

Discovering Tavernier

History and Architecture in
Tavernier's Historic District

by

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While the history of Tavernier begins with its notice in the minds of navigators and then on the maps of cartographers, the richest aspect in its history is its development as a community on Key Largo. Through devastating hurricanes, faltering economies, remote transportation networks, and relative isolation, Tavernier has grown into a thriving community that typifies important historical themes. Tavernier's built environment, which is an evolving expression of its inhabitants, their ambitions, their sacrifices, and their architectural preferences, reflects this unique Floridian history. Tavernier's buildings illustrate the determination and commitment of its residents to create a permanent settlement. Architectural history, the story of making dwellings, churches, businesses, and thoroughfares, tells Tavernier's history of social development—shaped as it was by hardships, historical forces, and environmental changes.

Tavernier is not incidental to Monroe County history and the wider history of southern Florida. Rather, its history brings us to a fuller understanding of Florida's rich heritage.

By considering buildings as evidence, dynamic change in Tavernier becomes visible and reminds us of times worth remembering. Change in Tavernier is associated with weather, people, and transportation improvements. Change also appears in the transformation from an agricultural economy to a real estate and tourism service economy. The architectural evidence also shows uses of space, re-organization of space, and shifting spatial experiences in Tavernier. The streets and buildings tell of local entrepreneurs and families and how their needs influenced architectural choices. By looking at Tavernier through the lens of architectural history, we can see how events and buildings have not only shaped the Tavernier

landscape, but how they have combined to imbue that landscape with special significance for the community.



Floridae Antiquae Provinciae Recens & Excessiva Descriptio...
 Jacques LeMoyne de Morgues 1591. (Source: Library of Congress,
 Looney Map Collection)

During the colonial period, Tavernier Key was but a hazard to mariners and a haven for wreckers. Historians credit Juan Ponce de León with the discovery of Florida in 1513, including the Keys, which he named Los Martires for a physical similarity with a distressed position of martyrs he recognized in them and more so for the suffering they caused sailors. Later, the 1526 expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez disembarked at Tampa Bay, north of Tavernier, explored the interior of Florida, and sailed further, toward the Texas coastline. The commander died in a shipwreck with most of his men in 1528. However, four survivors, including Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, continued the journey westward from Texas to California and Mexico. Eight years later, they reached Spanish colonial settlements. Cabeza de Vaca wrote an intriguing account of his journey and captivity among various inhabitants of the Gulf of Mexico region, valuable for

its ethnographic insights as well as a chronicle of events (Cabeza de Vaca 2002). In 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Aviles cruised the Keys upon establishing a colony at St. Augustine (Tebreau 1971: 21; Eyster 1982: 11). Spanish reconnaissance along channels and reefs in the vicinity of the Keys resulted in the increasing use of the Florida Straits by Spanish ships sailing to and from Europe. In addition, these journeys combined to inform the knowledge of European cartographers, and their maps reflect these explorations. For instance, Jacques LeMoine de Morgues (1591) illustrated the Florida Straits, and its Keys or the "Martyres," as hazardous for sailors and habitat for strange beasts. Later, Joan Vinckeboons (1639) delineated the Florida peninsula and identified Caio de Tabanos at the southern tip of a long key in the early seventeenth century. Years later, not much had changed, as can be seen in Bernard Romans's (1961: 251) report and chart from 1775—noting that the key offered "a small

harbour with in a reef" and very little in the way of provisions, "land crabs, a few doves and other birds," he wrote. In addition, rocks and "coral heads" there could prove damaging to vessels. Long before Romans, charts labeled Tavernier Key thusly: Caio di Tabanos, Cayo Tabona, Tabano, Tabonas, Cayo de Tivanos, Cayo de Tabonas, and Tabano e. Cayo de Tabona has been translated as Horsefly Key. British charts name it Stephen, Key Tabona, Cayo Tabona, and finally Kay Tavernier (Clipper 2000).

Ethnohistorical accounts identify the Calusa and Tequesta groups as native occupants in the region. The Tequesta occupied the area around Biscayne Bay, while the Calusa chiefdom maintained a hegemony in the south-central and western sections of Florida. Although Hernando de Soto began his 1539–43 expedition at Tampa Bay, his journals do not document exploration activities in the Keys. Yet, Calusas appear in the historical record through

the accounts of castaways from Spanish shipwrecks. In the Upper Keys, specifically, accounts refer to Matecumbe as a native group leader encountered by Spaniards. Matecumbe then also became a toponym for that place in general, as well as a referent for native groups inhabiting that Upper Keys location. As for their regional affiliations, they held a tributary status with Tequesta to the north. Later, Tequesta, Calusa, and Matecumbe became generalized in terminology as Spanish Indians, who exploited local natural resources and utilized European material goods, such as cloth from Castile, from Spanish wrecks that washed ashore. Spanish colonial records mention that Matecumbes, who occupied a favorable watering place, attacked and killed a group of Spaniards in 1573. Casual

contacts with Europeans, brief Christian missionary attempts, and raids by native groups from the north continued throughout the seventeenth century and transformed their world (Scarry 1994: 21; Gogg in 1944: 13; Gogg in 1950: 16-20; Hodge 1907: 21; Schene 1973: 12; Hann 1991: 312-313).

During the colonial period, the Keys remained isolated from imperial administration and sustained Christian missionizing. With opportunities for profit more apparent elsewhere, Spain focused its imperial effort in the regions of South and Central America in the sixteenth century. North of the Keys, St. Augustine and Pensacola developed as frontier military outposts for protecting Spanish navigation in the Florida Straits and the Gulf of Mexico, respectively. Havana, Cuba, became the principal center of Spanish Florida during its colonial administration (Tebeau 1971: 309).



Cartonmient of his Magesties Porco in North America.
Daniel Peterson 1767. (Source: Library of Congress
Maps of North America)

European diseases and rapacious Spanish colonizers precipitated the decline of mainland indigenous cultures in the region by the last half of the eighteenth century (Swanton 1969: 125; Milanich 1995: 72). Despite Spain's claim to Florida, present-day Monroe County remained undeveloped by European colonists throughout the eighteenth century. Rather, local native groups on the Keys carried on a trade in fish with sailors from Havana (Hodge 1907: 195). Far off events tied to a global war for empire between France and Great Britain brought change

to the Keys. Most importantly, Great Britain's victory in the French and Indian War included the acquisition of Spanish Florida, achieved through treaty negotiations that returned Cuba, which had been controlled by the British after their 1762 capture of Havana, to Spain.

The Spanish withdrawal from Florida in 1763 also involved the removal of native groups living on the Keys who had allied themselves with Spain. Spanish ships carried them to Cuba. Gradually, Seminole groups began to reoccupy the abandoned lands of departed Spanish-allied groups in the 1770s (Gogg in 1950: 21).

British territorial administration, located at both Saint Augustine and Pensacola, commenced with the invalidation of Spanish royal land grants and the authorization

of Scottish merchant factors to trade with local native groups.

British cartographer Bernard Romans created a detailed map identifying the Keys, including Tavernier, which he mapped as Key Tabona in 1774. An earlier map, drafted by Daniel Peterson (1767) illustrates the British partitioning of Florida into eastern and western governmental units, as well as the relative location of the Keys, even though they are not individually labeled. Also during this period, William Bartram traveled from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on botanical research journeys to Florida between 1773 and 1777. His published account of the Seminole, Creek, and Cherokee groups and descriptions of native flora, including the royal palm tree, established his reputation as an American naturalist and explorer and presented an early



Map of East and West Florida, Bernard Romans 1774. (Source: Library of Congress Maps of North America, Peter Force Collection)

understanding of terrain in Florida (Bartram 1996: 429-479).

During this period of British administration, Bahamian fishermen and wreckers from New Providence exploited favorable conditions for turtling and salvaging on the American side of the Florida Straits, long known for its dangerous shoals. Bahamian sailors found suitable anchorages for their vessels at Tavernier Key, among others, where sea turtle kraals and impermanent storage facilities were mostly likely

constructed. Fishermen sought out sea turtles, whose shells were valued for jewelry and comb manufacture. Turtles also provided a source of food. For example, Charles Darwin reported that turtle meat, both fresh and salted, when prepared properly was fit for human consumption, but turtle soup especially, could be quite delicious.

When he was in the Galapagos Islands in 1832, on James Island specifically, he lived for a week



Fishermen Picking Turtles, 1871
(Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

near a Party of Spaniards who were fishing and turtling. Darwin and his party "lived entirely upon tortoise meat: the breast plate roasted (as the Guachos do carne con cuero), with the flesh on it, it is very good and the young tortoises make excellent soup; but otherwise the meat to my taste is indifferent" (Darwin 1909: 379, 380, 381).

Key Tavernier offered a preferred anchorage due to its location near the hazardous Carysfort Reef and potable water on Upper Matecumbe. Bahamian fishermen and wreckers returned with salvaged goods and vessels to the British admiralty court in Nassau in the Bahamas for adjudication. Bahamians also exploited timber resources on the Keys, such as mahogany, in this period (Dodd 1944: 174-175; Goggins 1944: 14). Later in the nineteenth century, many of Tavernier's earliest settlers descended from Bahamian ancestry.

Having lost military control in 1781, British administration of East and West Florida finally ended in 1783. Spain reclaimed it as an American ally in the Treaty of Paris that ended the American Revolution (Tebeau 1971: 73-91). Little change in the character of life and business around Tavernier Key occurred during the restoration of Spanish control. Bahamian privateers continued their patrols of the Florida Straits. The presence of United States Navy vessels, part of the West India Squadron, emerged on the seascape in an effort to suppress active buccaneers in the region after the War of 1812 (Goggins 1950: 22).

In the years of the Early American Republic, President James Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe worked toward acquiring Florida through administrative measures and forceful attempts. For instance, the United States invaded Pensacola during the War of 1812 and annexed portions of West

Florida along the Perdido River through a broad interpretation of former President Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase treaty. Also, militias from Georgia and other southern states made incursions into Florida in the vicinity of the St. Mary's River and Amelia Island. Salutary neglect characterized the level of Spanish colonial administration of Florida from 1783 to 1821, as Spain offered generous land grants to settlers and protection for fugitive American slaves.

After the Creek War, the First Seminole War, and the United States purchase of East Florida from Spain during President James Monroe's administration in 1821, American settlers began populating the territory and changing its society, most noticeably in the introduction of chattel slavery to work north Florida cotton fields and the establishment of an admiralty court in Key West, which became a port of entry, in 1825 (Dodd 1944:

179-180; Mahon 1994: 147-148; Tabeau 1971: 103-109).

During Florida's United States territorial period, no known settlement or frontier society development occurred on Tavernier or southern Key Largo. Key West, however, witnessed settlement of people from New England and the Bahamas as early as 1821, and people from there began to utilize the Upper Keys. Competition between American and Bahamian wreckers increased, as did commercial traffic through the Florida Straits. During the first half of the nineteenth century, wrecking took prominence as the

major economic activity. Salvage vessels of Bahamian and American origin now cruised along the Keys, searching for wrecks. Sponging and turtling continued to provide income. Even in the nineteenth century, Tavernier Key remained a favorable anchorage for wreckers monitoring the notorious Carysfort Reef. For instance, Charles Vignoles noted in 1823 that Key Tavernier served as a "general rendezvous of the little fleet of small craft, which are annually fitted out for wrecking" (Vignoles 1977: 118; Wilkinson 2008a).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the character of economic

life in settlements on the Keys was commercial, agricultural, and extractive. Fishermen exploited such abundant marine resources as turtles, sponges, and reef fish. Wrecking remained quite profitable, and Key West, with its convenient anchorage and admiralty court, developed its commerce on that activity. Interests located in New York and Connecticut owned most wrecking vessels, but knowledgeable New Englanders and Bahamians manned them (Dodd 1944: 180, 186). President Monroe authorized a special naval force to use Key West as a base in their efforts to suppress piracy in 1822. The



J.J. Storer, Bird's Eye View of Key West, Fla., 1854 (Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.)

federal government installed a system of navigational aids along the Florida coast beginning in 1824 and initiated a coastal survey in 1849, which identified Tavernier Creek between Key Largo and Plantation Key.

The first navigational aid placed at Cary's Point Reef was a vessel mounted with a beacon. The lighthouse was operational in 1852 (Dodd 1944: 182, 198). Events on Indian Key illustrate settlement efforts in the Upper Keys. In the 1830s, Indian Key represented the largest settlement in the Upper Keys. It functioned as the county seat of newly formed Dade County. The U.S. Navy maintained a depot on Indian Key, which also housed a customs inspector. In 1832, John James Audubon explored and documented the variety of bird species in the Keys (Audubon, et al. 1844: 111). Seminole raids in the Second Seminole War, however, decimated the settlement on Indian Key. As a result of the raid, Miami became

the seat of Dade County, which still included the Upper Keys, in 1844. Due to these events, settlers turned their focus and livelihood to Key West. In 1845, the War Department began construction of Fort Zachary Taylor and Fort Jefferson in the lower Keys (Tebbs 1971: 140, 146-148, 167).

The advent of steam-powered ships, improved nautical charts, and lighthouse construction contributed to the decline of wrecking in the nineteenth century. Key West's courts stopped issuing wrecking licenses in 1921 (Dodd 1944: 199). Construction, commerce in naval stores, and cigar-making sustained Key West's prosperity after the demise of wrecking. In the Upper Keys, residents turned to farming, packing, and shipping such agricultural products as pineapples, tomatoes, limes, and melons. In 1866, the Upper Keys were returned to Monroe County's jurisdiction.

At this point in the nineteenth century, Tavernier's history comes into clearer focus. The Homestead Act stimulated, and an agricultural entrepreneur from Key West initiated, Tavernier's development. Surveyors began delineating land for settlements in the Upper Keys in 1874 (Wells 1984), but Captain Ben Baker, resident of Key West and a prominent wrecker, established a plantation in 1866 on Key Largo northeast of present-day Tavernier. Although Baker did not live there full-time, he demonstrated the settlement potential of the area based on agriculture, and he established a post office there in 1870 (Wilkinson 2008e). The Homestead Act, passed during President Lincoln's administration, made public land available for disposal. Under Captain Baker, Planter, the roots of the Tavernier community, prospered from the cultivation of pineapples, tomatoes, and melons. The community

established a Post office in 1891. Tavernier's ancestor—the Planter community, which centered on the Samuel and Caroline Johnson family homestead, included a school, a church, five farms, and a corallimestone rock landing. (Wilkinson 2008c). A cannery factory on Plantation Key, operated by the Pinder brothers, and fast schooners bound for New York City supported Planter's profitable agricultural



William Kromb's 1905 Map of Florida East Coast Railway (Source: Helen Wesley Library, Monroe County Public Library, Islamorada)

production. One million crates of pineapples were shipped from the Keys in 1875. The first postmaster of Planter was John W. Johnson, followed by Charles W. Johnson in 1901. On July 6, 1902, John Wesley Johnson was re-appointed postmaster (Wilkinson 2008e). William Kromb's 1905 survey map for Flager's Florida East Coast Railroad Key West Extension (FEC) identified the Planter community as a cluster of buildings situated on the shoals of Hawk Channel (Clupper 1998; McCoy 1997: 124; Windhorn and Langley 1974: 15-18; Wilkinson Winter 1997: 17-19; Wilkinson 2008b; Eyster 1982: 16-17).

The development of Planter followed a more general growth trend underway on Key Largo. Population growth on Key Largo shared a link with pineapple truck

farms. Increases in truck farms paralleled population increases. For example, 1870 census data revealed only thirteen households with 61 inhabitants on Key Largo after passage of the Homestead Act. Ten years later, Key Largo had grown to 200, with Bahamians comprising a prominent portion of that population. By 1900, the population had grown to 350, as the agricultural economy flourished. Following the 1906 hurricane, Key Largo population numbers had dropped to 200. Most farmers had small vegetable gardens and citrus groves. Fruit tree varieties included guava, date palms, sapodillas, mangoes, bananas, and cocoanuts (Wilkinson Fall 1997: 3; Gallagher 1997: 74; McCoy 1997: 125; Windhorn and Langley 1974: 18).

A variety of forces conspired to bring on the abandonment of Planter. The pineapple blight and another hurricane in 1909 again damaged crops. Also, the location of the FEC railroad alignment toward

the gulf side of the key induced a shift in the community's location. Planter may have been able to rebound from the natural disasters, but the transportation improvement sealed its fate. Rather than working to the benefit of farmers on the Keys, the FEC provided lower shipping costs for Cuban-produced pineapples that were already priced lower than local pineapples. The local market collapsed, and the Planter Post Office closed in 1910 (Gallagher 1997: 74; Wilkinson 2008e).

The 1905 Krome map provides clues about life near Planter just before the FEC railroad construction project began. Farming was a primary economic activity. The railroad map-maker plotted the location of old lime groves, cultivated fields of pineapples, dense growth of



Photograph 7. William Krome, 1905 Map of Florida East Coast Railway. (Source Helen Wadley Library, Moroccan Cuisine; Public Library, Islamorada)

Tallahassee hammock, a wharf, and Joseph Mourier's orange grove. Joseph Mourier was, according to the 1900 US census population schedule, a 43-year-old farmer who was born in New York. His parents were born in France. His eight-year-old son Joseph, who was born in Louisiana, lived in his household and was "at school."

Swamps— a "wet boggy swamp" and a "mangrove and buttonwood swamp"—stood between Planter and the railroad.

The need for easy access to the railroad also brought about the shift in community location. The right-of-way mapping included landowner names in Tavernier: Annie E. Hull, Absalom Albury and wife, Amos Lowe and wife, and William Sawyer and wife. Planter's shoreline location indicated the community's orientation toward the ocean and transportation by boat. The railroad changed that aspect of life at Planter (Simpsen 1983: 55).

In 1907, railroad construction activity increased in Tavernier. Workers completed the trestle over Tavernier Creek then, and the construction of depot buildings soon followed. FEC railroad timetables from 1908 show the extent of the railroad's operation on Key Largo. Early railroad buildings in Tavernier included the section foreman's house and the station house, or depot (Wilkinson 2008d).

By 1911, a new post office at Tavernier began serving the former community of Planter. Tavernier developed on land owned by Amos Lowe and Robert Albury, who were the heads of households that had established a permanent presence in southern Key Largo in the late nineteenth century. Their arrival at Planter coincided with the favorable pineapple market on Key Largo at that time. Amos Lowe's patent for two tracts of 146.26 acres combined on Tavernier dates from 10 June 1882 (United States General Land Office Records, 1796-1907). However, 1870 census takers identified Amos Lowe, who was born in the Bahamas, as a farmer with his household on Key Largo. His wife Ada E. Lowe, also born in the Bahamas, kept their household, which included three children. A farm laborer, Eldred Curry, lived nearby, somewhere between the Lowe and Albury households. Robert Albury also patented two tracts totaling 146.26 acres north of the Lowe tract dating from 25 August 1882

(United States General Land Office Records, 1796-1907). The 1870 census takers identified Robert Albury as a Bahamas-born farmer with his household on Key Largo. His wife, Patience, also was born in the Bahamas. His son, Absalom Albury, was 26 years old at the time of the 1870 census, which noted that he too was born in the Bahamas. Absalom Albury's patent of 114.53 acres dates from 20 December 1882 (United States General Land Office Records, 1796-1907). 1880 census records documented the same household situations, identifying Absalom Albury, John R. Albury, William Albury, and Joseph Albury (the sons of Patience and Robert Albury) as farmers. In 1880, the Lowe household included Amos and Ada E. Lowe (husband and wife), and five children: Ada E., Mary A., Sarah E., Annie S., and Leonard L. Emanuel Grant was included among the household, perhaps as a boarder or laborer. Records from the 1890 census have been destroyed.

In the vicinity of cultivated fields around the Absalom Albury house, as depicted in the 1905 Krome map, a cluster of buildings stood on the ocean-side shore. They included a church and a school. Some maps identify this section of Tavernier as Lowesport.

The Albury family achieved local prominence through, among other ways, service as postmaster. For instance, after Daniel W. Riley's appointment to the post in 1911, Merlin Albury served for ten years, beginning on 21 January 1916, and Robert H. Albury began serving in 1926. Robert H. Albury's service continued until 1953, although a brief interruption occurred during World War II. Lastly, Paul E. Albury received his postmaster commission in 1953 (Clupper 1988; Wilkinson 2000: 161; Wilkinson 2008c; Wilkinson 2008a).

As the railroad approached Tavernier, the community's largest landholders, the Lowe family and the Albury brothers (Joseph V., Absalom, and William)

sensed an opportunity for profits in real estate. In 1913 and 1914, they hired George L. MacDonald to survey and plat their father's land into parcels. Soon thereafter, the Albury brothers divided the parcels among themselves through a deed dated 5 August 1914 (Monroe County Deed Book A-2, Pages 163-167). South of the Alburys, the 1913 plat of the Amos Lowe Homestead (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80) identified individual lot landowners, who were family members, and features of the community's built environment at that time, which still oriented itself toward the ocean, rather than the railroad. For instance, Austin Sawyer's waterfront lot included a house, Sam W. Williams's lot included a house and cistern, Mrs. Sarah E. Johnson's waterfront lot included a house and a cistern, Mrs. Mary A. Sawyer's waterfront lot

included a cistern only, Mrs. Ada E. Albury's waterfront lot included a school, and the land of the Albury brothers included a school too. The school, however, stood nearer to the railroad than the ocean. The parcel boundaries that divided the



Florida East Coast Railway Steam Engine #10 on Tavernier Creek Bridge (Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

land among the Lowe family later became the alignments followed by such streets in Tavernier as Coconut Row, Lowe Street, Ocean Avenue, Tavernier Trail, Beach Road, and Sunrise Drive.

The 1914 plat of the property belonging to Absalom Albury,

William Albury, and Joseph V. Albury did not identify the names of lot owners (the earlier mentioned deed has the names), but it did locate local built environment features: the FEC railroad right-of-way, the FEC section house, and a few subdivisions of large lots into building parcels near the railroad (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 64). Lot lines formed by the division of the Albury estate also emerged as streets such as Atlantic Circle Drive.

By the 1920s, the settlement at Tavernier had a population of approximately fifty families; some of them farmed, while others worked for the railroad. The community featured a small number of commercial stores, a service station, a Methodist church, and a schoolhouse (Wells 1984: 6). Such community members as the Albury brothers owned land beyond Tavernier, suggesting the extent of their farming operation and investments. The 1922 Monroe

County Tax Assessment Roll showed Joseph V. Albury, William Albury, and Absalom Albury owning property on Plantation Key in addition to their land on Key Largo. The 1922 tax rolls also indicated the tax burden of the estate of Mary A. Sawyer in Tavernier that included four lots in the Amos Lowe Homestead plat. The heirs of Mary A. Sawyer, wife of George Sawyer, (including George G. Sawyer, George B. Sawyer, A. Leiland Sawyer, Ida A. Baldwin, and Melton E. Sawyer) acquired the 14-acre property from Amos Lowe's Homestead tract in 1921 (Monroe County Deed Book A-4, Page 507). Leonard L. Lowe also paid taxes on four lots in the Amos Lowe Homestead plat. Grace Cullingford paid taxes on a three-acre lot, which had been owned by Austin Sawyer. Ada E. Albury and Sarah E. Johnson also appeared in the tax rolls for property in Tavernier in 1922.

The years between 1910 and 1925 in Florida witnessed a period of substantial construction activity

on the whole, which became known statewide as a Land Boom. Population also increased dramatically in Florida at this time. In Monroe County, however, only Key Largo experienced the developer's activity. The remainder of the Keys was considered to be too remote for the full onslaught of the speculative development that characterized the boom. A 1926 hurricane that made landfall in Miami, failure by some buyers to make payments on real estate transactions, and restrictions on credit burst the speculative bubble. Nevertheless, some of Tavernier's prominent citizens arrived during this period: Oliver M. Woods, H. S. McKenzie, and Harry Harris, among others. In 1925, O. M. Woods platted "Olliewood," which became the Tavernier No. 2 subdivision in 1929. Tavernier No. 2 emerged from lots 19, 20, part of 17, and part of 18 in the Albury brothers' property, which they and their heirs transferred to Woods in 1925 (Monroe County Deed Book B-5, Page 151).

Table 1

Subdivision Name	Date	Plat Book/Page	Owner Name
Sunny Haven	1926	1/185	Martha B. Bales
Knust & Lane Re-subdivision	1925	1/246	William Knust and Della Lane
Largo Beach	1925	2/108	Harry and Ruth Telford
Tavernier No. 1	1925-1929	1/179 and 2/8	● M. Woods and J. M. Woods
Tavernier Beach, American	1928	2/201	Harriah and Leonard L. Lowe
Tavernier Cove	1925	1/103	William Knust and Della Lane
Singleton's Addition to Tavernier Cove	1926	1/135	John Singleton
Tavernier Heights	1926	1/180	Ada E. and William Albury

Woods did not limit his real estate investments to Key Largo. He also purchased Albury land on Plantation Key, which he platted as Olliewood No. 2 (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 190). The Depression and Florida's post-Land Boom bearish market, however, defeated his plans and led to tax default proceedings. George W. Albury acquired many of the lots in Olliewood 2 in 1936 (Monroe County Deed Book G-9, Page 325) and 1940 (Monroe County Deed Book J1, Page 39). Deed research also revealed that in July 1921, Leonard L. Lowe and Hannah Lowe

sold four of the lots they owned in the Amos Lowe Homestead plat (Monroe County Deed Book A4, page 507; Book A5 pages 489, 493-494, and 497). Many of these large lots emerged as Tavernier subdivisions in the Florida Land Boom. A *plat* is a map of surveyed land, scaled to show division of land, and is used as a legal document for land sale.

In the short span of time that was the Florida Land Boom, numerous subdivision plats for Tavernier appeared on paper, laying the foundation for the community landscape of the present. In a 1975 newspaper interview, Captain

Rodney Albury recalled that construction of the first road in the Tavernier area occurred circa 1926 (Eyerdam 1975). This dirt road proceeded up Key Largo, and state-funding provided for the construction of more roads and bridges throughout the Keys from 1923 to 1918 (Marzyck 1997: 143). Roads became important factors in area development, providing settlers with more transportation options for entering and exiting the keys.

Developers exploited these transportation improvements and the sale of individual lots from the Amos Lowe Homestead plat



Barges at Tavernier Creek for Construction of the Overseas Railway Extension (Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

in 1921 by Hannah and Leonard Lowe. The list of plats dating between 1925 and 1928 illustrates the active real estate market at the time (Table 1).

All but one of these plats originated from earlier subdivisions and sales of lots from the property of Amos Lowe. Except for their deed to O.M. Woods, which became Tavernier No. 2 (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 179), the Albury brothers (Absalom, William, and Joseph V.) did not plat individual

subdivisions. Rather, they sold parcels in Tavernier from the lots delineated in their 1914 plat.

The unfulfilled ambitions of speculators during the Land Boom appeared in the designs for the Largo Beach subdivision. Here, the developers

anticipated large amounts of dredging and filling to create building lots and a pier where mangrove swamps stood. Streets named Euclid Place and Washington Avenue were envisioned as grand thoroughfares, but they remain as undeveloped swamp to date. Based on research in newspaper archives of the Key Largo Breeze by Jerry Wilkinson, we know that W.H. Knust and E.F. Lane (Deila Lane's husband) managed their Key Largo real estate investments

from Miami. Lane, who was a member of the Key Largo chamber of commerce, died in 1926. O.M. Woods and Roger Albury were also chamber of commerce members (Wilkinson personal communication 2008). During the Great Depression, the Keys suffered economically. Key West had entered a period of decline following World War I, when the U.S. Navy reduced its presence there. In addition, cigar manufacturing left the city in favor of Tampa, and the sponge fishing industry moved to Tarpon Springs. Immense debt resulted in the Federal Emergency Relief Administration taking over municipal finances in Monroe County by 1933 (Tebeau 1971: 385-387, 403). Houses built in Tavernier during the Depression reflect the national economic climate and the utilization of building materials brought in by the railroad. The house at 140 Tavern Drive and the house at 213 Sunrise Drive are fine examples of this point.

H. S. "Mac" Mackenzie, an entrepreneur and builder, and his wife Hazel moved to Tavernier from Homestead in 1928, initiating a significant phase of construction activity in Tavernier. Mackenzie built a small Standard Oil Service Station (MO-03627) and a drug store (now the vacant Copper Kettle Restaurant (MO-03625) along the new Overseas Highway. Mackenzie also built a building intended to serve as a movie theatre but later became the Tavernier Hotel (MO-01996) and the Old Tavern Tea Room (MO-03626). He operated a water-hauling business, as well. Mackenzie's businesses provided important work opportunities for Tavernier's residents. Even after the Depression, he built homes on the bay side of Tavernier.

Harry Harris built the house at 114 Lowe Street (MO-01989 and LHD 95-8) as an investment in the 1930s. These buildings reflect the growth of the community just after the end of the Land Boom and prior to the

tragic hurricane of 1935 (Henry 2003: 36).

During the Great Depression, the federal government funded a New Deal program that provided construction jobs erecting highway bridges to replace ferry crossings of the Overseas Highway in Monroe County. These ferry crossings were located at No Name Key, and between Grassy Key and Lower Matecumbe. Work camps were established at Windley Key, site of an extensive quarry, and on Lower Matecumbe Key. Construction of the bridges began in earnest in mid-1935 (Henry 2003: 38).

Significant changes in the built environment, as well as significant loss of human life, occurred on Labor Day 1935, when a hurricane made landfall in Monroe County. The hurricane killed approximately 400 people and destroyed much of the FEC Key West Extension railroad. Many of those who lost their lives were the aforementioned highway workers.



Monument to Hurricane Victims, Matecumbe Key, Florida. (Source: Library of Congress, Photo Security Administration. Office of War Information Photograph Collection)

The FEC decided not to rebuild the railroad due to the extensive repair costs. Instead, the FEC sold the right-of-way and bridges to the state. Three years later, the Monroe County Toll Bridge Commission, with federal funding, constructed a highway along the former railroad right-of-way. This project supported the growing

tourism industry in the Florida Keys. The tropical climate and excellent fishing opportunities available in the nearby Gulf Stream kept up tourists' interest in the Keys (Wells 1984: 9). Rodney Albury, Cliff Carpenter, and Eugene Lowe succeeded as off-shore captains in the charter boat business during this period (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008).



Pipes on Key, 1941 (Source: Helen Wiedley Library, Monroe County Public Library, Islamorada)

Following the deflation of the Florida Land Boom and the Great Depression, the Second World War stimulated the region's economic recovery. Specifically, the U.S. Navy reactivated the Key West station in World War II (Tebeau 1971: 416). The expansion of the naval base in Key West necessitated the use of more water than could be supplied by cisterns. Therefore, a water pipeline from Florida City to Key West was constructed in 1941 (Tebeau 1971: 404). Prior to pipeline construction, people

captured and stored rainwater in cisterns. Shirley Faye Albury recalled that her father had a cistern composed of cypress starks with charcoal filters, and the water was pumped to the house. Even if the Navy had not installed the pipeline, she added, "Conch people would have survived" (Personal Communication 2008). The term *Conch* originally referred to Bahamian fisherfolk who included the large marine gastropod mullocks in their diets. Residents of the Florida Keys with Bahamian ancestry use the term

to denote their proud heritage (Foster 1991a). Plans for such a pipeline date from 1925, but Monroe County never completed the project. The Florida Keys Aqueduct Commission, which was created in 1937, initiated surveys and planning studies, but water did not reach Key West until 1942 (Wilkinson Spring 1999: 98-99). Another resident of Key Largo, Beauregard Albury, recalled that cisterns required regular maintenance:

"To clean our cisterns, we would pump and bail the water out and save it in barrels. Then, we would scrub the cistern and put the water back in. We added kerosene on top of the water for wiggle tails [mosquito larvae]" (Wilkinson Summer 1999: 121).

Aerial photography of Tavernier, taken between 1945 and 1955, shows changes in the landscape that occurred after World War II—1945 mapping shows an agricultural field (perhaps a citrus grove) between Lowe Street and Coconut Row; by

1955, only a small patchwork of the grove remained among houses that had been built (Historic Aerial Photographs of Upper Florida Keys, 1945, 1947, and 1955.)

In the 1950s, electricity was introduced to many parts of the Keys that had never experienced it on more than just a part-time basis. In the early days, Tavernier residents relied on locally generated electric power. H.S. McKenzie installed a diesel generator and installed distribution lines to local homes that desired the service. McKenzie energized the lines only during essential hours of the day. Nevertheless, this arrangement was insufficient to allow for refrigeration of food. Therefore, housewives, according to Sharon Wells (1984: 8),

"roasted and ground their own coffee, made their own yeast, and . . . preserved many items in salt, including tubs of lard and butter brought by boat or rail. Staples

of rice, flour, and beans were ordered by the barrel, as was pickled beef. Fresh milk was totally unavailable, so canned condensed milk served many purposes, including desserts which are world famous today [key lime pie]."

Such delicacies as ice cream, however, were made possible through the ingenuity of the local Conchs. Shirley Faye Albury (Personal Communication 2008) remembered that her father told her about harvesting jelly coconuts as the key ingredient for



Herb Alley Dines for Crawfish, 1955
(Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

hand-made ice cream, which was cooled in tubs of rock salt and then churned in the process of men running with the tubs. During the New Deal era of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, the Rural Electrification Administration assisted in financing electrical distribution systems in rural areas, such as the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., which energized its lines in 1942. Captain Eugene Lowe served as the first manager of the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.,



Fish Fry on the Keys at Herb Alley's Tourist Court, 1955 (Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

plant in Tavernier (Wilkinson Winter 1999: 81-82).

US Route 1 (the Overseas Highway) was widened in several locations along its route through the Florida Keys beginning in the 1960s. The reconfigured highway was most noticeable in Key Largo. A new toll bridge at Card Sound was built in the early 1960s. Furthermore, the Florida Keys' reputation as a vacation destination provided sustained support for real estate services and tourism, which supplanted agriculture in the local economy (Henry 2003: 39-40).

The Driftwood Lodge was a popular Tavernier venue from the 1930s to the 1950s, located at the end of Sunrise Drive. Completion of the Overseas Highway stimulated business by bringing more tourists to the area. In the late 1940s, Raymond and Annie Maloney managed the Driftwood Lodge for its owner Adrian Rollini, a noteworthy jazz musician. Rollini died in the late 1950s, and a fire in the 1960s destroyed the Driftwood

Lodge (Wilkinson 2008d). Herb Alley's Campground also became a popular tourist destination at this point in Tavernier's history.

Looking at the history of Tavernier through its built environment provides an intimate portrait of the community. The houses convey an association with local events, community founders, and some of Key Largo's pioneering families. An understanding of the division of family estates can provide answers to why the streets are aligned in their present configuration. House histories constitute a community history that shows changes in the local economy, from agricultural production to real estate and tourist services. Moreover, the buildings themselves highlight the value of vernacular style architecture as a versatile medium for supporting the complex needs of a community like Tavernier. Like people in motion, many of the houses themselves have a moment of re-location in their own history. For instance, the Rodney Albury House, the Merlin Albury House, the Tavernier Methodist

Church, the Station Master's House, and some of the houses along Lowe Street have traveled about as they have become local historic landmarks. Hurricanes have moved some houses off their foundations (or necessitated new house construction on the site), while other homes have been moved to new locations. Even the emergence of a historic preservation movement in Tavernier is rooted in re-locating a building, the Tavernier Methodist Church. The historic buildings of Tavernier represent a significant collection of architectural resources that provide an important and rare visual and physical link to the town's past. The following section, then, provides the results of intensive level research into the history of each contributing resource in the Tavernier Historic District.

The following narrative is arranged alphabetically by address in ascending order. Rather than using the Florida Master Site File number or the historic name of

the house, street (starting with A) and house numbers determine the order of descriptions. Also, the captioned photo direction indicates view direction, not building elevation.

200 Albury Lane

The Rodney Albury House

Built in 1927, this frame vernacular style house belonged to a descendent of one of Tavernier's pioneering homesteading families, the Alburys. Rodney Albury, the son of William and Ada Eliza Albury, became one of Tavernier's well-known off-shore captains in the local sport-fishing industry (Shirley Faye Albury, Personal Communication, 21 May 2008).

Sharon Wells (1984) noted that the Rodney Albury House featured a barrel cistern and lumber recycled from a Johnson family house at Planter. Capt. Rodney Albury moved the house to its present

location from Planter by barge. Deed research indicated that Capt. Albury had owned the property since 1925 (Monroe County Deed Book 85, Page 276) when his parents transferred the property to him.

Born Malcolm Rodney Albury in 1890 to William and Ada Eliza Albury in Florida, Capt. Rodney Albury was a 40-year-old truck farmer married to Myrtle O. Albury with three children (Marjorie G., R. Edward, and William A. Albury), according to the 1930 US census population schedule. Capt. Rodney Albury died in 1984, and his executors transferred the property



Rodney Albury Standing on the Porch of his Home, c.1930 (Source: State Library and Archives of Florida)

out of the family in 1991 (Monroe County Deed Book 1690, Page 606).

The house, which warrants local historic designation, continues, despite contemporary alterations and additions, to convey its historic architectural associations. It is a well-maintained example of local frame vernacular domestic architecture. Furthermore, it conveys a noteworthy connection with Planter, Tavernier's original community, and one of Tavernier's pioneer families.



Rodney Albury House Facing Southeast



Rodney Albury House Facade Facing East

140 Atlantic Circle Drive

This masonry vernacular style, one-story residence dates from 1958, according to Monroe County ProPerty Appraiser data. The house reflects post-World War II building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of new building technologies. The house stands on Lot 1 in Block B, a parcel in O.M. Woods's Tavernier 2 subdivision, which was part of the Albury brothers' property surveyed in the early-twentieth century. In fact, Roger L. Albury and Sarah L. Albury conveyed the property to H. C. Griffiee in 1954 (Monroe County Deed Book 21,



140 Atlantic Circle Drive
Facing Southeast at

Page 25). Hubert C. Griffiee and Clara N. Griffiee owned it until 1984, when they transferred it to Edna P. Carrera (Monroe County Deed Book 976, Page 770). The house reflects adaptations to the local environment in its operable clamshell awnings and storm window protection system.

143 Atlantic Circle Drive

This masonry vernacular style, gable-front residence dates from 1957, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. Like its neighbor, the house reflects post-World War II building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of new building technologies. The one-story house bears the influence, in this massing and materials, of the Alice Lowe House and the other Red Cross Houses/Hurricane Houses in Tavernier. The house stands on a parcel that was part of the Albury brothers' property surveyed in the early-twentieth century. Absalom Albury purchased it from his brothers and sisters-in-law (Joseph V. and Mary F. Albury and William



143 Atlantic Circle Drive
Facing North

and Ada E. Albury) on 5 August 1914 (Monroe County Deed Book A2-167). Roger L. Albury acquired the property, which was part of his estate, including a 1956 Plymouth four-door sedan, at the time of his death in 1962 (Monroe County Probate Record 8, Page 158A). Deed records indicate that the house remained in the Albury family until 1996. Sharon Wells noted (1984) that a cistern was located on the property.

166 Atlantic Circle Drive

This frame vernacular style house was built in 1938, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. This one-story house reflects post-Land Boom building trends in Florida and the vernacular building mode with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies. The house stands on Lot 14 in Block B, a parcel in O.M. Woods's Tavernier No. 2 subdivision, which was part of the Albury brothers' property surveyed in the early-twentieth century.

The house, which warrants local historic designation, continues to



166 Atlantic Circle Drive
Facing North

convey its historic architectural associations. It is a well-maintained example of local frame vernacular domestic architecture and contributes to the significance of the Tavernier Historic District.

186 Atlantic Circle Drive

This frame vernacular style house was built in 1943, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects post-Land Boom building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials, such as stone and poured concrete. Two adjoining shed roofs form this interesting roof profile. Some residents of Tavernier affectionately call it the "Ranch House." The house stands on Lot 10 in Block B, a parcel in O.M. Woods's Tavernier No. 2 subdivision, which was part of the Albury brothers' property surveyed in the early-twentieth century.

Deed research revealed that Hazel R. McKenzie and H.S. McKenzie,

who was a prominent local builder and businessman, were early owners of the property and built the house. They sold it to Gladys H. Sticher in 1961 (Monroe County Deed Book 222, Page 214). In 1974 Gladys Sticher sold the property to Thelma Vickery (Monroe County Deed Book 598, Page 714), and it remained in the Vickery family until 1995.



186 Atlantic Circle Drive
Facing Northwest

190 Atlantic Circle Drive

This frame vernacular style house (formerly the Methodist Church Parsonage) was built in 1933, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects post-Land Boom building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The use of jalousie windows points to a common fenestration technique in southern Florida. The one-story house stands on Lot 26 in Block A, a parcel in O. M. Woods's Tavernier No. 2 subdivision, which was part of the Albury brothers' property surveyed in the early-twentieth century.

In 1974, the Burton Memorial United Methodist Church and the board of trustees of the Matecumbe United Methodist Church sold the property to private individuals (Monroe County Deed Book 580, pp. 455 and 551.)



190 Atlantic Circle Drive Facing Northwest

1 Balas Trail

Alice Lowe House/Red Cross House

Built in 1935, the house provides an immediate reflection on the consequences of the 1935 hurricane. For those who lost loved ones in the hurricane, the disaster was cataclysmic. For those who survived, housing needs were immediate and the promise of a hurricane-proof house proved catalytic in the architectural history of the Florida Keys, leading to houses elevated on stilts above the floodplain and an emphasis on concrete structural systems.

Alice L. Lowe, originally from Key West, and her husband Edward R. Lowe were prominent community members in Tavernier. Edward R. Lowe served as a paramedic for the Florida East Coast Railroad and remained in Tavernier. Later, "Doc" Lowe served as a justice of the peace (Wilkinson 1999: 175). During the 1935 hurricane, the surging storm carried their original house into the ocean (Burton 1987: 44).

After living in the home of Cliff Carpenter, the Lowes occupied their new hurricane-proof house in late 1935. The 1935 storm was not the last to assault their home. It withstood the insults of Hurricane Donna as well. In the 1970s, the house endured a period of neglect. After the death of her husband Alice L. Lowe had moved to Miami to live with family prior to her own death on 13 May 1974. She was living with her grandson Jerry Lowe at the time. During the proceedings that accompanied the settlement of her estate, an appraiser commented on the condition of the house:

"There is also," he wrote, "on the shore, an old poured concrete cottage (era 1935), in deteriorating condition." (Monroe County Will Book OR-7, Page 142, and Probate #74-124-CP-12).

Sharon Wells (1984) noted that the Alice Lowe House stands above an 18,000-gallon cistern with in the footprint of the house and that grave sites are on the property.

She and Shirley Faye Albury also identified two burials on the property—Captain Samuel Williams and his wife Beatrice Williams. The 1913 plat of the Amos Lowe Homestead identifies Samuel Williams's home lot and cistern (Monroe County Plat Book 1, page 80) at this location.

As for its construction, the builders utilized poured concrete as the structural system. Built through federal work relief program funding and supervised by O.A. Sundsquist, the building features 18-inch-thick reinforced concrete and cast concrete roofs, which fed the cistern. Elevating the first floor above the floodplain was another innovation in the house design necessitated by the hurricane cycle (Wells 1984: 11). The Lowe House is, rightly so, a recommended Monroe County Historic Landmark (LHD 95-13), and it shares a common history with similar houses in the area. For instance, this is one of two houses in Tavernier that belong to a larger group of Works Progress



Alice Lowe House circa 1995 Facing Southwest



Ballast Trail Facing East

Administration- (WPA) funded housing projects, numbering 29, that are located elsewhere in the Upper Keys. They are known as Hurricane Houses and/or Red Cross Houses, and they include schools and hurricane

she lters (Wilkinson 2008b, Albury 1985).

Following the tragic hurricane, this type of house was promoted as "hurricane proof," as were other similar buildings constructed in the Keys. For instance, the Federal Writers Project guide to Florida praised the house for its substantial construction: "The average four-room house of reinforced concrete construction contains approximately 80,000 pounds of steel; steel rods anchor the house to solid rock. The roof, floors, and walls are of concrete; the walls are a foot thick. All partitions extend from the roof through the house to bedrock. Window sashes are of steel, with double strength glass and double shutters. Wood is used in the triple-strength cypress doors. Drain pipes run from the roof to a cistern cut in the bedrock under the house, providing water in emergencies" (Federal Writers' Project 1984).

178 Beach Road

This frame vernacular style house was built in 1941 according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects post-Land Boom building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The house stands on Lot 10 in Block A, of the Amos Lowe Homestead subdivision, which was bequeathed to Leonard Lowe.

Deed research indicated that Jack London, an early member of the Old Tavernier Town Association, a property developer active in Tavernier in the late 1980s and 1990s, and a Monroe County



178 Beach Road Facing Northwest

politician, owned this property with his wife (Monroe County Deed Book 922, Page 907). The Londons sold the property in 1995 (Monroe County Deed Book 1348, Page 129).

189 Beach Road, former address (191 Lowe St, current address)

The Oliver "Ollie" M. Woods House has been altered throughout its life, but it still conveys a connection with one of Tavernier's early community builders through its style of construction. Many of the alterations have been completed in response to the insults of severe weather. Twice, hurricanes have pushed the house off its foundation. As a result, a poured concrete foundation system of piers date from 1960, when the house was elevated above the floodplain. According to Monroe County Property Appraiser data, the house, which is on a lot in the amended Tavernier Beach subdivision, dates from 1948; however, previous historians determined through historic mapping that the construction

occurred before 1935. H.S. McKenzie built the residence, according to an article in the Florida Keys Keynoter (1996). Furthermore, the Woods family had been living in Tavernier as early as 1928. Woods died in 1934.

Born in Missouri in 1887, O.M. Woods was a 43-year-old retail merchant who operated a local drugstore and married to Josephine M. Woods with one child in their household (a step-daughter named Peggy), according to the 1930 US census population schedule. Josephine and Peggy were born in New York. Prior to 1930, O.M. Woods lived in Kansas and Chicago, Illinois, with his first wife. For example, the population schedule of the 1920 US census identified O.M. Woods in Hyde Park, Cook County, Illinois, as the 32-year-old head of a household with a 32-year-old wife named Bessie, who was born in Illinois. Together, they had two sons (Delmar and Dexter, both nine-years old). The boys were born in Kansas. He was

working as a broom corn trader in 1920. Earlier, O.M. Woods was working as a real estate agent, an experience that shaped his later activities in Tavernier. For example, the population schedule of the 1910 US census enumerated O.M. Woods in Seward County, Kansas, as the 23-year-old head of a household with a 22-year-old wife named Bessie, who was born in Illinois. In 1910, O.M. Woods was working as a real estate agent in Kansas.

Jerry Wilkinson (2003d) argues that O.M. Woods moved to Tavernier in the late 1920s. He partnered with H. S. McKenzie



189 Beach Road Facing Northeast

in a business that involved construction of petroleum storage tanks. He also worked as an agent for Standard Oil when the Overseas Highway opened to vehicular traffic.

According to a notice dated June 20, 1928, in the Key Largo Breeze newspaper, the Standard Oil Company, through Woods, announced that it "will erect storage tanks and warehouses within the next few weeks." Woods recently sold the company a parcel "having 150 feet of frontage on Dixie Highway and the same trackage on the F.E.C. Railway near its station." Woods's involvement in the local retail drug industry and petroleum service in 1930 indicates his varied business interests. These varied interests also included real estate speculation, which began upon his arrival in Tavernier in 1925, according to numerous deeds executed by him in that year. Later, the 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment Roll indicated the extent of Woods's real

estate holdings in Tavernier. For example, Woods and McKenzie owned fifteen lots in the Tavernier No. 2 subdivision. The O. M. Woods House possesses sufficient architectural and historical significance to be designated Monroe County Historic Landmark (LHD 95-4).

198 Beach Road

Built in 1935, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data, this frame vernacular style house on lot 4 of the Sunny Haven subdivision stands one story tall. This gable-front house typifies vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.

Deed research indicated that Jack London, a local developer in Tavernier mentioned earlier, owned this property, beginning in 1931, and moving the residence to its present location before his death in 2005 (Monroe County Deed Book 837, Page 749). Jack

London sold the property in 1987 to Holt E. and Patricia



198 Beach Road Facing North

B. Loeffler (Monroe County Deed Book 1029, Page 2483).

200 Beach Road, current (formerly 198 Beach Road) The Station Master's House, which dates from circa 1934, was moved to this location between 1945-1950. The building functioned as a dwelling in Rock Harbor situated by the depot for an official of the Florida East Coast Railroad's Key West Extension prior to the 1935 hurricane. The wrap-around porch is not original to the house (Wilkinson 2008b).

Martha B. Bates recorded the Sunny Haven plat in 1926 (Monroe

County Plat Book 1, Page 185). Martha B. Bates, a widow living in Miami, sold parcel 3, the lot where the dwelling currently stands, as an empty lot to George and Viola Carter in 1925 (Monroe County Deed Book C-2, Page 392).

The *Miami Herald* featured the Station Master's House as an illustration of historic preservation activities gearing up in Tavernier in 1984, with Jack London altering the historic architectural fabric of the building for contemporary needs (Dunlop 1982).



200 Beach Road Facing Northwest

105 Coconut Row

The Geiger Packing House

This significant commercial building dates from 1919.

Presently, it stands on lot one in the amended plat of Tavernier Beach (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201). Leonard L. and Hannah Lowe transferred the property to G. C. Geiger on 26 October 1931 (Monroe County Deed Book 83, Page 371). In 1947, G. C. Geiger sold the property to James G. and Ila M. Donaldson (Monroe County Deed Book 629, Page 275-276). The property remained in the Donaldson family until 1979 (Monroe County Deed Book



105 Coconut Row
Facing North

794, Page 1943). Walter E. and Nancy W. Stoetzer acquired the property in 1986 (Monroe County Deed Book 979, Page 1574). The Stoetzers lived in Cleveland, Ohio, and they were the property owners at the time the packing house was recommended for local historic designation. They sold the property in 2000 (Monroe County Deed Book 1633, Page 759-761) to its current owners.

In the early twentieth century, many of Tavernier's farmers (and Key Largo's farmers) operated truck farms, using the nearby railroad to ship their products. Following the pineapple blight, many farms on Key Largo turned to tomato crops. The upper story of the packing house functioned as a living space, according to Alice Allen (Alice Allen personal communication 2008).

Alterations to the building include the construction of a second-story porch and an attached garage. The alterations date from 1986, when Walter Stoetzer hired Joe Bjzjak, a

Tavernier contractor, to renovate the roof, the wood siding, install new doors and windows, and update the plumbing and electrical system, based on a Monroe County building permit. A 1965 photograph on the Monroe County real property record card shows that the building had exposed rafter tails and metal clamshell awnings. Fascia boards now obscure the exposed rafter tails, and the metal clamshell awnings have been discarded, in favor of Bahamas-style louvered shutters.

Aerial photography from 1945 shows an agricultural field extending from the building to the ocean. Situated between Lowe Street and Coconut Row, the field may have been a citrus grove (Historic Aerial Photographs of Upper Florida Keys 1945).

115 Coconut Row

This frame vernacular style house was built in 1948, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects mid-century building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The house stands on Lot 5 in Leonard and Hannah Lowe's amended Tavernier Beach subdivision.

The Santini family, of Hitchcock, Texas, owned the property at the time of the house's construction (Monroe County Deed Book G18, Page 326). The 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment Roll indicated that Lawrence Santini owned the property. The property stayed in the Santini family until 1978 (Monroe County Deed Book 773, Page 1196). Since 1978, the property has changed hands frequently. Additionally, the house appears to have been realigned on its present lot. For example, the gable end façade faced the street in a 1965 photograph, plan view sketches, and a 1992 photograph included on



115 Coconut Row
Facing North-Northeast

the Monroe County real property record card. Since that time, a one-bay-wide garage has been appended to the gable end, and the jalousie windows have been replaced. A lattice pergola has been installed in the front yard.

125 Coconut Row

Like its neighbor, this frame vernacular style house dates from the World War II era, specifically 1942, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects post-Land Boom building trend in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The house stands

on Lot 5 in Leonard and Hannah Lowe's amended Tavernier Beach subdivision. The gable-on-hip roof profile allows for adequate roof ventilation.

In the past, the façade featured a poured concrete stoop and projecting gable over the doorway, based on a 1965 photograph on the Monroe County real property record card. Since that time, a shed-roof porch projects from the facade and metal awnings windows have been installed, replacing earlier fenestration.



125 Coconut Row
Facing North of Northeast

129 Coconut Row

Like its neighbor, this frame vernacular style house dates from the World War II era, specifically 1955, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects mid-century building trends in Florida, with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The house stands on a low concrete pier foundation. It is on Lot 8 in Leonard and Hannah Lowe's amended Tavernier Beach subdivision.

Based on a 1965 photograph on the Monroe County real property record card, the house has not undergone extensive alterations.



129 Coconut Row
Facing Northeast

A 1972 photograph on the Monroe County real property record card shows no front porch, only a stoop and asbestos shingle siding. The porch has been added and the asbestos siding either removed or covered by vertical vinyl siding since 1972. This modest house illustrates an expedient way of meeting housing needs following World War II.

139 Coconut Row

Like its neighbor at 163 Coconut Row, this frame vernacular style house dates from 1953, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects mid-century building trends in Florida, with emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The house stands on Lot 9 in Leonard and Hannah Lowe's amended Tavernier Beach subdivision.

The house has been elevated to avoid hurricane flood damage. A 1965 photograph on the Monroe County real property record card shows a ground-floor door



139 Coconut Row Facing Northeast

aperture unfinished, the house had been elevated on concrete blocks at that time. By 1972, the original windows had been replaced with metal awning windows. Shirley Vondersaar owned the property from 1973 to 1980 (Monroe County Deed Book 561, Page 615, and Monroe County Deed Book 822, Page 18). The current owners, Ronald Eugene and Nettie Dowmond, installed the open wood porch and stairs, based on a 1987 Monroe County building permit.

This is a common example of Tavernier vernacular-style domestic architecture altered in response to environmental conditions.

163 Coconut Row

Like its neighbor, this frame vernacular style house dates from the World War II era, specifically 1953, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects mid-century building trends in Florida, with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials. The eaves of the house feature exposed rafter tails—a typical detail in frame vernacular style houses. The house stands on lots 12, 13, 14, 22, and 23 in block 1 of Leonard and Hannah Lowe's 1928 amended Tavernier Beach subdivision (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201).

This modest house illustrates an expedient way of meeting housing needs following World War II. L. Jack Vickers owned the lot in 1947, according to Monroe County's tax assessment rolls. John C. and Lois M. Stormont acquired the property in 1973 from L. Jack and Cecelia D. Vickers (Monroe County Deed Book 537, Page 854).

While the house possesses significant

architectural qualities, its owners played a significant role in raising Tavernier's historical consciousness. By organizing the effort to save the Methodist Church and by initiating the Old Tavernier Town Association, John and Lois Stormont earned a prominent place in Tavernier's early historic preservation effort. They alerted the media to the cause of historic preservation and helped raise funds for relocating the Methodist Church and the Merlin Aubrey house to their present location on the Overseas Highway. This house warrants designation as a local historic landmark for its historic architecture and its association with important local residents.



163 Coconut Row Facing North

181 Coconut Row

This one-story frame vernacular style house stands on a low concrete pier foundation and dates from 1925. Aerial mapping from 1945 suggests the possibility that this house was moved to this location in the 1930s. It typifies the style, materials, massing, and setting of Tavernier's architecture during the formative years of the community and the Land Boom just prior to the Depression. The gable end fronts the street. Also, the gable ends of the roof feature brackets and molded rake boards, typical features of frame vernacular style houses. The house is also noteworthy for its retention of the historic, glazed front door and other original interior doors, doorknobs, and pine floors.

When Karl Henry and Thelma G. Vickery acquired the property from Marie A. McGeagh in 1970 (Monroe County Deed Book 462, Page 765), the façade featured a poured concrete stoop and clam shell awnings, and the east elevation featured a carport,



181 Coconut Row
Facing North

based on an image on the Monroe County real property record card. Since that time, the carport has been converted into a gable-roof side addition aligned perpendicular to the main block of the house, and the concrete stoop has been replaced by a wood porch and set of stairs.

This dwelling exemplifies Tavernier's early frame vernacular style of domestic architecture. It also illustrates ground-level construction of the foundation. Current concrete block building methods and hurricane elevation requirements have rendered this type of house foundation obsolete.

The house at 181 Coconut Row is a designated Monroe County Historic Landmark (LHD 95-11).

240 Lincoln Avenue

Built circa 1948, this frame vernacular style house stands on concrete block piers. The gable end of the building faces the street. The façade features an enclosed, shed-roof porch. A shed-roof addition extends from the west elevation. The current owner, Joe Miklas, acquired the property in 1977 (Monroe County Deed Book 727, Page 116) from M. Martin and Sara D. Black. The house is on Lot 6 in Block 10 of the



240 Lexok Avenue
Facing Southwest



240 Lincoln Avenue
Facing Southeast

Largo Beach subdivision (Monroe County Plate Book 1, Page 180). Sylvia Murphy, a former owner, recalled that prior to Hurricane Donna in 1960, the house stood on elevated concrete piers. The storm tipped the house over and off of its foundation legs. "We lost everything we had in that house," she said (Sylvia Murphy personal communication 2008). When the house was repaired, elevated foundation piers were not used. The house was constructed by a Miami policeman as a weekend cottage after World War II (Sylvia Murphy personal communication 2008).

Harry and Ruth Tedd filed this plat in 1925. The plat illustrates grand designs for a waterfront development that never materialized. The design included a pier and bulkhead extending beyond the existing shoreline. This section of Tavernier has witnessed less development than other parts of town.

114 Lowe Street

This house dates from circa 1935 and was built for Harry Harris, one of Tavernier's prominent citizens, politicians, and developers. This was not Harris's primary residence. The dwelling occupies Lot 32 in the Tavernier Beach subdivision plat of the Leonard and Hannah Lowe (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201). The frame vernacular style house is rectangular in plan. The original fenestration and doors have been removed, and Bahamas-style louvered shutters have been installed.

Following Harry Harris's ownership of the property, J. Elmer and Hazel

Marie Keefer owned this house (Monroe County Deed Book G-27, Page 344). The Keefer transferred the property in 1954 (Monroe County Deed Book 17, Page 300) to Chester Earl and Ruth E. Bock. The Bocks were married on 10 May 1954, and Chester E. Bock died on 22 August 1968 (Monroe County Deed Book 1505, Page 1492). Ruth Bock died in 1999, but before her death, she pursued Monroe County local historic landmark designation of her home. Robert C. Stokely, III, acquired the property in 1999 (Monroe County Deed Book 1587, Page 2053). Stokely sold the property to its current owner, Linda Gay Reedy, in 2002 (Monroe County Deed Book 1813, Page 1014).

The house illustrates the role of developers and speculative home construction in the economic history of Tavernier.



114 Lowe Street
Facing Southwest

122 Lowe Street

This locally designated historic frame vernacular style house dates from circa 1935 and is associated with Harry Harris, one of Tavernier's prominent citizens, politicians, and developers. Harris used the dwelling as a primary residence at one time. The dwelling occupies parts of lots 6 and 31 in the Tavernier Beach subdivision plat of the Leonard and Hannah Lowe (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201). The frame vernacular style house is rectangular in plan, with a projecting front entry. Exposed rafter tails are visible in the eaves of the low-pitched hipped roof. The original siding is still evident, and Bahamas-style louvered shutters have been installed on the facade. The interior has Dade County pine floors. As for fenestration, the double-hung, wood sash windows feature a one-over-one light pattern.

Following Harry Harris's ownership of the property, J. Elmer and Hazel Marie Keefe owned this house

(Monroe County Deed Book 431, Page 294, and Monroe County Deed Book 409, Page 121). The Keefers transferred the property in 1969 (Monroe County Deed Book 437, Page 695) to Marsden L. Williams. Williams died in 1975, and he bequeathed his estate to his son William E. Raye (Monroe County Deed Book 661, Page 3551). Raye transferred the property to Barbara Harwood in 1993 (Monroe County Deed Book 1248, Page 418). Barbara Harwood pursued Monroe County local historic landmark designation of her home in 1997. Harwood sold the property to its current owner, Carol L. Volland, in 2002 (Monroe

County Deed Book 1764, Page 2023).

Like its neighbor, the house features the conventional, ground-level foundation system once typical in Tavernier before the advent of concrete block building methods and hurricane elevation requirements. Also, the house illustrates the practices of developers and local entrepreneurs in speculative home construction in Tavernier.



122 Lowe Street Facing Southwest

124 Lowe Street

This house, a potential Monroe County historic landmark, dates from circa 1935 and is associated with railroad buildings and Harry Harris, one of Tavernier's prominent citizens, politicians, and developers. The 1996 staff designation report asserts that the front room of the dwelling formerly served as office space at the railroad depot, before it was moved to this location, based on Martin Krebs's investigations.

This frame vernacular style dwelling occupies Lot 30 in the Tavernier Beach subdivision plat of the Leonard and Hannah Lowe (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201). Krebs also stated that Harry Harris lived in the dwelling.

This modest house is rectangular in plan. The original fenestration and doors have been removed. It typifies the frame vernacular style of domestic architecture.

Harry Harris's ownership of the property began in 1944 (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 582). He

sold the property in February 1976 (Monroe County Deed Book 644, Page 587) to Paul K and Norma D. Snyder, who held it very briefly. The Snyders sold the property to William George Williams in September 1976 (Monroe County Deed Book 674, Page 792). In 1986, Williams, who had filed for bankruptcy, sold the property to Martin B. Krebs (Monroe County Deed Book 981, Page 2036-2038). The property remained in the Krebs family until 1997 (Monroe County Deed Book 1473, Page 1332).



124 Lowe Street Facing South

130 Lowe Street

Dating from 1948, this frame vernacular features a gable roof with three-tab, standard strip, asphalt shingles, rakeboards, new windows, and a stucco exterior. The front porch has been enclosed. Heavy vegetation and a high wood fence obscure views of the house from the street. Although altered, as a vernacular style building, it conveys the architectural character and historic significance of the Tavernier Historic District. An early property owner was David R. Stuart, who transferred the property to J.H. Williams and C.M. Ingle in March 1945 (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 600).



130 Lowe Street Facing Southwest

157 Lowe Street

This frame vernacular style dwelling dates from 1935. The house, which stands at the intersection of Beach Road and Lowe Street, is rectangular in plan. The original fenestration and doors have been removed. The façade features a full-width, screened front porch with a half-hip roof. Ornamental details include exposed rafter tails, Dutch lap wood siding, and corner boards. This gable-front house typifies frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.



157 Lowe Street Facing Northeast

The dwelling occupies Lot 10 in the subdivision plat of the Amos Lowe Homestead on Key Largo (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80).

Captain Samuel C. Williams, who had married a daughter of Amos and Lowe named Annie Lorena (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008), received the property in 1921 (Monroe County Deed Book 45, Pages 493-494). The lot was the property of Alice L. and Eugene R. Lowe until 1979, when Jerry O. Lowe, estate executor, sold it to Paul and Barbara Faye Milazzo (Monroe County Deed Book 784, Page 119). Jack London acquired the property in 1984 (Monroe County Deed Book 922, Page 907). It is likely that he moved the house to this location during his ownership. London sold the property in 1995 (Monroe County Deed Book 1363, Page 2177).

180 Lowe Street

This house stands at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Lowe Street in the amended Tavernier Beach



180 Lowe Street Facing Southeast

subdivision. The dwelling dates from 1930s. This gable-front house, which is rectangular in plan, typifies frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance. The knee braces in the eaves, the exposed rafter tails, the Dutch lap wood siding, and a scroll-sawn truss in the apex of the gable enrich the house's ornamentation. The fenestration is not original.

Deed research indicated that Jack and Elaine London owned this property, beginning in 1985. Before his death, he enclosed the front porch of the residence (Monroe County

Deed Book 948, Page 1370). Jack and Elaine London sold the Property in 1994 to William C. Bateman (Monroe County Deed Book 1292, Page 2135). During Bateman's ownership of the property, Monroe County recommended designating the house as a local historic landmark.

181 Lowe Street

This frame vernacular style residence dates from 1935. The one-story dwelling has a front-gable roof profile and a screened-in, half-hip, full-width front porch. Cornerboards, Dutch lap wood siding, scroll-sawn brackets, and exposed rafter tails comprise the house's ornamental details.

Deed research points out that Jack London, a developer of local historic properties in Tavernier, owned this lot, beginning in 1984 with A. Elaine, his wife, before his death and when they resided on Summerland Key (Monroe County Deed Book 915, Page 2372).

London may have moved the present building to this location from another site

in Tavernier. The Londons sold the property in 1995 (Monroe County Deed Book 1183, Page 1227). Prior to the Londons' ownership, Elizabeth Graham purchased the property in 1979, when she owned another property in Tavernier on Lowe Street with Virginia Graham (Monroe County Deed Book 798, Page 1946). Virginia Graham died in 1966 (Monroe County Deed Book 915, Page 2378).

This well-maintained house typifies the frame vernacular style of domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.



181 Lowe Street
Facing North

184 Lowe Street

192 Lowe Street (current)

Built in 1935-1936, the house illustrates one of the effects of the 1935 hurricane on Tavernier's built environment. The need for a hurricane-proof house simulated the creation of this type of housing that is now a significant element in the architectural history of the Florida Keys. This house can be considered a prototype of later houses that are elevated on stilts above the floodplain and emphasize concrete structural systems. This house shares a common history with the Alice L. Lowe House (MO01993), in that they are part of a larger group of WPA-funded housing projects found throughout the Keys (Wilkinson 2008b; Albury 1985).

Following the tragic hurricane, this type of house was promoted as "hurricane proof." For instance, the Federal Writers Project guide to Florida praised the house for its substantial construction: "The average four-room house of reinforced concrete construction



Facade of 122 (current) Lowe Street
Facing Southwest

contains approximately 80,000 pounds of steel; steel rods anchor the house to solid rock. The roof, floors, and walls are of concrete; the walls are a foot-thick. All partitions extend from the roof through the house to bedrock. Window sashes are of steel, with double-strength glass and double shutters. Wood is used in the triple-strength cypress doors. Drain pipes run from the roof to a cistern cut in the bedrock under the house, providing water in emergencies" (Federal Writers' Project 1984).

The house stands above an 18,000-gallon cistern within the footprint of the house. As for its

construction, the builders utilized poured concrete as the structural system. Built through federal work relief program (WPA) funding and supervised by C. A. Sandsquist, the dwelling features reinforced concrete walls and cast concrete roofs, which fed the cistern. Elevating the first floor above the floodplain was another innovation in the house design necessitated by the hurricane cycle (Wells 1984: 11). This house has the architectural merit and historical significance to be designated a Monroe County Historic Landmark (LHD 95-12).

This historic Lowe Street house occupies Lot 2 in Block 2 of the amended subdivision plat of the Tavernier Beach filed by Leonard and Hannah Lowe (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 201).

185 Lowe Street

Built in 1943, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data, this frame vernacular style house on Lot 2 in Block 4 of the Tavernier Beach subdivision stands one story tall. This gable-front house typifies

frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance. The house features an enclosed front porch, brackets, exposed rafter tails, and Dutch lap siding.

Deed research indicated that Jack London, local developer of historic properties in Tavernier mentioned earlier, owned this property, beginning in 1984 with A. Elaine, his wife (Monroe County Deed Book 915, Page 2372). The Londons sold the property in 1995 (Monroe County Deed Book 1183, Page 1227). Prior to the London's ownership, Virginia Graham and



Facade of 185 Lowe Street
Facing North

Elizabeth Graham purchased the property in 1965, when they were living in Coral Gables (Monroe County Deed Book 350, Page 593). However, Virginia Graham, who was born in West Virginia in 1895 and was a retired juvenile probation officer, died on September 1966 (Monroe County Deed Book 915, Page 2378).

195 Lowe Street

This frame vernacular style house was built in 1949, according to Monroe County Property Appraiser data. The house reflects post-World War II building trends in Florida with its emphasis on simplicity and use of available building technologies and materials, such as a continuous concrete block foundation and vertical wood siding. The eaves have exposed rafter tails. Two shed roofs form this interesting roof profile. The house stands on Block 5 of the Tavernier Beach subdivision.

Alterations to the house include the installation of Bahamian-style shutters. This house exemplifies



195 Lowe Street Facing North

frame vernacular style domestic architecture in Tavernier, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.

204 Ocean Boulevard

Although the Monroe County Property Appraiser asserts that this dwelling was constructed in 1957, its massing and materials suggest a construction date from the 1930s. The present owner stated that the house was moved to this location at an unknown time and from an unknown location, and it may have been worked on by H.S. McKenzie (Christine Nicholls personal communication 2008). The original

windows are still in their frames.

Christine Nicholls acquired the property from Clara Killingsworth, her mother (Monroe County Deed Book 1634, Page 633). Clara Killingsworth acquired the property in 1979 (Monroe County Deed Book 779, Page 704) from Sarah Jane Ward, whose uncle, Edward Cox had owned the property since 1955 (Monroe County Deed Book 40, Page 88).

The house is on Lot 13 in Block 2 of the Largo Beach subdivision (Monroe County Plats Book 1, Page 108). This subdivision was created by Harry and Ruth Todd, who lived in Kansas, at the time



204 Ocean Boulevard Facing Northwest

the plat was filed in the Monroe County Courthouse in 1925. Their location at such a far distance from Tavernier, their reliance on a Miami engineering firm, and the grandiose plan point to the speculative nature of real estate development in Florida during the Land Boom.

131 Ocean View Drive

Known as the Annie V. Smith Cottage, this frame vernacular style, one-story dwelling stands on a concrete and brick pier foundation. The house exemplifies the frame vernacular style with its Dutch lap wood siding, one-over-one glazing scheme in double hung, wood sash windows, exposed rafter tails, rectangular massing, and cornerboards. The house dates from 1938 and bears a connection with the Albury family.

The façade features a full-width, shed-roof front porch. Also noteworthy are the wood shutters that flank most of the building's window apertures. At the rear of the main house stands a one-story, small cottage. The cottage



131 Ocean View Drive Main Dwelling
Facing Northeast

is also a frame vernacular style building with details similar to the main house: exposed rafter tails, shutters, cornerboards, and Dutch lap wood siding. These two dwellings are excellent examples of the style of construction, materials, and scale of Tavernier's architecture during the community's emerging years. A new garage has been constructed at the rear of the property.

Annie Valda Smith and her husband Ila E. Smith acquired the property from Mary Lorena and John Pinder (Monroe County Deed Book G 44, Page 348). Ila E. Smith died in 1956. Annie Valda Smith



131 Ocean View Drive Secondary
Dwelling Facing North

sold the property in 1984 (Monroe County Deed Book 917, Page 565) to Ellen Lucille Baker and Hazel H. Carey. In 1987, Baker and Carey sold the lot to Nancy L. and Thomas J. Grant (Monroe County Deed Book 1030, Page 1473). The Grants owned the property when it was recommended for designation as a Monroe County historic landmark. Annie Valda Smith and Mary Lorena Pinder were the daughters of William and Ada E. Albury.

The Smith Cottage stands on Lot 5 in Block 3 of the Tavernier Heights subdivision. Ada E. and William Albury filed the



RESTRICTIONED
USGS IS UNAVAILABLE
TAVERNIER FL

LEGEND

- TAVERNIER HISTORIC DISTRICT
- PARCEL BOUNDARY
- HISTORIC PARCEL BOUNDARY

0 100 200 400 Feet

TAVERNIER HISTORIC DISTRICT SHEET 1 OF 2



MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA
AND
THE HISTORIC FLORIDA KEY FOUNDATION

BY: LFS

CHECKED: MOH

DATE: 06/24/2008

APPROVED: MGH



TAVERNIER HISTORIC DISTRICT SHEET 2 OF 2



MONROE COUNTY FLORIDA
AND
THE HISTORIC FLORIDA KEYS FOUNDATION

BY: LFS
CHECKED: MCM

DATE: 04/26/2008
APPROVED: JGH

03/20/2008, 04/26/2008, 05/26/2008, 06/26/2008, 07/26/2008, 08/26/2008, 09/26/2008, 10/26/2008, 11/26/2008, 12/26/2008

Tavernier Heights plat in 1926, and it included part of two lots that Amos Lowe bequeathed to Ada, his daughter. William Albury was the son of Robert Albury, an early settler and farmer at Planter. According to an Albury descendant, Robert Albury and Amos Lowe were good friends (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008).

91461 Overseas Highway Foot and Ankle Building

This commercial building has been a fixture on the Tavernier landscape since just after World War II. It had a dual purpose, functioning as a residence on the upper floor and a beauty shop on the ground floor. Presently, it is a doctor's office. Built in 1948, it is a fine example of masonry vernacular architecture, with a gesture toward fanciful details in the castellated parapet on the rear portion of the building.



91461 Overseas Highway Facing
Northeast

The exterior staircase led to the residence on the upper floor. Between the time the beauty shop closed and the doctor's office opened, the building was vacant.

91701 Overseas Highway
Tavernier Methodist Church, which is a designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHD 95-15), is rich with Tavernier history. This church community traces its origins to Planter, where it was known as Barnett Chapel, named for a pastor in Key West. When the Planter community migrated to Tavernier, with its railroad access, their church building came with

them. They moved it by barge to Tavernier. Methodism had been a prominent denomination among immigrants from the Bahamas. Unfortunately, the 1935 Labor Day hurricane destroyed that building. In a 1981 newspaper interview, Captain Rodney Albury recalled that the effort to rebuild a community church was completed in 1938. In the same article, Shirley Faye Albury added,

"It was built by everybody who could wield a hammer, pound a nail, or heft a board." (Rivas 1981, D1).

In 1956, the church community broke ground on a new worship space north of Tavernier: The Burton Memorial United Methodist Church. The new church serves the combined Methodist communities of Rock Harbor and Tavernier. By 1959, Tavernier Masonic Lodge #336 purchased the building to use it as a meeting space. In the early 1980s, the old church building blocked expansion of the lodge, with its new meeting building and parking lot. So,



91731 Overseas Highway Facing South

concerned citizens, led by John and Lois Stormont, rallied to the cause of historic preservation to raise funds and relocate the building to its present address. During the relocation process, Stormont removed the interior ceiling to reveal the structural members. He stated,

“When we looked up, we saw pointed wood support beams that had come from buildings destroyed in the 1935 hurricane. Toward the rear of the church, where the floor boards differ from the rest of the building, stood

the original choir platform” (Sheldone 1996).

Relocating the church proved to be a touchstone event in Tavernier’s historic preservation movement. Threats to the building and the need for a community meeting space spurred John Stormont to incorporate the non-profit Old Tavernier Town Association in July 1981, and the movement grew from this point forward—from saving one building to designating the entire Tavernier Historic District (Wilkinson 2008c).

Since its move, the church has been altered by renovations. The roof over the front door is not original. Prior to its move, additions to the church were removed. A Sunday-school annex, which had been appended to the rear of the church and had termite damage, was removed in 1981. Once the church was set on its new foundation, a half-hip front porch roof was constructed over the main doorway.

91731 Overseas Highway Merlin Albury House

Known as the Merlin Albury House, this frame vernacular style, one-story dwelling stands on a new concrete block pier foundation. The house exemplifies the frame vernacular style with its knee braces, Dutch lap wood siding, one-over-one glazing scheme in double-hung, wood sash windows, board-and-batten shutters, exposed rafter tails, and cornerboards. It is worth noting that the Alburys plumbed the house for using both saltwater (for sewage waste) and cisternwater for other household uses such as washing, drinking, and cooking.

The interior featured drawers that operated in a cabinet that could be accessed from both the dining room and the kitchen. The house dates from circa 1923 and bears a connection with the Albury family. Furthermore, it survived the devastating 1935 Labor Day hurricane. During that storm, the house left its foundation and hit debris near the FEC

railroad depot, as seen in the historic photograph.



Signs of Wreckage at the Railroad Platform, Tavernier (Source: The State Library and Archives of Florida)



9131 Overseas Highway
Facing Northeast

Prior to 1984, the house stood at 9131 Overseas Highway. Even though it has been relocated, this dwelling stands as an excellent example of the style of construction, materials, and scale of Tavernier's architecture during the community's emerging years.

Merlin Albury served as Tavernier's postmaster from 1916 to 1926. Merlin's father was William Albury, who along with his brothers Absalom and Joseph V., received property homesteaded by their father Robert Albury. Merlin and his wife Jeanette resided in this building when it stood behind the post office. Merlin, who had worked at the US Navy facility in Key West during World War II, also owned a house on Ash Street in Key West, according to his nephew Everett Albury (LHD 95-17 Staff Report).

Absalom and Louisa L. Albury and Joseph V. and Mary E. Albury deeded the property to Merlin's father William Albury on 5 August 1914 (Monroe County Deed Book

A-2, Page 163). William and Ada E. Albury transferred the property to Merlin and Jeanette Albury on 15 January 1926 (Monroe County Deed Book D-1, Page 144). The Old Tavernier Town Association re-located the house to its present site in 1984, where it stands as a designated Monroe County historic landmark.

91861 Overseas Highway Old Tavern Tea Room

This Mission style building was constructed in 1936. The shaped parapet on the building's façade marks the character-defining element of this popular style from the early twentieth century. The original fenestration has been removed. A shed-roof porch sheltered the entry in the 1940s, based on historic photographs of Tavernier's commercial district.

The building bears an association with Harry Harris, one of Tavernier's prominent politicians and developers. In the past, the building housed restaurants of



Tavernier Café, Tavernier, Florida,
1939. (Source: State Library and
Archives of Florida)

various names: the Tavernier
Café, Harry's Restaurant, Harry's
Place, Harry's Tea Room, and
the Tavern Tea Room. Later, it
briefly became an electronics shop
and the Jan Buddhist Center in



Façade of 91861 Overseas Highway
Facing East

1996 (Greenberg 1996). Jerry
Wilkinson (1996) notes that rooms
for boarders were appended to
the rear of the building in the
1930s. Following World War II,
McKenzie constructed another
restaurant building for Harris on
the opposite side of the highway.
Harris continued to use the former
restaurant as an office (Wilkinson
1996). The Old Tavern Tea Room
is a designated Monroe County
historic landmark.

In 1931, Harry Harris moved to
Tavernier. He had been visiting
his sister Mabel at that time.
He started working for H.S.
McKenzie, and later opened his
own restaurant. His political career
began in 1942, when he won
election to a county commission
position. He briefly served in
World War II. In 1948, he won
another county commissioner
election and remained active in
local politics for many years. Harris
favored road-building and real
estate development on the Keys
(Wilkinson 2008d).

91865 Overseas Highway

The Tavernier Hotel is rich with
historical associations. H.S.
McKenzie, a prominent Tavernier
businessman, began construction
in 1934 on a lot in O.M. Woods's
Tavernier No. 2 subdivision, but
the 1935 Labor Day hurricane
interrupted completion. Alzono
Cothron, the building contractor,
boarded up the hotel prior
to securing his own home.
Immediately after the storm
passed, relief workers stationed
the National Guard at the hotel,
which the Red Cross transformed
into the Northern Relief Center.



91865 Overseas Highway
Facing East

After the hurricane and after completion of the building, McKenzie operated a theatre within it, but only for a few years, as the theatre was not profitable. McKenzie converted it into a hotel about 1939. The Tavernier Hotel is part of a complex of buildings that includes the former Standard Oil gas station and the Copper Kettle Restaurant, formerly the Tavern Store.

In 1981, when Richard D. and Theresa Martin owned the hotel, the interior living areas underwent a major update. The interior retains many of its original trim and finish work. The doors within the rooms, door hardware, some built-in furniture, and moldings date from the 1930s. With its variety of uses, the Tavernier Hotel illustrates the versatility of vernacular style buildings, and is a designated Monroe county historic landmark.

91871 Overseas Highway Standard Oil Station

After Oliver M. Wood moved to Tavernier in the 1920s, one of his first businesses outside of real estate speculation and development was selling Standard Oil products and building petroleum storage tanks. He partnered with H.S. McKenzie in the petroleum storage tank construction business. Jerry Wilkinson identified a notice dated June 20, 1928, in the Key Largo Breeze newspaper, stating that the Standard Oil Company, through Woods, "will erect storage tanks and warehouses within the next few weeks." Woods recently sold the company a parcel

"having 150 feet of frontage on Dixie Highway and the same trackage on the F.E.C. Railway near its station" (Wilkinson personal communication 2008).

In his lifetime, Woods ran a local drugstore (The Tavernier Store) and a gas station. He also invested in real estate and developed local



Tavernier Store and Gas Station
Tavernier, Florida circa 1930 (Source:
State Library and Archives of Florida)

plots. Woods is remembered as an energetic businessman and promoter of Tavernier.

Woods's estate provides a glimpse into his Tavernier business interests. After Woods died in



91871 Overseas Highway Facing
Northeast

Dade County in 1934, his sons, Dexter and Delmar, released their claim in their father's estate to Josephine M. Woods, including: the Tavernier Store, Tavernier Lumber & Supply Company, Keys Utility Company, Tavernier Grocery Company, and the Keys Theatre (Monroe County Deed Book G-5, Page 74).

Presently, the old gas station building has been incorporated into the Tavernier Hotel. Renovations have transformed it into guest accommodations. The building is a designated Monroe county historic landmark.

91875 Overseas Highway
Copper Kettle Restaurant
When Oliver M. Woods first moved to Tavernier, he operated a number of businesses. Beyond selling Standard Oil products and building petroleum storage tanks, he operated a drug store known as the Tavern Store. H. S. McKenzie, Woods's business partner, constructed the building in 1928.



Tavernier, c. 1930 (Source: Helen Wadley Library, Monroe County Public Library, Islamorada)

Jerry Wilkinson (2003d) points out that O. M. Woods moved to Tavernier in the late 1920s. Woods's involvement in the local retail drug industry, petroleum service in 1930, and real estate



91875 Overseas Highway
Facing East

development provide clues to his varied business interests. The 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment Roll indicated the extent of Woods's real estate holdings in Tavernier. For example, Woods and H. S. McKenzie owned fifteen lots in the Tavernier No. 2 subdivision.

After Woods died in Dade County in 1934, his sons, Dexter and Delmar, transferred their claim to his estate to their step-mother Josephine M. Woods, including: the Tavernier Store, Tavernier Lumber & Supply Company, Keys Utility Company, Tavernier Grocery Company, and the Keys Theatre (Monroe County Deed Book G-5, Page 74).

Presently, the old drug store has been incorporated into a restaurant, the Copper Kettle. At the moment, the restaurant is vacant, but it is a Monroe County designated historic landmark.

1951 Overseas Highway Old Post Office

This frame vernacular style building is the home of Tavernier's second post office and the former home of an Albury family member. When the Planter community relocated its central place to Tavernier with the coming of the FEC railroad's Key West Extension, the first post office was located much closer to the tracks in a building that functioned as a packing house. The post office window was in a corner of that building. Robert Harold Albury built this post office building in 1926, with living space in the upper floor and a post office and store in the ground floor.

Merlin Albury served as Tavernier's postmaster from 1916 to 1926. He and his wife Jeanette lived in a house nearby, which has been moved to a location south of the old post office. Robert Harold Albury began serving in 1926. Robert H. Albury's service continued until 1953, although a brief



1951 Overseas Highway
Facing East

interruption occurred during World War II. Lastly, Paul Everett Albury, nephew of Merlin and Robert, received his postmaster commission in 1953. The building remained as the post office until 1961 (Clupper 1988; Wilkinson 2000: 161; Wilkinson 2002a; Wilkinson 2002a).

Robert Harold Albury received title to the property from the heirs of Ada E. Albury on 16 March 1951 (Monroe County Deeds Book G-53, Page 1214). Her heirs included: Thora Fay Vosberg, Nellie Brown, John R. Brown, Hazel Henrietta Carey, Charles Oliver Carey, Annie Valda Smith, Ella E. Smith, Ellen

Lucille Crible, Mary Lorena Pinder, Malcolm Rodney Albury, Charles Franklin Albury, Paul Everett Albury, and William Merlin Albury, according to the deed. Robert Harold Albury sold the post office property in 1981 to Catherine Nash (Monroe County Deed Book 843, Page 1916). Gilberto and Cica Cairo owned the property when Monroe County recommended designating it a local historic landmark in 1995 (Monroe County Deed Book 1184, Pages 1091-1095).

As for its historic architectural fabric, the old post office is a fine, two-story example of frame



Post Office Building, Tavernier,
Florida, c. 1960 (Source: State Library
and Archives of Florida)



Post Office Building, Tavernier,
Florida, ca. 1970 (Source: State Library
and Archives of Florida)

vernacular style architecture combining both residential and commercial functions. Exterior cladding consists of weatherboard siding trimmed with corner boards. Exposed rafter tails in the eaves of the hipped roof and chamfered posts on the front porch stand out as interesting ornamental details. The fenestration consists of double-hung, wood sashes with one-over-one light schemes in most apertures. Additionally, operable wood shutters flank most window apertures. Historic photographs indicate the location of doorways on the north elevation and the location of the

cistern that served the house. The cistern has been removed. In its life so far, the building has functioned as post office, store, residence, pet shop, art gallery, and real estate office. The present owner, Joe Burke, has maintained the historic character of the building.

91991 Overseas Highway
Robert Willard Albury House
Built in 1922, this frame vernacular style house stands one story tall and has been altered recently. The front porch has been enclosed. Replacement windows have been installed. Nevertheless, this early



91991 Overseas Highway
Facing East

residence stands as a sufficient example of the style, materials, and scale of Tavernier's domestic architecture at the time of the community's early development.

Willard Albury's parents, Joseph and Mary E. Albury, transferred this property to him in 1924 (Monroe County Deed Book 8-2, Page 569). R. Willard Albury died in 1942, leaving his wife Teresa C. Albury and two daughters (Mary E. Arslu and Teresa M. Murphy) as his survivors. His estate included property in Monroe County and Dade County (Monroe County Original Record 3-A-5).

92001 Overseas Highway
Joseph V. Albury House

The Joseph V. Albury House exemplifies the frame vernacular style of domestic architecture found in Tavernier. The building stands on a concrete pier foundation. Yet, some coral rock piers are evident in places. The exterior cladding consists of drop wood siding trimmed with cornerboards. The eaves of the roof feature exposed rafter tails. The fenestration consists of double-hung, wood sash windows with two-over-one and one-over-one light patterns. A full-width, half-hip front porch dominates the façade. The porch features chamfered wood posts, with splayed steps, and wood brackets. The dual front doors are both glazed.

The interior retains much of its original trim and finish work. The interior doors, door hardware, some built-in furniture, and moldings date from the 1920s. The unplastered interior walls retain their original shiplap



92001 Overseas Highway Facing East

wood boards. Although the cluster has been dismantled, the pier foundation for this important domestic feature of the homelot remains standing in the backyard.

Joseph V. Albury was one of the sons of Emma Pinder and Robert Albury, who homesteaded on the north end of Tavernier in 1882. Along with his brothers Absalom and William, Joseph received a portion of his father's homestead tract when the brothers divided it up among themselves (Monroe County Deed Book A-2, Page 165). R. Willard Albury served as the executor of Joseph V. Albury's estate after he died in 1938. His estate included 15 acres on

Plantation Key (Monroe County Deed Book G-7, Page 237).

114 Sunrise Drive
Cliff Carpenter House and Shed
Like the Joseph V. Albury House, the Cliff Carpenter House and Shed exemplify the frame

vernacular style of domestic architecture found in Tavernier. The well-maintained house dates from 1931, while the shed dates from 1945. The house, which was built by H.S. McKenzie, features rectangular massing, hurricane ties at the four corners of the building, and long-leaf, yellow pine lumber milled in Brooke, Florida. The one-story house stands on a pier foundation. Exterior cladding consists of wood siding milled to a flattened half-round profile and trimmed with cornerboards. The hipped roof features exposed rafter butts in the eaves and pressed metal shingles.

The frame vernacular style shed building was moved to this site in the 1950s. The shed has Dutch lap wood siding for its exterior cladding and a gable roof.



118 Sunrise Drive Facing South-
Southeast

Cliff Carpenter, who became a prominent resident here, moved to Tavernier in the late 1920s. To make a living, Carpenter maintained a farm on Plantation Key, growing tomatoes, watermelons, and banana melons, while also operating a charter fishing boat business. He also built houses with H.S. McKenzie and was working on the building at 140 Sunrise Drive on Labor Day 1935.

After the storm died down and the extent of the damage became known, Carpenter opened his house to his devastated neighbors in need of shelter. He provided hospitality to Doc and Alice Lowe

here. This house also functioned as a hospital, or triage center. He recalled,

"They were bringing people from everywhere and patching them up, keeping them here until the ambulances could take them out to hospitals in Miami and even as far as Palm Beach."

Cliff married Violet "Shorty" Carpenter in 1950, and their house withstood the assault of Hurricane Donna in 1960 (Albury 1995; Burton 1987: 44-45; Wilkinson 2008d).



118 Sunrise Drive Main Dwelling
Facing Southwest

118 Sunrise Drive

Dating from 1931, this frame vernacular style house, built by H. S. McKenzie and Cliff Carpenter, stands on a concrete pier foundation. The original fenestration and a glazed front door are still in place. The façade features a full-width screened front porch with a shed roof sheltering the wood steps. Ornamental details include exposed rafter tails, weatherboard wood siding, and corner boards. This hipped-roof house typifies frame vernacular domestic architecture—the main stay of the historic district's significance (Albury 1995).

The dwelling occupies Lot 46 in the Tavernier Cove subdivision, which was platted by Miami developers William Knust and Della Lane from tracts that Mary A. Sawyer (Monroe County Deed Book A-4, Page 507) and Sarah E. Johnson (Monroe County Deed Book A-5, Page 497) received from their father's (Amos Lowe) homestead (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). Mary



118 Sunrise Drive Facing South

A. Sawyer married George Sawyer, and Sarah married Sam Johnson (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008).

A 1913 survey indicated a house and cistern on the parcel owned by Sarah E. Johnson (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). They are no longer extant. Loran H. and Reatha Prevo, who lived in Miami, owned the property in the 1930s when McKenzie and Carpenter built the house thereon. Carpenter acquired the property in the 1940s (Monroe County Deed Book 13, Page 49; Book 410, Page 960), and they sold it in 1978 (Monroe County Deed Book 757, Page 328).

120 Sunrise Drive

This frame vernacular style dwelling dates from 1932. Like its neighbor at 118 Sunrise Drive, the house, which was built by H. S. McKenzie and Cliff Carpenter, is rectangular in plan and stands on a concrete pier foundation (Albury 1995). The façade features a modest stoop with a projecting shed roof sheltering the wood steps. Ornamental details include exposed rafter tails, operable drop-hinged wood shutters, Dutch lap wood siding, and cornerboards. Hurricane ties are part of the house's building system. This hipped-roof house typifies frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.

The dwelling occupies Lot 45 in Knust and Lane's Tavernier Cove subdivision. William Knust and Della Lane worked (lived in Miami at this time. They purchased the land from tracts Mary A. Sawyer (Monroe County Deed Book A-4, Page 507) and Sarah E. Johnson

(Monroe County Deed Book A-5, Page 497) had received from their father's homestead (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). Mary A. Sawyer married George Sawyer, and Sarah married Sam Johnson (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008).

The 1913 survey of the Amos Lowe Homestead indicated a house and cistern on the parcel owned by Sarah E. Johnson (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). They are no longer extant. A Miami couple, Loran H. and Reatha Prevo, owned the property in the 1930s when McKenzie and Carpenter built the house thereon. Carpenter acquired



120 Sunrise Drive Facing Southwest

the Property in the 1940s (Monroe County Deed Book 410, Page 960) and sold it in 1977 (Monroe County Deed Book 749, Page 204).

132 Sunrise Drive

This frame vernacular style dwelling dates from 1927. The house, which was built when Mr. Fiddler owned it, is rectangular in plan and stands on a concrete pier foundation. Fiddler owned a Miami hardware store and imported laborers to construct the house, which he intended to serve as a fishing lodge. Later, the Alley family owned it, according to Cliff Carpenter (Albury 1995). The façade features a shed-roof front porch and concrete steps. Ornamental details include a large coral stone chimney stack, exposed rafter tails, operable metal shutters, board-and-batten wood siding, and corner boards. This gable-roof house typifies frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.

Two secondary buildings have been constructed adjacent to the

house. A two-story building, which dates from 1949, stands north of the main house. A stairwell links it to the main house. This building served as a living space and a laundry with the first research office for the national Audubon Society located upstairs. A one-story frame building, which dates from 1950, stands east of the main house. Presently, this building functions as a music studio.

Robert Porter Allen, sanctuary director and board member for the National Audubon Society and author of a book on the roseate spoonbill arrived in the Keys in 1939 with his wife Evelyn and purchased the property in 1948 from Ruth Vaux Cram, of Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1948 (Monroe County Deed Book G-38, Page 456). The Allens acquired adjacent lots in the early 1950s and 1962 (Monroe County Deed Book G-51, Page 37; Book G-57, Page 144; Book 267, Page 110). In his lifetime, Allen conducted research on bird life, most notably on spoonbill colonies in Texas and the Florida Everglades. The property remains in the Allen family.



133 Sunrise Drive Façade Facing Northeast

(Windhorn and Langley 1974, 18; Wilkinson 2008d).

The dwelling occupies Lot 8, 9, and parts of Lot 10 in the Tavernier Cove. This subdivision was platted by William Knust and Della and H. F. Lane, developers from Miami. The lots were part of Amos Lowe's homestead, which Mary A. Sawyer (Monroe County Deed Book A-4, Page 507) and Sarah E. Johnson (Monroe County Deed Book A-5, Page 497) had received from their father (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). The house is a designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHD 95-23).

137 Sunrise Drive

This frame vernacular style residence dates from 1933 and holds an association with Harry Harris, a prominent local politician, businessman, and real estate developer. Frequent alterations to the house have occurred since 2000. Harris acquired the property in 1948 from Florence H. and William T. Hennessey of Dade County (Monroe County Deed Book G-35, Page 411).

Harris's main residence stood on an adjacent lot. This house served him as a rental unit, occasionally housing his restaurant employees

there. Following his 1976 death, his widow, Carol Harris, received the property through Harry's will (Monroe County Will Book 765, Page 1181). She sold the property in 1983 (Monroe County Deed Book 898, Page 2446).

140 Sunrise Drive

Roberts House

This one-story, frame vernacular style dwelling dates from 1935. The house, which was built by H.S. McKenzie and Cliff Carpenter, is rectangular in plan and stands on a raised foundation of battered concrete piers. The fenestration consists of casement windows with multi-light glazing schemes and some new windows. Hurricane tie down cables and turn-buckles are also evident. The façade features a full-width, open front porch with a shed roof sheltering the porch. A splayed central, open-string wood stairway runs from the ground level to the porch. Squared wood posts with simple shafts, bases, and capitals support the porch roof. Ornamental details include exposed rafter tails, wood

siding milled to a flattened half-round profile, and corner boards. The interior features chamfered beams. This hipped-roof house typifies frame vernacular style domestic architecture, the mainstay of the historic district's significance.

This house survived the 1935 Labor Day hurricane. Cliff Carpenter recalled that he was working on this building that day.

"I was putting shingles on the roof when we got word that the '35 hurricane was on the way, and I was building it myself under McKenzie's supervision."

Carpenter rode out the 1935 hurricane in his own house (Albury 1995).

The dwelling occupies Lot 40 in Knust and Lane's Tavernier Cove subdivision. Originally, Tavernier Cove was part of land that Mary A. Sawyer (Monroe County Deed Book A-4, Page 507) and Sarah E. Johnson (Monroe County Deed Book A-5, Page 497) received from



137 Sunrise Drive Facade
Facing Northeast



140 Sunrise Drive Facade Facing Southwest

the father Amos Lowe (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 80). Mary A. Sawyer married George Sawyer, and Sarah married Sam Johnson (Shirley Faye Albury personal communication 2008). William Knust and Della Lane, who operated a real estate business out of Miami, participated in the exuberant real estate market that was the Land Boom. The Samuel and Charlotte H. Roberts family lived here many years before selling it in 1935 (Monroe County Deed Book 549, Page 385).

The present owner, Stephen G. Lohmayer has completed a sensitive restoration of the



140 Sunrise Drive Facade Facing Southwest in 1994

building since he purchased the house in 1994. He has restored the front porch, which was enclosed, and maintained the interior. A secondary building has been constructed adjacent to the main residence. The Roberts House is a designated Monroe County historic landmark.

141 Sunrise Drive

Harry Lemuel Harris House

The original core of this frame vernacular style residence dates from 1933, although the house was altered in 1975. The one-story building stands on a continuous masonry foundation. New windows have been installed.

Harry L. Harris and his first wife Hazel acquired the property in 1946 (Monroe County Deed Book E-6, Page 269) from Florence H. and William T. Hermessey. Jessie Alley acquired the property in 1938 (Monroe County Deed Book G-7, Page 365). According to Monroe County's 1947 Tax Assessment rolls, Jessie and Florence Alley, who lived in Miami, owned numerous lots in the Tavernier Cove subdivision, Singleton's Addition to Tavernier Cove, and Tavernier Heights. The Alleys acquired much property in Tavernier through tax delinquency sales following the bust of the Land Boom. Their son Herb operated a tourist court and a resort in Tavernier on



143 Sunrise Drive Facade Facing
Northeast

the Gulf side (Wilkinson personal communication 2008).

Following Harris's 1976 death, his second wife Carol received the property through his will. During his lifetime, Harris maintained a large yard that neighborhood kids used. His gardener lived on the property in a small cottage, (Alice Allen personal communication 2008). Born in 1904, Harris moved to Tavernier, served in World War II, and became a prominent citizen through political service, local business, and real estate development.

149 Sunrise Drive

This frame vernacular style residence dates from 1947. Although it is modest in appearance, it exemplifies the vernacular mode of domestic architecture that is the mainstay of Tavernier's historic significance. The house stands on a concrete pier foundation. Exterior cladding consists of Dutch lap wood siding, and the fenestration consists of jalousie and metal awning type windows, with clamshell drop-down hurricane awnings. The hipped roof is covered by asphalt shingles. Exposed rafter tails are evident. A rear shed roof addition has been appended to the building.

Jack London, an early member of the Old Tavernier Town Association, a local politician, and a developer of historic properties in Tavernier, owned the building from 1981 to 1986 (Monroe County Deed Book 846, Page 70; Book 985, Page 1458). The building occupies Lot 13 in the Knust and Lane Re-subdivision of Tavernier



149 Sunrise Drive Facade Facing
North of Northwest

Cove (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 146). George B. Myers and his wife Kessie H. Myers owned the property at the time the house was built, according to the 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment rolls and a deed (Monroe County Deed Book G-9, Page 226). Kessie, who was born in Hebron, Illinois, in 1892, died in 1968. Her husband died in 1969 (Monroe County Probate Docket 11-93).

162 Sunrise Drive

This masonry vernacular style residence dates from 1947. Examples of masonry vernacular style homes are infrequent in the Tavernier Historic District, where frame vernacular style housing predominates. This house, therefore, illustrates the vernacular preference for masonry building solutions that were affordable and readily available immediately after World War II.

The house stands on a continuous masonry foundation. The exterior walls display the use of stucco and coral veneers. The original fenestration has been removed and replaced with contemporary windows. Knee walls flank the concrete steps that lead to the front door.

Jessie and Florence Alley acquired the property in 1938 (Monroe County Deed Book G-8, Page 379). A Miami couple, Jessie and Florence Alley owned numerous lots in the Tavernier Cove subdivision, Singleton's Addition



162 Sunrise Drive Facade Facing South

to Tavernier Cove, and Tavernier Heights, according to Monroe County's 1947 Tax Assessment rolls. The Alleys acquired the property through tax delinquency sales at the end of the Land Boom. Their son Herb became a local Tavernier businessman, operating a touristic court and a resort in Tavernier on the Gulf side that provided Audubon tours of local wildlife (Wilkinson personal communication 2008).

The house was built during the period when the Alleys owned the property. Earl and Ann Hendrickson transferred

the property to Charles J. and Katherine Delemater in 1960 (Monroe County Deed Book 201, Page 181). Following the 1973 death of Charles J. Delemater, Betty S. Bullock owned the property until 1985 (Monroe County Deed Book 806, Pages 704-706, Book 961, Page 667). Robert Thomason sold it in 1991 to Jerry and Jeanne Finch (Monroe County Deed Book 1179, Page 1750). The Finches sold it in 1995 to Malena N. Bergman and William G. Miller (Monroe County Deed Book 1364, Page 585). Bergman and Miller sold it to Timothy A. and Shannon Normington (Monroe County Deed Book 1600, Page 666) in 1999.

256 Tarpon Street

Built in 1940, this two-story, frame vernacular style building stands on a continuous masonry foundation. The interior has been updated, and the original windows have been removed and replaced. Asbestos shingles have been applied to the exterior. The hipped roof has metal roofing. The façade features an enclosed shed-roof porch. A kitchen is located in the ground floor. This frame vernacular style represents local preferences in building style that cohere into the Tavernier Historic District.

George B. and Kessie H. Myers owned the property at the time



256 Tarpon Street Facade
Facing West

of house construction (Monroe County Deed Book 395, Page 657). Kessie, born in Habron, Illinois, in 1892, died in 1968; her husband died in 1969 (Monroe County Probate Docket 11-93). One year prior to Kessie's death, the Myers sold the property to Paul G. and Estela C. Mendoza (Monroe County Deed Book 403, Page 753). Paul Mendoza died on 30 December 1971, and Estela sold the property in 1982 (Monroe County Deed Book 853, Pages 501-503) to Thomas J. Lavin, who transferred the property to the U.S. Marshal, Southern District of Florida, on 9 August 1989 (Monroe County Deed Book 1101, Page 1041). Rolf D. and Maria V. Johnson acquired the property on 24 August 1989 from the U.S. Marshal (Monroe County Deed Book 1103, Page 2243). The Johnsons sold it to Richard and Leslie Grootveld and Donald A. and Melody Elsmann in 1991 (Monroe County Deed Book 1172, Page 2403) and the Elsmanns sold their interest in the property to the Grootvelds in 1993 (Monroe County Deed Book 1249, Page 799).

114 Tavern Drive

Built in 1934, this one-story house illustrates the frame vernacular style of domestic architecture, which is the mainstay of the historic district's significance. The house also demonstrates the work of H.S. McKenzie, a prominent community developer and entrepreneur in Tavernier's history.

With this house, which follows a rectangular footprint, the eaves wall faces the street, while the gable ends are set perpendicular to the road—allowing for an ample shed-roof porch on the facade. The house stands on a continuous masonry foundation. Exterior cladding includes drop siding and flush wood siding (on the porch), trimmed with cornerboards. The eaves of the gable ends feature brackets. Clam shell awnings protect the fenestration, which consists of double-hung, wood sashes with various light patterning.



111 Tavern Drive
Facing North

From the early 1930s until 1964, H. S. McKenzie, his wife Hazel, and Josephine M. Woods, the widow of O.M. Woods, owned the property, which may have been utilized as a rental unit (Monroe County Deed Book D-3, Page 391; Book G-5, Page 565; Book 299, Page 155).

120 Tavern Drive

This frame vernacular style house dates from 1929. It illustrates the early community development activities of O. M. Woods and H.S. McKenzie (Christine Nicholls personal communication 2008). Stucco has been applied to the exterior. The original fenestration has been removed and replaced with metal awning style windows, and the original board-and-batten, operable wood shutters have been discarded. The one-story dwelling features a front-gable roof profile with a transverse gable at the rear of the building and a shouldered brick chimney stack.



120 Tavern Drive
Facing Northwest



120 Tavern Drive, 1965 (Source:
Monroe County Property Appraisers
Office)

George B. Myers and his wife Kessie H. Myers owned this property in the 1950s (Monroe County Deed Book G-51, Page 125). Douglas P. and Clara Killingsworth, who owned a local grocery store, purchased the property in 1965 (Monroe County Deed Book 335, Page 580). Kessie Myer died in 1968, and her husband died in 1969 (Monroe County Probate Docket 11-93). Clara Killingsworth died in 2000. The house is a designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHO 95-28).

124 Tavern Drive

This frame vernacular style house dates from 1933 and illustrates the community development of Tavernier in O.M. Woods's Tavernier No. 2 subdivision, which he acquired from Roger L. Albury and Sarah L. Albury in 1925 (Monroe County Deed Book B-5, Page 151). This land was part of Robert Albury's home tract. The house stands on a continuous coral stone foundation. Exterior materials include asbestos shingle siding, cornerboards, asphalt roofing shingle, and Bahamian-style louvered shutters. Modest though it may appear, it is a significant part of the vernacular style architectural fabric of the Tavernier Historic District.

As for its construction history, Roger L. Albury and Sarah L. Albury may have hired H.S. McKenzie to build the dwelling on this lot in 1933. Soon after construction of house was

completed, they sold the property to Austin L. and Janice M. Reese in 1935



124 Tavern Drive
Facing North

(Monroe County Deed Book D-3, Page 469). The Reeses acquired adjoining property from William N. and Helen E. Pinder in 1940 (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 146). The property remained in possession of Austin Reese until his death in 1976, when he bequeathed it to his sister Hazel R. McKenzie, the widow of H.S. McKenzie, and Dallys R. Dodge (Monroe County Deed Book 708, Page 463).

128 Tavern Drive

This two-story frame vernacular style dwelling dates from 1938. It stands on a continuous masonry foundation. Stucco and asbestos shingle siding comprise the exterior materials. The front porch has been enclosed. Some of the original windows have been removed and replaced. In the upper floor, double-hung wood sash windows with a six-over-six glazing scheme are in the apertures. Rolled asphalt roofing covers the enclosed shed-roof porch on the façade.

As for its building history, Roger L. and Sarah L. Albury likely hired H.S. McKenzie to construct the



128 Tavern Drive Facing North of
Northwest

dwelling on this lot in 1938. Soon after construction of house was completed, they sold it to William N. and Helen E. Pinder in 1939 (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 56). The Pinders, who lived at 132 Tavern Drive until 1945, maintained ownership until 1967 (Monroe County Deed Book 396, Page 847) when they sold the property to Salvatore W. and Pauline Maffeo. The property remained in possession of the Maffeo family until the 1982 death of Sal Maffeo, when he bequeathed it to Frank Maffeo, Joseph Maffeo, and Virginia M. Cope, his siblings (Monroe County Deed Book 880, Pages 2109-2112). Sal Maffeo was born in 1915 in Cadiz, Harrison County, Ohio and made his living as a public school teacher. His wife Pauline died in 1974. They did not have children (Monroe County Probate Case 83-97-CP-12). The Maffeo siblings sold the property in 1983 to Edward M. Cornish (Monroe County Deed Book 900, Page 895).

**132 Tavern Drive
Charles Albury House**
Built in 1933, this one-story house illustrates the frame vernacular style of domestic architecture, which is the mainstay of the historic district's significance. The house also conveys an association with such prominent local families as the Alburys and the Pinders, and O.M. Woods, a prominent community developer and entrepreneur in Tavernier's history. Hurricanes have assaulted it, only once succeeding in pushing it off its foundation (LHD 95-29 Staff Report).

In this house, which follows a rectangular footprint, the gable end faces the street, while the eaves walls run perpendicular to the road. The façade features a braced pent shed-roof on the facade. The house stands on a concrete pier foundation. Exterior cladding includes weatherboard siding trimmed with cornerboards, v-crimp metal, and pressed metal shingles. Hinged drop-down solid wood panel shutters protect the



132 Tavern Drive
Facing North

fenestration, which consists of double-hung, wood sashes with one-over-one light patterning.

O.M. Woods acquired the land for this Tavernier No. 2 subdivision from Roger L. and Sara L. Albury in 1925 (Monroe County Deed Book B-5, Page 151). Robert Albury homesteaded this tract and bequeathed it to his sons Absalom, William, and Joseph V., prior to his death. Roger L. and Sarah L. Albury received the lot from Woods prior to his 1934 death and then sold it to newly wedded William M. and Helen E. Pinder in 1936 after the completion of the house (Monroe County Deed Book D-3, Page

434). Sarah Albury and William Malcomb Pinder were siblings. Roger L. Albury, William M. Pinder, and George W. Albury worked together to build the house, which was completed prior to the 1935 Labor Day hurricane (LHD 95-29 Staff Report). Later, George W. Albury, who had married Mary Annis, purchased it in 1945 (Monroe County Deed Book E-6, Page 5). In 1961, they sold it to their son, Charles C. "Prof" Albury (Monroe County Deed Book 288, Page 18a). Charles C. Albury, a prominent local educator, lived in the house throughout his lifetime; his executors sold the property in 1981 (Monroe County Deed Book 335, Page 1557). The Charles Albury House is a designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHD 95-29).

136 Tavern Drive

This frame vernacular style residence was built in 1939. It stands on a masonry pier foundation. Exterior cladding materials include stucco (on the enclosed front porch), wood drop siding (on the main block of the house), common wood siding (in the gable end), and pressed metal shingles (on the roof). The fenestration consists of a mix of old and new windows. For instance, double-hung wood sashes, with one-over-one light patterns, are evident in the main block of the house. Replacement metal sash windows light the front porch.

Alterations to the house illustrate how it has adapted to the living needs of its owners. The front porch has been enclosed to provide more climate-controlled living space. This vernacular style residence remains a fine example of the style, materials, and scale of Tavernier's architecture during the emerging years to the town.



136 Tavern Drive
Facing West

Mae Rose Albury, daughter of William and Ada E. Lowe, married Charles Louis Pellicier. C. L. Pellicier was the first ambulance driver at Tavernier (Wilkinson 2008d). Louis V. and Ora Pellicier acquired the property in the 1990s and transferred it to Charles Louis and May Rose Pellicier in 1986 (Monroe County Deed Book 927, Page 2229). In 1999, Charles Louis Pellicier deeded the property to his daughters Anne P. Dunn and Susan P. Parker (Monroe County Deed Book 1597, Page 699). This house is a designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHD 95-30).

140 Tavern Drive

This vernacular style frame house typifies the style, materials, massing, and setting of Tavernier's architecture during the formative years of the community and the Great Depression. Built by H. S. McKenzie in 1934 as a four-room fishing cottage, the house features such local materials as Dade County pine framing, flooring, and wood interior walls, and a rectangular floor plan. The gable ends of the roof feature molded rake boards, a typical feature of frame vernacular style houses. McKenzie may have built the house as a retirement cottage for his father (Brown 1996). The house continues to reflect the architectural history of Tavernier. As such, it is a designated local historic landmark.

The historical connection with Oliver M. Woods lies in the location of the house on Lot 28 in Tavernier No. 2, which Woods purchased from the Albury brothers and initially platted as "Ollie wood" but changed it to



140 Tavern Drive
Facing North

Tavernier No. 2. Originally from Missouri (see the entry for 189 Beach Road), O.M. Woods worked in Tavernier as a retail merchant engaged in the pharmaceutical industry, according to the 1930 US census. Josephine M., his wife, and Peggy, his step-daughter, were born in New York. Prior to moving to Tavernier, Woods lived in Kansas and Chicago, Illinois, with his first wife and family, where he worked as a real estate agent and a commodities trader, respectively. Jerry Wilkinson (2003d) notes that Woods moved to Tavernier in the late 1920s and then joined H. S. McKenzie in the

petroleum storage tank business. He worked as a Standard Oil agent and invested in local real estate speculation. The 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment Roll indicated the extent of Woods's real estate holdings in Tavernier. For example, the Woods and H. S. McKenzie owned fifteen lots in the Tavernier No. 2 subdivision.

Deed research indicated that Woods owned this property from 1929 to his death in 1934, when his executors sold it to H. S. McKenzie. The property remained in the McKenzie family until 1969. Nora A. Williams and Timothy A. Wilson owned the property when it was designated as a local landmark property (LHD 95-7).

153 Tavernier Trail

Built in 1944, this frame vernacular style residence features a noteworthy roof profile. Some local residents refer to the building as "Twin Peaks" due to its adjoining hipped roofs (Alice Allen personal communication 7 August 1996). The building stands on a concrete pier foundation. The exterior walls have board-and-batten wood siding. A shed roof shelters the entry in the façade. Five-v crimp sheet metal covers the roof. The original fenestration has been removed and replaced. Bahamas-style louvered shutters protect the window apertures.

The house stands on Lot 14 in the Knust and Lane Subdivision (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 146). George B. Myers and his wife Kessie H. Myers owned the property at the time the house was built, according to the 1947 Monroe County Tax Assessment rolls and a deed (Monroe County Deed Book G-9, Page 226). Kessie, who was born in Hebron, Illinois, in 1892,



153 Tavernier Trail Facing Northwest

died in 1968. Her husband died in 1969 (Monroe County Probate Docket 11-93). Their executors transferred the property to Richard George Moller and Marie Agnes Moller in the late 1960s (Monroe County Deed Book 354, Page 503). The Moller family occupied the house until 2001 (Monroe County Deed Book 1718, Page 2281). Marie Agnes Moller died 1 February 1997 (Monroe County Deed Book 1558, Page 1086). Alice Allen recalled that Mr. Moller "was the manager of four first real first-run movie theatre" in Islamorada. The family of Jack and "K" Wilkinson briefly lived in this house while their new stilt

house was under construction on the lot next door (Allen personal communication 1996). This modest frame house typifies the style, materials, massing, and setting of Tavernier's vernacular architecture during the historic district's period of significance.

159 Tavernier Trail

Wilkinson House

A designated Monroe County historic landmark (LHD 95-31), and built in 1951, the Wilkinson House is an early example of the stilt houses that are quite common in the Florida Keys now. Noteworthy details include vertical wood siding on the exterior, casement windows, and a full-width wooden porch with operable wood shutters operated from the interior.

The Wilkinson House, significant in its own right, represents an early instance of domestic architecture adapting to the Florida environment. Presently, stilt houses are a common construction method found throughout the Keys. Features of this construction mode include



159 Tavernier Trail
Facing Southwest

high concrete piers, an emphasis on horizontality in massing, a low-pitched roof, usually extending on the front to shelter a porch, and operable shutters. The first example of this type of domestic architecture, the Wilkinson House reflects the character defining elements of this type, particularly its elevation of the living space above the floodplain.

Jessie L. and Florence H. Alley, who lived in Miami, owned the property in the 1940s, along with many other undeveloped lots in this subdivision (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 514; Book G-8, Page 379; Book J-1, Page 41).



159 Tavernier Trail
Facing South

In 1930, Florence H. and William T. Hennessey sold Jack O. and Katharine L. Wilkinsontwo lots in Singleton's Addition to Tavernier Cove (Monroe County Plat Book 1, Page 135) where they built this house (Monroe County Deed Book G-49, Page 647). Jack died in 1977 (Monroe County Death Certificate, Book 712, Page 768).

The Wilkinsons moved to Key Largo from Miami in the 1930s and lived in the area of the former Planter settlement. Jack provided for the family as a fisherman and collector of live marine specimens that he sold to marine parks. They enjoyed a simplified life style, even

living in a semi-permanent tent building. Following his service in World War I, Jack Wilkin son returned with his family to Tavernier (Wilkinson 1996; LHO 95-31 Staff Report). Antecedents for this mode of building can be seen in the historic photograph of the Rodney Albury House (MO 2013) at 200 Albury Lane.

165 Tavernier Trail

According to the Monroe County Property Appraiser's data, this frame vernacular style residence dates from 1910. However, that date is speculative, at best.

The house does not appear on historic mapping from the 1930s. A long-time Tavernier resident, Alice Allen stated that the house was occupied in the 1930s, when tragic events occurred there. Two family members were murdered here by their hatchet-wielding son-in-law (Alice Allen personal communication 1996).

The Alley family acquired the property in a county tax delinquency proceeding in

the 1920s, but home construction did not begin there at that time (Jerry Wilkinson personal communication 2008). Halbert C. Meyer of Naples, Florida, owned the property in the 1940s (Monroe County Deed Book D-3, Page 516, Book G-25, Page 316). He owned other undeveloped lots in the Tavernier Cove subdivision as well (Monroe County Deed Book E-2, Page 114, Book G-5, Page 176). Earl W. and Ann Hendrickson owned the property from 1965 to 1981 (Monroe County Deed Book 333, Page 161, Book 834, Page 329).

The one-story house stands on a brick pier foundation, with some poured concrete in places. The frame walls feature contemporary vertical grooved wood siding panels. The gable roof has g-v-crimp metal sheet roofing, exposed rafter tails, molded rake boards, and fascia boards. Unlit, gable-roof dormers pierce the slope of the roof on both sides of the building. Bahamas-style louvered



165 Tavernier Trail Facing North

shutters protect the fenestration. An open porch extends from the gable end of the southeast elevation.

A modern secondary dwelling stands at the rear of the lot. This shed-roof building stands one story high on a continuous masonry foundation. The fenestration consists of double-hung, wood sashes with a one-over-one light pattern. This building dates from the 1970s.

With the quick pace that accompanies contemporary real estate development in Florida, it is remarkable that Tavernier's historic district still has the ability to take us back in time. Tavernier provides us with clues to the complex changes that occurred almost beneath our perception in the twentieth century. The buildings of the historic district show us how we have survived the various storms that have battered our homes and our lives on the archipelago that is the Florida Keys. They also remind us that we can again survive such storms. Thus, the Tavernier Historic District is significant and worthy of careful preservation for its collection of vernacular style buildings, among other attributes, in which we have embedded many memories. The buildings, in turn, reflect significant aspects in local history as well as the Upper Key's growth and development. Through their architectural history, these buildings remind us where we have been and guide us as we decide upon our future.

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