

Florida Keys

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The Florida Keys - Volume 3

The Wreckers

By John Viele
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The following text is an excerpt from John Viele's latest book "The Florida Keys Volume 3 The Wreckers" and is reprinted with permission of the publisher, Pineapple Press Inc. of Sarasota, Florida

CHAPTER 6

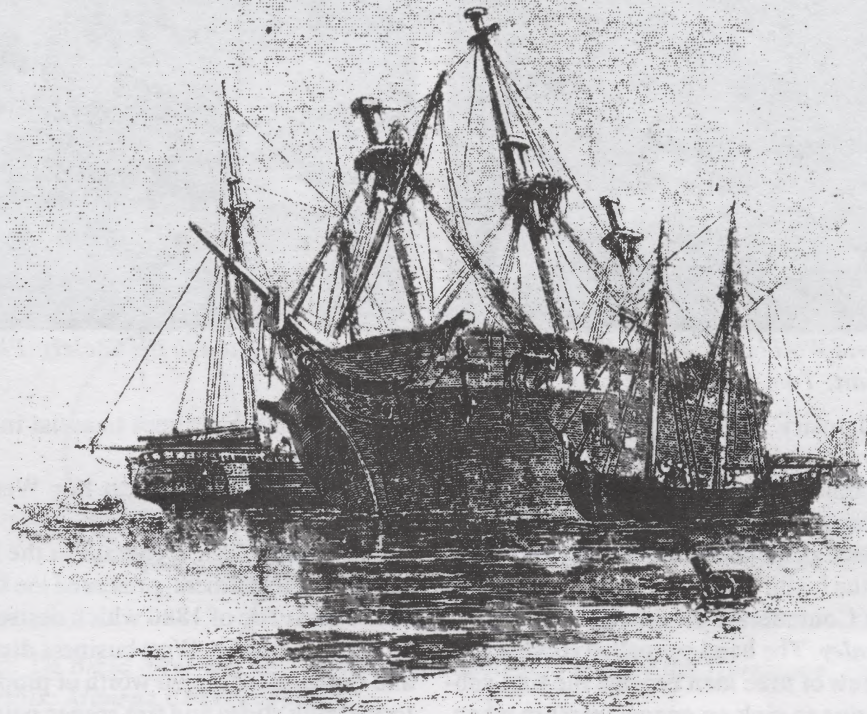
SALVAGE OPERATIONS

Wrecking Legends

Romanticized stories of Florida Keys wrecking begin with the cry "Wreck ashore!" followed by scenes of seamen dashing to the waterfront to board their vessels for a race to the site of the wreck. The fact is, Keys wreckers did not sit around in port waiting to hear news of a wreck ashore. They spent most of their time on station in areas where the incidence of wrecks was high. According to wrecking court records from 1828 to 1861, eighty-five percent of all wrecks were discovered by wrecking vessels while cruising or at anchor along the reef.

How often the cry "Wreck ashore!" was heard in Key West is debatable. If first news of a wreck was brought to Key West by a passing ship, and particularly if the wreck was a large ship requiring many wreckers to offload it, then the news would quickly circulate around town. But this was seldom the situation.

It is also true that there were lookout towers over merchants' warehouses, but few wrecks occurred within sight of Key West. In fact, out of 315 wreck sightings in pre-Civil War admiralty court records, only three were sighted from Key West. The towers were built as much for sighting incoming vessels in order to prepare to receive them or to send a boat to meet them as for sighting wrecks on the reef. The



WRECKERS AT WORK.

Wreckers at work (Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Vol. 18, 1858/59). Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

arriving vessel might bring word of sighting a wreck up the reef or it might be a vessel that had been wrecked and was in need of repairs. It is also difficult to believe that a lookout sighting a wreck off Key West would run around town broadcasting the news. It is much more likely that he would quietly pass the information to his boss, a merchant and presumably the owner of several wrecking vessels, one of which might be ready to get underway and be the first to the wreck.

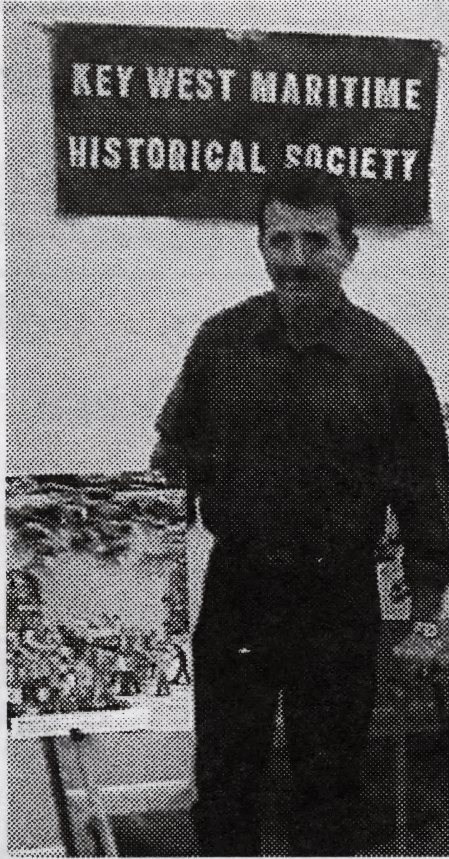
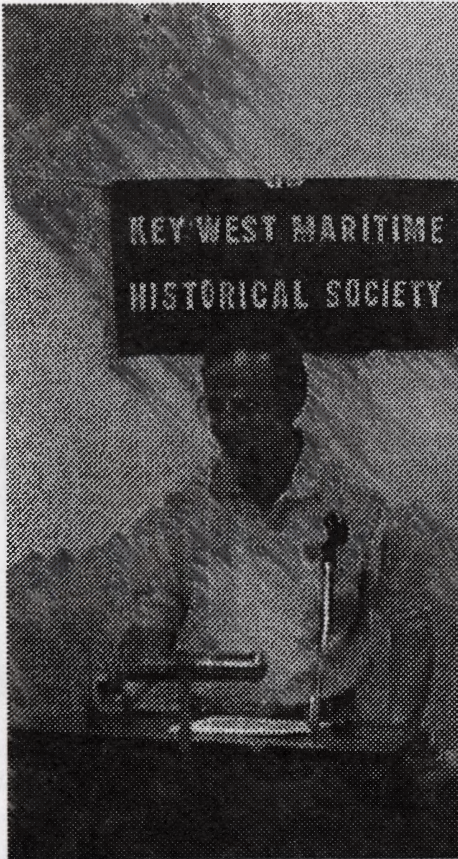
Another untrue wrecking legend is the story of unscrupulous men hoping to cause a wreck by placing false lights on shore. This simply wasn't done because it wouldn't work. Mariners are not "attracted" to lights. Quite the contrary, the sight of a light warns them that they may be standing into danger. Furthermore, for lights to be seen any distance at sea in the era of oil lanterns, they had to be specially designed and constructed, great in size

(Continued on page 10)

Society News

Lectures and Field Trips

By John Viele



David Wall left and Alex Vega right during their presentation to the Society. Photo credit: Tom Hambright.

January 22 Raising the Confederate Submarine *Hunley*

Commander David Whall USN (Ret.), a former U.S. Navy salvage diver, gave a slide presentation to society members on the history, discovery, and recovery of the Confederate submarine CSS *H. L. Hunley*. The hand-propelled *Hunley* with a crew of nine men became the first submarine to sink an enemy warship when, on February 17, 1864, she sank the Union sloop-of-war USS *Housatonic* off Charleston, S.C. In 1995, best-selling author Clive Cussler and his National Underwater Marine Agency discovered the *Hunley's* resting place. In May 2000, Commander Whall was engaged to assist in the recovery operation. The submarine was lifted from the bottom in a steel framework on August 8, 2000 and transported to the old Charleston Naval Base for archaeological examination and preservation. Com-

mander Whall continues to assist in the project.

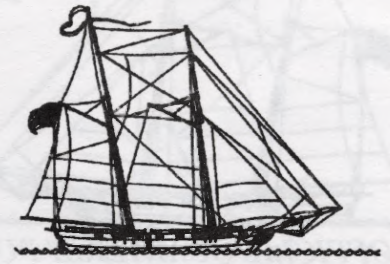
February 19 The Great Key West Fire of 1886

Alex Vega, a captain in the Key West Fire Department, presented the story of the great fire of 1886 which destroyed 50 acres of the Key West business district and caused \$3,000,000 worth of property loss. Using slides and fire scenes painted by local artist David Laughlin, Mr. Vega told what Key West looked like before the fire, the state of the fire department at the time, the spread of the fire, firefighting efforts, the aftermath, the rebuilding process, and his own theories on the fire's origin and cause. Alex Vega is a native of Key West, a graduate of Florida Keys Community College, a member of the Key West Fire Department for the past twenty-five years, and serves as Fire Department Historian.

New Members

Tony & Liz Harlacher, No Name Key; Maureen Ogle, Ames, IO; John Petzold, Key West;

Christine Spratt, Marblehead, MA; John Sundin, Key West; Carl Tedesw, Key West.



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

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Hurricane of 1910

The Hurricane of 1910 baffled forecasters and they first reported it as two separate storms. Later it was identified as a single storm that stalled near western Cuba and made a loop before passing near Key West. The weather observer at Sand Key Lighthouse did not have this information and reported it as two storms. Sand Key Lighthouse is seven miles southwest of Key West and had a separate weather bureau building until it was destroyed by the Hurricane of 1909. During the 1910 storm the weather observer was in the lighthouse. Following is the Hurricane of 1910 as recorded in the official Sand Key Weather Log.

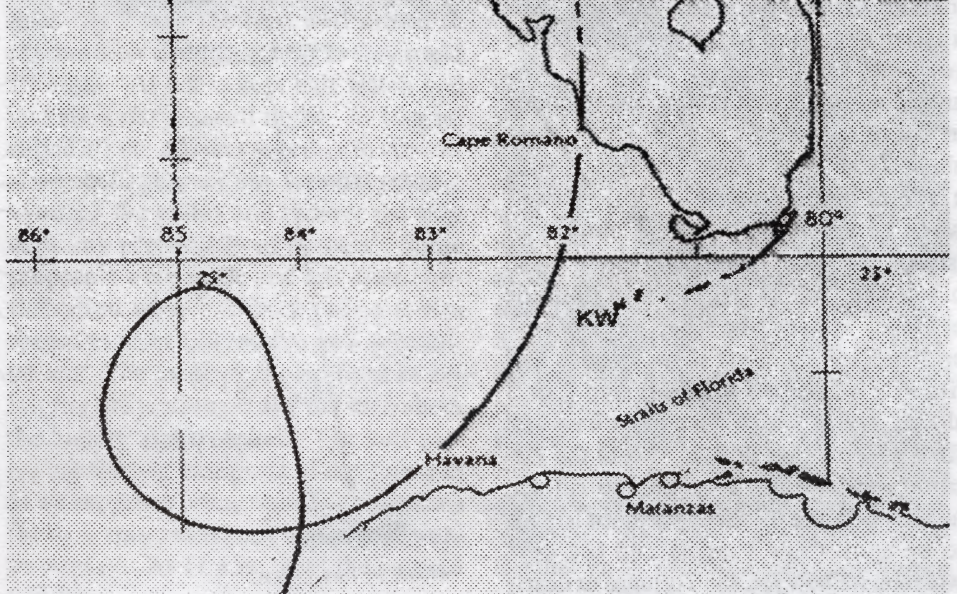
October 13. The southeast storm warning was hoisted at 2:00 P.M. today by authority of the Official in Charge at Key West.

October 14. The storm warning was changed to hurricane waning today and was kept up on the 14th and 15th and 16th.

October 18. This station was visited by two severe hurricanes on October 13th, 14th and 15th and October 17th and 18th respectively. The barometer began to fall about midnight on the 12th and fell slowly but steadily to 29.55 inches at 5 P.M. on the 14th. The wind velocity steadily increased and much rain fell. At 3:30 A.M. on the 15th waves began to wash over the island, and soon all the sand was carried from under the lighthouse and the island shifted to a position further north. At 4:50 A.M. one outhouse was washed away. The barometer remained at about 29.60 inches until 8:00 A.M. on the 16th. On the morning of the 16th the wind began to subside and several steamers passed. Hurricane warnings were kept up all day.

The barometer began to fall rapidly about midnight on the 17th and reached 28.62 inches at 12:20 P.M. It was stationary at this point for some time, only moving up and down with the violent gusts.

At noon on the 17th the wharf and woodpile were washed away and the lighthouse began to sway in the gusts. Great trouble was experienced in keeping the doors closed on the windward side, the force of the wind pulling out nails repeatedly. The waves now broke over the whole of the island, and the spray from the breaking waves was carried many feet in the air. Rain fell in torrents, making it impossible to see farther than 100 feet. The wind blew from



Top: La Brisa after the 1910 Hurricane. Bottom: Track of the Hurricane. Photo credits: Monroe County Library.

the southeast up to 1:05 P.M. when it changed to south. The wind velocity increased, and the swaying and trembling of the lighthouse stopped the clock several times. At 1:10 P.M. the dingy broke away from the lighthouse and was washed away. The boat house went to pieces soon after and was washed to sea.

At 1:30 P.M. the brick oil house broke up at 1:50 P.M. the barometer reached its lowest point, 28.40 inches. It rose quickly to 28.46 inches and continued between 28.46 and 28.50 till about 3:20 P.M. Telephone communication with Key West was broken about 2:00 P.M. At 4:30 P.M. braces at the bottom of the lighthouse began to break, and the force of the waves kept

striking them against the other iron work like sledge hammers. At 5:00 P.M. the wind shifted to the southwest.

About 3:30 P.M. the barometer began to rise slowly, but the wind continued with unabated fury until about 6:00 P.M. when it began to subside. At 4:00 A.M. on the 18th, the wind was still strong enough to shake the lighthouse, but the size of the waves was very much decreased. The moon and a few stars could be seen. At 4:00 A.M. telephone communication with Key West was resumed at 7:45 A.M.

October 20. The lighthouse tender Mangrove brought oil and wood for the lighthouse and food supplies for Observers. Mr. Johnson returned from Key West.

Log of HMS Tyger - January to May 1742 Part 2

Transcribed and annotated

By John Viele

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Part one of the Log of HMS Tyger appeared in Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal, Fall 2000

Monday, Feb. 15 D:o

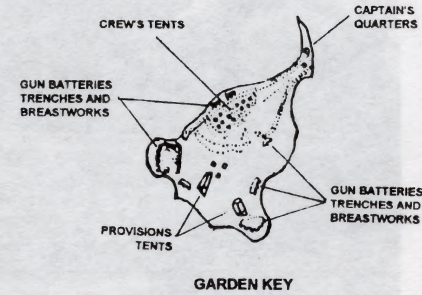
Moderate weather. At 6 p.m. the barge returned with 21 rock fish which were served to the ship's company. D:o hauled the boats up. At 4 a.m. launched the small canoe and barge and sent them a fishing. D:o sent two pettiaugres aboard to fetch the bowsprit ashore. D:o sent aboard a topmast for that purpose. At 8 a.m. saw a sail to windward which proved to be the yawl with Mr. Craeg our 2nd Lieut. who arrived about 1/2 past 10 a.m. and informed us that he had steered an ENE 1/2 E course about 35 leagues [about 105 miles] with a current running a little to the northward when he fell in with a great number of islands and upon a good observation found himself in Lat. 24 deg. 55 min. [latitude of Upper Matecumbe Key] He saw several Indians amongst these islands and likewise a Spanish schooner and 2 or 3 sloops, one of which gave him chase and fired several shot at him. From the circumstances he has been able to collect, he fully believes the forementioned islands to be upon Cape Florida and the keys whereon we now are, the Tortugas or nearly adjacent. D:o made a signal for all boats to come ashore. At 2 a.m. the bowsprit and some casks were brought ashore.

Note: Sailing master's log for Feb. 15: The 2nd Lieut.'s name is spelled "Craig."

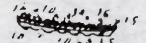
Tuesday, Feb. 16 On the Keys between the Tortugas and the Florida Shore.

Moderate gales and clear weather. At 1 p.m. the officers met in consultation. From Mr. Craeg's account of his voyage and the vessels he had seen, thought it advisable and concluded accordingly immediately to send two of our pettiaugres and barge with sixty men completely armed to attempt the taking of those vessels by reason as we believed the execution would not be attended with any insuperable difficulty and finding ourselves disappointed of the expected assistance from Providence,

DESCRIPCION DE LA FORTIFICACION

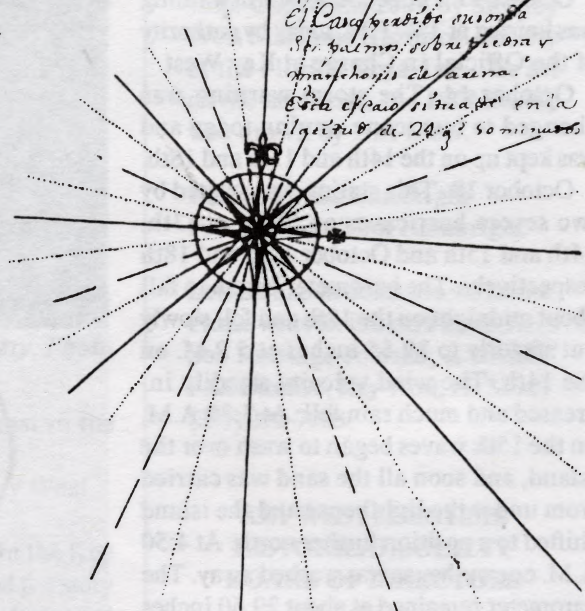


WRECK SITE -- ABOUT 1.5 MI. FROM ISLAND



WRECK OF HMS TYGER

de 2 cañones de a 10.
 B Acampamiento
 C Fortin de 3 cañones de a 10.
 D Alvaran del Com^{te}
 E Fortin de 2 cañones de a 10.
 F Fortin de 5 cañ de a 10.
 G Lugar de comida
 H Otro cañon de a 10.
 I Casas de abito
 de 2 millas
 Toda la sona es aya
 Palmas como abito
 de 2 millas de Jure
 El Casu de abito
 de 2 millas de Jure
 de 2 millas de Jure
 de 2 millas de Jure
 de 2 millas de Jure
 de 2 millas de Jure



Sketch made by the Spanish vessel after *Tyger's* crew had escaped showing wreck site and fortifications and encampment on Garden Key. From a document found in Biblioteca Nacional by treasure salvor Jack Haskins.

found ourselves under a necessity of attempting something of this kind as our provisions were so far expended that in all probability we could not wait the success of a new message with danger of being reduced to extremity. Accordingly, set to work the carpenter, sailmaker and boatswain people, all employed in fitting the barge and the two pettiaugres and rigging them with schooner sails. Ammunition, provisions and arms were got ready for 60 men including our first and second Lieutenants and the Lieut. of the Marines who were dispatched accordingly at 10 a.m. in quest of these vessels seen

by Lt. Craeg according to his account. At 3 p.m. sent a topmast aboard for shears to get the foremast out. The carpenter employed in enlarging the large pettiaugre [to make it] more serviceable.

Note: Sailing master's log for Feb. 16 is essentially the same except that no time is stated for the departure of the barge and two pettiaugres, manning was 58 instead of 60, and they were dispatched "with a merry heart."

Wednesday, Feb. 17 D:o

D:o weather. At 6 p.m. came ashore the pettiaugre with boards, planks, etc. D:o hauled the boats up. At 5 a.m. launched

them. Sent two aboard and one a fishing. At 9 the pettyaugre returned with stores from the ship. D:o came ashore the yawl with two casks of wet bread. D:o sent the yawl to the windward island to fetch an old yard lying there. At 8 a.m. the carpenter sawed the large pettiaugre asunder [apart] in order to enlarge her [to make her] more serviceable. The rest of our men employed at the battery, trenches and sawing timber into planks to enlarge the boat.

Note: Sailing master's log for Feb. 17 is essentially the same except weather is described as "The first part of this 24 hours small breezes inclinable to calms." Also the canoe returned with "26 rock codd."

Thursday, Feb. 18 D:o

D:o weather. At 2 p.m. the yawl returned with the old yard from the easternmost island we could see. At 4 D:o got the foremast out. At 6 the foremast was brought ashore. D:o the canoe returned with 23 rock fish and the yawl with 3 seals which were distributed amongst the ship's company. At 7 hauled all the boats up. At 4 a.m. launched the canoe to go to the windward island to look for some old timber fit for use, but found none. At 5 yawl returned from the ship with a cask of wet bread and stores. The carpenter employed in ripping up the fore-castle and the rest of the men at the battery.

Note: Sailing master's log for Feb. 18 begins "Moderate and clear. At 2 p.m. the yawl returned with the mast of a wreck which lay on the easternmost island."... "The sawyers employed in sawing the large pieces of timber." In addition to the cask of wet bread, some gunner's stores were brought back from the ship. "The carpenter employed at cutting up several beams and knees. The people employed on shore in building a battery for 6 [or 8] of our main deck guns."

Friday, Feb. 19 On the Keys between the Tortugas and Cape Florida

Moderate weather. At 6 p.m. hauled up all the boats. At 1/2 past 4 a.m. launched them. Sent the yawl aboard and the canoe a fishing. D:o the canoe (by a signal) returned ashore with 33 rock fish which were distributed amongst the ship's company. At 1/2 past 8 a.m. saw a sail to the eastward which, as she came nigher we imagined her to be a Spanish half galley. Upon which made the signal for the boats. The canoe came ashore. We immediately armed her with ammunition and remanned

her to a first shape[?] [to go] on board in defence of the ship [wreck of *Tyger*] but could not reach [the ship] before the galley had boarded the ship and obliged our Lieut. and men that were on board to take to the yawl and make for the shore. They [men in canoe] observed their [Spanish] motions for a little while and returned ashore as [it] appears they had at least 60 or 70 men on board the galley, well armed. At 12, fired a gun at him [the Spanish galley] from the battery, but could not reach him, neither had we the boats to attempt anything against them with success.

Note: There are no sailing master's log pages after Feb. 18.

Saturday, Feb. 20 D:o

D:o weather. Our men employed at the battery and trenches, making breast works and putting everything in a posture of defence we could lest she might have more confederates and attempt something further. At 7 sent the boat well armed to observe their motions as near as they could all night. At 8 D:o kept half watch and laid upon our arms all night. At 10 a.m. called all the officers together to consult if we could propose any rational scheme to attack the galley and recover the ship with any probability of success. Some proposals were made and left upon consideration until 1 o'clock, when it was agreed to meet and resolve on a determination. The carpenters employed in enlarging the pettiaugre and the men about the battery and trenches. The half galley continuing alongside of the ship and as we supposed fixing one of our topmasts for their own main mast which they were in want of. At 11 a.m., sent the canoe a fishing.

Sunday, Feb. 21 D:o

These 24 hours little wind and fair weather. The carpenters employed upon the pettiaugre and the men at the battery etc. At 3 p.m. the canoe returned with some fish which were served to the ship's company. At 8 a.m. sent the yawl and canoe to observe the galley's motions which had been very busy all day long on board. At 12 they returned. At 3 p.m. after a general consultation, the officers were unanimously of opinion that our yawl and canoe were not capable of containing a sufficient number of men and arms to attack the galley with any probability of success. Therefore it was thought advisable to content ourselves in keeping a strict watch over them and ourselves in constant readiness to lay hold of any opportunity that

might happen until the arrival of some of our boats, which we hourly expected, might allow us to make some more effectual attempt. Meantime we employed ourselves with all possible diligence in building upon the pettiaugre and fortifying ourselves in the best manner against any attack whatsoever. We mounted 13 [18?] guns in such places as we thought most commanding which added to those on the battery made 20 [or 21] guns, all mounted upon platforms and most of guns covered with breastworks and lined with trenches etc. At 7 a.m. the galley left the ship and sailed eastward. At 10 sent our 3rd Lieut. aboard the ship to examine how things stood. Found they had taken two topmasts which we made use for shears on Tues[?]day before in getting out the foremast and intended them for a mainmast, likewise a 4-inch hawser with some other materials, but did no further damage.

Monday, Feb. 22 D:o

Moderate weather with a little rain. The carpenter employed about the pettiaugre. At 1/2 past ? p.m., the 3rd Lieut. came from the ship and informed us that one of the galley's men had wrote their name who was Leonardo Castro who our old Spaniard, a prisoner, [captured with one of the pettiaugres] assures us was lieutenant of such a galley at the Havana where he came from thence and that this galley was then a careening and to be fitted out directly, that she carried [blank space follows, perhaps erased]. At 3 called all the officers together to consult what methods were most suitable in our present situation. At 6 they gave in their opinion that as our misfortune was now known to the Spaniards, we had the strongest reason to believe they would be industrious to use it to their own advantage, that the many disappointments we had in our expectation of success and the uncertainty still remaining whether we shall get any assistance at all, renders it necessary to destroy or render useless to our enemy all such materials as we find we are unable to defend or carry away. It was therefore determined to employ our utmost endeavours in getting ashore as many of the most useful things that can be got and to make such preparations on board that we might burn the ship in an instant whenever we found it necessary. The anchors and guns that we could not manage ourselves, we resolved if we received no assistance nor advice in 3 days, to destroy

(Continued on page 6)

(Tyger from page 5)

the anchors and break the trunnions of the guns. At 5 a.m. sent the 3rd Lieut. and sufficient hands aboard to work in pursuance of our last determination but would not break the trunnions of the 18 pounders.

Tuesday, Feb. 23 D:o

These 24 hours fair weather. At 1 p.m. the yawl came ashore with the mainmast. At 2 sent her aboard again. At 7 she returned and the men with planks etc. D:o hauled the boats up. At 4 a.m. launched the yawl and sent her aboard with some hands to try what could be got. At 6 D:o saw a sail to the NE coming down before the wind. At 1/2 past 7 made her to be a large sloop with red colours. At 10 D:o she anchored about a mile and a 1/2 from our battery and about a mile from the ship. D:o got out their boat and made towards the ship leaving their colours flying as before, but our men observing their boat full of armed men, the Lieut. thought it not prudent to trust them any further, so set the ship on fire and came off in the yawl. D:o sent the canoe to inspect and see what she was. At 11 D:o the canoe returned and told us she had been so near the sloop as to call to each other and that she was an English built vessel, her sails and rigging after the English manner, and her colours D:o. They fired some muskets to leeward, the sloop answered the same and called to them in English to come aboard.

Wednesday, Feb. 24 On the Keys between the Tortugas and Florida

Fresh gales and clear. The carpenter employed about the pettyaugre and the men in making all possible defence against any attempt that might happen from these circumstances though doubtful and our affairs being in so urgent a posture, the officers being in consultation, all declared they thought it convenient to send a boat to know the certainty and, to prevent mistakes, to carry a flag of truce which was accordingly put in execution. At 1 p.m. sent the canoe with the 3rd Lieut., surgeon, and pilot off with a white flag, having fired a gun. They immediately returned the gun and the canoe proceeded toward them. Something more than half-way between us, came to a grappling [anchored with a grapnel?] and waited some time which to their going toward them [Tyger's captain] ordered a gun to be fired [as] a sign for the boat to come ashore which

they did accordingly. As soon as they [the sloop] heard the gun they again returned it and immediately sent their boat off with a white flag, but our canoe kept on her way for the shore according to their order, but still kept the flag flying. They came off as far as the canoe had gone and lay by some time upon which it was thought convenient to go off again, which we did and gave them the meeting. They told us they belonged to the King of Spain, that the officer in the boat was a Lieut. of a man of war and informed us that our longboat had been taken on the Florida shore and three of our men killed and six made prisoners and carried to Havana 2 days before they came out, that upon information from some of the prisoners, the sloop was sent in quest of us and had been out six days from the Havana. They behaved with much civility, proffering to give us water and provisions, etc. If we had any occasion, we returned their civility and told them we wanted nothing. After several questions on both sides such as we thought most co_d [?] us we to our several purposes, we parted and about sunset, observed the sloop's boat make toward the ship [wreck of Tyger] as she lay burning. At 7 pm, sent the yawl and canoe armed to lie off and observe their motions which returned after 12 and said all was quiet. We lay upon our arms all night to prevent any surprise and at break of day found the sloop was quite gone off. The carpenter continually employed in enlarging the pettyaugre and the people in strengthening our fortifications to the best advantage we could for our own defence. At 10 a.m. the 3rd Lieut. went off in the yawl to the wreck which was burnt down almost to the water's edge and at 12 returned with old iron etc.

Thursday, Feb. 25 D:o

Fresh gales and clear weather. At 3 p.m., sent the yawl to the wreck which returned with old iron, etc. D:o the canoe a fishing. D:o returned with 33 large rock fish which were distributed amongst the ship's company. Hauled up the boats and set 1/2 watch. At 5 a.m. launched the boats. Sent one to the eastward to kill seals and the other a fishing. At 11 D:o the canoe returned with fish which were served out to the ship's company. D:o sent a boat aboard for some old iron. D:o cut the mainmast asunder to be sawed into planks for the carpenters' use about enlarging the pettyaugre. D:o found the mast so much decayed that it was scarce fit for any use.

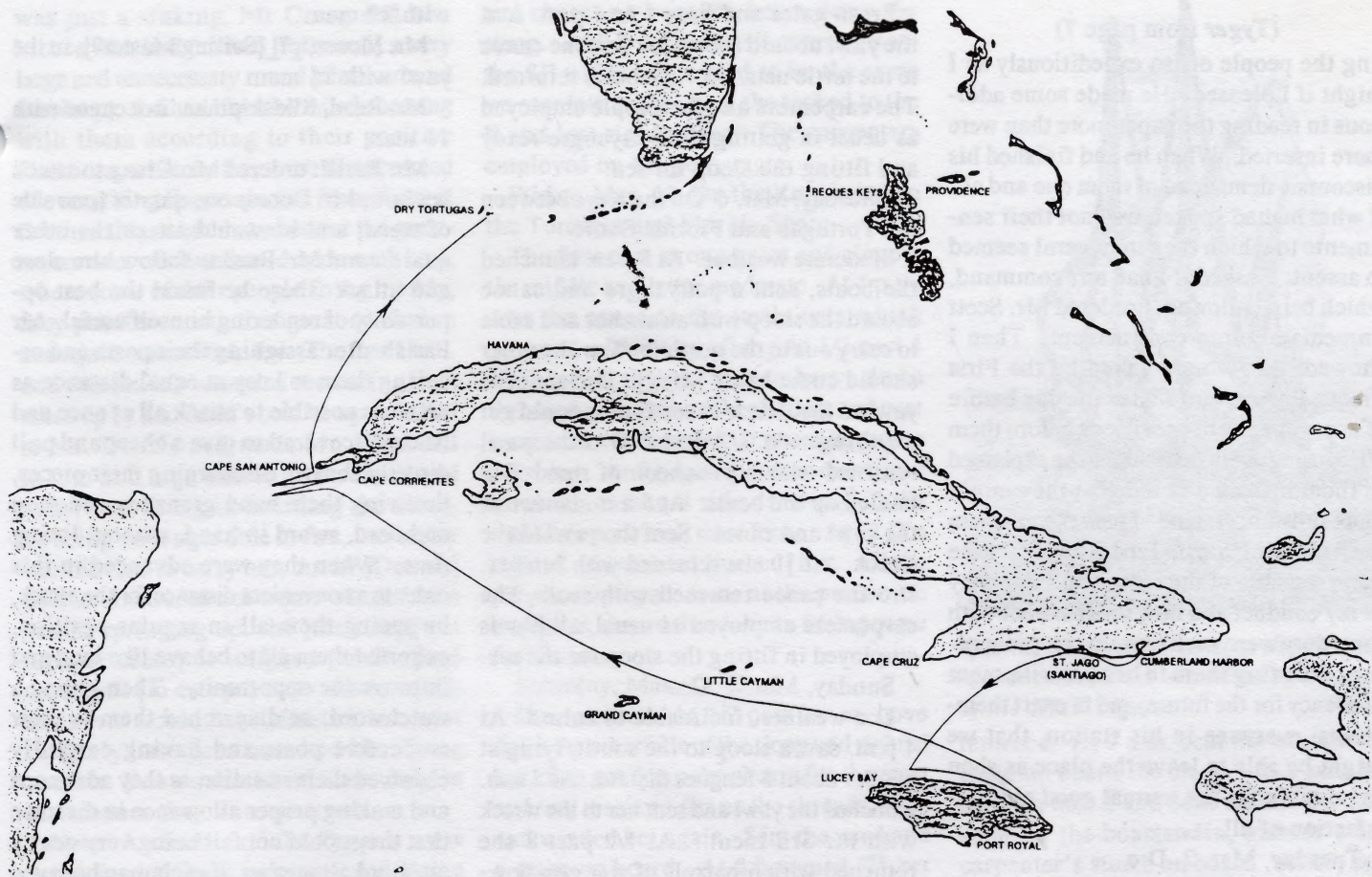
The carpenters and sawyers employed D:o and the rest in making the best posture of defence that could be done. Have in all 78 gun mounts in the best manner we were able to prevent our enemy from attacking of us. We find by the great dew that falls in the night that our sails are much damaged by milldew notwithstanding all possible care to prevent it.

Friday, Feb. 26 D:o

D:o weather. Sent the yawl to the wreck which returned at 4 p.m. with some iron and plank. D:o sent the canoe a fishing which returned at 4 p.m.. Saw a sail to the eastward standing to the southward but could not tell what to make of her, her sail being so much out of the way. She made to the southward till almost dark, it being very hazy. At 9 D:o our barge returned from the voyage with the Lieut. of Marines from the sloop and [he] informed us it was the [same] sail as we saw before night standing to the southward and the same sloop we had relieved at sea the day before our ship bilged [wrecked], when we were informed that the sloop was retaken by the *St. Andrew* privateer belonging to Rhode Island, and we judged [that the sloop] had been again taken by the Spaniards and for want of a mast, sails, and rigging they could not take her away with them, this being the sloop seen by Mr. Creag, our 2nd Lieut. when he went in the yawl in quest of the longboat to Providence. At 10 D:o sent the barge off to inform them [the sloop] the yawl was coming off with sails and an anchor to their assistance. It could not find the sloop, but at 2 a.m. the barge returned. At 1/2 past 7 a.m. sent the barge off with sails and the yawl with an anchor and hawser. It blowing hard, the barge got aboard [the sloop], but the yawl could not.

Saturday, Feb. 27 D:o

Moderate weather. At 1/2 past 4 p.m., the sloop came in as near as she could and came to anchor in 15 ft. water. D:o saluted me with 7 guns, returned 5. At 1/2 past 6 D:o our 1st Lieut. came ashore from aboard the sloop and gave an account of his voyage and what they found on board when they took her. Upon which ordered him to go off in the morning and try if he could get her in nigher to the fort. At 6 D:o sent a boat aboard the sloop. D:o sent the barge with the 1st Lieut. to sound. He found out a small channel and got the sloop in under the fort and moored her in 7 ft. of water. Came ashore at sundry times this day 15 puncheons _?_ 1/2 of



Last voyage of the HMS Tyger showing her track from Cumberland Harbor (Guantanamo Bay) to wrecking at the Dry Tortugas. Drawing by John Viele.

rum from on board the sloop, 25 puncheons of water. The carpenter employed in enlarging the pettyagre and the people fitting of shrouds and stays, the sailmaker about [working on] the sails for the sloop. D:o cut up a topsail to make sails for her.

Sunday, Feb. 28 On the Keys between the Tortugas and the Florida Shore.

Moderate weather. At 3 p.m. sent 2 of our topmasts on board the sloop to make shears to get out her mast. D:o set one of the sloop's anchors in the ground and carried a fast [line] from it to the sloop. There was no writing [log or other papers] found when taken, but several shot holes which did not appear when we spoke with her before. By these marks we apprehend she was taken in an engagement, though there was nobody aboard to give any information. D:o sent the yawl to the wreck to see what they could get. At 6 returned with old iron, nails etc. D:o the canoe came ashore with fishes which were distributed to the ship's company. Hauled up the boats. At 5 a.m. launched them and sent one aboard the sloop to get out her mast. D:o sent the canoe a fishing. At 8 D:o went to short allowance of bread

at the rate of a quarter of a pound every other day, 2 1/2 lb. rice in lieu of bread to make it continue the longer. At 12 a.m. the sloop's mast came ashore and when they got it up upon deck, it broke off at the partner. The boat returned with fish. The carpenters employed about the pettyagre and the sloop.

Monday, March 1 D:o

D:o weather. At 3 p.m. sent a pettyagre to the wreck. At 7 she returned with iron bolts, etc. D:o the canoe returned with fish which were served out to the ship's company. Hauled up the boats. At 5 a.m. launched them. Sent the canoe a fishing and a pettyagre to Long Island for brush. At 12 they both returned. The carpenters employed about the pettyagre, the people at work, the sawyers at work all night. The First Lieut. and 2 mates surveyed all the provisions as to quantity and quality, gauging the water, and taking the number of pieces of beef, pork, likewise the weight of bread, rice, and gallons of oil, etc. The people at this present allowed half a pint of rum and 2 pints and half of water mixed each day being served it at 3 times viz., a pint morning, noon and

night. At 7 they assembled in a mutinous manner, some of them intoxicated with liquor, using many seditious words, demanding water in an insolent manner, some of which were seized and put in custody. At 7 a.m., more endeavoring to promote mutiny with the utmost insolence in the face of the officers, were secured. At 1 p.m. Mr. Scott, Lieut. of the Marines gathered all the people together without the knowledge of any officer and ranged them before my tent which he opened and desired a hearing. He then produced a paper of his own composing signed by his own hand, and demanded of the people, if he should speak for them. They answering yes, he read the contents in which he accused me of monstrous cruelty and barbarity, in keeping from the people the provisions and water without the least necessity, there being according to the Lieutenant, more of each specie in store than we should be able to carry away when we left the island. He carried his accusation further charging me with indolence and neglect of duty and that I was opposed to use the most effectual means for get-

(Continued on page 8)

(Tyger from page 7)

ting the people off so expeditiously as I might if I pleased. He made some additions in reading the paper more than were there inserted. When he had finished his discourse, demanded of them one and all, if what he had spoken was not their sentiments to which they in general seemed to assent. I asked if I had any command, which being allowed, I ordered Mr. Scott immediately into confinement. Then I showed the accounts taken by the First Lieut., Purser, and Mates the day before of every species of provisions before them all, causing every particular to be explained to them in such a manner as they might more fully understand. I read then to them the Articles of War and endeavored to make them sensible of the reason and integrity of my conduct and how inconsistent with their duty were such tumultuous proceedings, exerting them to behave with more prudence for the future, and to exert themselves, everyone in his station, that we might be able to leave the place as soon as possible for the mutual good and satisfaction of all.

Tuesday, Mar. 2 D:o

D:o weather. At 3 p.m. sent the yawl to the wreck which returned with a puncheon of brackish water, D:o hauled up the boats. At 4 a.m. launched them. Set 3 to fish, D:o one to the wreck, one to the sloop with the caulkers and a barrel of tar. At 11 the 3 boats returned with a great quantity of fish which were served out amongst the people.

Wednesday, Mar. 3 D:o

Fresh gales and hazy. At 2 p.m. sent one boat to the wreck, the caulkers employed about the sloop, the carpenters and the rest of the people as usual. At 7 D:o hauled up the boats. At 5 a.m. launched them. Sent one a fishing and one to the wreck. At 10 she returned with 14 barrels of gunpowder, wet. D:o the canoe returned with fish.

Thursday, Mar. 4 D:o

D:o weather. At 2 p.m. sent a pettyagre to the wreck, at 6 she returned with old iron, bolts, etc.. At 7 D:o hauled up the boats. At 5 a.m. launched them. D:o sent one to the wreck and one a fishing. At 8 D:o the boat returned from the wreck with 8 barrels of wet gunpowder and a butt of fresh water. D:o returned the canoe with turtle. The carpenter and the people employed as usual.

Friday, Mar. 5 D:o

Fresh gales and hazy. At 4 p.m. sent the yawl aboard the wreck and the canoe to the turtle nets. At 7 the boats returned. The carpenters and the people employed as usual in getting the pettyagre ready and fitting the sloop for sea.

Saturday, Mar. 6 On the Keys between the Tortugas and Florida Shore

Moderate weather. At 3 p.m. launched the boats, sent a pettyagre and canoe aboard the sloop with an anchor and cable to carry out to the north for fear the other should come home [drag]. D:o sent the yawl to the wreck to see if they could get anything. At 1/2 past 6 D:o the yawl returned with a puncheon of rum. D:o hauled up the boats. At 5 a.m. launched the yawl and canoe. Sent the yawl to the wreck. At 10 she returned with lumber. D:o the canoe returned with seal. The carpenters employed as usual, all hands employed in fitting the sloop for the sea.

Sunday, Mar. 7 D:o

D:o weather, inclinable to calms. At 4 p.m. saw a sloop to the south, lying at anchor about 5 leagues distant. At 5 a.m. launched the yawl and sent her to the wreck with the 3rd Lieut.. At 1/2 past 8 she returned with 6 barrels of wet gun powder and 2 jars of oil. Sent her on board again at 1/2 past 9. Sent the 1st Lieut. in the barge to discover what the sail was. When he came within a mile and half of her, they sent their boat full of men and arms to meet him. He turned about and endeavored to lead them to the wreck where he thought to keep them until he had assistance from the shore, but the yawl being on board the wreck, perceiving him chased, met him and gave him some arms, then he gave chase to the Spanish boat for about 2 miles, but not coming up with her, he returned to our island.

Monday, Mar. 8 D:o

Little wind and fair, the vessel [Spanish sloop] at an anchor to the southwest. The Lieut. believed her to be the same we spoke with a flag of truce which we knew to carry 14 carriage guns and many swivels, being fitted at the Havana and manned from a King's ship. It was determined to attack her at night with our 5 boats, completely armed. Accordingly at 1/2 past 5, they all embarked in the manner following:

Mr Farish, 1st Lieut. in the barge with 19 men.

Mr. Creag, 2nd Lieut. in a pettyagre with 19 men.

Mr. Dennis, 3rd Lieut. in a pettyagre

with 27 men.

Mr. Moore, _?_ [Sailing Master?], in the yawl with 15 men.

Mr. Read, Midshipman, in a canoe with 11 men.

Mr. Farish ordered Mr. Creag to attack her bow, Mr. Dennis one quarter [one side of stern] and he would attack the other quarter and Mr. Reed to follow him close and attack where he found the best opportunity of rendering himself useful. Mr Farish after assigning their posts and ordering them to keep at equal distance as much as possible to attack all at once and when discovered to give a cheer and pull directly aboard, discharging their pieces, throwing their hand grenades and then on board, sword in hand, without losing time. When they were advanced in this order to a convenient distance for the attack, he seeing them all in regular position, exhorted them all to behave like men and improve the opportunity. Then giving a watchword, he dispatched them to their respective posts and having carefully observed their situation as they advanced and making proper allowance in distance that they could not fail being very nearly on board altogether, if each man behaved as directed, Mr. Farish pulled towards the larboard quarter with Mr. Dennis and Mr. Read and being discovered [by Spanish crew] they cheered according to appointment, but were not gained [supported?] nor answered by the other two boats. He [Farish] then climbed on board the larboard quarter and Mr. Read on the starboard where they received all their fire. Mr. Dennis at the meantime lying about 2 sloops length astern without offering any assistance. Mr. Farish called to him several times to come on board, but could not get any answer, he lying upon his oars till they had ceased the enemy fire, cleared their round house and were climbing up on their quarter, when after much calling he [Dennis] came up upon the larboard quarter about a canoe's length and flung several shells and fired his small arms upon the sloop's stern, by which several of our people were wounded and were obliged to quit the sloop's quarter _?_ the boat, where several of his [Dennis'] grenades fell into them [Farish's boat], wounded the first Lieut. and many more and sunk the boat so that they were obliged to make for him [Dennis' boat] and Mr. Read to save themselves as well as they could. After they had been engaged about 8 minutes in the manner as here mentioned, when their boat

was just a sinking, Mr Creag and Mr. Moore who had fetched [followed] a very large and unnecessary round [circle around the sloop], and had likewise failed cheering with them according to their positive directions, whereby they were disappointed of everything they expected from them at the time they might have been at the greatest service, came on board upon each bow, where some of their people firing briskly, they put the enemy to a great confusion and again ceased their fire. The first Lieut. and some of his wounded men being then taken up by Mr. Read's boat he again called to Mr. Dennis and made Mr. Read call to him and urge him to go on board and assist Mr. Creag in boarding the sloop, he being no longer able to fire, there only wanted that to carry her, but he [Dennis] neither answered nor went. Meantime a breeze springing up, she [the sloop] cut [anchor cable] or weighed [anchor] and made sail [to escape] from them, which she never would have affected, but must certainly have been ours had Mr. Creag and Mr. Dennis discharged their duty in the manner they were directed.

Note: A number of the *Tyger's* crew, including Lt. Craig, were wounded during the attack, but none were killed.

Tuesday, Mar. 9 D:o

The first part calm, the middle and latter fresh gales and a great sea from the N. At 4 p.m. made an end of fishing and wooding [repairing] the sloop's mast. Sent it on board the sloop. At 1/2 past 4 a.m. sent a pettyaugre to look for the sunken barge, but could not find her. At 7 sent the sloop's mast, at 1/2 past 4 sent the pettyaugre with the boatswain and several hands to rig her.

Wednesday, Mar. 10 D:o

Strong gales and hazy. At 4 p.m. sent the sloop's boom on board for a shore to heave her down. [careen] D:o made a stage to search her [inspect underwater hull]. At 1/2 past ___ a.m., saw a sail in the EbS. At 9 she being nigh the reefs, she tacked and stood to the E, at 11 she stood to the N. Made her to be a schooner and a Spanish privateer. At 12 she stood to the E and [we] lost sight of her. Sent the canoe a fishing, the carpenters employed as usual.

Thursday, Mar. 11 D:o

D:o weather. At 1 p.m. the canoe returned from fishing. At 4 D:o sent 4 swivel guns and ammunition on board the sloop. The canoe a fishing which returned at 6 with a large turtle which was served out to the ship's company. D:o sent tackles

and chains on board to heave down the sloop. At 6 D:o saw a sail coming from the SE which we judged to be the same we saw last night. At 8 she tacked to the E and lost sight of her. The carpenters employed on the pettyaugre.

Friday, Mar. 12 On the Keys between the Tortugas and Florida Shore

The first part strong gales and cloudy, the middle and latter moderate. At 4 p.m. sent the canoe to the turtle nets which returned without any fish. At 1/2 past 4 a.m. got all things ready to heave down the sloop. D:o got out her ballast and sent some iron work aboard. D:o sent the canoe a fishing. At 9 began to heave down and scrub the larboard side. D:o nailed the rudder irons which were loose. At 12 D:o righted and winded [turned] her. All the people employed, some at the pettyaugre and some aboard the sloop in fitting same for the sea.

Saturday, Mar. 13 D:o

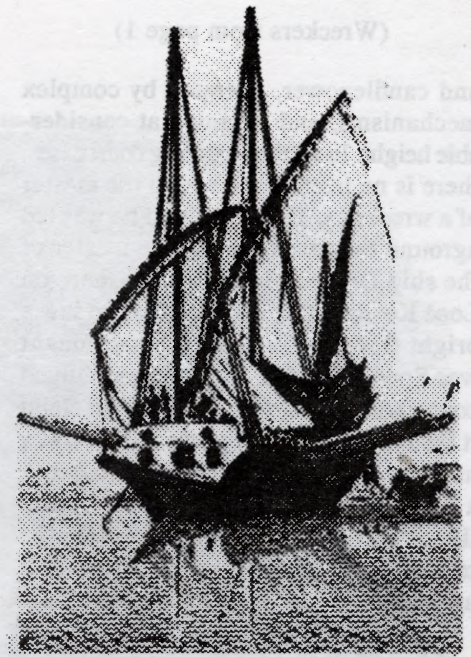
D:o weather. At 1/2 past 2 p.m. heave down the other side of the sloop and righted her. D:o got down the shears for the mast and sent it ashore. Set up the shrouds, stays and winded her again. Sent the yawl and a stage on board. At 8 breamed [?] her black work. Sent 3[?] pettyaugres with iron work aboard. At 1/2 past 10 broached and filled up 16 butts of fresh water and sent it aboard. The carpenters employed as usual. Sent the canoe a fishing.

Sunday, Mar. 14 D:o

Little wind and fair. At 2 p.m. sent aboard 6 butts and 3 puncheons of fresh water, 16 puncheons of beef and pork containing 3077 pieces. At 4 the canoe returned from fishing. D:o sent the yawl to the wreck to see if they could find any stores, etc. At 7 she returned with a box of grape shot. At 5 a.m. all hands employed in shipping of provisions, stores and _?_ 13 puncheons of rum that were found aboard the sloop. D:o 4 hogsheads of pork, several stores belonging to the boatswain, gunner, carpenter and purser.

Monday, Mar. 15 D:o

D:o weather. At 2 p.m. sent 2 boats to the wreck to try to get our stream anchor and cable which was carried out the morning after our ship bilged. At 1/2 past 4 they grappled the cable and hauled as _?_ the anchor as they could by which means they got up the [anchor] buoy rope and weighed the anchor and got it into the boat with the cable and part of the two hawsers that the Spanish half galley had cut. When she was on board at 1/2 past 7, the boats



Spanish half-galley such as the one that reconnoitered the situation of the crew of the HMS Tiger.

returned. At 6 a.m. sent the anchor and cable on board the sloop. At 8 sent her sails on board and bent them. D:o sent some of the boatswain, gunner's and carpenter's stores on board. At 10, sent 3 jars of oil aboard. At 11 the canoe returned from the island with some seals which were distributed amongst the ship's company. All hands employed in making all possible dispatch for the sea.

Tuesday, Mar. 16 D:o

D:o weather. All hands employed, some in carrying eighteen pound shot and iron hoops out into the sea and dropping them in deep water [so they could not be recovered by the Spanish]. At 11 a.m., launched the schooner [the enlarged pettyaugre] the carpenters built, rigged her and sent some provisions aboard her and some iron work for ballast.

Wednesday, Mar. 17 D:o

The first, little wind and clear, the middle part squally with thunder, lightning, and rain, the latter moderate and fair. At 4 p.m. began to destroy and burn such stores as we could not carry off the island. Some hands employed in breaking the nutts [short iron bars that hold the anchor stocks in place] and permillions [cascabels- iron balls at inboard ends] of the guns, the rest in carrying stores on board the sloop and schooner and sinking shot and iron hoops into deep water.

Thursday, Mar. 18 Winds: NE, E, EbS, SE At noon Long Island bore NEbN 4

(Continued on page 12)

(Wreckers from page 1)

and candlepower, operated by complex mechanisms, and mounted at considerable height. In all the wrecking court cases, there is no instance in which the master of a wrecked ship alleged that he was led aground by a false light. The master of the ship *Diadem*, which went ashore on Looe Key in 1856, claimed that he saw a bright flashing light, which he thought was Sand Key, and, as a result, changed course and went aground. He did not claim it was a false light, merely that he was unable to account for it. It might have been a natural phenomenon such as distant lightning or a desperate attempt on the master's part to excuse running his ship aground.

Patrol Stations and Searches

After loading enough provisions and stores (paid for by the owner) for several weeks, a wrecking vessel would proceed to an area of the reef where the chances of finding a wreck were high. The greatest number of wrecks occurred in the upper Keys, particularly on Carysfort Reef, French Reef, Pickles Reef, and Alligator Reef. The next highest number of wrecks took place in the Dry Tortugas area. The reefs off the lower Keys were next in order, with most of the unfortunate ships grounding on American Shoals and Looe Key. The middle Keys area attracted wrecks to Delta Shoal and Sombrero Key. Other high-incidence wreck areas were the Eastern and Western Dry Rocks off Key West, the Quicksands to the west of the Marquesas Keys, and the reefs to the south of Cape Florida at the southern tip of Key Biscayne. Keys wreckers also went to the aid of vessels ashore on the mainland coast as far north as Hillsboro Inlet.

In the upper Keys, wreckers mostly used the anchorages at Indian Key, Key Tavernier, Rodriguez Key, and Caesar's Creek. At first light each morning, the wreckers would get underway from their anchorage to search along the reef. To ensure that no one had an unfair advantage, it was the custom for all to weigh anchor at the same moment. If there were several wreckers in the same area, by mutual agreement, each wrecker would search a designated sector of the reef. When two wreckers, converging on opposite courses, sighted each other, they would know they had completed a full sweep of their sectors and return to anchor, usually by ten o'clock in the morning. The



A Key West wrecking vessel crewman. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

crew would spend the rest of the day at various maintenance tasks such as resetting and tarring the standing rigging or scraping and slushing down (greasing) the masts. They would often go ashore to cut stovewood, get water, or hunt deer. For amusement and relief from the heat, they would put a sail in the water suspended so as to form a pool and bathe in it. When several wrecking vessels were anchored in the same harbor, the men would visit back and forth by boat. In the evening, they might all gather on one of the larger vessels for a night of feasting, singing, and dancing.

Even while at anchor, wreckers maintained a sharp lookout, both day and night.

In the middle of the night, a lookout on the wrecking sloop *America*, anchored off Key Largo, sighted a light on the reef. The *America* and another wrecking sloop, the *Mount Vernon*, got underway immediately, but the light went out. Instead of returning to harbor, the wreckers anchored in the lee of the reef. At first light, they discovered the source of the light, a brig ashore on French Reef. An even more alert lookout was on watch on board the sloop *Randall H. Greene*, anchored at Rodriguez Key. At two-thirty in the morning, the lookout saw, through his spyglass, the dim silhouette of what might be a vessel on the reef. Within an hour, the *Greene* was standing by to render assistance to a brig ashore

on Carysfort Reef.

Typical Salvage Events

When a wrecker sighted or received news of a ship aground, the captain would crowd on sail to be the first to arrive on the scene. On boarding the wreck, he would present his license to the master and offer his assistance. If the ship was in danger of breaking up or sinking, he would immediately take steps to transfer the passengers and crew to his wrecking vessel.

Typically, assuming there was no immediate danger to life, the master of the wrecked ship would refuse assistance, saying he intended to refloat his ship by himself. The wrecking captain would return to his vessel and stand by, knowing that the odds against the captain getting his ship off without help were extremely high.

When the next high tide had come and gone, and the ship was still hard aground, her master would signal the wrecker that he was ready to accept help. Usually, by this time, several other wreckers would have arrived on the scene. The first-arrived captain was the wreck master, and, as such, directed all the salvage operations and decided how many of the other wreckers, in the order in which they arrived, he needed to assist him. Either by a prior agreement, or by one made on the spot, the wreck master and assisting wreckers would enter into a partnership, called a consortship, in which they agreed to share the salvage award. The usual basis was "ton for ton and man for man." This meant that half the total salvage award went to the vessels' owners divided according to vessel tonnage and half to the crews divided according to the standard rule for distributing shares. A consortship agreement signed, witnessed, and certified by the clerk of the court and made in 1835 reads as follows:

"Know all men by these presents that I, Elum Eldridge, Master of the Licensed Wrecking Sloop *Mystic* and George Eldridge, Master of the Licensed Wrecking Schooner *Whale* have this day entered into a consortship for Six Months in the following conditions to wit. All monies received for Salvage by ourselves or agents to be divided as follows. Schooner *Whale* & Sloop *Mystic* to draw equal as regards the vessels & Man for Man."

In most cases, the first step in a salvage operation was to carry out and plant one or more anchors, both to prevent the ship from being driven further aground and to serve as a means to kedge (haul) the ship



Key West wreck diver from Harper's New Monthly Magazine of April 1859. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

off after sufficient cargo had been offloaded. In the meantime, one or two wreckers would come alongside the wreck and begin breaking out and offloading cargo. If the water was too shallow alongside, the cargo would be transferred in the wreckers' boats. Speed was essential to get the ship off the reef before she bilged. Often, work went on around the clock for days.

At the next high tide, as many men as possible would man the wrecked ship's capstan or windlass and heave around. If enough cargo had been removed, the ship would slide off the reef. After the ship was afloat, depending on her condition, she would be sailed or towed to Key West.

If the ship had bilged and was lost beyond recovery, the wrecking crews would remove the cargo and strip the rigging, sails, spars, anchors, deck gear, and other valuable items. Often divers would have to go down into the dark, water-filled cargo holds and, by feel alone, in water befouled by paints, dyes, and other toxic materials, wrestle out boxes, bales, and barrels.

Some salvage operations might last for several weeks and involve a dozen or more wrecking vessels and more than a hundred men. Salvage of 3,432 cotton bales from the ship *Indian Hunter*, lost on French Reef in June 1856, required the combined efforts of thirty-one wrecking and fishing vessels and 259 men over a period of thirty days. Undoubtedly the largest salvage operation was the recovery of cargo from the ship *Isaac Allerton*, sunk on Washerwoman Shoal off the Saddlebunch Keys in August 1856. Seventy-four craft, ranging from a 172-ton wrecking schooner to small row boats—or, as the judge of the admiralty court expressed it, "nearly or quite all the wrecking vessels and boats on the coast,"—labored to extract cargo from the submerged hull for a period of two months.

The Florida Keys, Volume 3 – The Wreckers, ISBN 1-56164-219-3, may be purchased from local book stores or direct from the publisher by calling 1-800-746-3275.

(Tyger from page 9)

leagues.

Little wind and clear. At 4 p.m. made an end of breaking the nuts and permillions of the guns. At 2 hauled down all the tents and sent the sails aboard the sloop and several hands, and 60 men on board the schooner, including the 2nd Lieut. and Lieut. of the Marines. At 4 set the battery on fire and several stores belonging to the boatswain, gunner, and carpenter. D:o set the magazine of damaged powder on fire, gathered up all iron work that could be found in the fire and threwed them into the sea. At 5 went on board the sloop with the remaining part of the people off the island. At 6 made sail, the schooner in company. At 10, the island bore NEbE 3 leagues. At 12 Long Island NE by N 4 leagues.

Friday, Mar. 19 Winds: EbS, E, SE, SEbS, ESE Courses: SW3/4S, SW, W3/4N

The first part little wind and clear, the middle and latter fresh gales. At 2 p.m. shortened sail for the schooner. D:o took her and the small craft in tow. Handed the topsail and lowered the mainsail and went under the square sail and jib. At 1/2 past 8 a.m. saw a sail bearing W3/4N. Let go the schooner and craft that were in tow and gave chase. Made her to be a schooner standing to the NW. Thinking she stood to the southward, hoisted a Spanish jack and pendants thinking to decoy her, but she made the best of her way, and as it blew fresh, was in danger of losing our craft, gave over chase and lay to till the schooner and the small craft came up with us. At 9 lost sight of the chase. Began to drink 3 pints of water and 3 _?_ s of rum mixed with water and serve 3 times to each man per day in order to pay for the days we were at short allowance of rum.

Saturday, Mar. 20 Winds: E, SE, SEbE Courses: Blank

Fresh gales and clear weather. At 1/2 past 12, the schooner and small craft came up on us. D:o took them in tow. At 1/2 past 5 p.m., the small canoe broke her tow rope. Sent the yawl after her, she immediately filled full of water which obliged the yawl to let her go adrift. Hoisted the square sail. At 9 cast off the schooner.

Sunday, Mar. 21 Winds: EbS, NNE, E, EbN Courses: Blank

Little wind and clear weather. Towing the schooner and small craft. At 9 handed the foresail and lowered the

mainsail [to] half mast. At 2 a.m. sounded, no ground [bottom at] 20 fathom. At 6 made sail, loosed topsail and flying jib. At 12 sounded 80 fathom no ground.

Monday, Mar. 22 Winds: NE, EbN, SE Courses: Blank Bearings and Distance at Noon: At noon Cape St. Anthony [Antonio] SSE distance 4 leagues.

Moderate and cloudy weather. At 5 p.m. saw the land bearing ESE. At 1/2 past 8 ran into 5 fathom, D:o 4 fathom, D:o 3 1/2 fathom. D:o tacked and stood out NW, then sounded 4 fathom, D:o 5 fathom, D:o 10, D:o 22 fathom, kept sounding no ground at 80 fathom. At 1/2 past 7 a.m. saw the land bearing SEbS.

Tuesday, Mar. 23 Winds: SSE, SEbS Courses: Blank Bearings and Distance at Noon: D:o Cape NEbN 4 or 5 leagues.

Moderate and clear weather. At 6 Cape St Anthony SEbS 6 or 7 miles, at 6 a.m. tacked back eastward. At 9 saw the land which we took to be the Cape.

Wednesday, Mar. 24 Winds: SbE, SSE, D:o Courses: Blank Bearings and Distance at Noon: D:o Cape N end NW 3/4 N, 6 leagues, the east [?] end NEbE 5 leagues.

The first and latter parts moderate and clear, the middle cloudy with rain. At 6 p.m. W end of the Cape EbN 3 leagues. At 6 a.m. tacked to the eastward.

Thursday, Mar. 25 Winds: SEbS, SEbE1/2E, SEbE Courses: Blank Bearings and Distance at Noon: Cape Corrientes bore east distance 4 leagues.

D:o weather. At 4 p.m. set the main topsail. At 6 the west most land in sight SWbW 2 leagues. At 5 a.m. tacked the the eastward.

Friday, Mar. 26 Winds: SE, SEbE, ESE, SEbE Courses: Blank

Bearings and Distance at Noon: At an anchor in Cape Corrientes Bay.

The first and latter parts fresh gales and squally, the middle little wind and cloudy. It looking like a very bad night, at 1/2 past 5 p.m. anchored in Corrientes Bay in 8 fathom then wore away into 15 fathom, sand and coral rocks. D:o struck [sent below] our two 9 pounders into the hold and unbent the mainsail and jib and altered them. Refitted the rigging. Sent the yawl and pettyaugre ashore to dig wells for water. D:o found water but brackish. At 6 p.m. saw a sail standing to the west. Sent the yawl ashore to make a fire on the point to decoy her into the bay. At 1/2 past 6 lost sight of her. D:o bent the sails at 1/2 past 3 a.m. Sent the boats ashore

for water. D:o filled 4 puncheons and sent them on board the schooner, got 2 pair of preventer shrouds up and set up the rigging.

Saturday, Mar. 27 Winds: SE, NE, E, SEbS. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: At noon D:o Cape bore ENE 2 leagues.

The first part fresh gales and cloudy, the middle and latter moderate. Boats employed in watering the sloop. Came aboard 5 puncheons. At 6 a.m. weighed and came to sail with the sloop and small craft. At 7 shortened sail for the schooner and took them in tow.

Sunday, Mar. 28 Winds: NEbN, NbE, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: At noon the high land to the west of the Isle of Pines bore Nbe 12 or 13 leagues.

Moderate and clear weather. At 7 p.m., Cape Corrientes bore NNW 2 leagues. D:o the eastmost land in sight Nbe 1/2 E 4 leagues.

Monday, Mar. 29 Winds: S, NW, EbN, E. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: The west land in sight of Isle of Pines NNW 6 leagues.

The first and latter parts moderate and winds variable, the middle cloudy with lightning in the northward. At ? p.m. the high land to the west of the Isle of Pines N 1/2 W, 12 leagues. At 10 a.m. _?_ the high land to the east of Isle of Pines NNE 10 leagues. At 1/2 cast off the schooner. Began 2/3 allowance of meat viz: beef 4 times and pork 3 times served per week.

Tuesday, Mar. 30 Winds: NE, Calm, D:o, NE. No Courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Blank.

The first part fresh gales and squally, the middle and latter moderate and calm. At 1 p.m. took the schooner in tow. At 4 the high land to the east of Isle of Pines N 12 leagues. At 7 a.m. sent the boats ahead to tow. D:o cast off the schooner, the boats towing ahead.

Wednesday, Mar. 31 Winds: Calm, NNW, NE No courses, no bearing and distance at noon.

The first and middle parts moderate and calm and lightning to the west, the latter fresh gales and cloudy. At 6 p.m. took the schooner and small craft in tow. At 4 a.m. set the square sail, at 7 handed [furl] him.

Thursday, April 1 Winds: Calm, NNW, NE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: The body of Grand Commanes [Cayman] WNW 1/2 W, 5 leagues. Lati-

tude by observation 19 deg. 09 min. N.
Moderate weather. At 5 a.m. saw the Grand Commanes bearing SE 4 leagues. At 8 D:o the southmost part of it bore SSE 3 leagues.

Friday, April 2 Winds: NE, NEbN, NEbE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. by observation 18 deg. 28 min. N.

D:o weather. At 4 p.m. Great Sound bore WbN 8 leagues. Lat. by observation 18 deg. 28 min. N. Found current to set to the SE.

Saturday, April 3 Winds: NEbE, EbS, EnE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. by observation 17 deg. 44 min. N.

D:o weather and a great sea from the eastward. Latitude by observation 17 deg. 44 min. N. found the current to set to the SE.

Sunday, April 4 Winds: EbN, NEbE calm, EnE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat 17 deg. 50 min. N.

The first part moderate and clear, the middle calm and great swells from the SE, the latter part light breezes. Lat. by observation 17 deg. 50 min. N. Found the current to set to the SE.

Monday, April 5 Winds: ENE, NEbN, NE, EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 18 deg. 12 min. N.

Moderate weather and inclinable to calms. At 1/2 past 2 p.m. tacked to the N. Found the stream to set to the SE. Lat. by observation 18 deg. 12 min. N.

Tuesday, April 6 Winds: E, EbN, ENE, EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 18 deg. 30 min. N.

D:o weather. At 4 p.m. got out our sea bars [oars?], began whole allowance of beef and pork, viz. beef 4 times and pork 3 times served per week. Lat. by observation 18 deg. 30 min. N.

Wednesday, April 7 Winds: E, EbN, ENE, EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Blank.

D:o weather. Lat. by observation 18 deg. 59 min. N.

Thursday, April 8 Winds: EbS, EbN, E. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: At noon the south part of the Grand Commanes SEbE 4 leagues. Lat. by obsv. 19 deg. 27 min. N.

The first and latter part moderate and clear weather, the middle part light gales and cloudy. At 7 a.m. saw land bearing EbN 4 leagues, at 12 tacked.

Friday, April 9 Widns SEbE, ESE,

Calm, D:o No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Blank.

Little wind and clear weather. At 1/2 past 2 p.m. cast off the schooner. D:o sent the yawl and two pettiaugers to tow her inshore. At 4 the south point bore SEbE 3 leagues. At 5 p.m. bore EbS 2 leagues. D:o the N point EnE 4 leagues, at 6 the S point E 1/2 S. Tacked to the north. At 1/2 past 2 a.m. tacked to the south. At 6 made the signal for all the craft to bear down on to us. D:o bore down the yawl and 2 pettiaugers. Stood close under the land, found it to be the Little Commanes [Cayman]. D:o made the signal and a general signal for the schooner to bear down and fired a gun. She took no notice of us, fired 3 more guns.

Saturday, April 10 Winds: ENE, E, ESE, SSE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. by observation 19 deg. 16 min. N.

These 24 hours moderate gales and clear weather. At 2 p.m. took the schooner in tow and made sail. At 6 p.m. the NE end of the Little Commanes bore EbS 5 or 6 leagues. Sent some provisions on board the schooner viz: bread 108 pounds, rum 109 gals., water 3 puncheons, beef 248 pieces, pork 341 pieces. At 5 a.m. struck 4 of our six pounders into the hold. Saw the Little Commanes from the masthead bear S and E about 8 leagues distance. Lat. by observation 19 deg. 16 min. N.

Sunday, April 11 Winds: SE, EbN, E. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 20 deg. 02 min. N.

D:o weather. At 9 p.m. Mr. Creag in the schooner behaved with insolence and disobedience. Ordered him directly to confinement and gave the command of the vessel to Lieut. Dennis.

Monday, April 12 Winds: SE, EbN, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 20 deg. 26 min. N.

The first part little wind and clear, the middle and latter light gales. At 6 p.m. got out our lee oars and pulled to keep too [to?] [headed into seas].

Lat. by observ. 20 deg. 26 min. N.

Tuesday, April 13 Winds: E, Calm, NNE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 19 deg. 58 min. N.

These 24 hours little wind and clear weather. At 2 p.m. the yawl went to try the current. D:o lost a deep sea lead and line and an iron pot and found the current to set WbN 1 knot. Lat. by observ. 19 deg. 58 min. N.

Wednesday, April 14 Winds: E, EbN,

ENE, E. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 20 deg. 44 min. N.

D:o weather. At 2 p.m. tacked to the N. At 5 tried the current, found it to set to the NNW, 4 1/2 fathom. At 7 a.m. set the topsail. At 10 D:o made the land bearing NNE. Lat. by obsv. 20 deg 44 min. N.

Thursday, April 15 Winds: EbS, NNE, EbN, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: 20 deg. 26 min. N.

The first part little wind, the middle and latter fresh gales and cloudy. Went to short allowances of beef and pork, at 2/3. At 5 p.m. W end of the Key NNE 1/2 E, 4 miles. At 6 the east end D:o ESE 3 leagues. At 7 D:o tacked to the south. At 9 a.m. tacked to the northward.

Friday, April 16 Winds: ESE, SSW, SW, SE, NE, NE, EbN, EbS. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 20 deg. 10 min. N.

The first and middle parts moderate, the latter cloudy and squally. At 2 p.m. sent for Mr. Dennis from on board the schooner and acquainted him we thought it highly necessary to attempt some other method to get to Jamaica than by towing them and as our provisions were very short and seeing the schooner made better way in light breezes than we could, but in a gale was a great hindrance to us in beating to windward, and the current running to the westward and what spurts of wind we had was easterly, but more frequently light breezes or calms, so that all our endeavors for the last fortnight had been without any advantage, he thought it the best way, as well as we, for him to keep within the Keys [along southwest coast of Cuba] and make the best of his way for Cape Cruzes [Cape Cruz, southwest tip of Cuba], and if he did not meet us there to stretch [sail] over to Jamaica and put into Savana Larmar or Black River or the most convenient port where to supply the vessel with provisions and water, and to proceed without loss of time to Port Royal Harbor. I gave him orders for doing accordingly. Sent 6 muskets, 6 cartridge boxes, 3 pairs of pistols and 6 swords on board the schooner. At 4 p.m. the schooner stood in for the Keys. At 6 the westward point NNE 1/2 E, 7 or 8 miles. D:o the eastward point ENE 1/2 E, 3 or 4 leagues. At 7 lost sight of the schooner. At 8 a.m. went to shorter allowance of bread, 5 to 4. D:o tacked to the northward. D:o went to an allowance of a quart of water per
(Continued on page 14)

(Tyger from page 13)

day each man. Tried the current, found it to set NW 4 fathom per hour.

Saturday, April 17 Winds: SSE, ENE, E, EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Lat. 19 deg. 09 min. N, Cape Cruzes EbS 8 or 9 leagues.

These 24 hours little wind and clear weather. At 1 p.m. saw the land. At 7 the east point of the land NNE 4 or 5 leagues. At 6 a.m. saw the land bearing ESE 2[?] leagues.

Sunday, April 18 Winds: SSW, NEbE, ESE, SW. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Cape Cruze bore NEbN 3 or 4 miles.

The first and latter parts clear weather, the middle squally with rain. At 6 p.m. Cape Cruze ESE 1/2 E, distant 3 or 4 leagues. D. D. [died] Gersham Collins. Drift eastward. At 6 am Cape Cruze EbN 7 or 8 miles. At 8 D:o Cape NE 1/2 E 3 leagues.

Monday, April 19 Winds: S, SSW, SE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Cape Cruze NbW 3 leagues.

The first and latter parts little wind and clear, the middle calm. At 6 p.m. Cape Cruze NbE 3 or 4 miles. At 1/2 past 11 sent the boats to tow ahead.

Tuesday, April 20 Winds: E, ESE, SEbE, ESE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Cape NbW 1/2 W 8 leagues.

The first and latter parts light breezes, the middle little wind, cloudy and lightning in the NE. At 5 p.m. tried the current, found it to set NE. At 6 Cape Cruze NNW 4 leagues. At 6 a.m. Cape Cruze NWbN 7 or 8 leagues. At 9 pulled with 12 oars.

Wednesday, April 21 Winds: ESE, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Montagues [Montego?] Bay bore SWbW dist. 4 leagues.

These 24 hours moderate weather. At 6 p.m. lightning in the NE board [?]. At 8 pulled our lee oars. At 8 a.m. saw the land [Jamaica] thick and hazy.

Thursday, April 22 Winds: ESE, S, ENE, EbN. No courses. Moored in Lucey Bay [at western end of Jamaica].

These 24 hours fresh breezes for the most part. Began 1/2 allowance of bread. At 5 p.m. arrived in Lucey to supply ourselves with provisions and water which we wanted very much. Came to in 6 fathom water. At 8 a.m. began 1/2 allowance of bread _?_ of yams each man per day.

Friday, April 23 Winds: E, ENE, EbN. Moored in Lucey Bay.

These 24 hours moderate and clear weather. The pettyauger employed in watering the sloop. Came aboard 8 hundred weight of yams and 4 tierces of beef.

Saturday, April 24 Winds: E, ENE, NE. D:o

D:o weather. At 3 p.m. came aboard in the yawl 218 w [weight?] of fresh beef. At 7 a.m. came aboard 121 w of fresh beef. The pettyauger employed in watering the sloop.

Sunday, April 25 Winds: E, EbS. D:o D:o weather. At 10 p.m. came aboard 800 plantains. At 8 a.m. came aboard 256 w of fresh beef. The pettyauger employed in watering the sloop.

Monday, April 26 Winds: ESE. Blank The first part fresh gales and cloudy, the middle and latter little wind and clear. At 7 p.m. came aboard some yams and plantains. At 5 a.m. sailed from Lucey Bay and brought to off Davises Cove. At 12 came aboard in the yawl one bullock and the pettiaugre with yams and plantains.

Tuesday, April 27 Winds: E, SSE, ESE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: The southwest point of the west end of Jamaica ESE 3 miles.

The first part squally with rain, the middle and latter little wind and cloudy. Made sail. At 6 p.m. the west end of Jamaica SW 4 leagues.

Wednesday, April 28 Winds: E, ENE, SbE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: The west end of Jamaica NW 4 leagues.

The first part squally with rain and winds variable, the middle and latter moderate and cloudy.

Thursday, April 29 Winds: SbE, NW, N, S. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Pt. Pedarra E 1/2 S 6 leagues, the high land of Blewfields NE 1/2 E 4 leagues.

D:o weather. At 1/2 past 4 p.m. sprung the topmast. D:o got him down, set the carpenters to make another. At 6 the high land of Blewfields ENE 3 or 4 leagues. At 7 a.m. got up the topmast and rigged him and set the topsail.

Friday, April 30 Winds SE, SbW. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: The high land of Blewfields N 4 leagues. Point Pedarra E 1/2 S 4 leagues.

D:o weather. At 1/2 past 7 p.m. spoke with the John and Sarah transport from Porto Bello for Port Royall who spared 1151 w of bread in 4 tierces. Began serving 1/2 w bread and w yam to each man per

day.

Saturday, May 1 Winds: SSW, E, NNE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Pt. Pedarra ENE 6 leagues.

Little wind and clear weather. At 1/2 past 10 p.m. spoke with the Kings Neston [ship] from Porto Bello for Port Royall.

Sunday, May 2 Winds: SSW, NNE, SW. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Pt. Pedarra NE 4 or 5 leagues.

D:o weather. Winds variable, the boats towing ahead.

Monday, May 3 Winds: SW, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Round hill NEb 1/2 N 6 leagues.

These 24 hours little wind and cloudy with small rain. At 2 p.m. sent the yawl on board the sloop that lay off. At 3 she returned and informed us the sloop came from Black River laden with timber for Port Royall for his majesty's use and destitute of provisions. D:o spared them 20 pieces of beef and 40 w of tire roass [?]. At 8 tacked and stood to the southward. At 4 a.m. tacked and stood to the northward. At 1/2 past 8 tacked and stood to the southward.

Tuesday, May 4 Winds: SSE, SE, E. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Portland Point EbN 8 leagues.

D:o weather. At 4 a.m. tacked to the southward. At 9 D:o tacked to the northward.

Wednesday, May 5 Winds: E, SW, Calm, ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: D:o Point EbS 4 leagues.

Moderate and clear weather, winds

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variable. At 8 a.m. sent the yawl on board the Ratsburn transport who spared us one cask of bread and two barrels of water.

Thursday, May 6 Winds: SE, EbS, ESE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: D:o Point East 4 leagues.

The first part moderate, the middle and latter fresh gales and cloudy. At 6 p.m. tacked to the eastward, at 12 tacked to the northward. At 4 a.m. tacked to the eastward, at 8 tacked to the northward.

Friday, May 7 Winds: ENE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: D:o Point East 3 leagues.

These 24 hours fresh gales and hazy weather. At 6 p.m. tacked to the southward. At 2 a.m. tacked to the northward.

Saturday, May 8 Winds: ESE. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Blank

D:o weather. At 3 p.m. tacked to the southward, at 6 D:o tacked to the northward, at 8 D:o tacked to the southward, at 1/2 past 1 a.m. tacked to the northward, at 4 D:o tacked to the southward. At 7 spoke with the Ratsburn transport who spared us two cask of bread. It blowing very hard and having but one butt of water on board, bore away for Wicky Wood to water the sloop, fix our rigging, and to clean the boats.

Sunday, May 9 Winds: SEBe, NNE, ESE. At an anchor in Wicky Wood road.

The first part fresh gales and hazy, the middle and latter little wind and cloudy. At 1 p.m. came to anchor in Wicky Wood road and sent the boat ashore for water. D:o heeled and scrubbed the sloop. Came aboard a canoe with wood. D:o came aboard the boat with water and 4 quarters of fresh beef containing 295 pieces. The boat employed in watering the sloop.

Monday, May 10 Winds: ESE, E, EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: Portland Point NEbN 6 leagues.

These 24 hours moderate and cloudy weather. The boat employed in watering the sloop. At 5 p.m. came aboard a canoe with some wood. D:o came aboard the boat with water and 4 quarters of fresh beef weight 398 pounds. At 1/2 past 9 p.m. weighed out of Wicky Wood road and stood to the east. The two after shrouds on the larboard side gave way.

Tuesday, May 11 Winds: EbN. No courses. Bearing and Distance at Noon: D:o Point ENE 3 leagues.

These 24 hours strong gales and hazy. At 4 p.m. tacked to the southward, at 6 tacked to the northward, at 1/2 past 7 tacked

to the southward, at 7 a.m. tacked to the northward. A great sea from the east.

Wednesday, May 12 Winds: EbN, ENE, EbN. No courses. At an anchor in Wicky Wood Road.

Strong gales and hazy, the wind blowing hard and a very great sea and we shipped a deal of water and finding we lost ground, bore away for Wicky Wood Road. At 2 p.m. came to anchor in Wicky Wood Road in 3 fathom. At 1/2 past D:o one of the men of war bore away. At 1/2 past 3 came in a snow [similar to a brig] and anchored here. At 4 D:o came in his Majesty's ship the Lyon. At 7 came to anchor 2 leagues distant a man of war. Found the shrouds faulty. D:o set up two preventer shrouds. Sent the yawl to Mich River on board the merchant ships to borrow some bread. At 2 a.m. she returned with 3 bags. At 6 D:o came in a merchant ship and anchored here. D:o sent the yawl ashore with 3 casks for water.

Thursday, May 13 Winds: EbN, NNE, E. No courses. At an anchor in Carlisle Bay, Jamaica.

Strong gales and hazy weather. Cut up some old canvas for 19 frocks and 13 trousers and served out to the men that went on the Florida [Keys] Expedition in lieu of their own frocks and trousers they cut up to make sails to bring the prize sloop away, she having no sails on board. At 6 p.m. came aboard in a shore boat 6 casks of water. At 8 D:o sent the boat for more water. At 3 a.m. she returned with 6 casks of water. At 1/2 past 6 sent her again for water. Came aboard in the yawl 4 quarters of fresh beef weight 722 pounds. D:o came aboard 9 bags of bread from on board his Majesty's ship the Lyon. [There are no remarks covering their movement from Wicky Wood Road to Carlisle Bay]

Signed: E. Herbert [Captain, HMS Tyger]

The log ends here.

All the boats arrived safely at Port Royal, Jamaica with all hands except the two seamen who had died of natural causes.. No record of the schooner's voyage after she parted company with the captain has yet been found.

The complete story of HMS Tyger's fateful voyage based on the log and the records of the court martials can be found in John Viele's book, The Florida Keys, Volume 2 - True Stories of the Perilous Straits published by Pineapple Press in 1999

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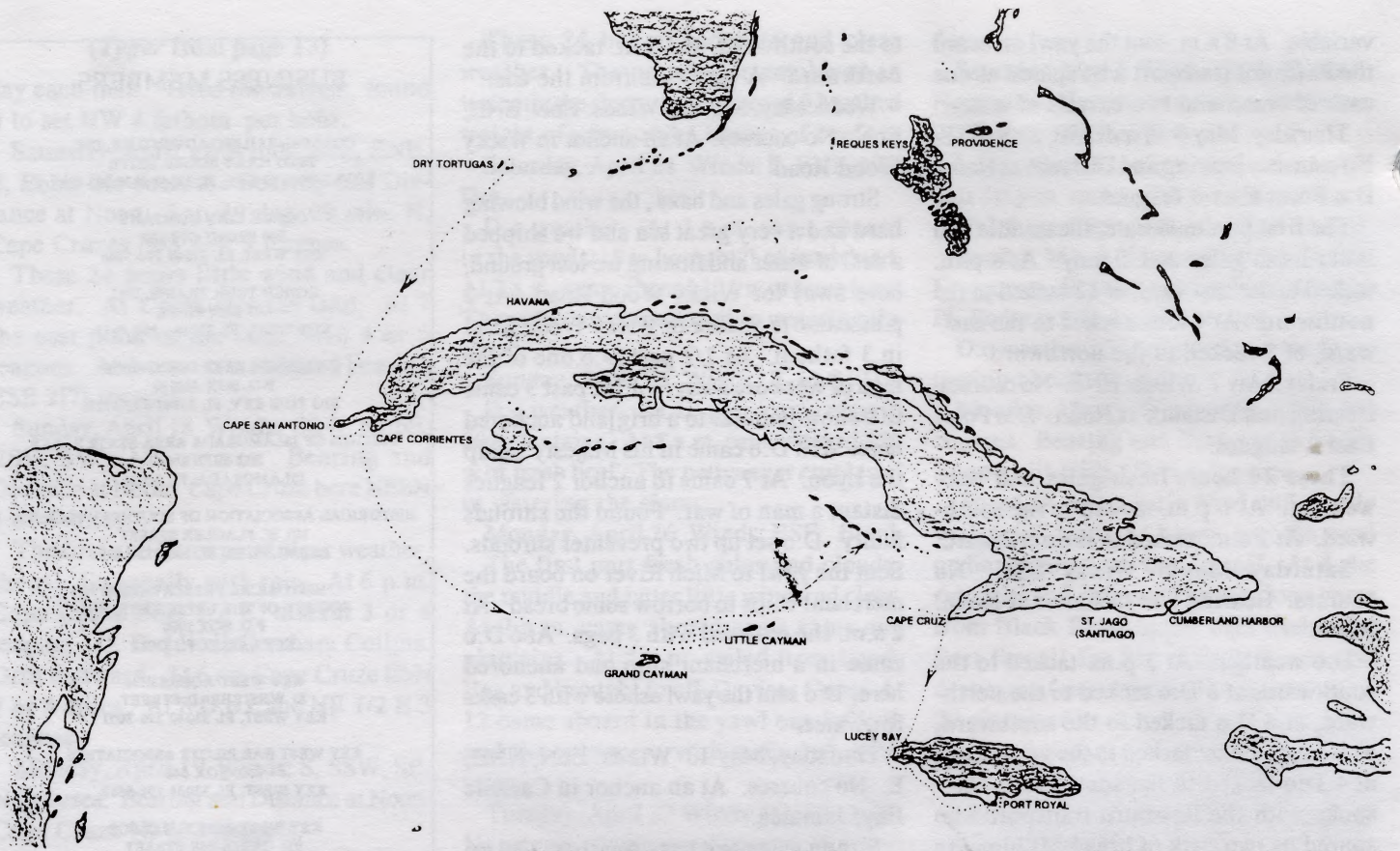
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Track of HMS *Tyger*'s boats and captured sloop from Garden Key, Dry Tortugas to Port Royal, Jamaica. Drawing by John Viele.

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