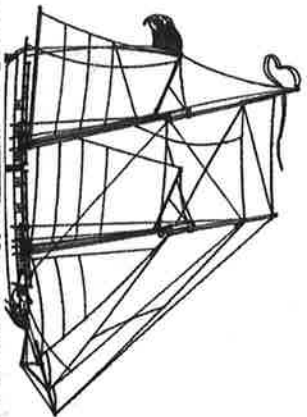


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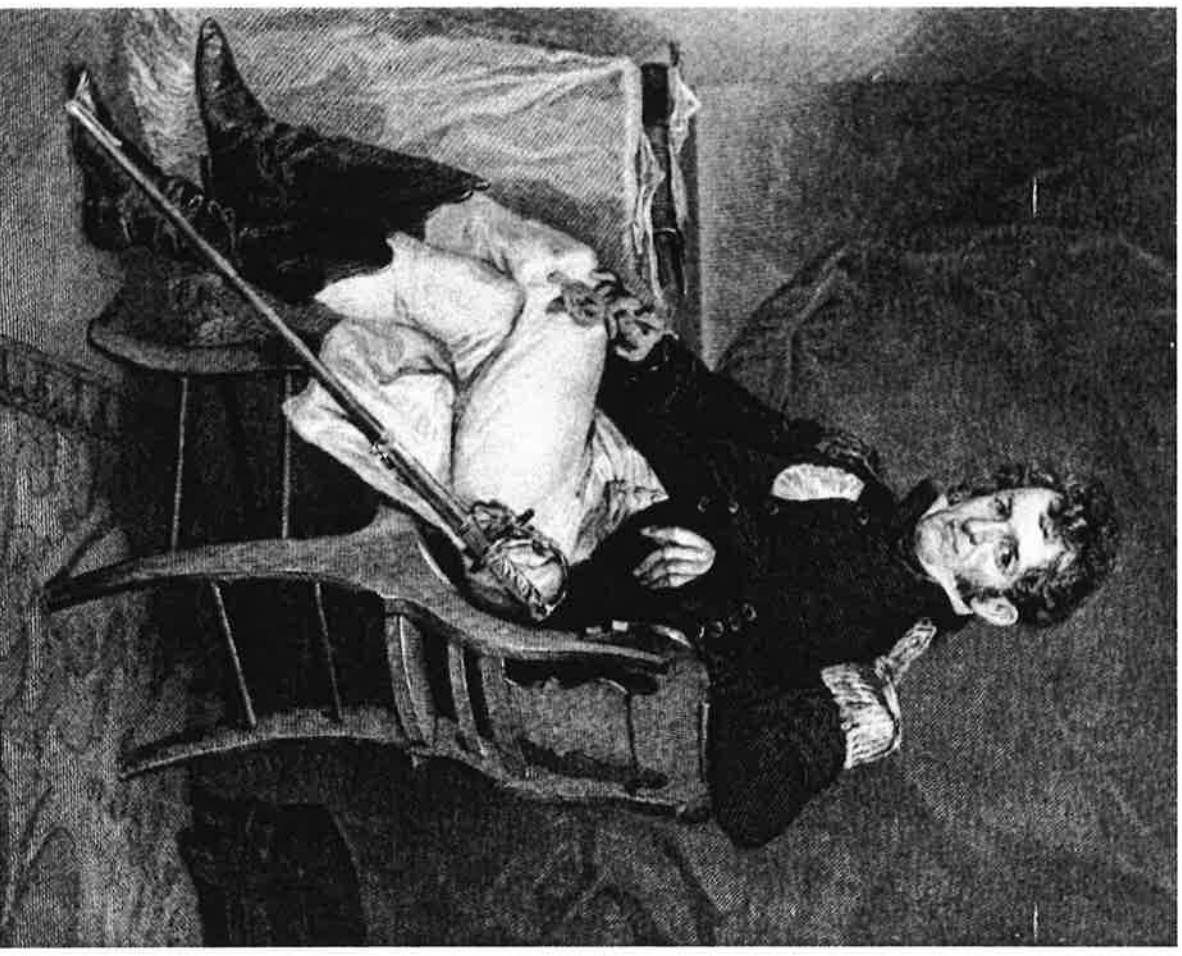
## Commodore David Porter Arrives in Key West

By Tom Hambright

When the United States took possession of Florida from Spain in 1819 the southern border was undecided. To establish America's control over the Florida Keys Lieutenant Matthew Calbraith Perry was ordered to Key West to investigate the Island and to claim it for the United States. He arrived on the March 25, 1822 and planted the American flag and claimed sovereignty over the island. Accompanying him was some of the first owners of the island (see Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal Summer 2011). Upon investigation Perry reported to the Secretary of the Navy that the island was suitable for the establishment of a naval station.

The Secretary ordered Commodore David Porter, a national hero of the War of 1812, to the command of the West Indies Squadron and to establish a headquarters on the Island. The Squadron's mission was to rid the Caribbean of pirates.

On April 6, 1823 Commodore Porter ordered Master Commandant John Minor Maury, Captain of the Squadron, to fire a 17 guns salute and raise the American flag. This was the first action to establish an organized



*Commodore David Porter. Photo credit: U.S. Navy.*

settlement on the island. The 1823 when the Florida Territorial first civilian government was Council created Monroe County. not established until July 2, (Continued on page 3)