

KEY WEST HARBOR, FLA.

1671/7

3rd Indorsement.

Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors. December 16, 1913. To The
Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

U. S. ENGRS OFFICE
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JACKSONVILLE FLA.
PREL. EX. 23/6

1. This report covers preliminary examination and survey of "Key West, Florida, for a harbor of refuge and a safe anchorage for vessels." The existing project for this harbor provides for an entrance channel from the south 300 feet wide at mean low water and 30 feet deep, the removal of the shoals in the anchorage, and the maintenance of a channel 17 feet deep and of sufficient width through the Northwest passage. This project is practically completed.

2. Man of War Harbor, located in the northern part of Key West Harbor, affords a commodious anchorage and refuge for vessels of from 18 to 25-foot draft. The commercial docks generally lie to the south of Man of War Harbor. During violent southerly storms, vessels can not lie at these docks but must seek shelter in Man of War Harbor. The Naval Station lies between the commercial docks and Fort Taylor. Except for very small vessels, this portion of the harbor affords shelter from northerly winds but is not a safe anchorage during southerly storms.

3. The commerce of Key West as given by the Key West Board of Trade amounts to 227,660 tons for the year 1912.

4. With reference to a harbor of refuge, Man of War Harbor would apparently provide about all the shelter that is needed for commercial purposes, but this shelter could be greatly extended by means of suitable breakwaters at some point near Fort Taylor and on the opposite side of the harbor. There has been no demand, however, for the creation of a harbor of refuge on the part of commercial steamship lines. It appears that this investigation was proposed by the Navy Department, which desires a protected harbor for torpedo boats and other small craft. A plan is suggested by the Navy Department for such a harbor, which would afford a sheltered area of about 47 acres. This would not, however, add anything to the harbor from a commercial point of view.

5. The District Officer states in the report on preliminary examination that if a sheltered area in the immediate vicinity of the Naval Station is essential for military purposes, the work necessary to provide for this harbor should be so designed as to improve the harbor as much as possible for commercial purposes also. In his report on survey he submits estimates for the small harbor proposed by the Navy Department in the sum of \$300,000. He also submits estimates for a harbor which would provide adequately for both naval and commercial purposes, as shown on accompanying tracing. Such a harbor is estimated to cost \$2,138,262. Arm D might be omitted so far as hurricanes are concerned, and this would reduce the cost to \$1,550,450.

6. The District Officer states that the cost of a harbor designed to afford protection for general commerce and for naval purposes is not believed to be warranted by the commercial or military importance of Key West, and therefore the larger plan suggested is not deemed worthy of being undertaken by the United States. As the smaller basin would be apparently a naval matter, he expresses no recommendation in regard thereto. The Division Engineer agrees with the District Officer that the commerce of Key West is not sufficient to warrant the construction of an extensive harbor of refuge, and he believes that the question of whether a sheltered harbor is needed for the smaller class of naval vessels is one which should be left to the Navy Department.

7. Interested parties were advised of the unfavorable report of the District Officer and given an opportunity of submitting their views to the Board. No communications bearing upon this subject have been received, but on December 3, 1913, Hon. D. U. Fletcher, U.S.S., appeared before the Board with reference thereto.

Paul H. ... 23