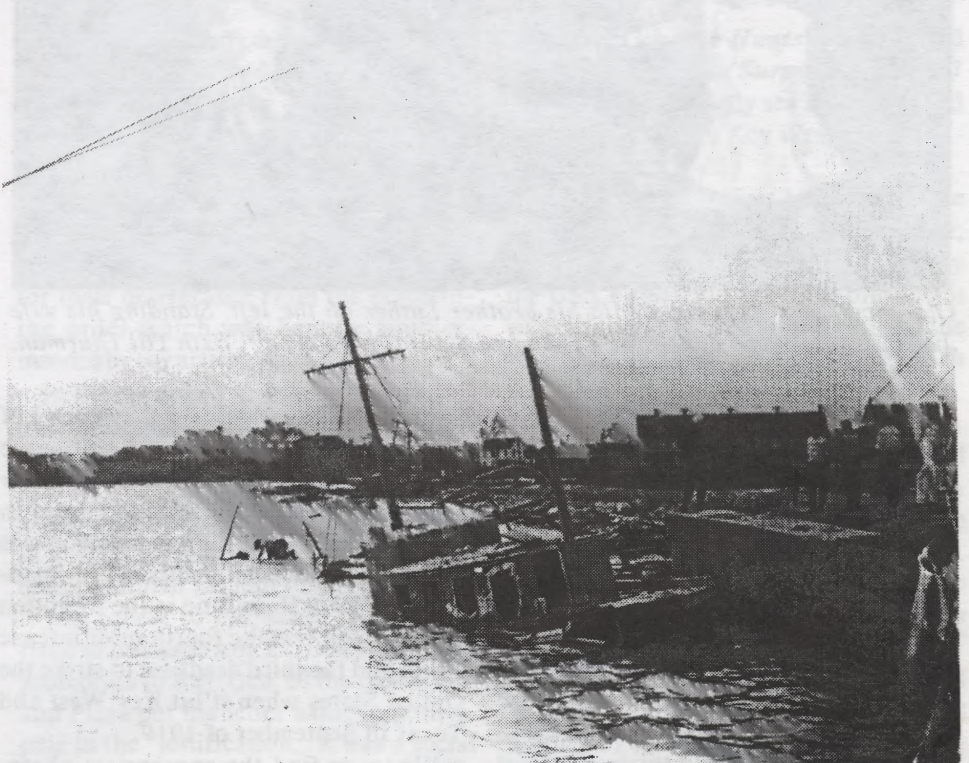
FRANKENFIELD"

This notice was sent to the different commands and preparations were started for meeting the hurricane.

2. At 2:30 P.M. the following was received: "1:00 P.M. Jupiter to Key West delayed report from Nassau barometer 29.46 and 56 mile wind from northeast storm center will probably reach south Florida coast by tonight attended by dangerous northeast wind all vessels cautioned to avoid the Florida Straits and the east coast of Florida until further notice.

FRANKENFIELD"

3. The **USS Wheeling** and the **USCG Tuscarora** took up moorings in the Man-of-war harbor: the order was given to move all vessels from water front to the inner harbor. It has been the practice to keep all craft not in active service, at moor-



*Naval vessels wrecked by the Hurricane of 1919 at North Beach Basin (today Garrison Bight). Photo credit: National Archives.*

ings in Man-of-war harbor, because of possibilities of hurricanes. In Man-of-war harbor, are three sets of heavy mooring one occupied, by Oil Barge #10; one by K-5 and the other assigned to the **Tuscarora** for such an emergency.

4. The Commanding Officer of the **Wheeling** was directed to leave the Coal Dock, he declined the assistance of heavier anchors.

5. Monday at sundown the sky was leaden and overcast to the eastward, with clouds to the west, with sky of a white steely appearance: during the night the weather became worse.

6. Messages were received relative to the storm, on Tuesday by telephone and

messenger service from the local Weather Bureau's office. There was also received from the Lighthouse Service, information as to conditions prevailing at Lighthouses along the reefs to the eastward.

7. The wind during the forenoon showed signs of backing to the north. During the forenoon, information was received from Alligator Reef Light that the wind was blowing about 90 miles. An hour later reports from Sombrero and American Shoals Light indicated storm was to the southward. The storm movement was very slow, but early in the forenoon there was rain and blowing a gale from the north-

(Continued on page 11)

# Society News

By Tom and Lynda Hambright



Clarence Till seated right with his brother Luther on the left. Standing his wife Julia with their two daughters Emma and Sybel. Photo credit: Beth Till Thurman.

This begins the tenth year of the Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal. Since that first six page Journal in the fall of 1990 we have printed more than 120 articles on Florida Keys History. This is an accomplishment of which FKMHS can be proud. Four articles which stands out in our mind are:

1. Lewis G. Schmidt's story of Sandy Cornish in the Spring 1994 Journal. The information from this article resulted in Sandy being one of the thirty-six Most Influential People in the Key West History included in the Key West Historic Memorial Sculpture Garden.

2. In the same issue we told the forgotten story of Clarence K Till, the first Key West policeman killed in the line of duty. This resulted in publication of his story in the press and his name being added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, DC.

3. In the Fall 1991 Journal Carston R. Heinlein for the first time told the complete story of the sinking of the USS Sturtevant at the beginning of World War II. This is the only story appearing in the Journal that was reprinted in another publication when the Sinking of USS Sturtevant appeared in the Tin Can Sailor.

4. Another maritime tragedy that had

never been told before was the sinking of the Steamer Valbanera in the Hurricane of 1919 which appeared in the Summer 1996 Journal. We were able to reprint in English Fernando J. Garcia Ekegogan's article that had been published in Spanish. The 1919 Hurricane is the forgotten storm which was the fourth most intense storm and the third deadliest to strike the United States when it hit Key West and Texas in September of 1919.

We try to find the appropriate photographs to go with each story. Sometimes the story leads to someone giving us a photograph that we could not find. That was the case in the story of Officer Till. Above Officer Clarence Till and his family which came from the Till Family. Other times we just find the photograph. On page sixteen is Lt. Robert E. Peary and his crew on the Naval Wharf at Key West. Bob Elliott's article in the Spring 1997 Journal told this story. In this case the photograph was in the Library files but was not identified until a copy was found in the National Archives this summer.

This is your Journal. You support it by your membership and by providing articles and photographs to publish and hopefully finding something you want to read. Keep the articles and photographs coming.



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# Civil War Days in Key West

By Lewis G. Schmidt

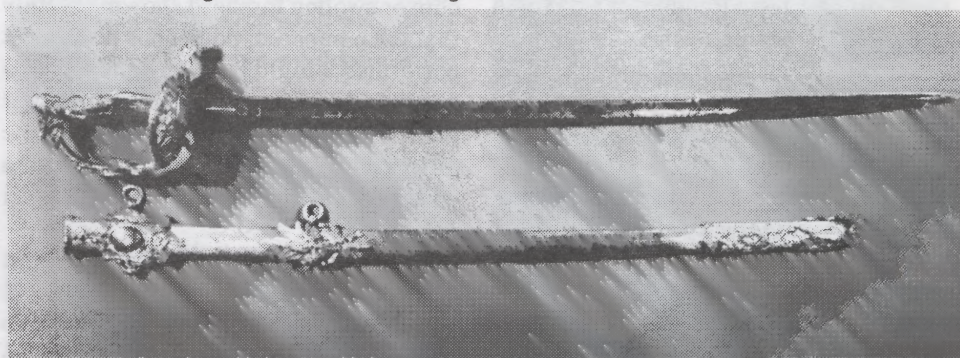
PART 6 (March 1863 thru July 1863)

The average temperature in Key West for March was 73 degrees. The month turned out to be less severe in so far as deaths in the 47th Pennsylvania were concerned, and there was only one known burial in the Key West Post Cemetery, although a member of the 47th Pennsylvania died near the end of the month and his remains were later returned home and are not included in the post cemetery record. One man would die at the Marine Hospital in Key West.

On March 1, Pvt. Pretz of the 47th Pennsylvania enjoyed a shell hunting expedition at Key West with Sgt. Major Hendricks of Sunbury, who was the nephew of Rev. Jeremiah P. Schindel. The two of them "left our beds at an early hour and started off for the south beach before sunrise, or just about sunrise. We were going to hunt sea shells. It was a splendid morning, clear, still, and warm enough to be pleasant. We soon reached the seashore and commenced picking up samples of the numerous varieties that abound in profusion. We found many small reptiles which we examined so that we did not get to the principal shell grounds before it was time to return in order to be with the mess at the breakfast hour."

"On our way back, we passed through the woods, with which the key is covered. These are little more than bushes, being small trees averaging eight feet in height, growing closely together with thick undergrowth of a beautiful shrub, and then on the ground a low, broad leaved plant. I plucked specimens of their foliage for enclosure with this letter. The smooth, stout, narrow leaf is from the tree, the tiny leaf, with thorns on the branch, is the undergrowth, the third variety I send is the plant I speak of. The single flower and bud is of a deep orange color and grows on trees the size of the largest trees in the Key West woods. These flower trees (I know no other name for them) are planted around the houses of town. The other flower is of a crimson color and grows in chunks like the cactus... We never have twilight here. As soon as the sun sets darkness sets in. At present however we have bright moonlight evenings. The weather is charming."

Also with the 47th Pennsylvania, Henry



The gold sword given by the citizens of Key West to Colonel T.H. Good. Photo credit: Lehigh County Historical Society.

Hornbeck "Rose early this morning & went to U.S. Barracks and had a good bath although in Salt water, on the beach. To day very warm again. In the evening Mr McGrath, Ginkinger & Myself attended Catholic Church and heard a very able sermon, at the close, he announced a meeting to take place next day, to offer up thanks for their deliverance from the persecuting order which was happily countermanded by our arrival, retired at 10 oclock."

In the evening Pvt. Pretz played backgammon with "Wal. Miller" again. "I cannot beat him-he's a sharp player." The Private was writing from the regimental office and reported there were a number of visitors there hindering him in his attempt to finish his letter before bedtime. It was nearly 10 PM, when the band arrived to serenade Adj. Lt. Bonstein on his promotion to Adj. Gen. of the command, and Pretz put his letter aside to participate in the "jollification... It was a social musical soiree". The Adjutant "is a strictly sober man so that we had nothing more to drink then claret and water. He gave us an abundance of good cigars. So much for the refreshments. We had plenty of music and conversation."

On March 10, orders were issued directing that enlisted men were to salute all officers, and "lounging about the fort in an unbecoming slovenly manner will not be permitted." No spitting on the floor of the men's quarters, pavements, casemates, or out the window was to be allowed. No dirt was to be thrown out the windows, and spittoons would be provided if necessary.

On March 12, Henry Hornbeck "witnessed the burning of an old house Near the Salt Works, produced great excitement in town."

On the 13th, the *Huntsville* captured the British schooner *Surprise*, with "207 bales of cotton (mostly sea island). I send vessel and cargo to Key West for adjudication."

Reported at Key West before the prize court was the British brig *Magicienne*; and the steamer *Peterhoff*, captured by the USS *Vanderbilt* was also present. It was reported that "yellow fever is on the 'Davis'. [And the men were] Singing in the steerage" of the *Sagamore*.

Henry Hornbeck was still tallying stores. "At Noon the Steamer *McClellan* arrived from New York, dating to the 5th inst... A small mail for our Regt. took a walk to Hd Qrs after Supper with Mennig & Weiss. And the next day, in the evening went to Billiard Saloon, witnessed a game, then went to quarters."

On March 22, it was "Very warm all day, persons dressing in white suits, it is quite a sight to see the Sailors in a body all dressed alike in white garments." On the 23rd, "heard splendid singing this evening by a party of Naval Officers out serenading." On the 24th, the 47th Pennsylvania's band left for the Tortugas to entertain the troops.

On March 28 at Key West, "About 1 oclock to night was roused up by a cry of Fire, a house & barn burnt down in the heart of the City, [Henry Hornbeck] assisted as much as possible in quelling the flames, subsided by 4 oclock, it is almost a Miracle that the whole City did not burn down, having no Engine in this place, and all the water was passed in buckets, had it not been for the Soldiers & Sailors everything would have been destroyed, went to bed again at 4 oclock."

(Continued on page 4)

On the 30th, Henry Hornbeck "heard that Corporal Jesse Remmel of Co B died last night, to be buried this afternoon at 5 P.M., died of Consumption brought on by fever, attended his funeral from General Hospital, two Companies as Escort Cos B & I. Chaplain Bass of 90th N. Y. Vols. officiating, our Chaplain being in Tortugas. Weather very warm. Retired at 11 P.M. sitting up tonight on McGraths front porch, fine breeze, heard a few Spaniards serenading."

April's average temperature was 75 degrees, as the Key West Post Cemetery records indicated at least two burials for the month, but no deaths in the 47th Pennsylvania.

The 47th Pennsylvania's Pvt. Pretz wrote from Fort Taylor on April 13 that "This fort is infested with mosquitoes to an alarming extent. It is this fact that makes it necessary for me to sit up on warm, still evenings like this until midnight, or until I grow sufficiently sleepy to sink into slumber as soon as I lie down, for if I go to bed without feeling extremely drowsy I am tormented for hours by these troublesome insects." The Private shared a room with Sgt. Maj. Hendricks on the ground floor.

"The room has a brick pavement in it, and has but very little ventilation, so that, besides being very damp, it is a regular mosquito nest. I hung up my bed there, arranged my old, torn mosquito net around it and so slept in comparative comfort till one night last week, when, by the sudden snapping-in-sunder of my head rope, I was most unceremoniously deposited on the bricks. Old Morpheus having dropped me from his arms in this careless manner, I realized my position as decidedly uncomfortable. I was somewhat stunned by the fall and, bewildered, I awoke to find myself lying up-hill at an angle of thirty degrees, struggling to rid myself of the net which enveloped, and eventually developed my muscles. It hung on my face till I became alarmed lest I should be smothered. This happened at 3 o'clock in the morning. I left the room at once and have not been in it since."

"I sleep on the table in the back room of our office. This is on the second floor and as I keep all the windows open I secure a draught of air into which no mosquito ventures. Its a general draught and in no wise injurious to my health. Of course

I have no mosquito bar now, and the consequence is that I get up every morning with swollen eyelids, swollen nose, swollen chin or swollen forehead showing plainly that the pampered, poisonous pests have performed a highly successful operation on my faithful face. We are actually obliged to keep a bottle of liquid ammonia in the office for the purpose of washing the skin where the little stingers have sown their venom."

On Friday, April 24, it was reported that there was a ball tonight at the Navy Warehouse. On the 26th, The USS *De Soto* captured the British schooner *Clarita* in the Gulf of Mexico and sent her to Key West for adjudication. The US gunboat *Sagamore* captured the schooner *New York* "30 miles S.W. from Tortugas, with a cargo of cotton and turpentine from Crystal River via Bayport, Fla. I have sent her to Key West for adjudication." (*These are just a few samples of the numerous vessels captured and sent to Key West for adjudication in the courts that had been established there.*)

On the 29th, Henry Crydenwise attended a literary meeting in the evening, for which "I have done a great deal of writing", and while the meeting was in session "a tall fellow (a reported secessionist) who was somewhat intoxicated came to the door of the church and commenced a tirade of abuse, and in a low contemptuous manner ridiculed our meeting. One of the soldiers who sat near the door stepped quickly out and knocked 'Mr. Secesh' down, before he could pick himself up another struck him and landed him over into the middle of the road. He then jumped up and skeddaddled through a house over the back yard followed by a shower of rocks from the hands of the enraged soldiers. Though the church was full by this time it became empty to see what the excitement was. But it soon became quiet. The audience came back and the meeting went on as usual. The next morning 'Secesh' was taken before the provost marshal and fined \$50."

The two Martello Towers at Key West were still under construction in May, and poor quality bricks were all that were available again. The severe Yellow Fever epidemic of last year that had frightened most of the workers from the island, resulting in a scarcity of workers during 1863 even though this year would prove to be relatively free of disease. May would bring 79 degree average temperatures.

An order from Gen. Banks came to Key West with the steamer *Mayflower* on Saturday, May 2, for one of the regiments stationed there to join him on the Mississippi. Since the 90th New York Regiment was too small to garrison the Department of Key West by itself, "numbering just 501 men", they were the "lucky ones" to go. As a result, the 47th Pennsylvania would have to remain a while longer and take its chances with the "natives, Conks, Spaniards and Yellow Jack" (Yellow Fever). The steamer *McClellan* left this date for New York, with a "large quantity of cotton", which was part of 500 bales stored in the government warehouse that had been captured from blockade runners. The McClellan had captured two prizes laden with cotton on her trip between New York, New Orleans, and Key West. "Keeping count of prizes and a lookout from the ramparts for a mail or stray sail, is the only excitement" the men had at Fort Taylor.

The 90th New York left Key West for New Orleans on Sunday afternoon. "On the eve of their embarkation they displayed all kinds of riotous demonstrations. Liquor was more plenty than water in this dry season, which gave to some of them spirits of fiends. An half hour before leaving, a Private attacked the colored servant of the Surgeon, running his bayonet through him, besides when a citizen interfered, he was hit with stones, cutting him so severely that it will cause him to think of his head in the morning for some time to come. The colored man lies in a very precarious situation, and doubts are entertained of his recovery."

"The Regm't embarked at 6 P.M. Left wharf at 1/2 past 7. Bennett of 90th N. Y. also left with Regm't having been a clerk in Quarter Masters Office. Very sorry to see him leave, being a fine & Jovial fellow. Considerable nuisance going on to day. Many of the 90th being drunk. Our men [47th Pennsylvania] on Provost Guard to day. Negro stabbed, very dangerously &c. Some of their men arrested that remained back."

On May 14, the peace and quiet was interrupted by the alarm of fire, turned out to be Mother Clark's shanty, near the New Barracks, cause unknown. Made a very grand sight, burnt down to the ground...There is a ball to night in the fort."

"Finster, Member of [47th Pennsylvania's] Co A shot himself this

morning, causing instantaneous death. Cause unknown, depression of spirits for some time past, was buried this afternoon without any Military escort, on account of being a suicide, he was a man in good circumstances at home, had no encumbrances, and no definite cause can be assigned for this rash act, besides being well educated."

On May 15, Celebrations were held at Key West as the 47th Pennsylvania participated in ceremonies to dedicate their new flag, with the legend of their battle at Pocotaligo, S.C. emblazoned upon it. Some Privates of Company C were caught causing trouble at the ball that was held in the evening and were punished for it. "A few of the worst served their penalty at Fort Jackson".

It was reported on May 21 that "The municipal officers of the City of Key West, elected in December last, may resume their respective functions, and exercise the authority vested in them by the City charter." The military maintained control over arrivals and departures of persons and vessels, and all masters of vessels were to report to the Provost Marshal, who would also control spiritous liquors, administering a \$25 fine for the first and a \$50 fine for the second offense. The Provost Marshal was authorized to take possession of the property of all persons who had been, or are now, in the service of the Confederacy, military or civil.

All stores were to be closed by 8 PM, and only barber shops were allowed to open after 8 AM on Sunday. Assemblies of persons on the streets and street corners was prohibited. Citizens out after 10:30 PM were to be escorted home and their names reported, unless they showed good cause why they were on the streets. No liquor was to be received through bonded warehouses except by special permission. Druggists were to dispense liquor only to those with certificates, and for medicinal purposes only. Officers of the army and navy could purchase liquors or wines by the case or package, if unopened. Violators would have their establishment seized.

On May 25, "House burnt down to night" at Key West, and on May 29, "After Supper Ginkinger, Weiss & Myself [Henry Hornbeck] went to Ingrams, and had some Ice Cream [a ship with ice had arrived a few days before], charging 15 cts a plate."

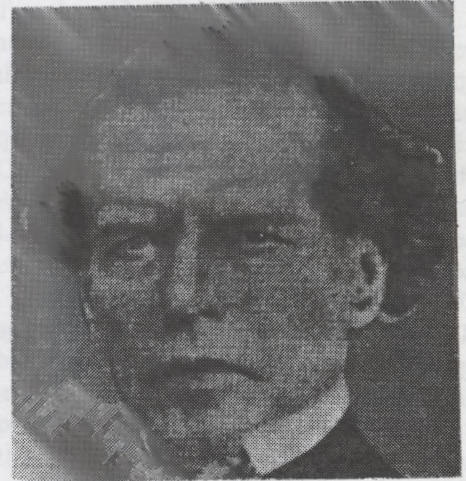
The average temperature for June was 81 degrees as the 47th would suffer the deaths of two more of its members dur-

ing the month, one at Key West and one at Fort Jefferson; and an additional member of another unit would die at Key West, as indicated by the Key West Post Cemetery records. One man would die at the Marine Hospital.

"The dreaded month of June came again and found us at Key West—to break the terrible monotony of island life" at the Tortugas, wrote Emily Holder on a visit. A lady in Key West who owned a number of slaves had little cabins for them in the rear of her house, separated by a fence. When they were declared free, they all left the house and retired to their cabins, and [the] Government provided them with rations. They would look over the fence and see their mistress, who had never performed such duties, cooking and doing her own work, and ask her how she liked it...After a few months, matters adjusted themselves and they came back to her. She hired as many as she wanted for the house and said she was better off than when she had them all to take care of."

At Key West on Tuesday, June 2, Pat McGrath of the 1st US Artillery died and was buried in grave #182 of the Key West Post Cemetery. "Heard the bad News that Mr McGrath had died this Morning at 7 A.M. on account of the climate it is customary here to bury persons the same day, his funeral is appointed at 1/2 past 5 this afternoon. Ginkinger & Myself [Henry Hornbeck] rode up to his house at Noon to see his remains, he looks very Natural, as if fallen asleep...At 5 P.M. Capt Bailey of Schr '*Julia Halleck*', Ginkinger & Myself went to McGraths house, attended the funeral, which was a very large one. Our Band and Comps B & D being in advance, and then the Carriages with Mourners & friends, he was a (regular) Soldier, having been in U.S. Services 15 years, serving in Mexico & Florida with distinction, he leaves a wife & one child, a very smart little boy."

On June 22, "After Supper Lawall, Mennig, Weiss & Myself [Henry Hornbeck] attended the funeral of a Navy Officer [George Kirkly] who died yesterday, belonging to the Gunboat '*Hendrick Hudson*', our Band [47th Pennsylvania] & Sailors as Escort, also a turn out by the Masons, the funeral rites of which are very interesting. Visited Mrs Garvin & procured Ice Cream, also visited Miss Allen, & procured Ice Cream...before returning Mennig, Watson, Whiting & Myself went



Walter C. Maloney. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

in swimming off the dock. Water warm."

On the 24th, Henry Hornbeck visited Mrs. McGrath after supper, and later "went aboard Schooner '*Nonpareil*' Capt Wilson, then went to Russell House where our Band serenaded Mr Russell who has just been married, also serenaded by a Calathumpian Band, making a tremendous noise, he treated all, splendid singing by Navy Officers."

On June 30, the 47th Pennsylvania's band was "out serenading" in the evening at Key West.

The average July temperature was 82 degrees. Only one member of the 47th Pennsylvania would die in July, and there were no burials indicated in the Key West Post Cemetery. Two men died at the Marine Hospital.

It was "Independence Day" at Key West. Henry Hornbeck "Rose at 4 A.M. went with Ginkinger to Slaughter House, procured rations of Fresh Beef for our Mess. Mennig & Myself went to Fish Market, purchased two fish, took a Cup of Coffee at Cafe opposite Provost Marshals Office. After Breakfast Whiting & Myself played a game of Billiards, then witnessed the Parade of 47th P.V. 5 Companies with Band & Col & Staff. Review by Genl at Headquarters, dispersed at 11 A.M. Weather extremely hot. Provost Guard quarters finely decorated. Flags hoisted at great many places. Firing Squibs &c, salute by Fort Taylor & Gunboats in harbor...Many of boys, as usual upon such occasions, being to day pretty well Curried."

The day's celebrations began at Key West at 9 AM when the five companies of the 47th Pennsylvania stationed there, were reviewed by Gen. Woodbury before the

(Continued on page 6)

(Civil War from page 5)

regiment's office. Immediately after inspection, the regiment marched in a "street parade through the principal streets of the city in heat of 110 degrees Fahrenheit and the dust almost suffocating." After which each "detachment was taken to their quarters, dismissed, and then to enjoy themselves as best they could...Col. Good fired the National Salute of 35 guns from Fort Taylor at Meridian [noon]...There was a great amount of firing from the vessels in the harbor in honor of the day."

Musician Wharton wrote that "The city was gaily dressed in flags, and the prettiest thing of the kind was that at the guard station, under Lt. Reese of Company C. Five flags were suspended from the quarters, with wreaths, while the whole front of the enclosure of the yard was covered with evergreens and the red, white, and blue. The Navy had their vessels dressed in their best "bib and tucker", flags flying fore and aft, of our own and those of all nations. It was a pretty sight, and in a measure paid for the fatigue of the boys on their march. At 12 noon, both Army and Navy fired a national salute of thirty five guns" (35 instead of the former 34, now that West Virginia had been admitted to the Union).

"The day passed off pleasantly, all seemed to enjoy themselves; the city was as quiet as could be expected, and the only disturbance was that of a conk "traveling on his muscles", who seemed to have a peculiar fondness for the 47th boys over on the left, when he was met by an Allentown boy, of five feet three inches in his stockings, who gave Mr. Conk a most beautiful trouncing, and one that will teach him that the descendants of Tories must not meddle with the Pennsylvania Dutch, as they please to term us." Unfortunately, Pvt. Pretz did not enjoy the day, as he wrote "My fourth was dull. I did not go outside Barracks Square."

Surgeon Scofield of the *Sagamore* was also unimpressed by the day, as he wrote: "No celebration on shore. Houses all burn like tinder and there being no engines in case of fire, the use of any species of exploding missiles is strictly forbidden. Salute fired from *San Jacinto* and the fort at 8 PM. See naval ships dressed in flags and signals at 8 AM hoisted simultaneously. No declaration of independence read. Executive ashore on a tear...Singing by the company on the quarter deck."

"Masser's Freezer", a product of Mr.

Masser of Sunbury, Pennsylvania, was quite popular at Key West. "His Five Minute Freezer is to be seen all over the world", and with the arrival of ice, many ice cream saloons have been started all over town using his freezer. "The cream made is very inferior and it would take a half dozen improvements to enable the people of Key West to manufacture a good article of ice cream."

The Navy was still taking many prizes, and had captured 63 in the last two months as the harbor was full of them. "From where I am writing this, I can count over 50 steamers and sails all of which contain King Cotton." The sailors were doing well on their prize money. Musician Wharton had met Dr. Dodge of Sunbury, Pa. recently, who was the Surgeon on the *Otorora*, and who had supplied them with all the news of home.

Judge Marvin of the United States District Court of Florida had resigned, and would leave for the North in a few days. He was very popular at Key West and the citizens presented him with a set of silver service. Provost Marshal Maj. Gausler was keeping the "morals of the city in a good state". The days are quiet, but the nights are a busy time for Lt. Reese at the guard station, "and woe betide those who imbibe sufficient to make them weak in the knees, for a soft plank in the lockup will be their bed, and a fine in the morning...Reese is playing the deuce with the Concks and Dagos (Spaniards) in the way of confiscating the ardent-stuff, sure to kill at forty yards." A few days ago he captured "eleven five gallon demijohns under the floor of a house, and another in a barrel covered with flowers in the lower part of the yard, where the Dago had been selling it to the sailors and soldiers in bottles containing scarcely a pint, at the exorbitant price of three dollars a bottle. A nice profit, as the stuff costs fifty five cents per gallon, clear of duties, being smuggled in at night." The man was fined \$400.

On July 11, Henry Horbeck reported that "To night went to Fort Taylor where a concert is given by the Col. everybody invited, consisting of the Ethiopian troupe of Minstrels of our Regt. I noticed Genl. Woodbury and Admiral Bailey were there, also a great many ladies, it was kept up until 11 o'clock, the Band striking up the finishing piece 'Home Sweet Home'."

It was reported on July 21 that "Col Good's sword arrived a day or two ago to be presented to him in a few days, on ex-

hibition at Walls store, saw it there, it is magnificent, made by Tiffany, at New York." And on the 24th, "Tomorrow evening Colonel is to be presented with a magnificent sword by the citizens of Key West "as a token of our appreciation of his merits as a gentleman and soldier", so the Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements said at their meeting the other evening. The sword was made to order in New York and cost \$750."

The sword presentation ceremony took place on Saturday, July 25, when Col. Good received from the citizens of Key West a magnificent sword, sash, and belt, "heavily plated with gold", and reported to cost \$610 or \$750, or by still another source "cost in New York \$700.48". At 4 PM, Companies C and D which were stationed at the barracks, were marched to Fort Taylor where Companies A, B, and I were stationed. The companies were formed in a line under command of Col. Good and marched through several streets to the front of the Custom House, where they formed in a square column at 5 PM, with the Colonel on his horse "in his regular position" in front of the troops.

"A fine stand had been erected on the piazza of the building, seats were placed for the ladies, flags were stretched across the streets, and everything so arranged as to give it the appearance of a holiday. On the stand were Rear Admiral Bailey, Capt. Templeton of the Navy, Gen. Woodbury and staff, Captains Hook and McFarland of the Army; besides Thomas J. Boynton, U.S. District Attorney, for the Southern District of Florida."

Two citizens came down from the platform and Col. Good dismounted from his horse and took his cap in his hand, stepped between the two men and was escorted to the platform at the cheers of his men. He was presented with the sword, sash, and belt by Mr. Maloney, a Key West lawyer. One can only speculate about the emotions of Mr. Maloney at this time, since he was reported to have a son serving with the Confederacy, although he was probably sincere in his thanks for the benevolent administration of the Colonel. The following is the text of his speech:

"The people of Key West have called upon me to represent them today, and in their name and on their behalf to present you with a sword as a token of their regard, and in appreciation of your merits as a gentleman and a soldier. And permit me to say sir, that heretofore in in-

stances almost without number have I been called upon to serve this people, during a residence of 28 years among them. And that many of those calls have been attended with positions of honor, trust, and emolument; but upon no occasion have I felt the honor more great, or my sympathies more in accord with the good people of this island, than upon the present occasion.

You first came to our island, sir, nearly two years ago. You came then as a subordinate, but at the head of a regiment, which had met the armed enemies of the government of the United States on the fields of Virginia, and had shown its discipline and bravery in battle, which attracted the favorable attention of the General soon after appointed to the command of this island; and which caused your regiment to be selected by him to serve under his command at this post.

Transferred from Virginia to Key West. From scenes of carnage to the peaceful abode of an unarmed and loyal people, you met the inhabitants of this island, as they deserved to be met and as they met you, and all who came before you bearing the flag of the Union and the Constitution, as friends-not as foes.

After a very short sojourn on the island, but not before you had succeeded in making a favorable impression on the inhabitants; the government found it necessary to transfer your regiment to South Carolina where it was expected fighting was to be done. And it was with pride and pleasure that your friends here learned that you met the enemy at Pocotaligo and Jacksonville and demonstrated that the most modest could be the most brave.

Unfortunately for us sir, the transfer operated to bring into chief command on this island, one who had yet to learn to meet an armed foe [Col. Morgan of the 90th New York]. And I refrain from speaking of the administration, or more correctly speaking the maladministration of that officer only because he is absent.

Wiser councils, and a good providence returned you to us, as chief in command, at a moment of great peril to a large number of our inhabitants, and you signalized your assumption of command by inaugurating renewed confidence in the good faith of the government of the United States. By discountenancing a vile system of clandestine attacks upon the reputation of quiet law abiding citizens. And by bringing order out of general confusion.

Your administration of affairs as chief

of command was short, but such as to attract the respect and esteem of the greater portion of the people of this island; and without disparagement to others, I can confidently say that no military officer of the United States, more wisely and prudently governed on this island, than yourself.

The citizens of Key West, in appreciation of your merits as a gentleman and a soldier, through me, now present this sword, asking your acceptance of the same, confident that they confide it to the hands of an officer who knows both how and when to use it."

To this, Col. Good answered:

"Gentleman, I accept at your hands this magnificent gift, and beg of you to accept in return my most heartfelt thanks. Duly sensible that no acts of mine as an individual have merited it. I shall regard the presentation of this testimonial as an evidence of your attachment to the cause I have the honor to represent, and of your devotion to our common country. It shall ever serve as an additional memento, if one were needed, to remind me of the pleasant days passed among you, and of the loyalty of your citizens, to whom I am already greatly indebted for many kindnesses. It shall be sacredly preserved and I hope no act of mine will ever disgrace it or cause you to regret of your generosity. I am a man of action, gentleman, and I know you will in these times particularly, excuse a lengthy speech from me, it not being a soldier's vocation. Imagine all a grateful heart could prompt the most eloquent to utter, and you will have the correct idea of my feelings."

As Col. Good concluded his short speech of acceptance, the 47th Pennsylvania's Band struck up the tune "Bully for You" which was received with "cheer after cheer". Several more speeches were made, among others, one by Mr. Boynton from Missouri, in which he said he hoped the cannon and sword would soon be made into plow shares and pruning hooks.

"Mr Maloney made the Presentation Speech which was very good, the Col responding in a neat, concise and appropriate manner. Different speakers were called up and made a few remarks amongst them I noticed District Attorney Boynton, who spoke in a very pleasing manner and to the point, making a very loyal speech. General Woodbury also made a few remarks, mentioning that Col Good could well be proud of the honor conferred on him, by the Citizens of Key West. Capt

Temple, of the Navy also made a very pithy address. I noticed conspicuous amongst the group, Admiral Bailey, who also was called to speak, but he managed to keep quiet. Three cheers were then given for Col Good, the Regt, Genl Woodbury, Admiral Bailey, Dist Atty Boynton, the Ladies of Key West, Mr Maloney & others, the Band at intervals playing."

After "Mr Maloney made the concluding speech, and proposed to retire, the Col then buckled on his new sword, sash & belt, and at the head of the Regt, the Band playing 'Bully for Us', they marched to the Fort, Cos B & D to the U.S. Barracks."

"The band then played several more National airs; cheers were given for the Union, President Lincoln, Army and Navy, Gen. Woodbury, Adm. Bailey, etc." and the meeting adjourned and the men marched through the streets and to their different quarters, worn out from the ceremony and the heat.

"The affair passed off very pleasantly, the streets were decorated with flags, and the crowd of citizens, soldiers & sailors was immense."

The sword was described at the regiment's reunion in 1915 as "a handsome sword with heavy gold hilt and scabbard, red sash and dress belt. On the sword is inscribed: 'The citizens of Key West, Florida to Col. T.H. Good, 47th Penn. Vols., in appreciation of his merit as a gentleman and a soldier, April 1863.'" The date probably related to the time of purchase, which may have been in April as other information seems to indicate.

Mr. Roberts of Allentown recorded the event sixty years later in writing "The presentation was made in Clinton Square...After the sword had been presented and received, the citizens joined hands and sang a paraphrase of a popular song, 'Bully for that, Col. Good has got the sword. Bully for that! Bully for that!'"

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

# The Newport Naval Academy Class of 1864,

By CDR Earle N. Trickey

The 1898 War with Spain was very naval-oriented. The ability to control waterways, to attack or defend coastal positions, and to move troops and supplies over sea lanes determined nearly all the moves in the war by both sides. Such abilities cannot be quickly purchased, but must be developed over time, with successes and failures, by leaders of talent and integrity.

For the U.S. Navy in 1898, that line of talent and integrity extended back to, at least, the Civil War. The young officers who had served with Porter on the western rivers, at Mobile Bay with Farragut, and with the blockaders at a hundred gulfs and bayous, were now commissioning the new battleships and holding positions of substantial influence.

To summarize earlier events: the Naval Academy classes of 1861, 1862 and 1863 were ordered to active duty in the spring of 1861, and the Naval Academy was moved to Newport, Rhode Island. The class of 1864 (the "Newport" class) graduated in two sections, in May and September of 1863. No further graduation took place until November of 1864.

There were fifty graduates of the class of '64-1 fourteen died on active duty, twenty-three were on the active list in February of 1898, and twenty-one eventually retired as admirals. (In 1898 only about thirty men remained on the active list from all previous classes) The "Newport" USNA class of 1864 held the commands and the offices where history could be made to a degree seldom equaled by any USNA class, before or since.

As the Good Witch said, "It's always best to start at the beginning." Let that be U.S.S. **Maine**, sometime armored cruiser, sometime second-class battleship, with four ten-inch guns, originally designed with three masts and square sails. The first captain was Arent Schuyler Crowninshield, '64. The second (and last) captain was Charles Sigsbee, '64. The story of **Maine** may never be completed to the satisfaction of all, but it led to war. So the significant achievements and contributions of other members of the "Newport" class of 1864 are here listed in the order shown in the Register of Alumni.

Henry Glass was the first CO of **Cincinnati**, first CO of **Texas**, and boldly captured Guam in **Charleston**. P.H. Cooper



*The gravestone of Lieutenant Commander Arthur H. Wright in the Battleship Maine Plot in the Key West Cemetery. Photo credit: Tom Hambright.*

was captain of **San Francisco** in 1894, then USNA Superintendent, and took command of **Chicago** in 1898. Henry Taylor succeeded A. T. Mahan ('59) at the Naval War College in 1893 and commanded **Indiana** at Santiago. George Wadleigh (a veteran of the Jeannette Search Expedition) was the first CO of the new **Minneapolis** and then commanded the Boston Navy Yard. Frank Wildes was CO **Yorktown** '91 to '93 and commanded **Boston** at Manila Bay.

Joseph B. Coghlan was CO **Raleigh** at Manila Bay and subsequently commanded **Olympia** and **Brooklyn**. He had served in the old **Brooklyn** in his youth. James H. Sands was CO **Columbia** in '96, then took over command of **Minneapolis** (and was Superintendent USNA in 1905-07). Yates Stirling had commanded **Dolphin** and the cruiser **Newark** but was on "board duties" during the war. (See the classes

of 1892 and 1926 for Stirling Jr. and III.)

Monitors were prominent in the war. Captain W. C. Wise was the first CO of **Amphitrite** (4 10-inch rifles), then commanded **Texas** and during the war had the big auxiliary cruiser **Yale** (ex-**City of Paris**, 10,000 tons). The first CO of monitor **Terror** (sister ship of above) was Purnell F. Harrington, who had command of the larger monitor **Puritan** (four 12-inch guns) during the war.

Robley Evans, surely a well-known figure, commanded **Yorktown** in 1891, making a rapid westward passage of the Strait of Magellan during the Chilean crisis. He was commissioning captain of **Indiana** and had **Iowa** at Santiago. Among the last of the "Newport" class to retire, he is best known for commanding the Great White Fleet on the first leg of that around-the-world cruise in 1907.

Nicoll Ludlow commanded monitor





*The Naval Strategy Board meeting in Washington. From the left Capt. A.T. Mahan, Capt. A.S. Crowninshield, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long and Rear Admiral Montgomery Sicard. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

**Monterey** in 1896 and **Terror** during the war. (His brother was a general under Shafter in the Cuban campaign.) Francis A. Cook put the armored cruiser **Brooklyn** in commission and held that command right through the battle of Santiago, Colby Chester was Commandant at USNA 1891-94, then CO **Newark** and was captain of **Cincinnati** during the search for Cervera and the blockade but missed the battle at Santiago. Charles E. Clark (in **Ossipee** at the battle of Mobile Bay) won fame in bringing **Oregon** around South America to play a prominent part at Santiago.

C. J. Barclay, who had previously commanded **Raleigh**, was CO of the monitor **Amphitrite**, conducting shore bombardments of the Cuban and Puerto Rican coasts and even sent a landing party ashore to capture an important coastal position. Charles V. Gridley had a long and honorable career, from **Oneida** at Mobile Bay to **Olympia** at Manila Bay, and his moment of fame there must be his memorial, for he died but a few weeks later. Richard P. Leary was the first commanding officer of the ram **Katahdin** and he had the cruiser **San Francisco** during the war. William H. Whiting had been aboard **Hartford** at Mobile Bay in 1864; 1897 found him in command of the monitor **Monadnock** on the west coast, from whence he sailed it across the Pacific Ocean to Manila in 1898. He subsequently commanded cruisers **Charleston** and **Boston**.

Returning to the top of the list, Arent Crowninshield became the head of the

Bureau of Navigation in 1897, responsible for training and assignment of personnel and making recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy for all the important appointments of officers. He became one of the three members of the wartime Naval Strategy Board which advised the Secretary and President McKinley. The other members were the retired Mahan and the ailing RADM Montgomery Sicard (class of '55).

Captain Sigsbee, after the **Maine** hearings, took command of the auxiliary cruiser **St. Paul**, an ocean liner of 15,000 tons capable of 22 knots and hastily armed with a half-dozen 5-inch guns. **St. Paul** spent the war in scouting duties, blockading the Cuban and Puerto Rican coasts and targeting small warcraft and shore batteries.

To summarize the commands and achievements of the class of '64:

Of the six battleships in the U.S. Navy in 1898, five were, or had been, commanded by '64. (It would be six, shortly.)

Of Dewey's six warships at the battle of Manila Bay, half were commanded by '64.

Of the five big-gun ships that destroyed Cervera's squadron at Santiago, four were commanded by '64.

Of the four big-gun monitors employed in the shore bombardments, three were commanded by '64 (and one of two in the Pacific).

Of the nine cruisers armed with eight-inch guns, the USNA class of 1864 com-

manded seven.

The "bottom line" here is that the class of 1864 was in the right place at the right time. From Newport to Santiago and Manila Bay was a journey of thirty-five years; years on distant duty stations; long cruises with moments of crisis and peril; years of dull shore duty; deep in bureaucracy in yards and depots; years of expeditions to the arctic or the tropics in vessels unsuitable for such purposes; years of aging ships and congressional neglect. Then, a generation after Mobile Bay, the beginning of the New Navy, the navy of steel and steam.

The class of 1864 (and others, of course) rose to the challenge. There was a long history of devotion to duty, adaptability to change, and loyalty up and down. They had, for years, worked to develop reliable and competent crews in conditions where the men were not particularly well paid, not well-treated ashore, and consisted of a high percentage of non-English speaking immigrants, refugees from all over the world, and men not using their correct names. May the nation always be so fortunate in finding leaders like the class of 1864.

In Key West next to the rows of some two dozen or more dead from U.S.S. **Maine**, stands a gravestone dedicated to Lieutenant Commander Arthur H. Wright, USNA class of 1864, died 5 November, 1881. Whether by plan or not, how symbolic it is that his memorial may keep watch over his classmate's men!

# Frederick Douglass Visits Key West

**RADM Robert W. Elliott, Jr., USN  
(Ret)**

On Tuesday January 17, 1871 Frederick Douglass one of America's most distinguished African-American orators and journalists began a journey which would eventually bring him to the island of Key West.

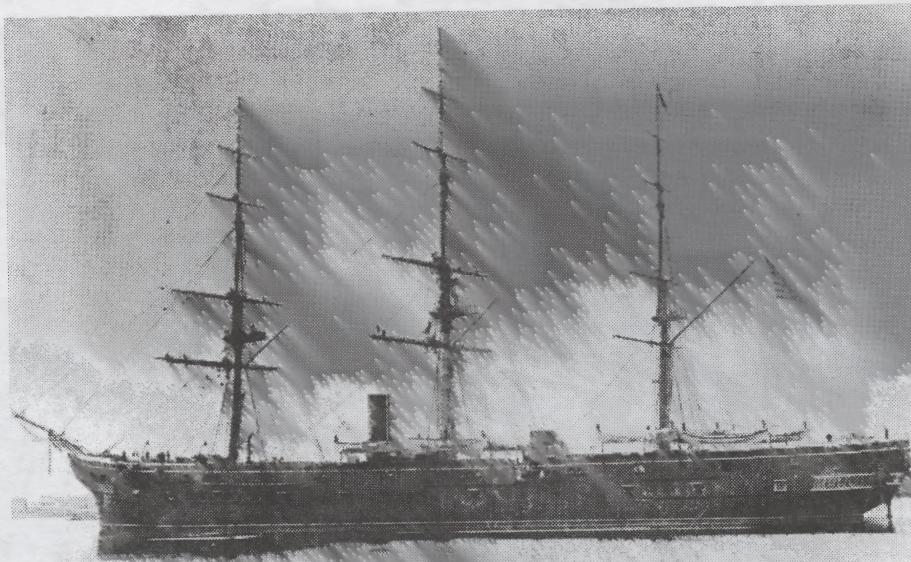
Douglass, born a slave named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, changed his name to Frederick Douglass at the suggestion of a friend. In 1845 to 1847 he lectured in England, Ireland and Scotland enlisting the sympathies of the citizens in those countries with the abolitionist cause in America. A sum of 150 Pounds Sterling was raised in Britain to secure his legal manumission (freedom from slavery) so that he did not need to fear a return to slavery under the Fugitive Slave law when coming back to the United States. He was a free man.

In the Late 1860s a treaty was negotiated for the annexation of Santo Domingo, now the Dominican Republic, to the United States. It was approved by the Santo Domingo Senate but rejected by the U.S. Government. President Grant, who was in favor of the annexation, appointed an investigative commission to go to the island. Douglass was named Assistant Secretary of The Santo Domingo Commission.

The Log of the U.S.S. *Tennessee* Commanded by William G. Temple, USN, records that on January 17, 1871, during the forenoon watch, 8 A. M. to Meridian, "... gentlemen comprising the members and attachire of the U. S. Commission to Santo Domingo came on board." A 15 gun salute was fired.

The party comprised 36 men and included Douglass, botanists, paleontologists, geologists, mineralogists, artists, draftsmen, naturalists, and chemists. The importance of the Commission can be attested to by the fact that accompanying the Commission were journalists from the N.Y. Tribune, N.Y. Herald, N.Y. World, N.Y. Standard, Washington Republic, Cincinnati Commercial, Baltimore American, and the Philadelphia Ledger.

The ship on which they sailed was the third to be named *Tennessee*. Originally she was the U.S. S. *Madawaska* a steam frigate laid down in 1863 and renamed *Tennessee* on 15 May, 1869.



*Top: USS Tennessee. Photo credit: U.S. Naval Institute. Bottom: Frederick Douglass left and the members of the Santo Domingo Commission on the deck of the Tennessee in Key West harbor. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

The Ship with the Commission aboard got under way at 12:45 P.M. on 17 January and anchored in the outer passage, Samana Bay in Santo Domingo at 2:00 P.M. January 24, 1871. The passage had taken one week. During the Commission's stay, the ship's log states that they were visited, on 28 January aboard *Tennessee*, by the Governor and the Commanding General of the Country during the forenoon watch.

Leaving the Dominican Republic for Key West, *Tennessee* with the Santo Domingo Commission, including Douglass, aboard arrived in Key West at 3:00 P.M., 21 March 1871. *Tennessee's* log states that on arrival in Key West she exchanged numbers with U.S. S. *Severn* and fired a 13 gun salute to Rear Admiral Lee, USN who was flying his flag in *Severn*. In return,

*Severn* fired a 7 gun salute. *Tennessee* went alongside the wharf to coal at 5:00 P.M. that day.

At 11:55 A.M., 23 March, *Tennessee* commenced getting underway from Key West arriving in New York Harbor on April 1, 1871. The voyage and mission having taken seventy one days.

The log entry for the forenoon watch stated in part, "... at 9:20 Anchored off quarantine landing... Wed fires in three boilers. All the passengers left the ship..."

As might have been suspected, the Commission returned with a report favoring annexation. It was ignored by the U.S. Senate which showed no interest in reviving the issue thus ending the possibility of the United States annexing Santo Domingo.

(Hurricane from page 1)

east.

8. I visited the Air Station, Hospital and the Naval Station and saw that such preparations had been made as were possible. At that time the sea wall at the Air Station was being washed away and the small boats appeared to be in danger of breaking up if the weather became much heavier. The velocity of the wind was then 66 knots an hour, as taken by the Commanding Officer in my presence.

9. At the Hospital some of the roof covering on the large building, had been blown away and steps were being taken to protect the roof and prevent further damage in the wards.

10. During the afternoon on Tuesday the SS **Comal** arrived in port from the westward and secured to pier. By 4:00 P.M. the wind was blowing with hurricane force with heavy rain squalls from the northeast. The tin and tiles of roofs were being torn away, and had become a menace to people in the street. A large amount of destruction to trees and shrubs had taken place.

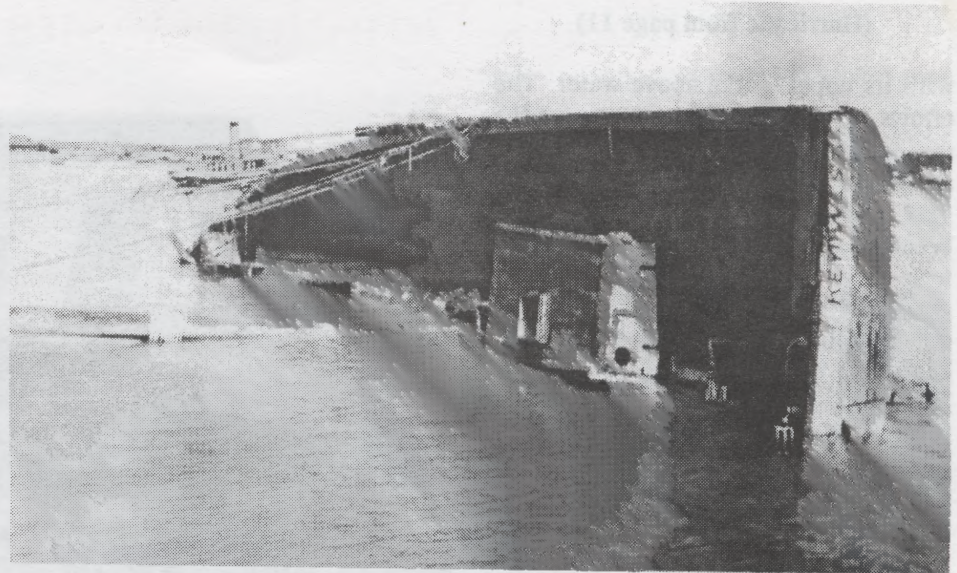
11. The communication with the Distant Control Station was lost about 4:30 P.M.; also with Air Station through City telephone circuit. An effort was made to establish communication with the **Tuscarora** and **Wheeling** to ascertain how shipping at moorings were riding out the gale. Dr. P.E. Garrison visited the Yard to secure lanterns as the Electric Plant was expected to stop producing current.

12. Information was received about 4:00 P.M. that the patrol boats moored near the Air Station were in trouble. On passing these boats about 11:00 A.M. when the wind was blowing 66 knots, the boats were riding perfectly safely and appeared to be in safe place.

13. About 4:00 P.M. the Marine Officer reported that word had been received from the Martello Tower that the water was rising in the tower. The question of withdrawing the magazine guard was discussed and decided the guard should remain.

14. During the evening the wind increased with velocity received by the Air Station as 84 knots an hour about 8:00 o'clock before the instrument was blown away.

15. At 4:55 P.M. received information from the Hospital that the roofing was blown away and buildings leaking badly, but that the patients were being taken care of and no injury to personnel. The Medical



*Wreckage in Key West harbor after the hurricane. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

Officer was directed to care for any civilians who applied for help. Communication with the Weather Bureau was lost during the evening and all communications thereafter were received by messenger.

16. At 8:00 P.M. information from the Weather Bureau was received that it was expected the storm center would pass over Key West between 8:00 and midnight, and possibly north of the city. Communication with the Yard telephone service was lost during the evening and the Yard telephone service was in general out of commission after 8:00 P.M. except the line between Commandant's house and Central which continued up to 2:00 A. M. One message was received from the **Tuscarora** during the evening.

17. The wind increased with terrific force from the northeast until a little after midnight when it hauled to the eastward and reaching its maximum force between 1:00 and 2:00 o'clock, blowing from the east. During the time from midnight until 3:00 o'clock the atmosphere was very clear with little or no rain, preceding this time the rain was very heavy.

18. The tug **Alex Brown** was secured at the water front inside "B" Coal Pier with line to the deck and anchor down, steaming ahead until Wednesday morning when the wind worked to southward and became it necessary to send her for shelter to the basin near the Florida East Coast wharves. The tug **Clark** had her engines disabled but was secured near the **Alex Brown** and held on there very well until morning when she was hauled close up in the basin and rode out the gale. A covered barge had

been secured ahead of the **Clark** but broke away during the night in spite of efforts made to prevent it, and lodged in the corner between the coal shed and the pier, destroying a boat lying there and the platform between the pier, doing a little damage to the pier and some damage to herself but remained afloat with stores on board. Some small boats that had been secured here were found capsized in the morning and still afloat bottom up.

19. On the morning it was discovered that the Mallory Steamship **Comal** had been blown from the Mallory dock and was aground on Frankford Bank. The S.S. **War Jandoli** had dragged her anchor and blown on Kingfish Shoal and was lying in sixteen feet of water with a draft of twenty-six feet. The **USS Wheeling** had dragged and in the morning was found close by the S.S. **Comal**, having collided with that ship during the night. The wind and seas were still too strong to send boats out to investigate damage to other boats, but during the afternoon, the Subchaser No. 320 under Lieutenant Jas. Roberts went out to remove the men from the Dredge "Grampus" which was sunk on the south end of Frankford Bank. This dredge on the evening before the gale broke, had been moored close to the shore off the Marine Hospital with its poles sunk in the bottom and dipper down, but it was torn loose at the height of the gale and swept across the harbor and sunk in about 16 feet of water. The other dredge of the Company engaged, in removing the Southern end of Frankford Bank was sunk on the bank

(Continued on page 12)

(Hurricane from page 11)

with its upper works above water. The efforts of Subchaser No 320 to get the men were frustrated by heavy rain squalls and the heavy sea.

20. Received the following messages on Wednesday afternoon:

Sept. 10, 1919.

Radio SS **Comal** 1:15 PM date

TO: Mallory SS Company, Key West, Fla.

**Comal** on bottom, both anchors out, all cabins, saloons and staterooms flooded. Ship very badly damaged. Get passengers ashore tonight at any cost

/s/ E E Curry Master."

"**Wheeling**

To: Commandant Seventh Naval District, Key West, Fla.

**Wheeling** anchor chains badly entangled with chains and with propeller of Mallory Steamer **Comal**. Both ships considerably damaged. Request tug as soon as weather moderates to take **Wheeling** to dock unshackling and leaving chains buoyed. **Wheeling** strained and starboard engine disabled, also **Wheeling** strikes bottom on swells 13010.

**WHEELING"**

21. The tug **Alex Brown** under Chief Boatswain William E. Barrows was sent to the S.S. **Comal** and brought in the passengers; after completing this duty the failure of the S.C. No.320 made it necessary for the tug to go to the "**Grampus**". On arriving there a motor boat sent out by the Porter Dock Company with Mr. Dexter Dorgan in charge was found taking off the survivors, but the clutch of the boat was gone and it was fortunate that this brave deed was saved from adding other casualties. One man of the crew of the Dredge died from exposure. An Inspection of the harbor where the moorings were located showed that few vessels were still at the moorings. The seven S.C. Boats secured alongside the Florida East Coast Railway Docks were uninjured. The **Raven III**, S.P.103 which had anchored near by had been sunk by a drifting boat of larger size. The water front was literally covered with the wreckage of small craft in this basin. The Lighthouse Tender **Ivy** slipped her anchors and came into the East Coast Dock during this afternoon. The Mine Planter "**Schofield**" also went alongside the same docks. After the return of the **Alex Brown** from the "**Grampus**" nothing more was done. The exhaustion of all men was

Porter Dock Douglass Visits Key West



A house wrecked by the hurricane. Photo credit: Monroe County Library

marked and rest was essential. Permission was given to bring the Marines in from the Martello Tower as the floor of their quartets was under water. During Wednesday - Thursday night word was received of the grounding of the **Lake Conway** near Tortugas and that she had two injured men on board. Lieut. Jas. Roberts in Subchaser No. 320 with Past Assistant Surgeon R. U. Whiteside, left Key West at 3:20 A.M. on Thursday for the grounded ship, returning during the evening with the injured men and part of the crew, the remainder remaining by their ship.

22. The sea and wind permitting, Thursday forenoon was started a systematic search to account for all craft, and make an estimate of damage done by the storm. The difficulty of securing a small boat that would run, delayed action, as well as unsettled weather. The **USS Wheeling** and **USCG Tuscarora** came to Navy Yard Docks. The **Tuscarora** had not sustained any damage, but while returning to the Yard stopped to assist the **Wheeling** and picked up a chain and line in her propeller. The **Wheeling** was also assisted by the **Alex Brown** to the coal pier, both propellers being foul. The port side was badly torn up by the collision with the **Comal**. Yard Officers were sent aboard to report the repairs necessary. The report being made that the Yard facilities were insufficient to admit of making the repairs; recommendation was made to the Department that she go to another Station. The search

for the floating craft showed as follows:

- VESSELS MISSING
- Kangaroo** S.P. 1284, drifted to sea — \$11,000
- Sea Hawk** S.P. 2365, drifted to sea — \$11,000
- Katherine K**, S.P. 220 drifted to sea — \$1,000
- Motor Sailor #4** drifted to sea — \$1,800

VESSELS WRECKED AT NORTH BEACH BASIN

- Mary Pope** S.P. 291 Wrecked and sunk — \$3,500
- Sylvia** S.P. 471 Wrecked and sunk — \$1,500
- Patrol #1**, S.P. 45 Wrecked and sunk — \$1,800
- Zig Zag** S.P. 106 Wrecked and sunk — \$2,500
- Helena** S.P. 24 Wrecked and sunk — \$900
- Traveler** S.P. 129 Wrecked and sunk — \$4,000
- St. Sebastian** S.P. 470 Wrecked and sunk — \$1,500

**Rondo** S.P. 90 Wrecked and aground — \$1,200

DAMAGE TO OTHER VESSELS

- Raven III** S.P. 103 Sunk near F.E.C. Dock — \$2,000
- Ora** S.P. 75 Boca Grande Key aground — \$1,000
- S.C.#339 Wrecked and aground — \$10,000
- S.C.#153 Aground Frankford Banks — \$1,000

S.C. 261	Aground Frankford
Banks—\$1,000	
Zumbrota S.P. 93	Damages, general
—————\$1,000	
Panama S.P. 101	Lose of small boat
—————\$120	
Total Loss —————	\$47,820
YARD CRAFT AND C & R PROPERTY	
Tug <b>James Clark</b>	Estimated dam-
ages, cost—\$200.00	
Tug <b>Alex Brown</b>	Estimated dam-
ages, cost—\$110.00	
Fuel Oil Barge #10	Estimated damages,
cost—\$25.00	
Stevedoring Barges, Nos.64-65-66-67	
cost—\$100.00	
Coal Barge #87	Estimated damages,
cost—\$250.00	
Coal Barge #150	Missing.
Coal Barge #151	Estimated damages,
cost—\$300.00	
Coal Barge #209	Missing
Coal Barge #232	Estimated damages,
cost—\$200.00	
Coal Barge #410	Estimated damages,
cost—\$85.00	
Supply Barge #412	Estimated damages,
cost—\$550.00	
Coal Barge #413	Estimated damages, cost—\$80.00
Coal Barge #414	Estimated damages,
cost—\$100.00	
Coal Barge #409	Missing
Derrick Barge #17	Estimated dam-
ages, cost—\$75.00	
Building #21	Estimated damages,
cost—\$450.00	
C & R Buildings #78-79-So.Marine	
Railway cost \$150.00	

The K-5 was torn from her moorings by a drifting schooner and went ashore on Frankford Bank.

The **John Lawrence**, S.P. 838 dragged her moorings and was carried over a bank into deeper water and grounded on opposite side on Frankford Bank. The Coast Survey Steamer **Hydrographer** dragged her anchors, fouled the **USCG Tuscarora**, crew and records recovered, the vessel was then out adrift and drifted on Frankford Bank and grounded on other side of Northwest Channel. The foregoing was the result of three days search of the Keys and Bur rounding waters, by subchasers, patrol boats, motor boats sad pulling boats. Work was started on the K-5 and preparations made to pull on the barges.

23. The day was given up to clearing the debris about the Yard and getting down to work. The weather still unsettled with rain squalls. During the day the **El Mar**



*A building wrecked by the hurricane. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

entered port without a pilot and ran ashore inside the buoy #17. Word was received of a ship ashore on Eastern Dry Rocks that needed assistance to carry out anchors. Nothing available for this duty. The services of the Army Mine Planter was placed at disposition of the Commandant by Major Ellis, U.S.C.A. on Wednesday evening and he was requested to assist the K-5. The Commanding Officer of the K-5 was so informed and directed to take charge of the work. Thursday the tug was coaled and rested. Friday pulled on K-5, parted the hawser and Commanding Officer gave up, deciding it would be necessary to try other means. The **Alex Brown** pulled off two barges on Friday that were given to the **Comal** to assist in lightening her. On Saturday pumped out barges and other craft; started work of raising the **Raven** S.P. 103; continued search for missing, boats with hope of finding the one missing man. Sunday was given up to rest. The Yard workmen have demands at home and consider that the strain of the gale and the work to be done at home warranted this stopping of work.

24. The enlisted personnel is so reduced in numbers that it has been a case of shifting men about on chasers and small boats to secure a crew for one chaser, and the two tugs. They worked very hard with irregular meal hours, and heavy strain, and Sunday rest was necessary.

25. The hurricane has been pronounced by the Weather Bureau officials as the most

violent on record, due to the length of time it blew.

26. The chief defects were the lose of communication by telephone by radio; the very few men available for the boats; the absence of a sea-going tug; the failure to secure the floating craft to moorings sufficiently when preparing for the hurricane; the character of the roof material used and lack of proper securing for doors and windows.

27. On Wednesday orders were given to take on all laborers possible, to be employed in straightening out the grounds and vessels, not only because of the need of men but to induce the men in the streets to work. The Mayor and City Solicitor called on the Commandant on Thursday and requested use of trucks for clearing up the city. Two were sent out on Friday and thereafter all trucks that were not in use; the city to pay drivers. The regular Yard force of employees other than laborers, was continued on Yard work in order not to draw on the men available for repairs to houses in the city. The Commissary was opened to civilians during the days when communication was shut off and the fact advertised. The Western Union Telegraph Office, the Weather Bureau and Marine Hospital were supplied with current, until the city plant was in operation. The Telephone Company was furnished a Delco Set to charge their

(Continued on page 14)

(Hurricane from page 13)

batteries while the city current was off.

28. The work done by the subchasers of the District and the Cruiser Squadron is deserving of special mention, as without them much injury to life and property would have resulted. Monday night the S.C. 203 in command of Ensign H.P. Clark placed a pilot on board British Tanker **War Jandoli**; no pilot boat would go out. Thursday the S.C. 320 Lieut. Roberts and S.C. 203 Ensign Clark, searched surrounding waters for missing boats. Friday the S.C. 104 left at 3:40 A.M. went to Tortugas on urgent call from Shipping Board ship **Lake Winona**, brought back injured men and part of crew. Ensign E.T. Anger in **Wheeling's** motor sailer proceeded to Sand Key to render any assistance needed. Mr. Boyer, Head of Weather Bureau Service accompanied the party. S.C. 145, Boatswain H.J. Messier and R.F. Lord engaged in attempting to pull S.C. 153 and S.C. 261 off bank; these searched for S.P. 2365 At 5:30 proceeded to assistance of S.S. **John G. Weller** off Sand Key, put pilot on board and brought off wounded man. No pilot boat would run. Saturday S.C. 203 Ensign Clark, Roberts and Knickerbocker, scouting about Marquesas Key. S.C. 104 Boatswain Hill made trip to Tortugas and assisted the S.S. **Lake Winona**. S.C. 70, Ensign E.T. Auer and Boatswain W.H. Klaproth proceeded to assistance of barge **Monangahela** anchored to southward of Rebecca Shoal, barge had been picked up by Standard Oil Tug from Tampa. The work done by these officers and the pick up crews was excellent, and showed not only readiness and courage, but an adaptability that was remarkable.

29. Of the officers in command of the various activities on shore, Lieut. Comdr. C.P. Mason at the Air Station and Lieut. Comdr. P.E. Garrison at the Naval Hospital, their work was excellent and their commands worked with great efficiency. At the Naval Station Lieut. Chas. Morgan was of very great assistance being about and overseeing necessary work. Boatswain C.L. Bailey did excellent work in looking out for craft at the water front during the height of the hurricane. Lieut. Comdr. George B. Graham returned to the Power Plant about 8:00 P.M. Tuesday evening and kept the plant in operation during the night and was a sure stay all the following day. He and his men are deserving of great commendation. Gun-



*Buildings on the waterfront destroyed by the hurricane. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

ner L.M. Hinchee remained at the Communication Office all the night and kept communication open as long as it was humanly possible. Chief Boatswain W. E. Burrows in command of the tug **Alex Brown**, was a wonder of patient endurance under strain, and courage in taking passengers off the S.S. **Comal** and the crew off the Dredge "**Grampus**". His skill saved his tug, and his work during the days following the hurricane was the salvation of the situation. I request that the Department send him and his brave crew a letter of commendation. I have written a letter to each of the officers mentioned and directed that where they had subordinates, to whom special credit was due, in assisting them, that a copy should be attached to their record, certified by him, as deserving of this testimony to their work. A District Order has been issued expressing my opinion of the whole work. The hearty cooperation of all, civilian and Naval personnel, has been worthy of grateful commendation on my part, as Commandant of the District.

Benton C. Decker

## Meteorology Report of the Storm

The storm that passed Over Key West on September 9 and 10 was without question, the most violent experienced since records at this station began. While the minimum barometric reading, 28.81 inches was not as low as that recorded in 1909 (28.52), and in 1910 (28.47), the violence of the wind was undoubtedly greater. It is to be regretted that owing to the vibrations of the tower supporting the wind instruments the anemometer cups were shaken loose and blown away at 7:30 p.m.

on the 9th in gusts ranging between 75 and 80 allow an hour, and thence on, until 3:35 p.m. of the 10th the wind-velocity record was lost. The wind-vane was blown away at 12:45 a.m. of the 10th during the winds of greatest intensity, and at 3:16 a.m. the collector of the recording rain-gage was blown off and the door forced open. The thermometer shelter held and temperature data are unbroken. In estimating the lost data great care has been taken, and advantage has been taken of notes made throughout the storm, and further advantage taken of the fact that the official in charge has experienced five hurricanes. Which enables him to make a fairly accurate comparison. The first warning was received on the 8th at 9:55 a.m.

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"Hoist northeast storm warning ten a.m. Jupiter to Key West and at Ft. Myers, Florida. Disturbance near or over south-western Bahamas apparently moving west northwest. Strong northeast winds Monday, and will probably increase to gale force. Advise great caution until further advices later in the day."

Storm warnings were immediately displayed, and the information disseminated.

At 1:05 p.m. the following was received:

"Change to Hurricane Warnings one p.m. Jupiter to Key West. Delayed report from Nassau: Barometer 20.46 and wind 56 miles from the northeast. Storm center will probably reach South Florida coast tonight attended by dangerous northeast winds. Caution all vessels to avoid the Florida Straits, and the east Florida coast until further advices."

Hurricane warnings were immediately displayed and the information disseminated by every available means. The response to this warning was immediate and there followed a period of great activity, especially as regards shipping. Vessels were moved to safer anchorage or better secured, and all weak places in residences and buildings of all descriptions were strengthened as much as possible by nailing and battening doors, windows, roof-hatches, etc. In the terrific gusts that prevailed during the height of the storm stanch brick structures had walls blown out, and large vessels, firmly secured, were torn from their fastenings or moorings and blown on the banks. Notwithstanding the great loss, estimated at \$2,000,000, the official in charge has been the recipient of many congratulations on the splendid service rendered by the Bureau.

Owing to the very slow progressive movement of the storm in this vicinity winds of gale force and over lasted continuously from about 7 a.m. of the 9th to about 9:30 a.m. of the 10th. The apex of the hurricane was reached on the 10th at midnight when the center, moving slowly west-northwest, was south of and nearest the station. The center when at its nearest point was probably about 30 or 40 miles distant. Following is an hourly tabulation covering the period during which winds of gale force prevailed:

Time	Barometer	Wind	Rain
7 a.m.	29.61	NE 36	Lt. rain
8 a.m.	29.61	NNE 38	Lt. rain
9 a.m.	29.58	N 36	Threatening
10 a.m.	29.56	NNE 39	Lt. rain

11 a.m.	29.54	NE 40	Lt. rain
12 a.m.	29.50	NE 37	Lt. rain
1 p.m.	29.46	NE 42	Lt. rain
2 p.m.	29.40	NE 44	Mod. rain
3 p.m.	29.31	NE 48	Mod. rain
4 p.m.	29.27	NE 50	Mod. rain
5 p.m.	29.23	NE 54	Mod. rain
6 p.m.	29.13	NE 58	Mod. rain
7 p.m.	29.08	NE 58	Heavy rain
8 p.m.	29.05	NE 70	Heavy rain
9 p.m.	28.99	NE 80*	Heavy rain
10 p.m.	28.97	NE 85*	Heavy rain
11 p.m.	28.93	NE 90*	Heavy rain
12 mid	28.81	E 105*	Heavy rain

Sept. 10.

1 a.m.	28.90	E 110*	Heavy rain
2 a.m.	28.96	E 100*	Heavy rain
3 a.m.	29.02	E 90*	Heavy rain
4 a.m.	29.07	E 85*	Heavy rain
5 a.m.	29.13	SE 80*	Heavy rain
6 a.m.	29.20	SE 70*	Heavy rain
7 a.m.	29.26	SE 70*	Heavy rain
8 a.m.	29.35	SE 70*	Heavy rain
9 a.m.	29.39	SE 60*	Lt. rain
10 a.m.	29.44	SE 55*	Lt. rain
11 a.m.	29.46	SE 50*	Lt. rain
12 a.m.	29.50	SE 48*	Lt. rain
1 p.m.	29.53	SE 48*	Lt. rain
2 p.m.	29.52	S 45*	Lt. rain
3 p.m.	29.56	S 40*	Lt. rain
4 p.m.	29.57	S 40*	Lt. rain

From the forenoon of the 9th squalls of wind and rain progressively increased in force and frequency, culminating in terrific gusts of great violence between midnight of the 9th and 2 a.m. of the 10th. As the storm's center slowly receded into the Gulf of Mexico to the Westward the squall and gusts gradually became less violent and of less frequency. The usual phenomena preceding, accompanying, and following storms of tropical origin were present in this one; and while no thunder was heard diffused lightning was noted at intervals for several hours before the maximum force was reached.

As previously stated the property loss is estimated at \$2,000,000 the air station losing about \$800,000. Probably not a structure on the island escaped being damaged more or less, the Weather Bureau building and grounds suffering quite badly. Three lives were lost by drowning.

The rainfall was extremely heavy and continuous. The loss of rainfall record is unfortunate, but from the partial record obtained and from notes made the total amount is estimated at 13.39 inches, the heaviest occurring during the early morning hours of the 10th.

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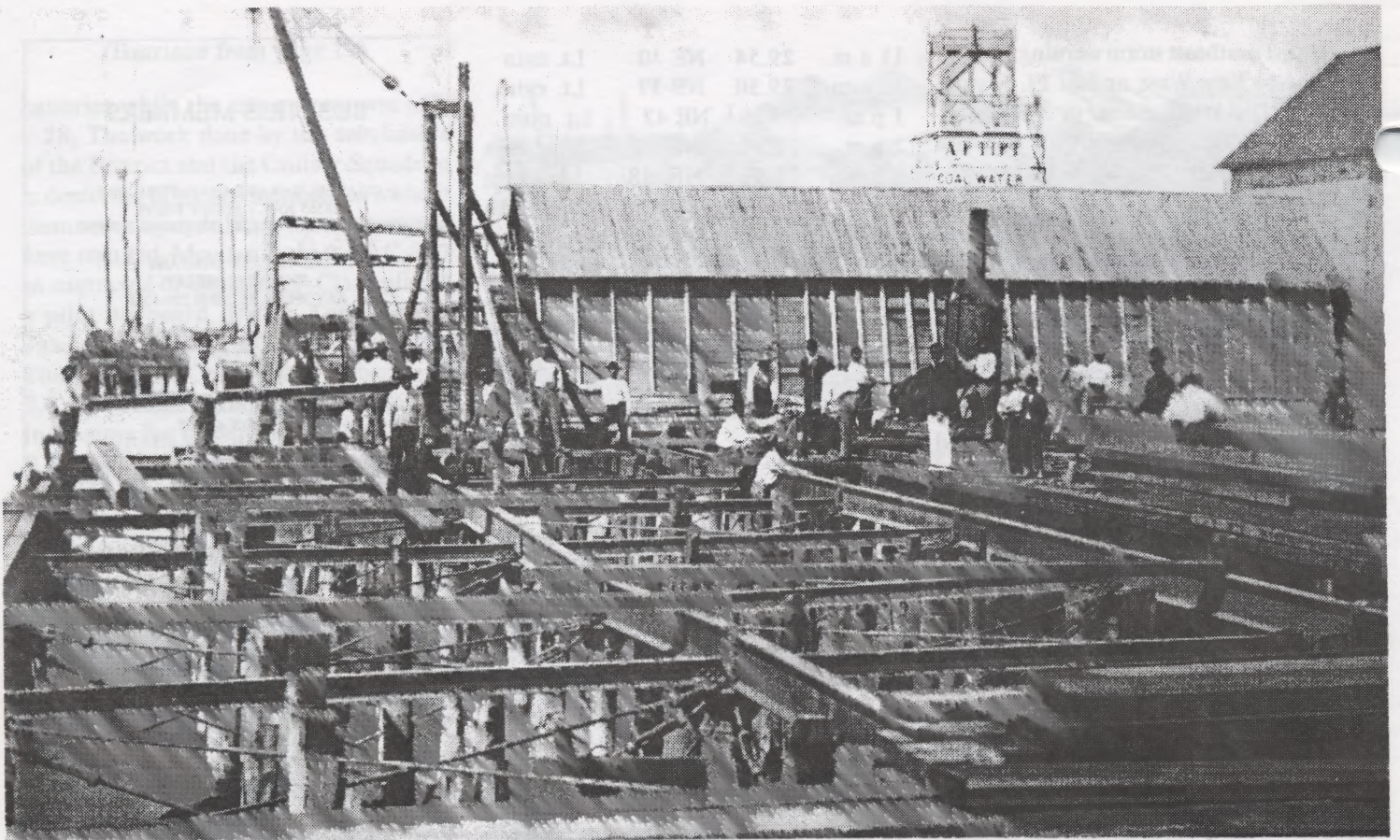
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*Lt. Robert Peary and crew building the Naval Wharf. Lt. Peary is in the dark uniform jacket and white trouser on the right. The photo is looking north to Mallory Docks. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

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