

Papers Prove She's an Angel

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TAVERNIER — Not many people get to be angels while they're still around to enjoy the honor.

Mrs. Frances Tracy is one. She's got a plaque to prove it.

In 1957 the bustling, blue-eyed registered nurse (Johns Hopkins '95) was proclaimed "Angel of the Upper Keys" by grateful settlers whose ailments, injuries and heartaches she had been ministering to for 30 years.

Officially, the honor came from the clinic of the Florida Keys Clinic at Tavernier, which she had helped to found five years earlier and worked to support.

"Everywhere I've lived I've helped to start something," said Mrs. Tracy, who wears her wings and halo with cheerful aplomb.

In Miami, where she came in 1916, it was a day nursery operated by the Women's Relief Association, which she served as secretary-treasurer for 20 years, and a small maternity home on Miami Avenue at the Trail.

When the late Dr. James M. Jackson and others started Jackson Memorial Hospital, she was their consultant on nursing services.

Last fall the members of the Upper Keys Garden Club became serious about acquiring a site for a garden center, and Dr. Frederick T. Bond told them, "I'll give you an acre on the highway if you'll name the center for Mrs. Tracy."

If plans progress on schedule, the center should be ready for dedication next year.

Naturally Mrs. Tracy is a busy member of the Garden Club, too. Now in her mid-80's, she looks easily 10 years younger, still drives her car, but not often because her husband worries.

Capt. J. Roy Tracy built and operated the West End Boatyard in Miami until 1937, when they became full-time residents of what had been a weekend home on the ocean at Tavernier.

The captain is a camera-toting tourist's dream — wears a yachting cap on his thatch of snow white hair, smokes a fat underslung



Nurse Frances Tracy—an Accredited Angel of the Keys
... with her husband Capt. J. Roy Tracy

were only about 500 people living between Rock Harbor and Islamorada in the 30's," Mrs. Tracy said.

"But the doctors helped me keep a supply of shots and whatever was needed." After the 1935 hurricane washed out the railroad, she had a delivery truck outfitted as an ambulance, with cot and first aid equipment.

Seminoles brought in to build chikees at a tourist lodge taught the knowledgeable RN the economy of home-grown remedies — aloe for a rash or open sore; crushed leaves of gumbo limbo to ease stings; the pain-quelling effects of a hot poultice made from soaking Bahama dogwood leaves ("fish-fuddle"); the usefulness of shepherd's needle, an otherwise pesky weed, whose stems when chewed have a quick laxative effect — useful for curing diarrhea in the not so long ago days, Mrs. Tracy said, when there was no water pipeline and drinking water had to be stored during the rainy season.

anybody for money to help us run our places," Mrs. Tracy declared. "But when people are able to do for themselves, then it's better to quit giving it to them free."

