

*Monroe County Public Library*

HELEN WADLEY BRANCH  
POST OFFICE BOX 1129  
ISLAMORADA, FLORIDA 33036  
(305) 664-4645

Mr. Roger Payne  
U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
523 National Center  
Reston, Virginia 22092

Nov. 28, 1995

Dear Mr. Payne:

I am in receipt of your letter of Nov. 20. Thank you for the copy of your Place Names of the Outer Banks. I plan to add it to the library's collection.

Again, I have no plans to copyright my research on place names in the Keys. I feel that since the work was done while I was on the public payroll, it should be available to the public, and would be proud to have you enter it into your data base.


In your letter you asked if I have any insight into why locals here sometimes drop the word Key from Island names. I'm afraid I have no real answer, but as I mentioned in my previous letter, this seems to be the case only with certain names. For example, I don't believe I have ever heard Key Largo referred to as Largo, But Big Pine Key is frequently referred to as Big Pine. It may be that those names which have some meaning on their own, such as Big Pine, Ramrod, Sugarloaf, etc. are the ones which people tend to drop the generic key from.

As to the Marathon - Marathon Key controversy, it seems that public opinion may be swinging against the proposed name change. I hope that by now you have heard from some of my co-conspirators and curmudgeons on this issue. There is some momentum going now to have our County Commission reconsider its support of the name change, and I have even heard talk of a local referendum on the matter. I further understand that Dr. Fernald of the State Board on Geographic Names is leaning toward denial of the name change.

I remember reading in a local news article that you are planning to visit the Keys next month. If you do, please stop in at the Islamorada library & say hello. We are at mile marker 81½ on the bay (Gulf) side of U.S. Highway #1.

Sincerely,

Jim Clupper  
Branch Manager

  
Gail Swanson  
Route 2, Box 189  
Marathon, Florida 33050  
(305) 743-5448  
swansoj@firmvx.firn.edu

May 20, 1996

Jennie Runyon, Case Worker  
U. S. Board on Geographic Names  
523 National Center  
Reston, Virginia 22092

Re: Proposed change of community name of "Marathon" to "Marathon  
Key", Florida

Dear Ms. Runyon:

Enclosed are petitions signed by 217 local people against the proposed name change. I have gone through the phone book and tried to match phone numbers to as many as possible so you may verify.

Some were passed around but most pages are the result of the petition being posted in our smaller post office at Marathon Shores or the library. The librarian (Gloria Goodman) was ordered to remove the petition there by County Commissioner Jack London.

Soon I will forward recent news items (mostly letters to the editor) on the matter that have been written since I last forwarded a set to your office in December.

I would also hope that you contact Dr. Fernald and get all his mail on the matter. I know of people who wrote just to him, having no idea that he would crash on the subject.

Gail Swanson  
Route 2, Box 189  
Grassy Key  
Marathon, Florida 33050  
(305) 743-5448  
swansoj@firnvx.firn.edu

May 22, 1996

Dr. Joe Knetsch  
Bureau of Survey and Mapping  
Division of State Lands  
Florida Dept. of Natural Resources  
Mail Station 105  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Fla. 32399-3000

Re: Salt Works, Key West  
"Marathon Key" (Key Vaca 1677 - 1995)  
De Mayne, British surveyor  
William Haven/Haben, British surveyor  
Field Notes, 1876 Keys survey

Dear Dr. Joe:

Enclosed, finally, are a few things on Key West salt works you may not have. At Harvard University there is an entire file on the salt works business at Key West - I found the reference to it on the computer and gave it to Tom Hambricht without keeping a copy.

I hope to find out something on the Duck Key salt works and will forward when I do.

Remember your telling me that this "Marathon Key" business is not going to happen? It is probably GOING to happen. Dr. Fernald, once perhaps a man, became a mouse - told Roger Payne at the U.S. Board on Geographical Names that he would make NO recommendation on the matter. Payne told me that is the first time in their history that has happened.

That leaves it to our 5 county commissioners who, like most politicians, especially southern ones, and especially those of Monroe County, are for sale to the highest bidder. And the real estate people have money. They will vote (surely) to confirm their original vote early June, after which the feds vote. Roger Payne's address is below, should you want to add one more letter to the 200 he has received from the locals (80% which are AGAINST the change, he told me). He also told me that the Commission represents the people. These things are why we started brewing Southern Comfort.

I keep finding the name of a British surveyor named De Mayne, but not a good date on him, at the Keys on a British ship in the 1700s. Do you know of him or his survey?

Also, do you know of an English engineer named William Haven or Haben? Since the British were very busy mapping the coast at the time I wonder if he is connected with that endeavor. My rough translation of the footnote in Angel Sanz Tapia's work, enclosed,

"22. A. G. Simancas, Estado 6963. Copy translated from English of the letter of Guillermo (William) Haven (Haben?) to Juan Antonio de la Colina, made at Cayo Hueso (Key West) the 26th of February, 1770. "

Finally, there is a map at Key West library of a survey done in 1876 of the Keys, but no field notes. Tom Hambright said you would have those. They may be interesting. If not lengthy, may I have a copy? I will forward to the libraries in Islamorada and Key West.

Roger Payne  
U. S. Board on Geographic Names  
523 National Center  
Reston, Virginia 22092

Tom Tuell, Editor

(305) 743-5551

February 7, 1996

Jim Clupper  
96 Parker Drive  
Islamorada, FL 33036

Dear Mr. Clupper:

Regarding excerpts from the *Florida Keys Keynoter* and *The Miami Herald* on the Marathon Key name change, for which you wanted a response:

*"Two weeks ago, Ed Fernald, Chairman of the Florida's Board of Geographic Names, told us he could not recommend to the federal government that the name change be approved because there was a lack of local consensus on the proposal."*  
*Tom Schumaker, Keynoter, Dec. 9, 1995.*

As far as I know, this is still the case. Mr. Fernald also expressed this to me in a telephone conversation, saying that due to the lack of consensus, he would make no recommendation to the federal government. I asked him specifically if that meant he was recommending against it. His reply was that he simply was making no recommendation one way or another.

*"Citing a lack of local consensus on changing Marathon's name to Marathon Key, Florida's chief geographer says the federal government shouldn't consider the name change for its official documents." Larry Kahn, Keynoter, Nov. 29*

That appears to be an accurate reflection of what Mr. Fernald said to Mr. Kahn. And as noted lower in the story, he meant quite literally that the item should not appear on the federal board's agenda. It is my understanding that he believes there should be local consensus (I don't know if that includes Islamorada) before the federal board considers the Marathon Key name change.

*"State says Marathon is the name." Headline, Keynoter, Nov. 29*  
I must take the blame here for an inaccurate headline. As you may have noticed, the story does not support the headline.

*"When there is a controversy about the name change, Fernald said, we tend to go with the historical rather than the new." Miami Herald, Dec. 31.*

While the *Keynoter* and *The Miami Herald* are both Knight-Ridder newspapers, we function as independent publications and, from a news standpoint, as competitors. Accordingly, it would be inappropriate for me to respond to a *Herald* article. However, Roger Payne, secretary for the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, told me that the board gives a great deal of consideration to the local government and to local usage.

*"But the chairman of the state board, Ed Fernald, says there is no way he's making a recommendation either way." Tom Tuell, Keynoter, Dec. 13.*

I believe that is a fair representation of what Mr. Fernald told me. It was my impression that he wished he'd never heard of Marathon Key, and was not about to get in the middle of a local squabble. He told me the issue is something that folks down here need to work out among themselves.

*In your letter, you write: "You will note that the Commission did not believe that it was officially changing the name, but simply giving its support to the EDC in its effort to change the name. The Commission recognized that the change could not become fact unless and until it was approved by both state and federal agencies. You, on the other hand, seem to be saying that the Commission's vote is law unless the national board rejects the change. This is wrong!"*

I am unaware of any statements by county commissioners regarding what they believed they were doing. It appears from the wording of the resolution that the Commission said it supports the community in its application to whatever boards require approval. Obviously, you are free to interpret than in any way you like. I chose not to make a presumption.

Also, you might note that the resolution states it "supports the community of Marathon in its application ...," not the EDC.

I understand that you feel strongly on this matter. Quite frankly, I don't. We chose to use the name Marathon Key merely because we believe, based on the Commission vote, it is more accurate usage than Marathon. Obviously you disagree, as is your right.

In the absence of clear-cut guidelines on the naming of unincorporated communities, we have chosen to continue with our policy until either the Commission withdraws its support or the national board declines to adopt the name Marathon Key.

I hope I have satisfactorily answered your questions.

Sincerely,



Tom Tuell, Editor

cc: Tom Schumaker, Keynoter publisher  
Roger Payne, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
Dr. Edward Fernald, Florida Board of Geographic Names

Editor,  
The Keynoter  
P.O. Box 500158  
Marathon, Florida  
33050-0158

Feb. 2, 1996

Editor:

The following sentences, quoted in their entirety, come both from your publication and that daily up the highway, which shares Knight-Ridder ownership with you.  
I have printed in boldface those passages to which I call your attention. I would appreciate a reply.

"Two weeks ago, Ed Fernald, Chairman of Florida's Board of Geographic Names, told us he could not recommend to the federal government that the name change be approved because there was a lack of local consensus on the proposal." Tom Schumaker, Keynoter, Dec. 9, 1995 p. 7

"Citing a lack of local consensus on changing Marathon's name to Marathon Key, Florida's chief geographer says the federal government shouldn't consider the name change for its official documents." Larry Kahn, Keynoter, Nov. 29, 1995 p. 1

"State says Marathon is the name." Headline, Keynoter, Nov. 29, 1995 p. 1

"When there is a controversy about a name change, Fernald said, we tend to go with the historical rather than the new." Miami Herald, Dec. 31, 1995 sect. B p. 1.

"But the chairman of the state board, Ed Fernald, says there is no way he's making a recommendation either way." Tom Tuell, Keynoter, Dec. 13, 1995

Huh?

Finally, you continue to use the Monroe County Commission's vote of Sept. 20, 1995 as justification for your continued use of the name "Marathon Key". Just what did the commission vote to do? Have you even bothered to read the resolution? I assume you haven't, so I quote here from that resolution: "Be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida that the County Commission supports the community of Marathon in its application to the Secretary of Interior and the Board on Geographic Names, as well as any other state or federal agencies from whom approval for redesignation of the geographic name is required."

You will note that the Commission did not believe that it was officially changing the name, but simply giving its support to the EDC in its effort to change the name. The Commission recognized that the change could not become fact unless and until it was approved by both State and Federal agencies. You, on the other hand, seem to be saying that the Commission's vote is law unless the National Board rejects the change. this is wrong!

Sincerely,

Jim Clupper  
Islamorada  
664-9193

cc:  
Editor, The Miami Herald  
Roger Payne, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
Dr. Edward Fernald, Florida Board of Geographic Names

## Press Release

Date: March 11, 1996

To: Larry Thompson, The Advertiser  
Rick Vangrouw, The Free Press  
Nancy Klingener, The Miami Herald

From: Gail Swanson  
Route 2, Box 189  
Marathon, Fla. 33050  
(305) 743-5448  
swansoj@firnvx.firn.edu

Dear Reporters,

I am a 16-yr. resident of the Middle Keys and a local historian. I do not write much as most of my time is taken up in research.

However, appalled at the "Marathon Key" affair I compiled a 61-page collection of historical events entitled,

### "Key Vaca

Florida Keys

An Ancient Name, An Ancient History

Events, Visitors, and Settlers  
In the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s"

This date I am distributing copies to the County Commissioners (by mail) and to the Islamorada and Marathon libraries (by hand). Additional copies will be sent shortly to the Marathon High School library, the Key West library, and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Hopefully this documentation of the centuries-long use of the place name of Key Vaca will inspire those that need some inspiring.

