

January 1960

## Key light was lonely beam during Civil War

Hampton Dunn

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/dunn\\_phototouring](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/dunn_phototouring)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dunn, Hampton, "Key light was lonely beam during Civil War" (1960). *Hampton Dunn Phototouring Florida Collection*. 1.

[https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/dunn\\_phototouring/1](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/dunn_phototouring/1)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Floridiana - General at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hampton Dunn Phototouring Florida Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).



# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## KEY LIGHT WAS LONELY BEAM DURING CIVIL WAR

By HAMPTON DUNN

LOGGERHEAD KEY--For more than a century, the Dry Tortugas Light Station has kept vigil over lonely waters from this outermost key of the Florida Keys. It's some 70 miles west of Key West and on one of the inlets that compose the Dry Tortugas. "Tortugas" is Spanish for turtles (the explorer Ponce de Leon named the coral keys), and loggerhead is a variety of turtle.

According to Cmdr. A. E. Carlson of the U.S. Coast Guard the light was established following an appropriation of \$35,000 by the 1856 Congress. A light on Garden Key, where Fort Jefferson is located, four miles away, then was reduced to a 4th order light and served as a harbor light.

Dry Tortugas was one of the few Southern lights continuously in operation during the Civil War, the reason being, it is assumed, that the Keys were occupied by Federal troops during that period. The light at the top of a 150-ft. tower was a fixed white light and a 1st order Fresnel lens.

In 1875 the Lighthouse Board asked for \$100,000 to rebuild the light since it was badly beaten by a hurricane in 1873. Congress came through with a \$75,000 appropriation. The next year another hurricane swept the Keys making action more urgent. By 1877 there was still no new lighthouse and, according to Cmdr. Carlson, "The Lighthouse Board must have despaired because the reports for the next 30 years tell of repairs and more repairs to the old structure.' Here it is many years since the light was established and the signal shines forth from the same old tower it always has. What happened to the \$75,000 appropriation. No one seems to know.

