

KEEPERS OF FORT LAUDERDALE'S HOUSE OF REFUGE

***The Men Who Served at Life Saving Station No.
4 from 1876 to 1926***

By Ruth Landini



House of Refuge.

*Courtesy of Mrs. Robert
Powell.*

In 1876, the U.S. Government extended the welcome arm of the U.S. Life-Saving Service down the long, deserted southeast coast of Florida. Five life saving stations, called Houses of Refuge, were built approximately 25 miles apart. Construction of House Number Four in Fort Lauderdale was completed on April 24, 1876, and was situated near what is today the Bonnet House Museum and Garden. Its location was on the main dune of the barrier island that is approximately four miles north of the New River Inlet. Archaeological finds from that time have been discovered in the area and an old wellhead still exists at this location.

The houses were the homes of the keepers and their families, who were also required to go along the beach, in both directions, in search of castaways immediately after a storm.¹ Keepers were not expected, nor were they equipped, to effect actual lifesaving, but merely were required to provide food, water and a dry bed for visitors and shipwrecked sailors who were lucky enough to have gained shore.

Prior to 1876, when the entire coast of Florida was windswept and infested with mosquitoes, fresh water was difficult to obtain. Most of the small settlements were on the mainland, and shipwrecked men had a fearful time in what was years later considered a "Tropical Paradise." There was a desperate need for rescue facilities. The problem was brought to a head during the hurricane of 1873, when a vessel was wrecked between Biscayne Bay and the New River. The ship was a total loss and the crew

existed on spoiled fish. The story of the hardship was told in the New York newspapers and reached the attention of government officials, including Sumner I. Kimball, superintendent of the Life-Saving Service. Kimball immediately ordered the construction of the “houses of refuge” on Florida’s east coast. An Act of Congress dated June 20, 1874, called for five houses to be built from St. Augustine south to Miami.²

Albert Blaisdell of Boston was appointed architect of the houses October 18, 1875. The South Florida stations built in 1876 were alike: frame construction, one-story with loft, three main rooms downstairs surrounded by an eight-foot-wide veranda on three sides and a narrow kitchen on the north side, windows with screens and shutters but no glass, and a brick chimney in the kitchen for a cook stove. The keeper and his family lived downstairs; the loft, with a small window in each end, was equipped with approximately 20 cots for castaways or visitors. There was a boathouse for the lifeboat and a large wooden elevated tank which held water. Each station cost about \$3,000.³

Describing the job of the district superintendent of Florida Life-Saving Stations, Sandy Thurlow writes that the ultimate success of the Life Saving Service depended on the keepers.⁴ Making a living in the wilderness was so difficult for early settlers that a government paycheck, albeit a small one, and a sturdy structure in which to live had great appeal. Keepers were paid \$400 annually. They did not need to be professional boatmen; most were listed as farmers in early census records. They had to possess good

character and be able to read and write. Keepers traveled anywhere from four to 24 miles for provisions. Years could go by without a shipwreck. Wrecked property remained in their control until it was released by a higher authority.

Keeper No. 1 Washington (Wash) Jenkins **September 11, 1876 to January 2, 1883**

Washington Jenkins was a 25-year-old South Carolinian who left his farm on the New River in Fort Lauderdale to take the keeper’s post. According to the 1870 census, he had only one neighbor, Charles Pierce, who later wrote a book describing pioneer life in southeast Florida.⁵

In 1880, 195 people were counted between St. Lucie and Jewfish Creek. By all accounts, keepers of the houses had a monotonous life, for the most part. Pierce wrote about arriving at the New River Inlet late one afternoon at the landing where keeper Jenkins kept his boats. “How he and his family managed to content themselves in this most isolated and out of the way place is hard to imagine,” he wrote. He visited with Jenkins and his family. Jenkins was building a good sized sloop, named *Rena Jenkins* for one of his daughters.

A July 10, 1878, handwritten directive, in the elaborate script of the day, has been preserved in the U.S. Coast Guard archives. The Keeper of Life-Saving Station No. 4



Washington “Wash” Jenkins, first keeper of Fort Lauderdale’s House of Refuge, with his first wife and family.

Broward County Historical Commission.

was requested to insert replies to 13 “interrogatories” in duplicate, and forward one copy to the Treasury Department, U.S. Life-Saving Services, Washington, D.C., and one copy to the Inspector of Life Saving Stations at 10 Broadway, New York. Signed by Superintendent Kimball, the questionnaire covered such subjects as high-water marks, beach description, tide rise and fall, water depth and sand bar measurements.⁶ By 1885, the questions were on a printed form but the replies from the keepers still handwritten.

In his 1884 book, Dr. James Henshall, a physician and author from Cincinnati, wrote of his 1879 visit to the New River Station: “Two miles below the station is the site of Old Fort Lauderdale where there is a flourishing grove of cocoa palms. New River is a fine stream. Mr. Jenkins sailed us up the river in his canoe; we landed and walked a few miles to some hamaks (hammocks or tree islands). On our return I shot a number of ducks with Jenkins’ gun and had a shot at a bear but he got away.” Henshall said the New River was famous for its sharks and immense numbers of fish. Jenkins often speared crevelle, from 10 to 30 pounds, and cured and smoked them.⁷

Jenkins was removed from his post by the new superintendent of the Houses of Refuge, Champlin H. Spencer, on January 2, 1883. On the day he and his family moved out of the house, Jenkins was very sick, swelled up and unable to walk. He had to be carried out and was taken for medical attention to the Biscayne Bay House. A month later, recovered, he made the statement that he had been poisoned by “one that wanted to get him out of the way.”

Jenkins was the father of four children, two of whom were born at

Station Number Four. He divorced his wife, Mary, in the mid-1880s. Jenkins remained in Florida until his death in 1906.

Keeper No. 2 Edwin Ruthven Bradley

January 2, 1883 to July 14, 1883

Superintendent Spencer appointed E. R. Bradley to replace Jenkins as keeper of Station No. 4. In his book Charles Pierce, whose father was keeper at the Orange Grove station in Delray Beach, describes how the Bradleys became part of the Pierce family group after they moved from Chicago to Lake Worth, Fla. When Bradley was later appointed keeper in Fort Lauderdale, the family was transported on the schooner *Illinois* for a 53-mile voyage to New River. Every one of them became deathly seasick in the fierce wind and storm. Keeper Jenkins, whom Bradley was replacing, was still at the house when they arrived.

Bradley served with the Union Navy as a master’s mate during the Civil War and was the first keeper required to keep a log book. Two items that



Guy M. Bradley. Broward County Historical Commission.

were to be included in the log were the barometer reading and, “Is the house thoroughly clean?” The barometric pressure was never given in those early days because no barometer was furnished. As to cleanliness, Bradley’s first entry on May 26, 1883, was, “No water in cistern.”

After taking over Station No. 4, Bradley lost his 10-year-old daughter, Flora, to a mysterious illness, the same malady which had afflicted keeper Jenkins the previous fall. Workmen engaged in repairing the station made a coffin and she was buried under a wide-spreading sea grape tree, believed to be on the Bonnet House site. No marker has ever been found on the Bonnet House grounds and the gravesite has never been identified. Flora’s brother, Guy, was so sick and swollen that he had to be carried to the grave.

The water tank never did hold water, although rain became plentiful. It is possible Bradley became disgusted with the situation because on July 13, 1883, he sailed with his family for Lake Worth, leaving the House of Refuge in the temporary hands of A. L. Daggett who manned it from July 14 to October 26, 1883.

Bradley was living in Lake Worth in 1885 when he took his first contract to carry the mail between Lake Worth and Miami for \$600 a year. He is, therefore, credited with being the first of the legendary “Barefoot Mailmen,” so named because the carrier went barefoot in order to walk at the water’s edge where the sand was firmer. In his book on tropical Florida, Tim Robinson records another story that was told about former keeper Ed Bradley, now a mailman: he hid casks that had surfaced along the “Barefoot” trail, “so that the mailman might have a

little liquid refreshment as he walks his rounds under the blazing Florida sun.” They drank from cracked coconut shells.

The two Bradley sons, Lou and Guy, returned in 1885 to the station area to hunt plume birds on nearby Cypress Creek. Ladies’ hats, decorated with plumes, became so fashionable that many species of birds were virtually exterminated.⁸ As detailed in Stuart McIver’s book, *Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America’s First Martyr to Environmentalism*, Guy Bradley, 20 years later, was the first Audubon worker to be killed in the line of duty.

Keeper No. 3 John Thomas Peacock

October 26, 1883 to December 1884

John Thomas “Jolly Jack” Peacock, was born in England, immigrated to America in 1863. In 1870, he was living on Biscayne Bay. As keeper of Station No. 4 for just over a year, he kept a careful log of vessel sightings and visitors,

many of whom came through the Everglades. He recorded the arrival of a Mr. Williford who had come on the schooner *Geneva* to settle at New River, and other travelers on their way to Fort Worth.⁹ His family arrived November 11, 1883. He and his wife had 11 children.

By several accounts Peacock was the “most fun and frolicsome, goodhearted and wayward of men.” After taking charge of the wreck of a bark loaded with wines, Peacock was called “an especially successful collector” of casks, which washed ashore from Fort Lauderdale to Miami. It was said that he bathed in the wine, hoping it would cure his arthritis.

Charles Pierce, son of the keeper of the Orange Grove station, recounts the time that Peacock accompanied him when he went to serve on jury duty for a Circuit Court hearing in Miami. Peacock, who had attended justices’ courts on the bay in the past, wanted to see how a real court was conducted. They walked from Fort Lauderdale to Miami, sampling hidden wine cached along the way

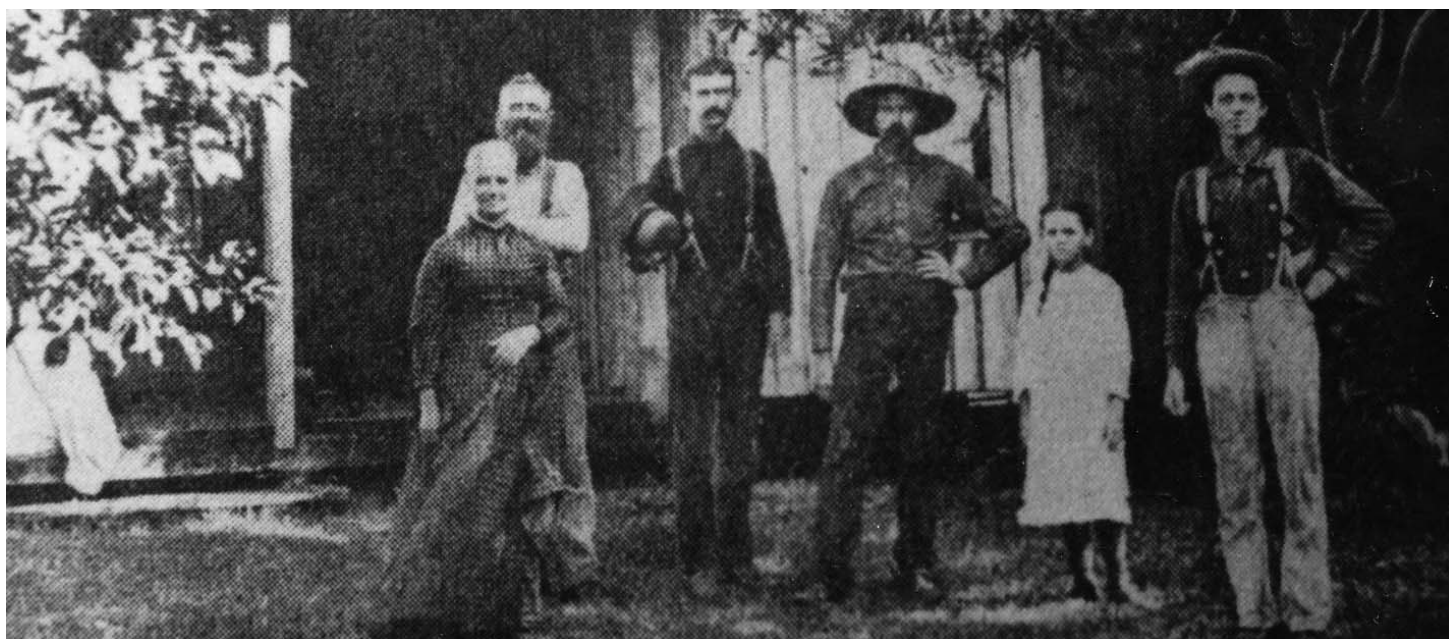
by his predecessor, Edwin Bradley. Court was adjourned the first day because many of the jurymen were absent, and a good portion of those attending were under the influence of wine from the wreck. The next morning, Pierce was disqualified because he was an assistant postmaster. He and Peacock walked back to Station No. 4. Pierce was broke because he was not entitled to juror’s pay and had used up his own money for room and board.

In 1885, after leaving House No. 4, Peacock became keeper of the Biscayne Bay House of Refuge, and subsequently temporary keeper of Gilbert’s Bar House, sheriff of Dade County and later, tax collector of Dade County. He died in 1907 and is buried in Miami City Cemetery.

Keeper No. 4 Charles Coman

December 1884 to October 31, 1888

Charles Coman was described as a college man studying marine biology. Information about this period of the



Pierce family home, Hypoluxo Island, 1886. Left to right: Margareta M. Pierce, Hannibal D. Pierce, Andrew W. Garnett, James E. “Ed” Hamilton, Lillie Pierce, Charles W. Pierce. Courtesy of Dr. Gilbert Voss.

late 1800s indicates that keepers of the Houses of Refuge still received wages of \$400 per year.

Coman was on duty at the House when “Barefoot Mailman” Ed Hamilton disappeared at Hillsboro Inlet while on his rounds. Coman was the first to realize that something was amiss and sought help. The unsuccessful search for Hamilton in the alligator-infested water was carefully detailed in Charles Pierce’s history. A mail carrier himself, Pierce wrote about leaving Hypoluxo for Miami in October 1888 and walking 25 miles from the Orange Grove House of Refuge to the Fort Lauderdale Station. On his return he met Charles Coman on the beach, and as was his custom, spent the night at Station 4.

Pierce also wrote of his family’s move on the *Bon Ton* in February 1885 from the Orange Grove station (where his father had just resigned as keeper) back to their old home on Hypoluxo Island. He landed at Hillsboro and went to call on “our neighbors on board the schooner *Neff*.” He met a Captain O’Neill and his companion Captain Smith. Both were from New York and said they were “just cruising about,” away from the ice and snow, but Pierce thought they were “on a treasure hunt of some kind.” Some three years later, O’Neill was appointed keeper of Station No. 4.

Keeper No. 5 Captain Dennis O’Neill

October 31, 1888, to December 29, 1894

Captain Dennis O’Neill was considered a “natural” at running a House of Refuge because he himself had been shipwrecked many times. In 1871, at age 20, he was aboard a steamer bound

from Central America to Boston that was shipwrecked near what is known today as Hillsboro Inlet. Many times he told of riding ashore on a mahogany log through a school of sharks.

Captain Denny, as the early settlers called him, was a boat builder and ship captain by profession. He also acted as postmaster, trading outgoing letters with the beach-walking mailman for letters addressed to Fort Lauderdale residents. In those days anyone wishing to travel between Miami and Palm Beach was welcome to walk with the “Barefoot Mailman” for \$5.¹⁰

In an account of a family expedition on the *Heron* in 1890, which was to take tax collector Fred Olivey on his annual rounds, Mrs. John R. Gilpin wrote of “sailing into the inlet beautifully after a tussle with the waves and being at peace by the shore of the little peninsula near House No. 4.” She and her traveling companions enjoyed a visit with the O’Neill family and gave Mr. O’Neill three of their books “to perhaps fill an hour now and then in his lonely station.”¹¹

O’Neill was keeper of the house in November 1891 when the station was skidded a mile-and-a-half down the beach to where it was originally supposed to be. The New River station was built in 1876 in the wrong location because the lumber for its construction landed in the wrong spot. The property owner, P. A. Cunningham, decided to toss Uncle Sam off his land in 1891 and advised Superintendent Hiram B. Shaw to “remove any buildings from, or improvements to, land where station now stands.”¹² The original site was at what is now the intersection of A1A and Sunrise Boulevard. The new location is the present home of

the Bahia Mar Resort, on the coast just south of Las Olas Boulevard.

There is an interesting story about the moving of Station No. 4 from its first site to the location for which was originally intended. Eugene E. Wiley, a history buff and member of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society recounts, “Some 15 years after its construction, the government decided to move the house and its appendages (outhouse, cistern and a boathouse). Getting a reasonable bid to do the job was almost impossible, given the remoteness of the area. It had to be moved south on what is now A1A for 1 5/8 miles and 24 yards. Ten men (nine laborers and a cook, at \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day with board) were expected to complete the task in the cold January of 1891. It was rolled on heavy timber tracks. Apparently, District Superintendent Shaw had used up his fiscal year allotment, so the house stayed part way down the coast for six months where the men had left it. The softness of the sand and an inadequate tackle also caused immense problems and precipitated volumes of letters, one described as a ‘masterpiece of haughty tartness,’ between Shaw and S. I. Kimball, General Superintendent.”¹³

Captain O’Neill, keeper of the moving House of Refuge, was called an inspiration to the faltering crew. The job, and repair of the house and outbuildings, was finally accomplished in early 1892. The mobile station on August 18, 1891, had been designated the Fort Lauderdale Post Office. The new postmaster, William C. Valentine, lived at the station with keeper O’Neill and was said to have kept the mail in a cigar box. Both men were known as whiskey enthusiasts, so their quarterly payday signaled a drinking spree at the House of Refuge.¹⁴

An article in the August 25, 1892, issue of *The Tropical Sun* newspaper reads, "Superintendent of the Life-Saving Service, H. B. Shaw, passed through here Tuesday on his quarterly inspection tour of houses of refuge." In telling of the 27-mile "pedestrian journey" from Lake Worth to Fort Lauderdale he said one leg should be shorter than the other for walking in the narrow, soft and sloped beach. He was laid up for a day or two "for repairs."

Around October 1, 1894, there was a bad storm which caused considerable damage to wharves and boats. Two bodies came ashore and two vessels were sunk, one near Hillsboro. Information regarding shipwrecks off the New River Inlet is scarce, but the log from Martin County's House of Refuge, also known as Gilbert's Bar House, has been researched and restored. It provides a comprehensive and undoubtedly typical picture of the challenges faced by early keepers.

In a letter dated January 31, 1893, to his brother in Ohio, early Fort Lauderdale settler and storekeeper Frank Stranahan wrote of managing his cousin Guy I. Metcalf's tent city and operating a ferry across the New River. Metcalf published *The Tropical Sun* and was a real estate developer. Stranahan, described as "an equally ambitious young man," wrote on Tropical Real Estate Exchange stationery that his nearest neighbors were Captain O'Neill (Dennis O'Neill) and a "Negro" cook. His cousin, Guy, and his uncle, Will, had visited the week before.¹⁵

After leaving the keeper's post, Captain Denny worked for landowners John MacGregor Adams and Hugh Taylor Birch, who now owned the Bonnet House acreage. He also experimented in aviation, using bicycle parts to drive a propeller.

On February 26, 1896, with Mr. Stranahan and Mr. Valentine, he was part of a small group that greeted the first train to arrive at the New River Station, one of the most important events in the town's history. At the turn of the century he traveled frequently to Honduras where he was engaged in banana growing and continued his attachment to and interest in Fort Lauderdale. Upon his second return he brought a young palm tree which he planted on Southeast River Drive. His last visit was in 1929; he died the following year at the home of a niece in Aurora, New York, still wishing to return again.¹⁶

Keeper No. 6 John (Jack) Fromberger

December 29, 1894, to April 21, 1906

John Fromberger was appointed keeper of No. 4 by H. B. Shaw, superintendent of the Life-Saving Service from Charleston, S.C. to Miami. He and his wife arrived by stagecoach at Frank Stranahan's New River Trading Post from Lantana about February 14, 1895. At that time, the railroad had not been completed that far south and, in fact, the dirt road on which they traveled was only two years old.

Station No. 4 began to have a social life of its own. Visitors were numerous and included retired people seeking a warmer climate, real estate developers, local people who boated over for swimming parties and picnics. Admiral George Dewey also visited. "Captain Jack" and his wife had their first child, Henry Spencer, on February 1, 1896. The attending doctor came from Coconut Grove. Soon afterward, the budding community of Fort Lauderdale had its own physician,

Dr. Thomas Kennedy. The census of 1900 showed a population of 91 in Fort Lauderdale.

In a letter to Mrs. Frank Oliver of Fort Lauderdale dated May 14, 1953, Agnes W. Fromberger, widow of Captain Fromberger, gives a "brief picture" as she saw Fort Lauderdale from 1895 to 1906.¹⁷ She wrote that the Indians came in canoes to Mr. Stranahan's camp to trade alligator skins and venison for their needs. They were well-behaved and no trouble. They often camped overnight on the 14-acre station grounds before going up the Middle River to hold their corn dance and ceremonies.

She wrote that the sailing vessel *Pearl*, carrying freight and passengers from Jacksonville to Key West, sometimes stopped at the station, usually for a few days. A number of early citizens, Dr. Kennedy among them, came south after the heavy frost of the '90s killed fruit trees in north Florida. One of the sea-going vessels which often passed in sight of the station was the *Three Friends* owned by Napoleon B. Broward, the one-time governor of Florida for whom Broward County was named.

Mrs. Fromberger added that the first school teacher was Miss Ivy Cromartie (later Mrs. Frank Stranahan). Frequently visitors from other parts of the country would dock at the station. She remembered when Admiral Dewey came from St. Augustine. Also, she recalled several bad shipwrecks. One was the Scandinavian steamer *Copenhagen*. Men of the community, among them Reid Bryan, Ed King and Mrs. Oliver's husband, gave volunteer assistance. Practically all trade was at Mr. Stranahan's store, which also served as the post office.

Senie Douthit, a teenage girl living on the South Florida frontier in the days before the railroad, wrote a story about a hunting trip by canoe through the “back route” to the New River, which stopped at the House of Refuge. In her journal entry of December 27, 1894, she writes, “As the evening passed it got cooler. We stopped that night at New River Life Saving Station. Captain Throwburg (actually John Fromberger) was as nice as he could be to us.”¹⁸

The Frombergers left in 1906 when Captain Jack was transferred to a larger station near Charleston, S.C. They were sorely missed; so many people recalled the good times they had at Station No. 4. After Fromberger’s transfer, Richard S. King was appointed acting keeper from April 21 to May 26, 1906.

Keeper No. 7 James B. Vreeland, Sr.

May 26, 1906 to 1914

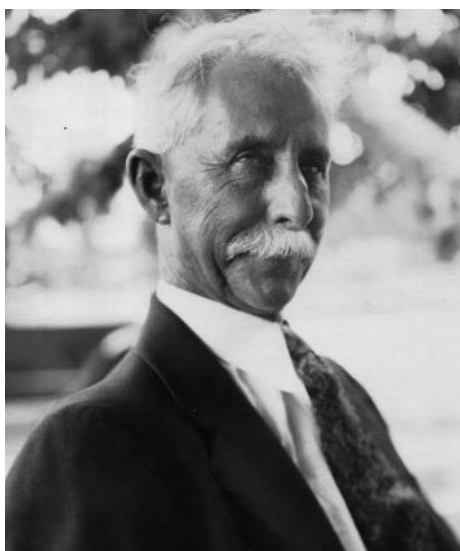
The beach had no fascination for investors; in the early 20th century, it was only a place to swim or picnic. A mile of mangrove swamp had to be negotiated at high tide. Most of Fort Lauderdale’s beach had been sold to Hugh Taylor Birch and John MacGregor Adams for \$3,500, approximately \$1,000 per mile. There was talk about a bridge but no one did anything about it.

A summary of Vreeland’s Life-Saving Log for 1908 was compiled by a former Broward County Historical Commission Administrator Christopher Eck. There were some 33 entries in 1908, mostly in February and June-July. It provides a comprehensive record of the vessels that were grounded offshore and the efforts to free them; the steamers

that were wrecked; the boatmen who needed gasoline, water or vessel repair; and the seamen who drowned when he could not find them in the deep waters.

The Vreeland family’s memories augment the Life-Saving Log. Two oral histories recorded of James Vreeland, Jr. and archived in the collections of the Broward County Historical Commission Keeper Vreeland described witnessing many loggerhead turtle roundups. Crews from schooners anchored in the west bay of the house would catch the giant turtles, tie their flippers together and ship them to Key West for sale. Vreeland’s son, veteran sea captain James B. Vreeland, Jr. (Jim) who came to the House of Refuge as an eight-year-old, remembered the 1909 hurricane which wrecked a Key West-bound schooner near the house. The entire crew reached the house safely and stayed there until they were picked up.

January 2, 1955, Vreeland’s 92 year-old widow, Cordelia DeVaux Vreeland, described the isolated strip of wilderness when she first set foot here in 1906. While it was not the easiest life, she enjoyed it.



James B. Vreeland, Sr. Broward County Historical Commission.

About 60 families received mail at the Fort Lauderdale post office. She was organist for both the Methodist and Baptist churches. She described walking for miles on the beach at night and never seeing a light. She recalled that in the eight years her husband was keeper, he took care of two crews of ill-fated vessels.

Although born in Michigan, Keeper Vreeland was known as a true lover of Fort Lauderdale. His March 14, 1916, voter registration indicated that after his resignation as keeper he lived at 2931 E. Las Olas. The registration identified him as age 52, white, Republican and a “fruit grower” by occupation. He passed away in 1943.

Walter V. Van Sawn was caretaker of Station No. 4 from April 21, 1914 until a permanent keeper was appointed July 29, 1914. A January 1987 account in the *Miami Herald*, described the razing of the historic Vreeland home, the oldest house east of the Intracoastal.

Keeper No. 8 Captain Charles Skogsberg

July 29, 1914, to April 1, 1925

In 1914, Captain Skogsberg and his family were the only residents on the Fort Lauderdale Beach, with the exception of Hugh Taylor Birch, who lived further north. Birch did not allow trespassers and seldom had visitors. In 1914, a first beach casino was erected near the station. It was initially used only on Sundays when excursion boats, such as Captain Dick La Vigne’s *Excelsior*, made their regular runs. The road to the beach with a hand-operated, single-lane drawbridge was opened to the public in January 1917 at what is now Las Olas Boulevard. Gone were

the intimate gatherings of picnickers on the veranda of Station No. 4.

When the United States entered World War I, the House of Refuge was taken over for the duration by the Coast Guard. They instituted a motorcycle beach patrol, usually ridden by Wallace King. The motorcycle patrol was able to tie into telegraph lines along the route and make immediate reports, instead of navigating the difficult trip through the mud flats and sandbars back to the station. Former keeper Skogsberg remained in charge of the house.

In 1918, Charles Skogsberg and his wife were listed in the city directory as living at the Coast Guard Station on Las Olas Beach. His occupation was given as “surfman.” Voting registration records archived at the Broward County Historical Commission indicate that when Skogsberg registered on March 31, 1924, he was listed as living at 917 E. Broward Boulevard, age 63, Democrat, white and occupation “Coast Guard.” He was a native of Sweden.

Captain Skogsberg’s daughter, Charlene Skogsberg Barton, was honored as a Broward County Pioneer in 1989. She recalled moving from Texas in 1914 when her father became keeper. She graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School and became active in the community, playing the Trinity Lutheran Church organ, teaching kindergarten and working at Broward Marine at Bahia Mar in Fort Lauderdale.

Keeper No. 9 Charles D. Stewart

April 1, 1925, to March 10, 1926

Charles Stewart became the last keeper of Fort Lauderdale’s Life Saving Station No. 4. He served for

less than a year when the United States Coast Guard took permanent possession of the property and relieved him of his duties. Coast Guard Base No. 6 was established on this site February 15, 1926, when it was transferred from Miami to Fort Lauderdale. The transfer of the House of Refuge to the jurisdiction of Base No. 6 was directed on March 10, 1926, at which time the Coast Guard brought the houseboat *Moccasin* to Fort Lauderdale from Miami.

Records of the U.S. Coast Guard, Record Group 26, show that the Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge, which had outlived its usefulness, was “damaged beyond repair” in the hurricane of September 18, 1926. It had been home to nine permanent keepers and their families and had been host to hundreds of visitors and countless men of the sea.

Voter registration records show Charles D. Stewart and his wife Jannette living at 128 N.E. 16 Avenue, Fort Lauderdale on April 28, 1928. He was listed as a native Floridian,

41, white and a Democrat. His occupation was given as Coast Guard. In 1930, he and his wife (here spelled Jeanette) were living at the same address and his occupation was given as Coast Guard officer, so he apparently retained a connection with the Coast Guard after Station No. 4 was closed in 1926.

The City of Fort Lauderdale considered purchasing the Coast Guard land on Las Olas beach on various occasions between 1927 and October 29, 1947, when the final transaction was consummated.²¹ The city leased the property, present home of the Bahia Mar Resort, to LXR Resorts and on June 21, 2011, renewed the lease for another 99 years. Redevelopment plans for the last location of Life-Saving Station No. 4 call for a hotel, a public park and a permanent home for the International Boat Show.²²

Anyone wishing to view an accurate, detailed replica of the House of Refuge may view the model on display at the Fort Lauderdale



The House of Refuge was taken over by the Coast Guard during WW I. Courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society.

History Center's New River Inn. It was created by Robert F. Wilhelm in 1977 after meticulous planning and research. Wilhelm used photos, articles from the Historical Society's archives and on-site research at the Gilbert's Bar House of Refuge, the only South Florida station still standing. He also reviewed copies of the original construction specifications furnished by the National Archives. He worked with many of the same materials used in model railroading, plus the modeler's convenient one-quarter-to-one inch scale. The roof alone consists of 8,000 individual shingles, such was his attention to detail. There is realistic screening in the windows; the door knobs are little pins.²⁰ ■

1. Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge, U.S. Coast Guard History Program, *Annual Report of the Life Saving Service, 1879*.

2. Wiley, Eugene E., "Life Saving Station No. 4 and The Quality of Life at the House of Refuge," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 1, no. 2, January 1977. p. 15-17.

3. Voss, Gilbert L., "The Orange Grove House of Refuge," *Tequesta*, vol. 27, 1978, p. 39.

4. Thurlow, Sandy, *Fort Lauderdale Historical Quarterly*, Fall, 1997, p. 157.

5. "The Adventures of Charles Pierce in Broward County One Hundred Years Ago, Part I," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 8, no. 3 and 4, 1985, p. 7.

6. Records of U.S. Coast Guard in the National Archives, Record Group 26.

7. Henshall, James A., *Camping and Cruising In Florida*, Robert Clarke & Co, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1884, p. 102-103.

8. McIver, Stuart, *Fort Lauderdale and Broward County, An Illustrated History*, Windsor Publications, Woodland Hills, California, 1983, p. 29-35.

9. Wiley, p. 17-18.

10. Pierce, p. 14.

10. Gilpin, Mrs. John R. , "To Miami, 1890 Style," *Tequesta*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1941, p. 89.

11. Robinson, Tim, *A Tropical Frontier, 1800-1890*, Port Sun Publishing, Port Salerno, Florida, 2005, p.408.

12. Wiley, Eugene E., "Once Upon A Sand Dune," *New River News*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1977.

13. McIver, p. 35.

14. Stranahan Papers, *Broward Legacy*, vol. 9, no. 3-4, 1986, p. 5.

15. McGoun, Bill, "Broward Heritage," *Miami Herald*, December 1, 1974.

16. Fromberger, Agnes, *New River News History*, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, April 30, 1974.

17. Scott, Patrick, "The Hunt in Florida, The Senie Douthit Letter," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 21, no. 1-2, 1998, p. 14.

18. Wiley, "Station No. 4," p. 21-22.

20. Wiley, Eugene E., "1977 House of Refuge by Dr. Robert F. Wilhelm," *New River News*, October, 1977.

21. House of Refuge, New River, *National Archives and Records for Fort Lauderdale*.

22. *Sun Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale, June 22, 2011.