

# SMALLER CRUISE SHIP TO STAY OVERNIGHT AT MALLORY DOCK

By Mandy Miles - September 19, 2024

MAYOR REMOVES  
VICE  
MAYOR

P. 3



American Cruise Line's American Glory cruise ship arrives in Key West for a christening ceremony on Jan. 20 at Mallory Square. LARRY BLACKBURN/Keys Weekly

The first regular meeting of Key West's newly assembled city commission saw the approval of regular, overnight visits by a small cruise ship to Mallory Dock — despite some lawmakers' concerns and a potential derailing of a three-year agreement.

American Cruise Line, which operates domestically registered ships only in U.S. ports of call, arrives at Key West in the evening and spends 34 hours here, enabling its passengers to spend more time doing more activities in Key West, including fishing charters and nighttime tours.

The ship also leaves its dock for an hour or so each evening so as not to obstruct the sunset view at Mallory Square.



At the start of the Sept. 12 meeting, several speakers, including those from Safer Cleaner Ships, which for years has advocated for smaller and fewer cruise ships in Key West, spoke in support of a three-year agreement for American Cruise Line to use Mallory Dock.

"This partnership benefits local businesses that never thought they could thrive from the cruise industry in Key West," local business owner Sarah Compton told the commission on Sept. 12.

She added support from business owners who could not attend the meeting, including tour operator David Sloan, whose nighttime tours at Fort East Martello are now available to ACL's "high-spending passengers," as Compton identified them.

The commission's discussion questioned the wisdom of allowing ACL ships so much access to Mallory Dock to the potential detriment of other smaller ships that may want to visit Key West. But only one other small ship has expressed such interest and it only visits once or twice a year.

A campaign graphic for Tim Root, Chairman of KeysEnergy. On the left is a portrait of Tim Root. To his right is a quote: "As Chairman of KeysEnergy, I will continue to work for lower rates, reliable infrastructure, and a clean energy future." Below the quote are sections for 'PRIORITIES' and 'ACCOMPLISHMENTS'. The priorities listed are: #1 Ensuring ALL residents have power restored as soon as possible during hurricanes; #2 Securing an additional \$15 million in grants for storm hardening pole replacement projects and upgrading the resiliency of our transformers; #3 Lowering rates by reducing the budget and proper strategic planning. The accomplishments listed are: #1 Completed the James Street main office renovation on time and in budget; #2 Over \$200,000 in negotiated construction contract savings on new Stock Island facility; #3 Installed solar at city hall parking lot and secured an additional 3.5 gigawatts of solar power. On the right is a 'Re-elect TIM ROOT' logo with a small portrait of him and the text 'UTILITY BOARD GROUP C' and 'facebook.com/VoteTimRoot'. At the bottom, it says 'Re-Elect Chairman TIM ROOT, Utility Board' and 'Paid and approved by Tim Root for Utility Board Group C'.

Evan Haskell of Safer Cleaner Ships commended McAlearney for negotiating the agreement with ACL, which could bring \$500,000 of revenue into Mallory Dock the first year, compared to a total of \$427,000 that came into the dock pre-COVID in 2018 and 2019.

"I think Steve did a great job negotiating a very favorable agreement for the city," Haskell said.

Newly elected commissioner Monica Haskell, the mother of Evan and Arlo Haskell of SCS, had no formal role with the group. She did not recuse herself and voted in support of the agreement.



In other, slightly contentious, commission news, lawmakers voted to reappoint Bob Dean to the Key West Housing Authority board despite objection from commissioner Sam Kaufman, who said he wanted to see newer faces on the board, as Dean was first appointed 51 years ago in August 1973.

"Ultimately, I really believe we need newer people on this particular board, and ultimately to increase the communication and transparency between the housing authority and the city," Kaufman said, recalling a dispute in 2021, when it was revealed that a public housing project was named for a local leader of the Ku Klux Klan. The community was ultimately renamed, but only, Kaufman said on Sept. 12, after he was made to feel "intimidated and unwelcome" by the board when Kaufman attended a meeting to request the name change.



Trending  
**ALLEGED COCAINE TRAFFICKING RING COULD PUT THESE FLORIDA KEYS RESIDENTS IN PRISON FOR DECADES IF CONVICTED**

"In fact, at one meeting, Mr. Dean asked, 'Who is that Kaufman guy?' I was vice mayor of the city commission at the time," Kaufman said.

Commissioner Monica Haskell mentioned term limits when considering the reappointment of Dean to the housing authority board, but was told that the federal Housing & Urban Development department that oversees housing authorities does not call for term limits.

The commission voted on Sept. 12 to reappoint Dean despite a "no" vote by Kaufman. Five days later, at a short Sept. 17 budget meeting, Mayor Dee Dee Henriquez removed Kaufman's title of vice mayor.

"I thank him for his service, and will create a resolution for the Oct. 10 meeting to appoint commissioner Clayton Lopez as vice mayor until the end of his term in November," Henriquez said. "At the conclusion of his term, I will appoint commissioner Lissette Carey vice mayor, provided they both accept."

The meeting adjourned immediately following the mayor's announcement and there was no discussion. The vice mayor conducts public meetings in the absence of the mayor.

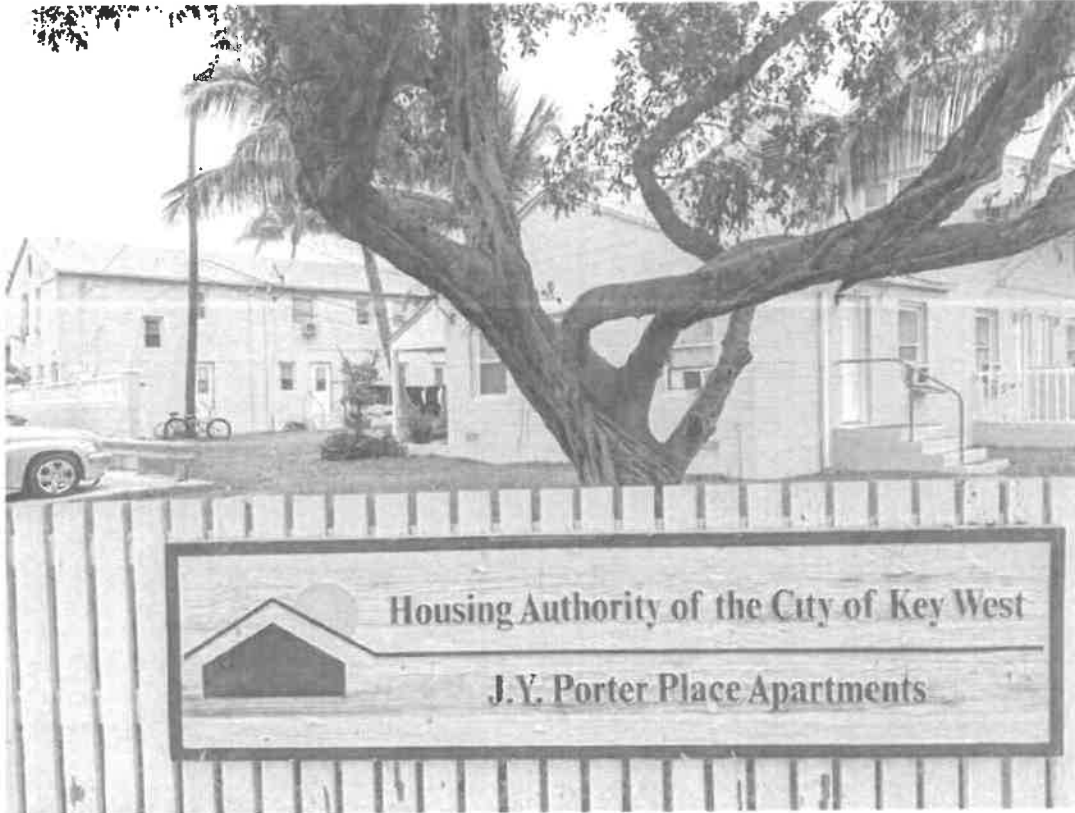


### MANDY MILES

Mandy Miles drops stuff, breaks things and falls down more than any adult should. An award-winning writer, reporter and columnist, she's been stringing words together in Key West since 1998. "Local news is crucial," she says. "It informs and connects a community. It prompts conversation. It gets people involved, holds people accountable. The Keys Weekly takes its responsibility seriously. Our owners are raising families in Key West & Marathon. Our writers live in the communities we cover - Key West, Marathon & the Upper Keys. We respect our readers. We question our leaders. We believe in the Florida Keys community. And we like to have a good time." Mandy's married to a saintly — and handy — fishing captain, and can't imagine living anywhere else.

# KKK CONNECTION PROMPTS KEY WEST HOUSING BOARD TO RENAME PUBLIC HOUSING COMPLEX

By **Mandy Miles** - April 23, 2021



*Public housing officials in Key West are in the process of changing the name of JY Porter Place apartments in light of concerns about Porter's Ku Klux Klan connections. The complex will be named for Lang B. Milian, the city's second black commissioner. MANDY MILES/Keys Weekly*

**T**he board of the Key West Housing Authority on April 19 voted unanimously to change the name of JY Porter Place public housing apartments in light of concerns about Porter's connections to the Ku Klux Klan. The same board is also committed to making its meetings more accessible to the public and to creating a resident advisory board to give residents of public housing a voice.

The JY Porter Place housing complex at the end of White Street will be renamed, as proposed by City Commissioner Clayton Lopez, for Lang B. Milian, the second black man ever elected to the Key West city commission in 1971.

Key West elected its first black city commissioner, Robert Gabriel, in the first decade of the 1900s. A public housing complex in Bahama Village is named for him.



Following the April 19 name-change vote, housing authority commissioner Annette Mobley told Lopez, "You've been making me smile all day with this."

City Commissioner Sam Kaufman had brought Porter's KKK connection to the housing board's attention in October and initially met with resistance from three of the five board members, who dismissed Kaufman's suggestion and questioned whether JY Porter or his son was a local Klan leader.

Lopez followed up with a letter on April 16 to the Housing Authority board that recognized the commissioners' decades of honorable service, but also expressed regret over the potentially divisive name. Lopez wrote that despite the contributions of Dr. Porter as the state's first health officer, "the darker side of that history" must also be recognized.

"I would like to offer a possible solution in the hope of avoiding further division in our community over this issue," Lopez wrote, suggesting the complex be named for Milian.

"Doing this would keep the historic perspective we all love, while casting no further aspersion on the name of Dr. Porter," Lopez wrote. "It would again allow us to concentrate on those issues that unite us and on which we can work together, rather than those that separate us and divert our attention from our greater missions of service to our neighbor."

After publicly criticizing the housing authority board for its lack of accessibility and failure to provide online links to its meetings, Kaufman thanked the board on April 19.

"This is a great day for Key West," Kaufman told the board. "We are One Human Family and now my kids will learn about what you did for them. The message you're sending to the community (with the name change) is wonderful."



Trending  
**NAVY HOUSING AT SIGSBEE PLAGUED WITH PROBLEMS**

The name change will not be finalized until the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) approves it. But the Key West Housing Authority's executive director, Randy Sterling, said he will bring the matter to HUD's attention in the coming weeks.

At the close of the housing authority board meeting, the board's new director of communications, Peter Batty Sr., told the board and the public that they are moving forward with increased public access, virtual meeting links and the creation of an advisory board to address concerns from residents of the city's public housing complexes.



**MANDY MILES**

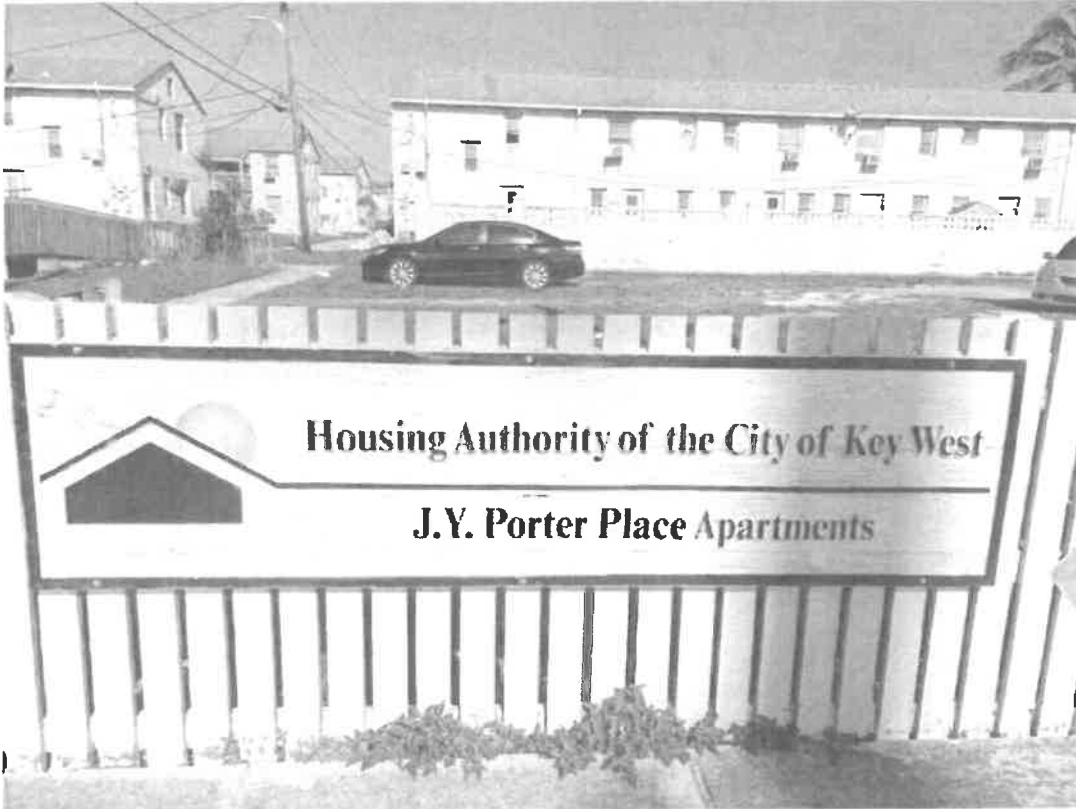
Mandy Miles drops stuff, breaks things and falls down more than any adult should. An award-winning writer, reporter and columnist, she's been stringing words together in Key West since 1998. "Local news is crucial," she says. "It informs and connects a community. It prompts conversation. It gets people involved, holds people accountable. The Keys Weekly takes its responsibility seriously. Our owners are raising families in Key West & Marathon. Our writers live in the communities we cover - Key West, Marathon & the Upper Keys. We respect our readers. We question our leaders. We believe in the Florida Keys community. And we like to have a good time." Mandy's married to a saintly — and handy — fishing captain, and can't imagine living anywhere else.





## KEY WEST HOUSING PROJECT MAY BE NAMED FOR A KLAN LEADER; SOME WANT TO RENAME IT

By **Mandy Miles** - February 18, 2021



*A city commissioner wants to change the name of a housing complex named for J.Y. Porter, prominent doctor — and Ku Klux Klan leader. SAM KAUFMAN/ Contributed*

Tuesday's meeting of the Key West Housing Authority board devolved into confusion and hostility that was heightened by the chairman's abrupt and indignant departure after a city commissioner asked that the name of Porter Place public housing apartments be changed.

The housing complex at the corner of White and Eaton streets was named 81 years ago for J.Y. Porter Sr., a prominent resident and, according to research by historian Arlo Haskell, a leader of the local Ku Klux Klan.

At the time of its naming, the apartment complex was designated a whites-only housing facility, City Commissioner Sam Kaufman told the housing commissioners on Tuesday.

Three of the housing authority's five commissioners are old enough to recall the naming in 1940. Chairman Frank Toppino is 97. Vice Chair Bob Dean is 89 and Commissioner Roosevelt Sands is 90. Commissioner John Parks, Jr. is 79 and Commissioner Annette Mobley is 68, according to online voting records.

But Kaufman's efforts to get the name changed did not go smoothly.

Housing Authority Executive Director Randy Sterling told the housing board that his staff spent significant time researching the matter, but were unable to definitively confirm whether J.Y. Porter Sr. or J.Y. Porter Jr. had held the title of Exalted Cyclops of the Key West chapter of the KKK. Sterling recommended that the board deny the renaming request.

"Due to the lack of conclusive evidence, we can't recommend changing the name," Sterling said.

In the three minutes allowed each speaker from the public, Kaufman presented evidence from three local historians who had concluded with near certainty that J.Y. Porter Sr., the compound's namesake, was also a local Klan leader.

"The recommendation of the director is woefully inadequate and unreasonably obtuse," Kaufman said during his three minutes. "The overwhelming evidence is that both J.Y. Porter Jr. and Sr. were Klan members."

The 1921 charter of the Key West chapter of the KKK bears the exact same name as the sign at Porter Place Apartments — J.Y. Porter, with no indication of Jr. or Sr.





A 1921 charter of the Key West chapter of the Ku Klux Klan lists J.Y. Porter as the Klan's 'Exalted Cyclops.' SAM KAUFMAN/ Contributed

Kaufman's time ran out before he could finish his prepared comments and Chairman Frank Toppino refused to grant him an extra minute to finish.



Trending  
**ALLEGED COCAINE TRAFFICKING RING COULD PUT THESE FLORIDA KEYS RESIDENTS IN PRISON FOR DECADES IF CONVICTED**

"You can't indulge me one more minute?" Kaufman asked incredulously.

Toppino refused. Another member of the public, Patricia Schwermer, used her three minutes to read the remainder of Kaufman's comments, which ended with, "You have an opportunity to make a statement by removing the vestiges of racism from a place dedicated for white residents only, J.Y. Porter Place, and rename the public facility with something more consistent with our One Human Family community values. I understand that you will likely follow the recommendation of your executive director and staff. Such a decision will not end this controversy. I strongly believe that our community, especially our young people, will not stand for this offensive symbol remaining on public land."

Toppino then said, "Let's vote no and move on to something more important."

Board member John Parks moved to deny the renaming request, but the motion died for lack of a second.

Housing authority commissioner Annette Mobley, one of the board's two black commissioners, then said she supported the name change. "In the words of John Lewis, 'We are better than this.'" But her motion also died for lack of a second.



Commissioner Roosevelt Sands Jr., the board's other black commissioner, suggested the board continue the conversation until all the facts are known.

"Whoever Sam Kaufman is has turned this into a racial issue. I don't think we ought to take any action," an indignant Toppino told the board, then stormed out of the meeting.

"This really made me angry," vice chair Bob Dean said. "I've been on this board 49 years. We've served thousands of black people and white people. No one on this board is a racist."



Trending  
**FEDS BUST 22 FLORIDA KEYS SUSPECTS IN COCAINE TRAFFICKING CASE**

When reached by phone after the meeting, board member John Parks Jr. pointed to J.Y. Porter Sr. 's contributions in eliminating yellow fever from Key West, but also said that he would support the renaming if it is proven with certainty that he was also a Klan leader. "It'd be like convicting a person without evidence," Parks said. "I don't want to change it without being sure. But Sam Kaufman has caused so many problems. We can't let this disrupt the work of the housing authority."

When reached after the meeting, Kaufman said his efforts to rename the complex are not over, and he envisions a community meeting to help spread the word about the issue.



**MANDY MILES**

Mandy Miles drops stuff, breaks things and falls down more than any adult should. An award-winning writer, reporter and columnist, she's been stringing words together in Key West since 1998. "Local news is crucial," she says. "It informs and connects a community. It prompts conversation. It gets people involved, holds people accountable. The Keys Weekly takes its responsibility seriously. Our owners are raising families in Key West & Marathon. Our writers live in the communities we cover - Key West, Marathon & the Upper Keys. We respect our readers. We question our leaders. We believe in the Florida Keys community. And we





By the Council of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Invisible Empire, Inc.

# IMPERIAL PALACE, INVISIBLE EMPIRE, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

(INCORPORATED)

To All Who Read and Respect These Lines, Greeting:

Whereas, The Imperial Wizard hath received a petition from the following named citizens of the Invisible Empire, *J. Y. Porter, EXALTED CYCLOPS; J. Vernon Hittis, KLALIFF; C. H. Kitchen, KLOKARD; A. H. Mills, KLUDO; J. Frank Roberts, KLORAPP; William F. Maloney, KLABEE; Geo. A. T. Roberts, KLADO; Curt Manning, KLARDO; Howard J. Sawyer, KLEXTER; F. F. Hoffman, J. M. Wilson, and P. R. Kaufman, KLOKANN; and W. A. Cooper, NIGHT HAWK, et al.*

trusting for themselves and others and their successors to be authorized a Klan of the Order under the name and number of **KLAN OF THE KEYS** Klan No. **2042 B6** within of **30 FLORIDA 00**, and same to be located **3000 KEY WEST 000**, in the County of **MONROE 000** State of **FLORIDA 00** United States of America, and they having given assurance of their fidelity to the order and their competency to render the service required, and their ready willingness to take upon themselves and their successors the responsibilities thereof, and their serious determined purpose to rightly use and not abuse the powers, privileges and prerogatives conferred on them as such, and be faithful and true in all things committed to them;

Now Know Ye, that I, the Imperial Wizard, Emperor of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, on this the *Twenty-sixth* day of the *Second* Month of the Year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred and *Twenty-one*, and on the *Resurrection* day of the *Seventeenth* sabbath of the *Sacramental* Month of the Year of the Klan *LXX*, and in the *Sixth* Cycle of the third Reign of our Incarnation, by authority in me vested, do constitute this

## Charter

to the aforesaid petitioners, their associates and successors, under the name and number aforesaid from the day and date hereon.

The said Klan is hereby authorized and empowered to do and to perform all such acts and things as are permitted by the Klans, Laws, Imperial Edicts, Edicts, Manifestos and Usages of the Order, and to enjoy all the rights, privileges and prerogatives authorized by the Constitution thereof and Chapters and Klans and entitled to retainly preserve and perpetually practice the principles of a pure Christian Home, Womanhood and White Supremacy, ever keeping it mind and heart the sacred mission, peculiar purpose, main aim and chief duty of the Order, which is to be their highest. The Imperial Wizard, in manifest abundance to the Constitution of the Order, a full and complete knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of every member of the Invisible Empire, to the end that the program, power, purpose and objectives of the Order be fully understood, the knowledge of the faithful, self-sacrificing worthy and noble achievement of our fathers be not lost to memory, and all those things for which our fathers were so bravely and so nobly sacrificed, and to protect, preserve and perpetuate, to diligently do and to conscientiously maintain, and that they be ever true to the great, noble and holy of the Order.

A worthy charge be to hold fast to the *Golden Rule* of our fathers, and to keep their sacred promises and obligations, and true to the traditions of our fathers, and ever every duty of duty, in all the responsibilities of the Order, and to be true to the Order, without fail, without fear and without shame.

The Imperial Wizard has and holds the full and undivided authority, right and power to suspend or revoke this Charter and to amend all the rights, prerogatives and immunities conferred herein, for the neglect or the refusal on the part of the said Klan to comply to and conform with the Klans, Constitution, Laws, Imperial Decrees, Edicts, Manifestos, Edicts, Usages and Instructions, or its failure to respect the Usages of the Order, as pronounced by and established under the respective Authority of same.

In Testimony Whereof, I, the Imperial Wizard, Emperor of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, do hereby affix the Great Imperial Seal of the Invisible Empire and transmit therewith my name, and same duly attested. - "Nas Siba Sed Aedon".

Done in the City of Atlanta, Commonwealth of Georgia, United States of America, on the day and date aforesaid written.

By His Majesty

*William F. Maloney*  
Imperial Wizard, Klan No. 2042 B6

*Samuel P. Kennedy*  
Imperial Wizard





# HOUSING AUTHORITY

## OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA

1400 Kennedy Drive – Key West, FL 33040 • Phone: 305-296-5621 • TTY/Florida Relay Service (FRS): 800-955-8771

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: Board of Commissioners  
From: Randy Sterling, Executive Director  
Meeting Date: February 16, 2021  
RE: J.Y. Porter Place Apartments - 301 White Street, Key West, FL 33040

---

#### Background:

The J.Y. Porter Place Apartments complex was named after Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Sr.<sup>1</sup> (“Dr. Porter, Sr.”), a prominent Key West citizen who served as the State of Florida’s first Health Officer from 1889-1917. Dr. Porter, Sr. was one of the first in his field to identify that mosquitos transmit yellow fever through their bites and he spent his career reforming quarantine and sanitation practices in an effort to control the deadly disease.

Dr. Porter, Sr. had a son circa 1882 and named him Joseph Yates Porter, Jr. (“Porter, Jr.”). Porter, Jr. became a physician like his father and he resided with his wife and children in the City of Key West at 429 Caroline Street<sup>2</sup>, the same home his father lived in his entire life.

On November 2, 2020, City Commissioner Samuel J. Kaufman emailed a Knights of the Ku Klux Klan issued charter from February 26, 1921 to Housing Authority staff. The name “J.Y. Porter” is listed on the charter as a citizen that sent a petition to the Imperial Wizard asking to be instituted a Klan of the Order under the name Klan of the Keys. In an email to staff dated December 22, 2020, Commissioner Kaufman suggested that, based on the document, the Housing Authority Board consider changing the name of the J.Y. Porter Place Apartments located at 301 White Street.

This item previously came before the Board on December 21, 2020 and again on January 19, 2021. At the January meeting, the Board asked staff to continue to research this matter, contact HUD for advice, and to bring the item back at a future meeting.

#### Action Statement:

Following the December 21, 2020 meeting, Housing Authority staff reviewed census records and newspaper articles, reached out to experts on matters of the Klan, and spoke with local historians.

#### Findings:

- Monroe County Libraries Historian Tom Hambright reported to staff that he has researched this matter and can find no evidence or documentation as to which Dr. Porter was a member in the KKK. He believes that the name on the charter is that of Porter, Jr. due to the age Dr. Porter, Sr. was at the

<sup>1</sup>The Key West Citizen, August 12, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>The Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.



time of the charter.

- Bob Wolz, Chair of the Sculpture Garden Selection Committee, researched Dr. Porter, Sr. extensively and opined in a letter to Commissioner Kaufman that the name on the charter is more likely that of Porter, Jr. due to his age at the time (40 years old; the average age of the other 11 names listed on the charter is 41 years). The age of Dr. Porter, Sr. in 1921 was 74 years of age. Additionally, the Sculpture Garden Selection Committee received a request to remove Dr. Porter, Sr. from the Sculpture Garden, which was denied due to the lack of evidence.
- David L. Sloan, a local author, publisher, and producer, provided two newspaper articles. The first article shows 3 of the 11 names on the Klan charter also show up as members of the Key West Rotary Club. The second article is a resolution written by Dr. Porter, Sr. on behalf of the Rotary Club defending Mr. Decker (a fellow rotary member whose name is *not* on the Klan charter). According to the article, Mr. Decker was accused of being part of a mob of 15-20 alleged members of the KKK who beat a local coffee shop owner named Mr. Cabeza on December 23, 1921. In retaliation, Mr. Cabeza shot and killed Mr. Decker on Duval Street two days later. While in jail awaiting trial for Mr. Decker's murder, a mob broke Mr. Cabeza out of the jail and subsequently murdered him.
- Arlo Haskell, a local author, historian, and poet, wrote in an email to staff that he "cannot prove it 100% and it may not be possible to prove" regarding his opinion that the J.Y. Porter on the Klan charter was Dr. Porter, Sr. He also provided a news article from January 17, 1922 that reported that a grand jury found that "Mr. Decker was not one of party that whipped coffee shop owner (Mr. Cabeza)" on the night of December 23, 1921.

Staff also contacted HUD regarding changing the name of the development, as directed at the January 19, 2021 meeting. A representative of HUD informed staff that the Housing Authority can request to change the name of a development by sending a statement that describes why the change of name is needed. The HUD Field Office would then review the request for accuracy and completeness and then process the request if there are no questions.

#### Staff Conclusion:

Staff can definitively confirm that the subject property was named after Dr. J.Y. Porter, Sr. However, based upon our research, staff is still unable to determine which J.Y. Porter (senior or junior) is listed on the KKK charter. Historians and experts have differing opinions on the matter but have confirmed that they have no conclusive evidence to determine which Porter is on the charter.

Based upon the finding above, staff cannot recommend the removal of the name J.Y. Porter from the J.Y. Porter Place Apartments located at 301 White Street.

**Emails Between  
Commissioner Samuel Kaufman  
& Randy Sterling**



**From:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**To:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**Subject:** FW: J.Y. Porter Document  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 10:40:13 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

**From:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 22, 2020 8:40 PM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter Document

Randy:

I very much appreciate your response and efforts to bring this to your board.

There is no dispute whether JY Porter Sr. and Jr. were active members of the KKK. When I spoke with Monroe County Historian Mr. Tom Hambright in 2017, that was his opinion especially in light of the prominence of the KKK in KW at that time (early 1920's). Because they shared the same name, Mr. Hambright stated that he could not be sure which was the Exalted Cyclops. However, the attached article shows that JY Porter Sr. was President of the KW Rotary club and associated with several other prominent KKK members. William Decker is associated with infamous the lynching of Manuel Cabeza. George A.T. Roberts is listed on the KKK Charter as well. It is clear that Sr. had the close relationship with other KKK leaders and remained active with his status of President of the Rotary Club in 1920-21 – the same year as the Charter – February 26, 1921.

Does the HA believe that public housing facilities in Key West should bear the name honoring either active or named KKK leadership? Does this really matter? I hope the answer is no. Perhaps your Board would consider changing the name to the "Historic Key West" or "Downtown" to be fair to all concerned.

I am available to discuss this more with you. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and I will continue to make efforts to provide this information.

All the best,

**Samuel J. Kaufman**

*Commissioner, District 2*

City of Key West, Florida

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 22, 2020 10:39 AM

**To:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter Document

Good morning Commissioner Kaufman:

I shared your email with Mr. Castillo and he decided to add this item to last night's agenda for discussion with the Board. He provided the Board with the background and asked the Board for some direction. The Board gave staff direction to find out if J.Y. Porter on the KKK document is the same J.Y. Porter that the housing complex was named after. Any additional information that you have and could provide to clarify this would be helpful. If it is confirmed that this is indeed the same person, then the Board directed staff to contact HUD and ask how we could go about changing the name.

I will keep you posted on any developments.

Best regards,

Randy Sterling  
Deputy Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254



**From:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 18, 2020 9:28 AM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter Document

Hi Randy:

I would like to follow up with you on this issue when time permits. Perhaps we can find a time. Please let me know.

Is it possible to make this item an action item for your Board of Directors on January 19, 2021. That day follows the MLK holiday which makes it even more appropriate. My intention is to call a community meeting on this subject as well. I wanted to give you the courtesy of advance knowledge of my plans so we can work together as much as possible on this issue.

I can also answer any questions or concerns that you or your board might have.

Thank you,

## **Samuel J. Kaufman**

*Commissioner, District 2*

**City of Key West, Florida**

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 3:36 PM  
**To:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter Document

Thank you for the quick response. I will review with Mr. Castillo.

Randy Sterling  
Deputy Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254



**From:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 3:32 PM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter Document

Yes – agreed Mr. Sterling.

See attached!

## **Samuel J. Kaufman**

*Commissioner, District 2*

**City of Key West, Florida**

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** Samuel Kaufman <[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Cc:** Monroe Holloway <[monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:monroe.holloway@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** J.Y. Porter Document

Good afternoon Commissioner Kaufman,

It was very nice meeting you the other day. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to introduce yourself.

I wanted to follow up on our conversation regarding J.Y. Porter and see if I could get a copy of the document you showed me.

I shared the information with Mr. Castillo and he was not aware of the history either.

Please let me know if you are able to share the document.

Thank you,

Randy Sterling  
Deputy Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254





**The Key West Citizen**

**“Dr. Joseph Y. Porter Honored by KWAH”**

# Dr. Joseph Y. Porter Honored By K.W.H.A.

## Name Selected For White Project; Fort Village Chosen For Colored Units

Wallace B. Kirke, director of the Key West Housing Authority, announced today that both white and colored projects of the authority's housing units had been named by the local authority members.

Joseph Y. Porter Place is the name selected for the white project which will consist of 136 family units situated on the property now purchased on Trumbo Island bounded by the extension of White street beyond Eaton street and the western boundary of the navy air field.

In selecting the name honoring Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, the authority members considered a total of nearly fifty suggestions sent in by interested citizens here. Giving preference to a name that would have a state-wide as well as a local bearing, the name of Dr. Porter was thought to have those qualifications, more so than any other names turned in.

The colored project, located between Division and Virginia streets and Port and Howe streets, has been named Fort Village. This project will contain 84 family units.

Dr. Porter was born October 21, 1847, being nearly 80 years old at the time of his death on March 16, 1927. He attained wide fame throughout the state of Florida for his efficient handling of various epidemics of yellow fever that broke out here and in other cities in the state.

As an outcome of his work in that connection, Dr. Porter became interested in the establishment of a State Health Board, and he is credited as being the founder of that organization. He served as State Health Officer under the Board since its founding in 1889 to 1917, in which year he resigned to enter the medical corps of the army in the World War.

Dr. Porter was widely-known all over the state for his work in fighting yellow fever, also for establishing quarantine regulations governing sailings of ships into Florida ports. His suggestions were first put into effect at Key West, then at Jacksonville and Tampa, later being adopted by practically every port of the nation. He was active in civic matters in Key West for several years.

His two sons, William R. Porter, president of the First National Bank and Dr. J. Y. Porter, Jr., are prominent residents of the city.

As one of those who chose Dr. Porter's name to be honored put it—"naming the white project for Dr. Porter would perpetuate the name that stood for the very thing you expect to accomplish with the housing projects here—better living conditions for the underprivileged".

Other suggestions for the white projects were as follows:

Juan Salas Apartments, Henry M. Flagler Manor Apartments, Cayo Hueso Manor Village, Naval Terrace, Colonial City or Square, Roosevelt City, Liberty Square or

Houses, Unity City, Modern Colonial City, U. S. H. A. Liberty Square, Key West Health City or Square, Gulf Shore Manor, West End Homes, Trumbo-Loxi, Bayshore Homes, Stephen R. Mallory Homes, George W. Allen Manor, and others.

In naming the colored project, the local authority consulted with a committee of colored citizens in the neighborhood selected for the site, who signified their approval of the name chosen. Other suggestions for this project were:

Fredercik Douglass Houses, Booker T. Washington Houses, Douglass Village, James D. Roberts Houses, Nelson English Houses, Shackelford Court, Lincoln Court, Western End Houses, and others.

Email from HUD

RE: Possible Renaming of a HUD Property



**From:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**To:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Possible renaming of a HUD Property  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 11:47:57 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

---

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Date:** January 26, 2021 at 11:30:00 AM EST  
**To:** "Atkins, Victor B" <[Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov](mailto:Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Fernandez, Amner E" <[amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov](mailto:amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Possible renaming of a HUD Property

Thank you Sir. I will relay this information to the Board of Commissioners and get back to you.

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621



**From:** Atkins, Victor B <[Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov](mailto:Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 7:59 AM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Cc:** Fernandez, Amner E <[amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov](mailto:amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Possible renaming of a HUD Property

Hi Randy,

Yes a PHA can change the name of a development. The PHA shall submit the request to change a single development name along with a statement describing why the changes are needed. The FO will review for accuracy and completeness and then process it if there are no questions. You will be notified upon completion.

*Regards,*  
*Victor B. Atkins*  
*Director*  
*Office of Public and Indian Housing*  
*U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)*  
*Miami Field Office, Region IV*  
*Brickell Plaza Federal Building*  
*909 SE First Avenue, Suite 500*  
*Miami, FL 33131*  
*Tel: (305)-520-5085*  
*Fax: (305)-536-5662*  
*[victor.b.atkins@hud.gov](mailto:victor.b.atkins@hud.gov)*

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 6:40 AM  
**To:** Atkins, Victor B <[Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov](mailto:Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Possible renaming of a HUD Property

Good morning Victor,

I just wanted to follow up on the email below.

Thank you,

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254



**From:** Randy Sterling  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 21, 2021 8:02 PM  
**To:** Atkins, Victor B <[Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov](mailto:Victor.B.Atkins@hud.gov)>  
**Cc:** Fernandez, Amner E <[amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov](mailto:amner.e.fernandez@hud.gov)>  
**Subject:** Possible renaming of a HUD Property

Mr. Atkins,

Good evening. The Key West Housing Authority Board gave me direction at Tuesday night's meeting to ask the HUD field office the following questions:

- Would it be possible for the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to rename a HUD property?
- If the answer is yes to the above question, then what would be the process to

rename it? Does HUD need to approve the renaming of the property?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please let me know if you would like to discuss.

Best regards,

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254



**Fifteenth Census of the United States**

**Key West, Florida**



Email from Tom Hambright

Historian – Monroe County Libraries

**From:** Randy Sterling  
**To:** Vanessa Sellers  
**Subject:** Fwd: J.Y. Porter  
**Date:** Friday, February 5, 2021 9:31:15 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

---

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Date:** January 26, 2021 at 6:45:00 AM EST  
**To:** Hambright-Tom <[Hambright-Tom@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:Hambright-Tom@monroecounty-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter

Thank you Sir.

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621 ext.254



**From:** Hambright-Tom <[Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov](mailto:Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2021 1:24 PM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter

I do not have any record of membership of the KKK.  
Tom

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 8:10 AM  
**To:** Hambright-Tom <[Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov](mailto:Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter

**| CAUTION**

Good morning Mr. Hambright,

Thank you for the quick response.

I just have one follow up question so I'm clear on what information you have.

You don't have any information that both Jr. & Sr. were members of the KKK?

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621



**From:** Hambright-Tom <[Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov](mailto:Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 4:35 PM

**To:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>

**Subject:** RE: J.Y. Porter

The only thing I have on the KKK is the charter and because of his age I do not think the senior Porter was the name on it, but I do not have any list or other information was were members of the KKK.

Tom Hambright

**From:** Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 2:04 PM

**To:** Hambright-Tom <[Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov](mailto:Hambright-Tom@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov)>

**Subject:** J.Y. Porter

...

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the County. Whether you know the sender or not, do not click links or open attachments you were not expecting.

Good afternoon Mr. Hambright,

I wanted to see if you can give me some clarification on the J.Y. Porter topic.

When we spoke last time you stated that you did not have any way to determine which Porter (Sr. or Jr.) was listed on the KKK charter. Is this correct?

Also, can you confirm whether J.Y. Porter Sr. was part of the KKK organization?



Thank you again for all your help with this topic.

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621



Letter from Robert "Bob" Wolz

Chair of the Sculpture Garden Selection Committee

# Robert J Wolz

Box 1411, Key West, FL 33040 [RJWolz@Gmail.com](mailto:RJWolz@Gmail.com) 305-797-5657

23 June 2020

Commissioner Sam Kaufman  
City of Key West, FL

Ref: Discussion of Dr. Joseph Yates Porter and the Klan

Dear Commissioner,

The Key West Sculpture Garden was created to memorialize the founders and contributors that make Key West what it is today. Fortunately, the garden was not begun until the early 1990s and thus the belief in one human family is expressed in the selection of the honorees...male and female, black and white, gay and straight.

I was not involved in the first selections around 1993 that included Dr. Porter and I know of no minutes from that time. After the deaths of Dr. Moore and Dr Sanchez who were on the original committee, I was named to the selection committee and elected their chairman around 2010. We have only met once since then as it should be a great honor to be selected. At that time, John Spottswood, Tennessee Williams and Margo Golan were selected. It takes a while to secure sponsors, do the research and create the bust and plaque. Plus the honoree must be a major contributor to Key West and dead for at least 15 years.

It has come to my attention that a charter of the KKK was donated to the Monroe County Library and sadly a number of prominent families seem to have been connected to this hate organization.

Historians, like lawyers, do our best to examine the evidence to arrive at the correct finding. So let's examine what we do know:

1. There are four Joseph Yates Porter graves in Key West Cemetery. The Dr. Porter we honored was the State Health Officer. He discovered the cause of yellow fever and according to his obituary had the largest funeral in Key West history. He was born on October 21, 1847 and died March 16, 1927 at age 79.
2. His son, Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Junior was born on September 26, 1881 and died on August 7, 1955.
3. This KKK charter was issued in February 1921. So who were these other charter members and their associates/ friends and what were their ages.

Dr Joseph Yates Porter, Junior who was born in 1881 would have been 40 years old.

Jeptha Vining Harris, Junior was born in 1865 would have been 55.  
Angus McInis born 1876 age 45  
J. Frank Roberts born 1883- age 38  
William Frank Maloney born 1872 age 49  
A.J. Roberts born 1882 age 39  
Curry Moreno born 1892 age 29  
Howard Sawyer born 1885 age 36  
Frederick F. Hoffman born 1869 age 52  
John Wilson born 1886 age 35  
Ernest Kirkland born 1888 age 33  
W. A Cooper born 1878 age 43

While the KKK group had political connections through the city and county government the membership is consistently the same ages between their 30s and 40s. Tom Hambright of the Monroe County Library is also a member of the selection committee and highly regarded as a historian has researched newspapers and all available records and found no evidence that Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Senior was the klansman. Dr. Porter Senior at age 74 just doesn't fit with the rest.

Our committee feels certain that health commissioner Dr Porter is in this case innocent and his son is more likely the klansman named in the charter.

As a Roman Catholic I am aware of the hate the KKK believes in and their existence was a dark shadow on Key West history. Fortunately, we are much more accepting 99 years later.

Sincerely,

Bob Wolz, Chair Sculpture Garden Selection Committee

Email from Arlo Haskell

**From:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**To:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Call  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 9:30:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[2019-0403-FKCC-Talk.docx](#)

---

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621



**From:** Arlo Haskell <arlohaskell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 28, 2021 11:28 AM  
**To:** Randy Sterling <sterlingr@kwha.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Call

Good talking with you today, Randy, and please pass this info along to your colleague as well.

As I said, I believe that the J.Y. Porter listed on the Klan charter was Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Sr. (1847–1927). I cannot prove it 100% and it may not be possible to prove it. But as a historian who has studied this era, and studied Klan activities here and elsewhere, I feel very confident stating that it was the elder Porter and not the younger.

I talked with David Sloan, who shares my opinion that it was Porter Sr. I will forward you an email from him. He includes a 1920 listing of Rotary members, with JY Porter Sr. as President, and the other members including other known Klan figures. This shows that Porter Sr held a leadership role in a parallel organization whose membership overlapped with the Klan. I think it would be very unusual for Porter Jr. to lead a different organization with these same men. David's # is 305-923-7822

Attaching a few things here:

The document I mentioned on the phone, which I was misremembering as grand jury testimony. In fact it is a letter from the Key West Rotary, where JY Porter Sr. was president, to a Tampa newspaper. It is a long attack on the character of Cabeza and a defense of Decker. See headline "Resolution by the KW Rotarians". The letter is also signed by A.H. McInis, who is also listed on the Klan charter and was sheriff at time of Cabeza's killing.

1 newspaper report of the grand jury proceedings.

The KKK charter

And the text of a talk I gave last year about the origins and activities of the KKK in Key West. This does not deal much with Porter but will give you some context around what was happening.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance,

Arlo

On Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 8:53 AM Arlo Haskell <[arlohaskell@gmail.com](mailto:arlohaskell@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Randy, good to hear from you. I've wondered occasionally if the issue of Porter's history would come up, regarding his name on the Palm Ave housing. I assume that's the context here. I'd be happy to discuss what I've turned up in my research. Give me a call at 305-395-1899

Looking forward,

Arlo

On Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 8:01 AM Randy Sterling <[sterlingr@kwha.org](mailto:sterlingr@kwha.org)> wrote:

Hi Arlo,

Good morning.

Your name was given to me as someone who might have some information on J.Y. Porter.

I wanted to see if you have a few minutes today for a phone call to discuss what information you may have on the topic.

Thank you,

Randy Sterling  
Executive Director  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040  
305 296-5621



Email from David J. Sloan



**From:** Randy Sterling  
**To:** Vanessa Sellers  
**Subject:** Fwd: Porter Sr. and KKK  
**Date:** Thursday, January 28, 2021 11:40:19 AM  
**Attachments:** Rotary\_KKK July 5 1920 Tampa Tribune.png  
Manuel Cabeza Head Lynching Rotary Letter.pdf  
Rotary Negro Woman Comments.png

---

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Arlo Haskell <arlohaskell@gmail.com>  
**Date:** January 28, 2021 at 11:33:22 AM EST  
**To:** Randy Sterling <sterlingr@kwha.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Porter Sr. and KKK

Here is the additional info from David Sloan.

Would it be helpful if David and I presented a more formal letter with our opinion and the supporting facts? Let me know what you think

A

----- Forwarded message -----  
**From:** David L. Sloan <sloaniv@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 11:16 AM  
**Subject:** Porter Sr. and KKK  
**To:** Arlo Haskell <arlohaskell@gmail.com>

Hi Arlo,

Attached, 1920 article listing Key West Rotary officers that match up with the 1921 KKK charter. It specifies that the Rotary president is J.Y. Porter, Sr.

Other officers in Rotary and on klan charter:  
William Decker (alleged to be part of KKK beating of Manuel Cabeza. Cabeza killed him)  
Charles H. Ketchum (listed as C. H. Kitchen, Klomard on KKK Charter)  
George A.T. Roberts (KKK Kladd)

I've also attached a letter delivered to the Tampa Times Feb 2, 1922, by Porter on behalf of the rotary regarding Manuel Cabeza and Decker. The letter speaks for itself.

upload image



David L. Sloan  
**Author, Publisher, Producer**  
**Phantom Press**  
**Key West, Fla.**  
**(305) 923-7822**



**Email Seeking Assistance**

**To:**

**The Florida Historical Society**

**Steven Levitt, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago**

**And the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History**

**From:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**To:** [chris.brotemarkle@myfloridahistory.org](mailto:chris.brotemarkle@myfloridahistory.org)  
**Cc:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**Subject:** Requesting Assistance to Determine if a Housing Authority Property May Have Been Unintentionally Named After a Member of the KKK  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:43:00 AM

---

Good morning,

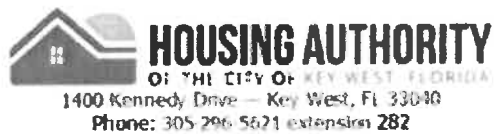
I am writing to see if The Florida Historical Society would be interested in assisting the Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida with some research. There has been an allegation that one of the federal housing projects that the Authority manages is named after a member of the KKK that passed away in 1927. Staff has spent scores of hours researching the subject but is unable to find solid proof to substantiate the allegation of KKK membership.

If this is something your organization would be interested in please let me know and I can share the documents and data that I have been able to find thus far. We will be happy to compensate your staff through whatever rate you may typically charge for this type of assistance or through a donation to the society.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

*Vanessa Sellers*  
Director of Procurement  
& Administration



**From:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**To:** [slevitt@midway.uchicago.edu](mailto:slevitt@midway.uchicago.edu)  
**Cc:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**Subject:** Requesting Assistance to Determine If a Housing Authority Property May Have Been Unintentionally Named After a Member of the KKK  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:33:00 AM

---

Good morning,

I read your paper "Hatred and Profits: Getting Under the Hood of the Ku Klux Klan" and I am writing to see if you would be interested in assisting the Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida with some research. There has been an allegation that one of the federal housing projects that the Authority manages is named after a member of the KKK that passed away in 1927. Staff has spent scores of hours researching the subject but is unable to find solid proof to substantiate the allegation of KKK membership.

If this is something you would be interested in please let me know and I can share the documents and data that I have been able to find thus far. We will be happy to compensate you through whatever rate you may typically charge for this type of assistance or through a donation to the university.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

*Vanessa Sellers*  
Director of Procurement  
& Administration



**From:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**To:** [info@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:info@gilderlehrman.org)  
**Cc:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**Subject:** Requesting Assistance to Determine if a Housing Authority Property May Have Been Unintentionally Named After a Member of the KKK  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:26:00 AM

---

Good morning,

I read Ms. Cindy Alexander's article and charts regarding statistics of KKK membership in 1840-1940 on your website and I am writing to see if your organization would be interested in assisting the Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida with some research. There has been an allegation that one of the federal housing projects that the Authority manages is named after a member of the KKK that passed away in 1927. Staff has spent scores of hours researching the subject but is unable to find solid proof to substantiate the allegation of KKK membership.

If this is something your organization would be interested in please let me know and I can share the documents and data that I have been able to find thus far. We will be happy to compensate the institute for staff's time through whatever rate you may typically charge for this type of assistance or through a donation to the institute.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

*Vanessa Sellers*  
Director of Procurement  
& Administration



Email from Roland G. Fryer

Professor of Economics at Harvard University

**From:** [Fryer, Roland Gerhard](#)  
**To:** [Vanessa Sellers](#)  
**Cc:** [Randy Sterling](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Requesting Assistance to Determine if a Housing Authority Property May Have Been Unintentionally Named After a Member of the KKK  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 27, 2021 8:26:14 PM

---

Hi

Thanks for your email

Unfortunately we never collected data on members in Florida. We have some from Georgia — Athens — but that's as close as we got.

Good luck with it. If you find some data down there I'd be happy to take a look and see if I can be helpful.

All the best  
Roland

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 26, 2021, at 11:33 AM, Vanessa Sellers <[sellersv@kwha.org](mailto:sellersv@kwha.org)> wrote:

Good morning,

I read your paper "Hatred and Profits: Getting Under the Hood of the Ku Klux Klan" and I am writing to see if you would be interested in assisting the Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida with some research. There has been an allegation that one of the federal housing projects that the Authority manages is named after a member of the KKK that passed away in 1927. Staff has spent scores of hours researching the subject but is unable to find solid proof to substantiate the allegation of KKK membership.

If this is something you would be interested in please let me know and I can share the documents and data that I have been able to find thus far. We will be happy to compensate you through whatever rate you may typically charge for this type of assistance or through a donation to the university.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

*Vanessa Sellers*  
Director of Procurement  
& Administration

<image001.jpg>

**Tampa Tribune**

**Rotary Officers**



WICKER PUNCH BASKETS,  
ICE COMPARTMENTS, AIR LIGHT

BECKWITH-RANGE JEWELRY CO.  
"THE HOUSE OF QUALITY"  
419 FRANKLIN ST.

# BROOMS

LEWIS & CLARK BROS. TAMPA, FLA.

**POLK REPUBLICANS NAME TICKET FOR STATE LEGISLATURE**

**Are You Smiling Today?**

You are not if you have a headache, a sore throat, a cough, a cold, or any other ailment. You are not if you are tired, nervous, or depressed. You are not if you are not getting the most out of your life. You are not if you are not smiling today.

**Monday, July 5**  
This Store Will Be Closed All Day

**TUESDAY MORNING**

We Will Continue Our

**SPECIAL SALE OF**

Lightweight Suits in Tricotine and Serge  
30 Per Cent. Off

Voile, Georgette Net and Taffeta Dresses  
Eight and dark colors—  
30 Per Cent. Off

Ladies' White Pumps  
In Kid ..... \$9.90  
In Reinskin ..... \$4.95

**Glenn's**

SHOE and TOGGERY SHOP FOR WOMEN CHILDREN  
309 S. Franklin St. Phone 4482

## LINK EAST AND WEST PORTIONS OF FLORIDA

**KISSIMMEE PEOPLE DISCUSS SHORT ROUTE**

Will Appear Before State Road Department at Tallahassee July 9

The Kissimmee people are discussing a short route for a road from Kissimmee to the coast. The route would pass through the Kissimmee river valley and would be a direct line to the coast. The people are discussing the route and will appear before the State Road Department at Tallahassee on July 9.

## APONKA

The Aponka people are discussing a short route for a road from Aponka to the coast. The route would pass through the Aponka river valley and would be a direct line to the coast. The people are discussing the route and will appear before the State Road Department at Tallahassee on July 9.

**To Protect Little Children—**

**Goodnight**

## PACKARD PIANOS

Moderately Priced — Fully Guaranteed

Prices From \$350.00

Used Instruments at All Prices

Phone 2046  
608 Franklin St.

Turner Music Co.  
608 Franklin St.  
Phone 2046

## RUBIES

For July Birthday Gifts  
SEE OUR BEAUTIFUL STOCK

We Close All Day Today To Celebrate Independence Day  
OPEN ALL DAY THURSDAY

ADAMS JEWELRY COMPANY  
ONLY THE BEST  
614 Franklin Street Phone 4383

Everything You Need For Your Vacation

THE FRENCH SHOP  
608 Franklin St. Phone 2177

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS!

TAMPA PHOTO & ART SUPPLY COMPANY  
314 Twigg St. The Art and Gift Shop Opp. Hillsboro

WEDDING PRESENTS

M. RESSLER  
140 South First Street

A GIFT BEYOND VALUE YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

VIROIL R. BOOZER, Photographer  
218 W. Lafayette St. Phone 4721

If You Would Get the Most for Your Money

THE FIFTH AVENUE SHOP  
218 W. Lafayette St. Phone 4721

ICE CHESTS

STANDARD SCALE AND FIXTURE CO.  
200 South St. Phone 4721

Call 3333 for Drugs

PATRICK'S PHARMACY  
2111 Seventh Ave. Phone 3333

"You're Looking Fine"

The Blakeslee Studio  
Opposite the Hillsboro  
Phone 2245

Get In the Swim

Art E. B. Reed  
144 East Bay Street

Gossard Corsets

2111 Seventh Ave. Phone 3333

Clean, White Clothes

Paine Orderless Dry Cleaners  
141 E. Lafayette St. Phone 7211

Do Electric Massaging

DR. J. HARVEY  
141 E. Lafayette St. Phone 7211

H. J. SMITH  
Watch Maker, Jeweler  
818 Franklin St. Tampa, Fla.

McCall's Patterns

Adeline M. Goldstein  
2111 Seventh Ave. Phone 3333

For Special Occasions

French Pastries  
DAIRY KITCHEN  
Established 1900  
Tampa and Lafayette Sts.

Diamonds

J. LEITER  
141 E. Lafayette St. Phone 7211

The Ludden & Bates

Opus Music Co.  
309 Zack St. Phone 4777

## Pompeian Olive Oil

TANNER REMAINS IN OFFICE FOR PRESENT

MAYOR AND COMMISSION IN DISPUTE

Auto Obtains Race in St. Petersburg—Boatleggers Captured

The Mayor and Commission are in a dispute over the appointment of a new Commissioner. The Mayor wants to appoint a certain person, but the Commission wants to appoint someone else. The dispute is still ongoing.

## KEY WEST

Key West is a beautiful island in the Florida Keys. It is known for its beautiful beaches, clear water, and unique culture. It is a popular destination for tourists and is a great place to visit.

## KEY WEST

Key West is a beautiful island in the Florida Keys. It is known for its beautiful beaches, clear water, and unique culture. It is a popular destination for tourists and is a great place to visit.

## Qualify yourselves, the cheapest

Qualify yourselves, the cheapest. This is a message to encourage people to improve themselves and their skills. It is a call to action for personal growth and development.

Qualify yourselves, the cheapest. This is a message to encourage people to improve themselves and their skills. It is a call to action for personal growth and development.

## Qualify yourselves, the cheapest

Qualify yourselves, the cheapest. This is a message to encourage people to improve themselves and their skills. It is a call to action for personal growth and development.

## Qualify yourselves, the cheapest

Qualify yourselves, the cheapest. This is a message to encourage people to improve themselves and their skills. It is a call to action for personal growth and development.

Following are the names of the new officers who will shoulder the work of the local Rotary Club for the ensuing year: President, Dr. J. Y. Porter, sr.; vice-president, William H. Decker; secretary, Charles H. Ketchum; treasurer, W. Lawton Bates; sergeant-at-arms, George A. T. Roberts; board of governors, William H. Malone, George W. Allen, Dr. J. Y. Porter, sr., William H. Decker, W. Lawton Bates, Dr. William R. Warren and Allan B. Cleare.

**The Tampa Times**

**Resolutions by the Key West Rotarians**

## THE TAMPA D

### RESOLUTIONS BY THE KEY WEST ROTARIANS.

Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, president of the Key West Rotary club, forwards The Times, with a request for publication, the following resolutions adopted by the club in refutation of allegations concerning the murder of W. H. Decker and the lynching of his murderer, Manuel Cabeza, contained in a letter written by Tudela Calvo and an interview with Tomas Cabeza, father of the man who was lynched, recently published in The Times.

The Times has previously printed statements from reputable Tampa business men refuting the allegations that Mr. Decker was of German descent, and testifying to his loyalty and good character.

Statements varying widely from the findings of the committee of the Key West Rotary club, and from sources believed to be authentic, were presented to The Times immediately after the deplorable tragedy, and these statements influenced the publication of the letter and the interview of which the Key West Rotarians complain. Ample evidence was also submitted to sustain the claim

that Cabeza had been awarded recognition for heroism on several occasions in the recent world war.

#### The Resolutions:

To the President and Members of Key West Rotary Club.  
Gentlemen:

The undersigned, constituting a committee appointed by this club to investigate the charges made by one Fernando Tudela y Calvo, in an open letter published in The Tampa Times under date of January 5, 1922, and the alleged statement of Tomas Cabeza, published in The Tampa Times, under date of January 10, 1922, relative to the assassination of William H. Decker, vice-president and a member of this club, by Manuel Cabeza, alias Manuel Head, and the subsequent lynching of the assassin, beg leave to report as follows:

Fernando Tudela y Calvo in his open letter, among other things, says that Manuel Cabeza was a member of the American Legion, and that he went over-seas and fought heroically. We find that while Cabeza did go over-seas, the truth is that Manuel Cabeza served two years in the state's prison by having committed an assault with intent to murder Thomas Lowe, a police officer. We find again that he has been committed to the city and county jail of Monroe county on numerous occasions for violations of the criminal laws; that he was in the county jail of Monroe county, serving a term in said jail for a violation of the criminal laws of the state; that he was drafted and the authorities of this county released him in order that he might be inducted into the army; that he was never a member of the American Legion in Key West. We likewise find that at the time he was lynched he was under in-

dictment charged with the commission of crime against nature.

This man's reputation in this community was that of a desperate criminal.

Calvo said further in said open letter that William H. Decker was a German and always believed in German ideals. Neither of these statements are true. He was living in Key West during the entire period of war, was chairman of important war work committees, and on numbers of occasions reported incidents which looked to him to be disloyal on the part of other people to the authorities.

Calvo further alleged that "Cabeza had for a long period maintained improper relations with a woman who is thought by some to be a mulatto, while others say she is a white woman. . . . She is a remarkably handsome woman." We find upon examination of the facts that this woman is a black negro woman, with black, kinky, woolly hair; that she would not be considered handsome in any respect by the male members of her race, although she may be considered handsome by the distorted imagination of Mr. Calvo. It is alleged by Calvo that Mr. Decker was attracted to this woman and that she always refused to have anything to do with him. This charge is so ridiculously false and unwarranted that we are forced to attribute it to malice and falsehood. Your committee has ascertained that this woman has stated that she did not know Mr. Decker and that she never even heard of him until after he was assassinated.

Calvo says that Cabeza was assaulted in his coffee shop and left lying unconscious on the floor. We find that the facts to be that Cabeza was taken from his coffee

shop to a point at the head of the island and there severely whipped with a strap; that Mr. Decker was not a member of the party of masked men who did the whipping; that Cabeza was not "left unconscious on the floor of his coffee shop." The facts are that Cabeza walked part of the way toward town after he was whipped and was finally assisted in a public automobile to town, which was on the night of the 23rd of December, and he was sufficiently recovered to be on the street on the day of the 24th, and the assassination of Mr. Decker took place on the 25th.

From an inspection of the testimony taken by the coroner's jury we find that Cabeza was in an automobile following Mr. Decker, who was in his car going up Duval street to his home, after having delivered some Christmas presents, on that Christmas morning; that he stopped his car opposite the Cuban club; that the automobile in which the assassin was following his victim came up to the rear of Mr. Decker's car; that Cabeza jumped out of his automobile, ran up to Mr. Decker's car and shot him from the back.

Every witness who testified stated that Cabeza shot Mr. Decker without making any statement to him whatever. Therefore Calvo's allegation that Cabeza said to Mr. Decker before shooting him: "The Germans could not get me on the battlefield, but a German got me after all because he wants my woman" is absolutely false and we are forced to the conclusion that the charge emanated from a mind so charged with venom and spite that it is incapable of detailing the truth.

The facts are that after Cabeza shot Mr. Decker, he jumped into the automobile in which he had fol-

lowed him and tried to escape. He was cornered in the garret of a building on Whitehead street; that he went to a cupola on the top of this building and from there shot twice at John Roker, captain of night police; once at Edward F. Page; twice at Roland Curry, the sheriff; that he surrendered to A. H. McInnis, deputy sheriff, and not to any naval officer.

It is true that a detachment of marines was stationed at the jail, but it is not true that Sheriff Curry dismissed the troops. The facts are that these troops were called into the naval reservation by their commanding officer, after the excitement quieted down.

The statement of Tomas Cabeza is evidently made from information furnished him by others, because nowhere in his "interview" does he claim to have been present, or that he knew any of the circumstances from personal information.

Tomas Cabeza, the reputed father of Manuel Cabeza, claims that he left Key West because he had been warned not to discuss the affair, and that other friends of his son had received similar warnings, many of them becoming alarmed, for their safety had left the place. It is true that many of Manuel Cabeza's friends have left Key West and we are of the opinion that the Island City will be a better and more law-

## DAILY TIMES

abiding place by reason of their departure, and we trust that they will not soon return. We doubt very much that any one has warned this old man to leave Key West.

This man charges among other things that Sheriff Curry after his son was placed in jail, early in the evening, removed all the prisoners from the second floor of the jail to the first floor, except this said son, and afterward disarmed the troops. The facts are that two soldiers were confined in the cell opposite Cabeza, and they testified before the coroner's jury and grand jury that they saw the men take Cabeza, alias Head, out of the cell; that the men came to their cell first; that there was no shot fired in the jail, and that Cabeza was taken out of jail, without having been beaten or hurt; and that there was a number of other persons on the same floor with Cabeza.

We find that both of these statements are without any foundation whatever. We dislike taking up the space to deny the charge that any detachment of marines belonging to our country's naval forces would allow any man or set of men to disarm them. We submit to all who are interested that this old man's statement in regard to the sheriff's disarming the troops is just as true as his other statements and charges.

We find that at about 2 a. m. on the 26th day of December, a party of about 50 men, by a subterfuge, gained access to the sheriff's residence, captured the sheriff and his deputy and after considerable trou-

ble gained access to the jail proper, and took Manuel Cabeza out of jail and lynched him. He was not shot in the jail.

The grand jury at the last term of the circuit court made a thorough investigation of the whole affair and in their presentment fully absolved the sheriff from all blame.

We submit that William H. Decker was a good and loyal citizen, a brave and honorable gentleman, a good provider for his family and loving husband and father, which facts are well known to our entire citizenship, and we deplore the fact that a newspaper such as the Tampa Times would be guilty of lending such a willing ear to such a villainous libel upon the defenseless dead.

W. HUNT HARRIS,  
WM. H. MALONE,  
A. H. M'INNIS.

## Ford's Offer and the Farmers

Henry Ford's comprehensive offer for the Muscle Shoals nitrate plant which the federal government started during the world war, but has not completed, will probably result in a hot struggle in congress by the latter part of this week. The alignment on both sides of this question of acceptance is interesting even to those who may be in-

Tampa Tribune

**“Exonerate Sheriff of Lynching Blame”**



# EXONERATE SHERIFF OF LYNCHING BLAME

## GRAND JURY REPORTS ON HEAD'S DEATH

### Finds That Decker Was Not One of Party That Whipped Coffee Shop Owner

KEW WEST, Jan. 16.—(Special.) —Complete exoneration of Sheriff Roland Curry of Monroe county, and his deputies, of any blame for the lynching Dec. 26 of Manuel Head, murderer of William H. Decker, is contained in the grand jury's report that has just been completed here. The grand jury investigation of the circumstances surrounding the lynching, was ordered by Governor Cary A. Hardee, and the jurors received their instructions from Judge Pierre Br -ing of the Monroe County Circuit court.

The jury's report also shows that Decker was not one of the fifteen or twenty men, who on the night of Dec. 23 beat up Head, stating that Decker on that night was at the Elks Club at the time. None of the men connected with the beating up of Head on Dec. 23 or lynching him on Dec. 26 can be learned, the report says. The complete presentment of the jury

on the case follows:

"We find that Manuel Head was taken out of his coffee shop on the night of Dec. 23, 1921, at about 8 o'clock, and whipped; that a mob composed of about fifteen or twenty men ordered him to leave Key West on account of his living with a negro woman and on account of threats that he had made and also his general reputation; that he refused to divulge the name of any individual in the crowd, and on the morning of Dec. 25 he shot and killed William H. Decker, on Duval street in front of the Cuban Club. Mr. Decker was a very prominent citizen of Key West. After the killing he (Head) sought refuge in the cupola of a building on one of the principle streets of the city of Key West and fired several shots into the crowd that had assembled, but he was forced to give up, knowing that a gas bomb would be used to force him out. With the assistance of the marine corps, the sheriff and his deputies placed Head in the county jail and there Head stated that it was his intention to kill four men.

"He stated his being beaten up would have been avoided by not permitting the negro woman he was living with to come back to him; that the crowd ordered him to leave Key West and he promised them that he would if they would let him go back and sell his coffee shop. At about 6:30 o'clock on Christmas morning he fired into the home of Mr. Decker where Mr. Decker's family was at the time, and Head stated that he did so hoping that Mr. Decker would come to the door or window so that he could kill him.

"When the people of Key West heard of Head firing into Mr. Decker's home and later killing him in the manner he did, the feeling throughout

the city was very intense. Head had a very bad reputation and his name was not only a terror to the officers of the law but to the citizens of Key West in general. The sheriff used every precaution to protect Head until after 2 o'clock in the morning of Dec. 26, when to all appearances there was no danger whatever and no further threats of lynching.

#### Sheriff Not Responsible

We find that under the circumstances neither the sheriff of Monroe County, or his deputies, should be held responsible or accountable for the lynching of Manuel Head, as under the same circumstances, in all probability, any other sheriff in the state would have been caught un-awares and the same thing would have happened.

"The grand jury has made diligent inquiry from the witnesses in the grand jury room and from friends on the outside and have traced down many rumors, but it is absolutely impossible to obtain the names of any of the parties who took Manuel Head out on the night of Dec. 23, or who lynched him.

"And we further find from the evidence before us that while Head stated Mr. Decker was one of his assailants on the night of Dec. 23, he was mistaken in the identity because it appears that on that night, during the time Manuel Head was being assaulted, Mr. Decker was in the Elks Club.

"From our investigation we are of the opinion that the lynching of Head was done by no organized society but by individuals unknown to us. We, the grand jury, exonerate the sheriff and his deputies from any blame or criticism in the lynching of Manuel Head. We have great confidence in the ability and efficiency of Roland Curry, sheriff of Monroe county, and his deputies. Respectfully submitted,

"Benjamin D. Trever, foreman;  
Eugene Albury, clerk; Roscoe Roberts, Shirley Bott, V. A. Johnson, William E. Meek, E. B. Curry, J. E. Singleton, William Marshall, J. W. Pinder, C. Cates, H. Saunders, L. Elwood, C. S. Singleton, J. M. Wilson, J. Curry, H. Bethel and F. W. Roberts.



WIKIPEDIA  
The Free Encyclopedia

# Key West

**Key West** is an island in the Straits of Florida, within the U.S. state of Florida. Together with all or parts of the separate islands of Dredgers Key, Fleming Key, Sunset Key, and the northern part of Stock Island, it constitutes the **City of Key West**.

The island of Key West is about 4 miles (6 kilometers) long and 1 mile (2 km) wide, with a total land area of 4.2 square miles (11 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>[6]</sup> Within Florida, it is 130 miles (210 km) southwest of Miami by air, about 165 miles (266 km) by road.<sup>[7]</sup> Key West is approximately 95 miles (153 km) north of Cuba at their closest points, and 106 miles (171 km) north-northeast of Havana.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

The city of Key West is the county seat of Monroe County, which includes a majority of the Florida Keys and part of the Everglades.<sup>[10][11]</sup> The total land area of the city is 5.6 square miles (14.5 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>[12]</sup> The population within the city limits was 26,444 at the 2020 census.<sup>[3]</sup> The official city motto is "One Human Family".

Key West is the southernmost city in the contiguous United States and the westernmost island connected by highway in the Florida Keys. Duval Street, its main street, is 1.1 miles (1.8 km) in length in its 14-block-long crossing from the Gulf of Mexico to the Straits of Florida and the Atlantic Ocean. Key West is the southern terminus of U.S. Route 1 – the longest north–south road in the United States, as well as State Road A1A, the East Coast Greenway and, before 1935, the Florida East Coast Railway. Key West is a port of call for passenger cruise ships.<sup>[13]</sup> The Key West International Airport provides airline service. Naval Air Station Key West is an important year-round training site for naval aviation due to the tropical weather, which is also the reason Key West was chosen as the site of President Harry S. Truman's Winter White House. The central business district is located along Duval Street and includes much of the northwestern corner of the island.

## History

### Precolonial and colonial times

At various times before the 19th century, people who were related or subject to the Calusa and the Tequesta inhabited Key West. The last Native American residents of Key West were Calusa refugees who were taken to Cuba when Florida was transferred from Spain to Great Britain in 1763.<sup>[14]</sup>

*Cayo Hueso* (Spanish pronunciation: [ˈkajo ˈweso]) is the original Spanish name for the island of Key West. It literally means "bone cay", *cay* referring to a low island or reef. It is said that the island was littered with the remains (bones) of prior native inhabitants, who used the isle as a communal graveyard.<sup>[15]</sup> This island was the westernmost Key with a reliable supply of water.<sup>[16]</sup>

Between 1763, when Great Britain took control of Florida from Spain, and 1821, when the United States took possession of Florida from Spain, there were few or no permanent inhabitants anywhere in the Florida Keys. Cubans

### Key West



An October 2002 NASA image of Key West from space



### Geography

<b>Coordinates</b>	<span><span><span><span><span>24°33′55″N</span> <span>81°46′33″W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span>24.565278°N 81.775833°W</span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>24.565278; -81.775833</span></span></span></span></span> <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Archipelago</b>	Florida Keys
<b>Area</b>	4.2 sq mi (11 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Length</b>	4 mi (6 km)
<b>Width</b>	1 mi (2 km)
<b>Highest elevation</b>	18 ft (5.5 m)
<b>Highest point</b>	<u>Solares Hill</u> , 18 ft (5.5 m) above sea level

City

and Bahamians regularly visited the Keys, the Cubans primarily to fish, while the Bahamians fished, caught turtles, cut hardwood timber, and salvaged wrecks. Smugglers and privateers also used the Keys for concealment. In 1766 the British governor of East Florida recommended that a post be set up on Key West to improve control of the area, but nothing came of it. During both the British and Spanish periods no nation exercised *de facto* control. The Bahamians apparently set up camps in the Keys that were occupied for months at a time, and there were rumors of permanent settlements in the Keys by 1806 or 1807, but the locations are not known. Fishermen from New England started visiting the Keys after the end of the War of 1812, and may have briefly settled on Key Vaca in 1818.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Ownership claims

In 1815, the Spanish governor of Cuba in Havana deeded the island of Key West to Juan Pablo Salas, an officer of the Royal Spanish Navy Artillery posted in Saint Augustine, Florida. After Florida was transferred to the United States in 1821, Salas was so eager to sell the island that he sold it twice – first for a sloop valued at \$575 to a General John Geddes, a former governor of South Carolina, and then to a U.S. businessman John W. Simonton, during a meeting in a Havana café on January 19, 1822, for the equivalent of \$2,000 in pesos in 1821. Geddes tried in vain to secure his rights to the property before Simonton who, with the aid of some influential friends in Washington, was able to gain clear title to the island. Simonton had wide-ranging business interests in Mobile, Alabama. He bought the island because a friend, John Whitehead, had drawn his attention to the opportunities presented by the island's strategic location. John Whitehead had been stranded in Key West after a shipwreck in 1819 and he had been impressed by the potential offered by the deep harbor of the island. The island was indeed considered the "Gibraltar of the West" because of its strategic location on the 90-mile (140 km)–wide deep shipping lane, the Straits of Florida, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

On March 25, 1822, Lt. Commander Matthew C. Perry sailed the schooner USS Shark to Key West and planted the U.S. flag, claiming the Keys as United States property.<sup>[18]</sup> No protests were made over the American claim on Key West, so the Florida Keys became the *de facto* property of the United States.

After claiming the Florida Keys for the United States, Perry renamed Cayo Hueso (Key West) to Thompson's Island for Secretary of the Navy Smith Thompson, and the harbor Port Rodgers in honor of War of 1812 hero and President of the Navy Supervisors Board John Rodgers. In 1823, Commodore David Porter of the United States Navy West Indies Anti-Pirate Squadron took charge of Key West, which he ruled as military dictator under martial law. The United States Navy gave Porter the mission of countering piracy and the slave trade in the Key West area.

## First developers

Soon after his purchase, John Simonton subdivided the island into plots and sold three undivided quarters of each plot to:

- John Mountain and U.S. Consul John Warner, who quickly resold their quarter to Pardon C. Greene, who took up residence on the island. Greene is the only one of the four "founding fathers" to establish himself permanently on the island, where he became quite prominent as head of

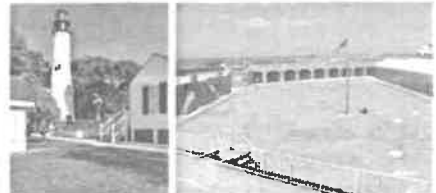


Aerial view of Key West (2001)



Southernmost point buoy

Ernest Hemingway House



Key West Lighthouse

Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park



Duval Street with St. Paul's Episcopal Church (2004)



Flag



Seal

Nickname(s): "The Conch Republic"  
 "Southernmost City in the Continental United States"

Motto: *One Human Family*



P.C. Greene and Company. He was a member of the city council<sup>[19]</sup> and also served briefly as mayor. He died in 1838 at the age of 57.

- John Whitehead, his friend who had advised him to buy Key West.<sup>[20]</sup> John Whitehead lived in Key West for only eight years. He became a partner in the firm of P.C. Greene and Company from 1824 to 1827. A lifelong bachelor, he left the island for good in 1832. He came back only once, during the Civil War in 1861, and died the next year.
- John Fleeming (nowadays spelled Fleming).<sup>[20]</sup> John W.C. Fleeming was English-born and was active in mercantile business in Mobile, Alabama, where he befriended John Simonton. Fleeming spent only a few months in Key West in 1822 and left for Massachusetts, where he married. He returned to Key West in 1832 with the intention of developing salt manufacturing on the island but died the same year at the age of 51.

Simonton spent the winter in Key West and the summer in Washington, where he lobbied hard for the development of the island and to establish a naval base on the island, both to take advantage of the island's strategic location and to bring law and order to the town. He died in 1854.

The names of the four "founding fathers"<sup>[21]</sup> of modern Key West were given to main arteries of the island when it was first platted in 1829 by William Adee Whitehead, John Whitehead's younger brother. That first plat and the names used remained mostly intact and are still in use today. Duval Street, the island's main street, is named after Florida's first territorial governor, William Pope Duval, who served between 1822 and 1834 as the longest-serving governor in Florida's U.S. history.

William Whitehead became chief editorial writer for the *Enquirer*, a local newspaper, in 1834. He preserved copies of his newspaper as well as copies from the *Key West Gazette*, its predecessor. He later sent those copies to the Monroe County clerk for preservation, which gives us a view of life in Key West in the early days (1820–1840).

In the 1830s, Key West was the richest city per capita in the United States.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 1846, the city suffered severely from the 1846 Havana hurricane.

In 1852 the first Catholic Church, St. Mary's Star-Of-The-Sea, was built. The year 1864 became a landmark for the church in South Florida when five Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary arrived from Montreal, Canada, and established the first Catholic school in South Florida. At the time it was called Convent of Mary Immaculate. The school is still operating today and is now known as Mary Immaculate Star of the Sea School.

Location in Monroe County and the state of Florida



U.S. Census Bureau map showing city limits



Location of Key West in Florida

- Show map of Florida
- Show map of the United States
- Show all

Coordinates: 24°33′18″N 81°46′55″W<sup>[1]</sup>

**Country**  United States

**State**  Florida

**County**  Monroe

#### Government

• **Type**  Commission–Manager

• **Mayor**  Teri Johnston

• **Commissioners**  Jimmy Weekley,  
Lissette Carey,  
Samuel Kaufman,  
Mary Lou Hoover,  
Billy Wardlow, and  
Clayton Lopez

• **City Manager**  Albert Childress

• **City Clerk**  Keri O'Brien

• **City Attorney**  Ronald J. Ramsingh

• **Total**  7.21 sq mi (18.67 km<sup>2</sup>)

• **Land**  5.60 sq mi (14.50 km<sup>2</sup>)

• **Water**  1.61 sq mi (4.17 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Elevation**  5 ft (2 m)

#### Population (2020)<sup>[3]</sup>

• **Total**  26,444

• <b>Density</b>	4,722.99/sq mi (1,823.44/km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Time zone</b>	UTC−5 (Eastern (EST))
• <b>Summer (DST)</b>	UTC−4 (EDT)
<b>ZIP Codes</b>	33040, 33041, 33045
<b>Area codes</b>	305, 786, and 645
<b>FIPS code</b>	12-36550 <sup>[4]</sup>
<b>GNIS feature ID</b>	0294048 <sup>[5]</sup>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov">www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov</a> ( <a href="http://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov">http://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov</a> )



A panoramic view of Key West, c. 1856

## American Civil War and late 19th century

During the American Civil War, while Florida seceded and joined the Confederate States of America, Key West remained in U.S. Union hands because of the naval base. Most locals were sympathetic to the Confederacy, however, and many flew Confederate flags over their homes.<sup>[23]</sup> However, Key West was also home to a large free black population. This population grew during the war as more enslaved black people fled from their masters and came under the relative safety of the Union garrison there.<sup>[24]</sup> Fort Zachary Taylor, constructed from 1845 to 1866, was an important Key West outpost during the Civil War. Construction began in 1861 on two other forts, East and West Martello Towers, which served as side armories and batteries for the larger fort. When completed, they were connected to Fort Taylor by railroad tracks for movement of munitions.<sup>[23]</sup> Early in 1864, 900 men from the 2nd United States Colored Troops (USCT) arrived in Key West as replacements for the 47th Pennsylvania Volunteers. Many of these men would see action in southern Florida and the 2nd USCT would become "one of the most active" black regiments in Florida.<sup>[25]</sup> Fort Jefferson, located about 68 miles (109 km) from Key West on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas, served after the Civil War as the prison for Samuel A. Mudd, convicted of conspiracy for setting the broken leg of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln.

In the 19th century, major industries included wrecking, fishing, turtling, and salt manufacturing.<sup>[26]</sup> From 1830 to 1861, Key West was a major center of U.S. salt production, harvesting the commodity from the sea (via receding tidal pools) rather than from salt mines.<sup>[26]</sup> After the outbreak of the Civil War, Union troops shut down the salt industry after Confederate sympathizers smuggled the product into the South.<sup>[26]</sup> Salt production resumed at the end of the war, but the industry was destroyed by an 1876 hurricane and never recovered, in part because of new salt mines on the mainland.<sup>[26]</sup>

During the Ten Years' War (an unsuccessful Cuban war for independence in the 1860s and 1870s), many Cubans sought refuge in Key West. Several cigar factories relocated to the city from Cuba, and Key West quickly became a major producer of cigars. A fire on April 1, 1886, that started at a coffee shop next to the San Carlos Institute and spread out of control,



East Martello Tower



Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West, active during the Civil War, contains the largest collection of Civil War cannons ever discovered at a single location.