

Florida Keys

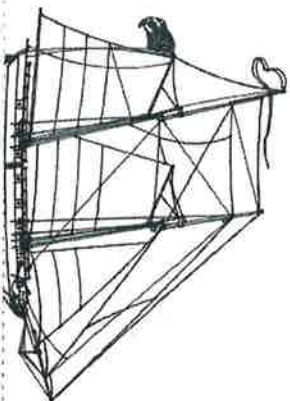
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Clement L. Knowles Cigar Manufacturer

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The rise and fall of the handmade cigar business parallels the manufacture of cigars by Clement Knowles. The cigar industry peaked about 1890, fell in 1890's with a final peak in 1911. With the introduction of machine-made cigars, the popularity of cigarettes and labor troubles the boom in handmade cigars in this city declined and the cigar was no longer king in Key West.

Clement Knowles, one of eight children, was born February 22, 1864 at the old Loyalist plantation, Northend, on Long Island, Bahamas. His parents were Clement Edward Knowles and Julia Rahming Knowles. Clement immigrated to Key West, Florida and entered the booming cigar business.

In 1893 Clement lived at 608 Francis street with his parents. In the City Directory for that year he was listed as a cigar maker along with his brothers Austin and Allen. On August 22, 1902 he married Elizabeth Curry and they had a daughter, Ruth.

In 1901 he advertised that he was a manufacturer of fine Key West Havana Cigars since 1892. His factory was No. 203 at 642 Front

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Clement L. Knowles and Elizabeth Curry on their wedding day, August 22, 1902. Photo credit: The Author.