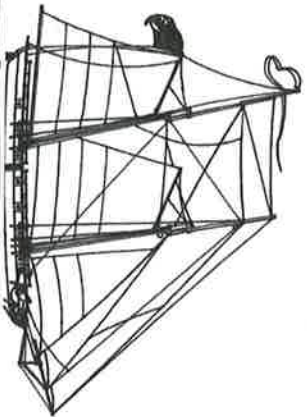


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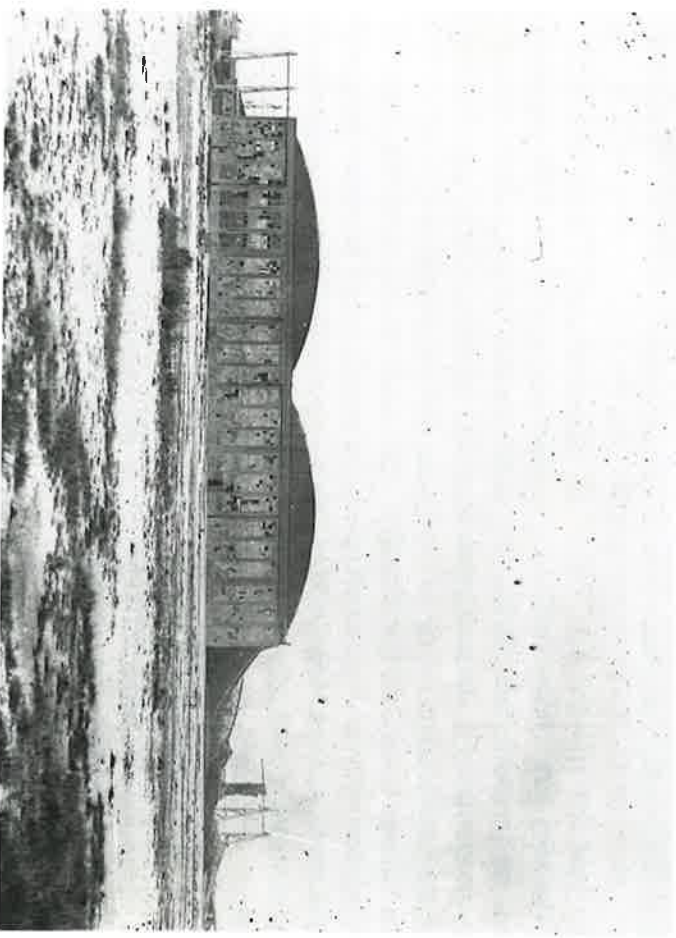
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Loss of the Steamship Valbanera

In the *Wilhelmina Harvey Collection* (see *Society News* on page 2) at the Monroe County Library is information and photographs from the Navy on hurricanes that we had never seen before. We may never know how the Harveys came by the file. Did C.B. (her Husband) save when the Naval Station closed the Engineering Office where he worked moved to Boca Chica or did the Navy give him copies for his duties as Mayor of Key West (1951-57 and 1961-1963) or did *Wilhelmina* come by the file when she worked in the Navy Yard or her many years in Monroe County government.



The seaplane hanger at the Naval Air Station Trumbo Point damaged by the Hurricane of 1919. Photo credit: *Wilhelmina Harvey Collection Monroe County Library.*

The report that follows on communication with the Spanish passenger liner *Valbanera* during and after the Hurricane of 1919 has been a subject of speculation and has been missing for years. Fernando J. Garcia Ekeegogan, who wrote the story of the loss of the *Valbanera* in the Summer 1996 Journal, searched for the report in Washington and Spain. We searched for the report in the National Archives in Washington and Atlanta

messages from the ill fated ship. The loss of the *Valbanera* with over 500 passengers and crewmen made the 1919 Hurricane the third deadliest storm to strike the United States. The report does not answer all the questions but does end the speculation about radio communication with the ship after the storm.

On page three is the Navy's report on the 1909 Hurricane. One interesting fact is the maximum wind recorded by the Navy during

the 1909 Hurricane was 84 mph. This goes in contradiction of the destruction reported from the storm and shown in the photographs in the Library. Newspaper accounts reported 400 buildings were destroyed and 300 boats in the harbor were totally destroyed. Even later accounts of this storm put the maximum wind at 94 mph with 6.13 inches of rain. So all accounts make this a category 1 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The question

(Continued on page 14)

* 1910 Valbanera 6000