

Sunday, March 4, 1973

# He's part of island history

Willard M. Albury, this city's oldest living former mayor, will be 88 years old Tuesday. Few men have held more political positions in Key West and Monroe County than Albury.

Today he is living in Fort Lauderdale with his wife at 4431 N. W. 24th Street. He is in the best of health and was a recent visitor to Key West where he was born. His wife of today is the former Retta P. Palmer whom he married in 1966 after the death of his first wife, the former Macy E. Sawyer.



Willard M.



Albury



Following preliminary school studies in Key West Albury attended business college in Jacksonville where he majored in business administration, accounting and shorthand.

Completing his college studies in Jacksonville he accepted employment there with Southern Utilities Corp. He advanced from secretary to the manager to the position of auditor and later was chief clerk in the accounting division.

Later he resigned from that company and took employment with Armour and Company.

But the sand was in his shoes, and after a short time with Armour, he returned to Key West to work with the Florida East Coast Railway. From the position of stenographer he worked his way up to station cashier and chief clerk.

In 1921 he accepted the position as manager of one of the city's largest cigar factories.

Albury entered politics in 1923 and was successful in the race for city councilman. He was successful in two other campaigns. In 1930 he accepted the

of Schools, a position to which he had been elected in the general election of Nov. 1944.

It was during his four year tenure as school superintendent that the school system of the county began to move forward. The system was virtual in the red in 1945.

Here are some of the things that happened in the school system under his regime. The Poinciana School was purchased. A new school was built at Marathon and four lots were purchased at South and William Streets to provide an annex to the Reynolds Street school.

He also recommended the condemning and purchase of where the school properties is today at Whalton, Seminary and United Streets.

It was during his tenure as superintendent that the first workshop for teachers was held. He sponsored and headed the workshop which was held for 18 days starting August 16, 1948.

On July 1, 1941, he was named a member of the Overseas Road and Toll Bridge Commission by Governor Fred P. Cone. He was reappointed in 1945 by the then Governor Spessard Holland for another four year term.

It was in response to a written invitation from Albury that President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Key West on Feb. 19, 1939, on his way to the Caribbean. Albury, who was mayor of the city then, drove to Florida City and rode with President Roosevelt to Key West.

It was while serving as city auditor that he was selected by the city council to prepare an application for funds to construct a municipal hospital. The funds were obtained through a federal grant. The hospital which later became Monroe General was built.

When the United States Marine Hospital closed down here he obtained the equipment and fixtures for the city owned hospital.

Later he was to be named administrator of the hospital and served in that capacity until his retirement.

## *Grace Lutheran Church*

(Missouri Synod)  
Flagler Ave. at Tenth St., Key West

You are most cordially invited  
to our services each Sunday

Church Services  
at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.,  
Sunday School at 9 a.m.