The Log of the Biscayne House of Refuge

By Dr. Thelma Peters

INTRODUCTION

In the 1978 Tequesta, Dr. Thelma Peters shared an excerpt from the Biscayne Bay House of Refuge's log with our readers. Space limitations prevented the entire log from being presented. This continuation of the log begins on April 10, 1900, and ends on January 15, 1903. As with the 1978 edition, space limitations prevent reproduction of the entire log. To quote the 1978 article, "Entries are chronological and have been selected with an eye for historical significance and/or possible reader interest. Misspellings have been left but an occasional capital or comma has been supplied."

During the summer of 1900 the keeper, William H. Fulford, had become increasingly ill and on August 18 left the station in the care of a temporary keeper, Ludwig H. Hovilsrud. Fulford with his wife had been at the station for ten years. He was from North Carolina and had been a sea captain before moving from New Smyrna to Station Five.

April 10, 1900
Keeper much better. Feaver broken. Mr. Roberts came over to stay with me. Keeper went to Lemon City to consult Dr.

Apr. 11, 1900
Mr. Roberts left for his home in Lemon City this morning.

Aug. 5, 1900
Ten years ago today I came to the station as keeper.

Dr. Thelma Peters is a charter member of the Historical Association of Southern Florida and the author of Lemon City, Biscayne Country and Miami 1909.
Aug. 16, 1900
Mr. Ludwig Hovilshrud came to station and relieved me temporarily. I am unwell and need treatment, previously reported.

Aug. 18, 1900
At 11 A.M. keeper left station being able to do duty longer.

[signed] Ludwig H. Hovilsrud, temporary keeper

Sept. 10, 1900
District Supt. inspected property by inventory and informed acting keeper as to his duties. Received from Captain C. A. Abbey inspector one anchor 30 lb in good order and two rolls of screens.

Sept. 11, 1900
District Supt. still at station in order to drill acting keeper more thoroughly. Keeper Fulford at station from 9:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. and with Supt. corrected receipt books, finishing them to date.

Sept. 13, 1900
Practiced signals from 8 - 9 A.M. Continue making a new mast for the supply boat. Taking out the old broken mast and carried it up to the house.

Sept. 17, 1900
Practiced signals. Placing the flag pole in a vertical position which was bent over in the last storm. Also putting planks crossways at the bottom near the surface of the ground, nailed them in place, so as to make it stay.

Sept. 18, 1900
Painting iron cots and the woodwork on the grindstone.

Sept. 24, 1900
Trying moving boathouse back to the right position, which was leaning to the south, but could only move it 3”. Put braces on to protect it from further damage.

Sept. 25, 1900
Making a good room for the paint, oil, cans and different things, by closing in with boards all around the bench in the boathouse.

Oct. 1, 1900
Practiced signals 9 - 10 A.M. Finished the table for the boathouse and painted the same. Keeper Captain W. H. Fulford came to station at 5 P.M.

Oct. 2, 1900
Keeper left station at 8:30. Temporary keeper helping him move
some of his property down to the landing, which was left here. Preparing a room for painting by taking down shelves, taking out nails and filling holes with putty.

Oct. 3, 1900
Have been down the bay sailing this afternoon for the purpose of drying the sails quickly after the last rain.

Oct. 12, 1900
Started for the post office this morning at 6 a.m. Returned half ways on account of appearance of heavy rain from SW which came very suddenly before I got to the landing. Practiced resuscitation.

Oct. 18, 1900
Being patroling the beach. Made a small flag pole for the signal flag.

Oct. 20, 1900
Being on the look out for wrecks. At 5 P.M. the surf was very rough and high. The surf making up under the house but no damage was done.

Oct. 23, 1900
Started to make sand bags as ballast for supply boat.

Nov. 1, 1900
Went to post office at 8 A.M. Returned at 1 P.M. Received telegram from H. B. Shaw with order to go at once to Oslo where further order would await me. At the same time got letter from H. B. Shaw to see the keeper Capt. W. H. Fulford about getting a good man in my place at the station. Received letter at the same time from keeper W. H. Fulford, with order to get Mr. B. E. Curry in my place. I got Mr. B. E. Curry with me at once.

Nov. 2, 1900
Temporary keeper Mr. L. H. Hovilsrud left the station at 4 A.M. in charge of Mr. B. E. Curry. B. E. Curry went with L. H. Hovilsrud to Lemon City and returned at 10 A.M.

[signed] B. E. Curry, temporary keeper

Nov. 3, 1900
Cleaning house and working on road from the house to the landing.

Nov. 21, 1900
Working on boat to see if I can stop it from leaking.
Nov. 26, 1900  
Left the station at 7 A.M. and went to Lemon City for paint and oil from the east coast railway and returned 11:30 A.M.

Dec. 1, 1900  
Walked the beach 2 miles each way and partly painted one room.

Dec. 21, 1900  
Went to the post office at 9 A.M. Received one book list of merchant vessels of the United States 1900 from H. B. Shaw.

Jan. 4, 1901  
Went to Lemon City to the depot and received one wheel barrow from H. B. Shaw.

Jan. 6, 1901  
Wm. H. Fulford keeper came to the station Saturday evening and staid overnight and left this morning for his home.

Feb. 4, 1901  
Very large whale seen off the station. It looked to be 70 ft. long.

Feb. 5, 1901  
Very large steamship off the station 3 P.M. Came near getting ashore. I just had time to make a signal. Captain seeing it kept off about East, then blew three times and went off. I think it was a foreign ship.

Mar. 1, 1901  
Saving some lumber that is drifted on the beach for the use of the station.

May 23, 1901  
Repairing the broken chairs.

June 15, 1901  
Raining all the week not able to do anything.

Sept. 19, 1901  
Working on the station helping to block it up on its foundations.

Sept. 24, 1901  
Working on the station helping to block it up and get it on rollers.

Sept. 26, 1901  
Working on the station night and day to get it on a foundation to keep the sea from washing it away. A heavy sea undermined the chimney and washed it down and broke a hole in the roof.
Oct. 1, 1901
Working on the station getting it ready to move.

Oct. 3, 1901
Lifting the station to get it ready to put on rollers.

Oct. 4, 1901
Working on the station all day and part of the night to get it on rollers.

Oct. 6, 1901
Worked on the station and moved it in about fifty feet.2

Oct. 9, 1901
Working on the boathouse getting it ready to put on rollers to move it.

Oct. 12, 1901
Finished moving the boathouse today and blocking it up in its place.

Oct. 18, 1901
Working on the station. Moved it about 25 feet today.

Oct. 19, 1901
Got through moving the house at 11:30. Now blocking it up, taking the rollers from underneath it.

Oct. 21, 1901
Working around the station digging trenches for a foundation.

Oct. 22, 1901
Working moving the water tank.

Oct. 24, 1901
Working on the tank house, moving it in its place, blocking it up. Left the station at 3:30 P.M. to take Capt. Shaw and the mule across to Lemon City.

Oct. 26, 1901
Carpenters working on the station putting up a foundation.

Oct. 30, 1901
Finished putting the foundation under the dwelling and gone to work putting the foundation under the boat house.

Nov. 2, 1901
Carpenters working fixing up the kitchen and putting lattice work around the building.
Nov. 28, 1901
Driving the hoops down on the tank. Took one off and cut it and put it back on.

Dec. 6, 1901
This A.M. Mr. Curry left the station taking all his property with him and leaving me in charge. As there had been no provisions by anyone in authority I proceeded to Miami to our Dist. Supt. Shaw who instructed me to remain in charge.

[signed] W. C. Kemper, acting keeper

Dec. 24, 1901
A launch brought lumber and carpenters today. They will commence work tomorrow.

Dec. 26, 1901
Carpenters ceiling veranda. Four more carpenters came this morning making six in all.

Dec. 28, 1901
Carpenters working on tank house, ceiling veranda, and building a new way to boat house. Put new floor in kitchen.

Dec. 31, 1901
Carpenters working on addition to kitchen, fixing steps and putting up moulding.

Jan. 4, 1902
Carpenters about finished. Chimney topped out. Took Mr. Woodworth to Lemon City.

Jan. 23, 1902
Cleaning and burning brush. W. L. Kemper, acting keeper.

Feb. 3, 1902
I was at Miami this morning and Mr. Kemper came from the station with all his things in the boat and turned boat over to me at 11:30 A.M. and told me I could go and take charge of the station, that he would not wait any longer.
Name of substitute — B. E. Curry

Feb. 9, 1902
Keeper absent on account of sickness.  
Name of substitute B. E. Curry

Feb. 10, 1902
Name of substitute C. J. Yates
Taken charge of House at 6 A.M. Carried Mr. Curry to Lemon
City and went on to Miami. Got my family and returned at 3:30 P.M.

Feb. 11, 1902

Am sunning all the blankets and mattresses and cleaning up the house generally.

Feb. 27, 1902

Painting some on house today and planted flower bed in border around one side of house.

March 22, 1902

Painting lattice work around cistern and scrubbing kitchen and dining room.

Mar. 25, 1902

Two boys came over to the beach today from Lemon City and their boat left them. They came up to the house and stayed overnight. I took them back across the bay the next morning.

Mar. 28, 1902

A fish boat came in from the bay with sail torn to pieces and remained here overnight. 2 men on board. I gave them beds and 2 meals, helped them mend their sails and they returned to Miami.

Mar. 29, 1902

Putting new screens in some of the doors and cleaning house inside. Cleaning up the yard around the house.

Apr. 1, 1902

One large steamer tried to pass inside of buoy today at 10:30 going south. I put up I.D. flag. She immediately turned her course and went outside of buoy. The direction she was going would soon have put her on the banks.

Apr. 4, 1902

A party of 10 people came to the house today to get water and rest. They were from Miami.

Apr. 5, 1902

A young man named Sturgis came over from Miami to go in surf bathing and after coming out said he felt very badly and stayed overnight. During the night I heard him struggling and I went to his room and found him with an epileptic fit. I applied the usual remedies and brought him around all right. He went back to Miami today.

Apr. 6, 1902

Gen. Gordon and party came over from Biscayne to station today. Got water from cistern.
Apr. 17, 1902

Heavy rain and hail storm this afternoon.

Apr. 21, 1902

Went to Miami today and returned at 4 o’clock P.M. Received word from Capt. H. B. Shaw Dist. Supt. engaging me as keeper in charge of this station in place of Capt. W. H. Fulford who received his discharge on account of sickness.

Apr. 24, 1902

Visitors from Miami today

| Mr. and Mrs. Bennett         | Mrs. Adams       |
| Miss Louise Bennett          | Mrs. Hassell     |
| Mr. and Mrs. Brice          | Mrs. Rutherford  |
| Mrs. McAlaster and son      | Mr. Brickle      |
| All went in the surf.        |                  |

Apr. 26, 1902

 Visitors

| Mrs. W. M. Burdine Miami     |                      |
| Mrs. L. E. Hill              | "                    |
| Mrs. Fred Kronowitter        | "                    |
| Mrs. V. A. Rutherford       | "                    |
| Miss Helen F. Burr Little River |
| Miss Clarissa Stone Miami    |                      |
| Miss Sadie Kolb              |                      |
| Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Boyce Chicago, Ill. |
| D. E. Stocking [?] Miami     |                      |
| Mr. ____________________ Stockman [?] Miami |
| Miss Maud Coahman, Miami     |                      |
| Miss Florence Frederick Miami |
| Miss Lucy Collier [?]        |                      |
| Miss Willie Colier [?]       |                      |
| Miss Grace Rader             |                      |
| Miss Rosalin Quarterman Miami |
| Miss Belle Blackman          | "                    |
| E. V. Blackman               | "                    |
| W. S. Miller Columbus Ohio   |                      |
| Miss Mamie Gamble, Jacksonville |
| Mrs. H. C. Walton Lady Lake, Fla. |
| C. E. Mc Lean, Leesburg, Fla. |
| Joe Frier Little River       |                      |
| Corah Freeman                |                      |
Rebecca Freeman  
A. C. Wolf  Birmingham, Ala.  
Miss Kate Wolf  Grandview, Tenn.  
Miss Annie Wolf  
J. B. Merritt and wife, Lemon City  
M. J. Parsons,  Denver, Colo.  
Josephine Parsons  
O. D. Markley, Cincinnati, Ohio  
Bessie Sligh  Miami  
Agnes Sligh  
Daisy Sligh  Jacksonville  
Fraser McHook  Gainesville  
Mr. Gasper  Ind.  
Mr. J. C. Sawyer  Grand Rapids, Mich.  
Mr. W. J. Williams  McRae, Ga.  
Miss Mona Smith  Cleveland  

May 1, 1902  
A party of 30 were prevented from visiting the station today on account of low water.  

May 2, 1902  
Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Roome and W. G. Roome on Yacht Roomy Jersey City, N.J.  

May 4, 1902  
A small sail boat going to Boynton from Miami came ashore this morning at 9 o'clock with sick man aboard. He came ashore and I gave him some medicine which relieved him. Boat went on and left him here. His name is Hamp Streggle Phelps [?]. He lost his shoes overboard and I gave him 1 pr. brogue shoes and 1 pr. wool socks and took him to Lemon City.  

May 13, 1902  
A picnic party of col. people numbering about 200 came to station today and got water.  

May 17, 1902  
Mrs. Comstock  
Madame Trybom  
Mrs. Walter S. Graham  
Miss Haslett  
May Worley  
Miss Gunilla Sjostrum  
Harold Graham
July 15, 1902
Went to Miami to vote in the primary election.

July 25, 1902
A small schooner came ashore to get the time and some fresh water this afternoon. Hailed from Palm Beach and bound for Elliots Key.

July 29, 1902
Went to Miami today to take my family over to the Jubilee celebration.

July 30, 1902
Went over to Miami and about the time was ready to start back took a chill and high fever. Had to remain overnight but sent my son over to take care of the station.

Aug. 1, 1902
Returned from Miami early this A.M. after fever went off and found station all O.K.

Sept. 28, 1902
Mr. Tatum and party came over from Miami today. Also a party from Little River.

Oct. 20, 1902
One small schooner came ashore today for provisions and water. Said they left Palm Beach 6 days ago bound for Miami.

Nov. 14, 1902
Six Indians are camping with us tonight.

Nov. 27, 1902
Mr. Norton and party Lemon City
James Pent and party Lemon City
C. Hughes and party Miami
All came over and spent day.

Dec. 25, 1902
Joseph Thrift party
F. Gillett party
Deughase party [DesRochers]
Dec. 27, 1902

A party of fishermen came to the house from the bay side at midnight and said they were about frozen. I gave them lodging and they went away Sunday morning. Temperature at sunrise 38.

Jan. 15, 1903

Capt. A. H. Johanson arrived this A.M. to take charge of station.

(This concludes Part I or the first 20 years of the log.)

To be continued . . .

NOTES

1. Curry made a daily entry of a line or two but with little variation: “walking beach,” “painting,” “cleaning house.”

2. The *Miami Metropolis*, Oct. 18, 1901, reported that high tides had undermined the House of Refuge and made it necessary to be moved “across the ravine on the west to a high ridge.”

3. Captain William Fulford was still official keeper. According to a *Miami Metropolis* story about the town of Fulford, April 26, 1901, Fulford was living in his “pleasant home” and was the “efficient” postmaster of Fulford.

4. This list is apparently in the handwriting of the guests. Many other lists were in Keeper Yates’ hand. On two occasions as many as 96 persons came to the station in one day. Only a few of the visitors are given here. The station appeared much less “social” under Yates’ successors.