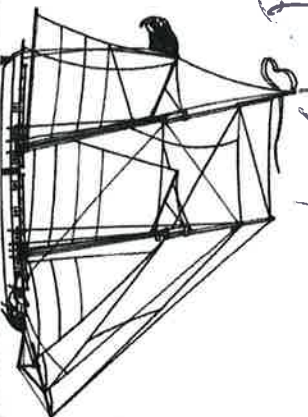


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Forgotten Soldiers

By Tom Hambright

After the end of reconstruction in 1876, the former Confederate States began to rewrite the history and causes of the Civil War. Even though Key West had been the only Southern city to remain in the Union throughout the war and served as headquarters for the Navy Gulf Blocking Squadron and base for Army operations in Florida, the history of the war was revised by the former Confederacy's power structure and historians. Key West, as opposed to most of the South, for the last thirty years of the 1800s had a fierce two-party political system that played a major part in glorifying the Southern cause. Hispanics and Blacks formed the power base for the Republican Party; Whites were Democrats. So both politics and racism were the driving forces in trying to change the part played by the Blacks during the war. After the Spanish-American War the Cuban population declined and the county was under control of the Democratic Party.

It is a common misapprehension that Key West remained in the Union by military force, yet newspapers, letters and diaries of the time shows a completely different story. Most citizens of the Island were either pro-Union or neutral and only

Wm. R. R.

ATTENTION!

HEADQUARTERS, ISLAND OF KEY WEST, FLA.,

U. S. BARRACKS, Feb. 16th, 1863.

SPECIAL ORDER, NO. 6:

In compliance with instructions received from Headquarters, Dept. of the South, every male person of African descent, between the ages of fifteen (15,) and fifty (50,) who have not already enrolled themselves, are hereby ordered to report in person forthwith. Col. Montgomery, at the Court House, Key West, there to undergo a medical examination, preparatory to embarking for Hilton Head, S. C.

Col. Montgomery will enroll such as may in the opinion of the examining officer, be capable of bearing arms, and hold them in readiness to embark on the U. S. Steam Transport "Cosmopolitan", on her return from Tortugas.

By Command of

JOS. S. MORGAN,

Col. 90th Reg't, N. Y. Vols.
Commanding Post.

W. T. WOOLLEY,
1st Lieut. and Post Adj't.

Colonel Joseph Morgan's Order Number 6 for all African males between 15 and 50 to report for military service. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

interested in making a living. Most Taylor and Jefferson. These slave-came from New England or the owners controlled the press and Bahamas and did not own Slaves. wrote the histories of the war. One Some of the leading citizens had result was that the 15 men who left purchased Slaves as an investment, Key West to join the Confederate in order to rent them to the Federal military have been glorified as Government to work on Forts (Continued on page 3)