



Save the Western Union



The Schooner Western Union the Flagship of Key West and the State of Florida

**A Living, Working Museum and the
Most Important Piece of Key West
Nautical History We Still Have**



Save the Western Union



The Schooner Western Union

- Fabricated in the Arch Shipyards in the Cayman Islands
- Constructed and launched off Simonton beach in Key West in 1939.
- Length 92' on deck & 126' overall, beam 24', draft 7.5', masts 65', displacement 218 tons
- Hull is yellow pine, frame and stringers are mahogany, and spars are Douglas fir
- Twin GM 671 six cylinder diesel engines
- Speed 8 knots under power, 12.8 knots under sail



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1939 Simonton Beach





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1939 Simonton Beach





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Working for the Company

- Commissioned by Thompson Enterprises under contract with Western Union Company
- Logged more than 30,000 miles maintaining communications cables that connected Key West with Cuba and the rest of the Caribbean
- During WWII served as an auxiliary submarine picket ship & maintained critical comms links
- Sailed the Caribbean and South Atlantic until 1974 when she was sold by the Western Union Company



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Working Cable at Sea





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1974 - 1997

- In 1974 she was converted into a passenger vessel and operated out of Key West
- In 1976 she participated in Operation Sail in New York City as part of the United States Bicentennial
- On 16 May 1984 she was placed on the National Register of Historic Places
- In 1984 she was sold to Vision Quest and used for a troubled youth program
- In 1997 she was purchased by HTA and operated with sunset and day sails and charter trips.



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2006-2013

- November 2006 SWUPS was established to restore and preserve the schooner as a working museum commemorating Florida's seafaring heritage.
- October 2007 HTA donated the schooner to SWUPS.
- In 2008 a major refit was needed & the "Save the Union" campaign was launched.
- \$1.2 million in donations & grants received from private citizens, the TDC & HFKF for the restoration.
- April 2011 Western Union re-launched.
- 2012 designated as **Flagship of the State of Florida**
- She continued sailing until July 2013.



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2010 On the Hard in Truman Annex





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Flagship of the State of Florida





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2014 and the future

- When sailing again we expect her to continue to serve the locals, schools, NFP groups, tourist visitors, corporate groups, etc.
- When sailing the Schooner Western Union pays for her operations with a little set aside for annual maintenance
- She needs a significant refit now to meet Coast Guard passenger sailing requirements



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Fundraising Focus

- Bight Board Support to be matched by the State of Florida, 2 for 1
- Local Fundraising including matching grants
- Crowdfunding site <http://schoonerwesternunion.causevox.com/>
- BP claim



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Thank you for this opportunity
to talk about how the
City of Key West and the State of Florida
can help **Save the Western Union**

We must preserve our maritime heritage

Are there any questions?

<http://schoonerwesternunion.causevox.com>

Schooner Western Union Preservation Society