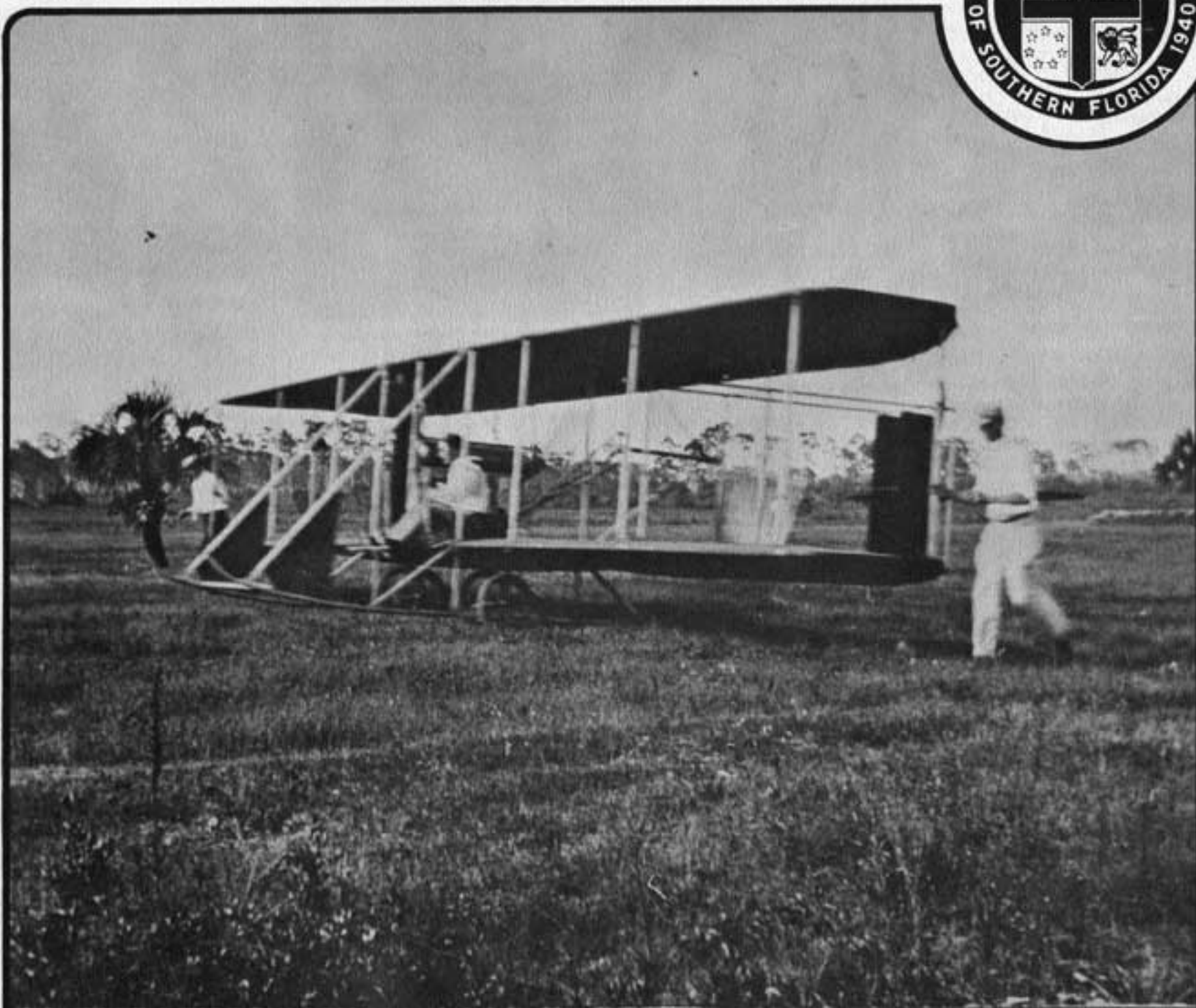


Update



PIONEER AVIATION DAYS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

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Cover:

On July 20, 1911, Howard Gill piloted a Wright biplane for takeoff over the Golf Links (now the Civic Center) for Miami's first airplane flight.

—Photo by B. Frank Davis. Collection of Don Carson.

UPDATE

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MUSEUM DIRECTOR
APPOINTED

The Historical Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Randy F. Nimnicht as its Museum Director. A native Miamian, Mr. Nimnicht received a B.A. in History from Stetson University and holds an M.A. in History from the University of Florida. He has most recently been associated with the State of Florida as Historic Preservationist in the Division of Archives, History and Records Management. Mr. Nimnicht will assume his duties by August first.

WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS

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Historical Commission
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M/M John Summers
Barbara L. Woodworth

FORWARD SCATTER

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August 1, 1974

11:00 AM Executive Committee Meeting

12:00 Noon Board of Directors Meeting

New exhibit in the gallery this month will spotlight bathing suits of the early 1900s. This is part of our continuing series of exhibits on loan from the Historical Costume Museum.

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

September 4, 1974

12:00 Noon Executive Committee Meeting at 1st Federal dining room.

History buffs and collectors — watch for the date in early fall for the Museum's annual "Garage Sale". Be here early to look through our surplus historical materials.

FIU students of Florida History have been making use of our resource material in the Library, and Channel 4 was here recently taking pictures of the Old Miami Riviera Newspaper for a TV news story.

EDITOR'S
OMISSION

The photo of the Granada site archaeological dig on our June UPDATE cover was taken by Dan D. Laxson.

WANTED

The following suspects are at large in attics, closets, and under beds. Their apprehension and delivery to the proper authorities will help fill gaps in the library's collection.

REWARD: Our deepest appreciation and a better HASF library.

Miami Pictorial. 1974 issues.
Metropolitan Miamian. 1940-1956 issues.

Apalachee, Tallahassee Historical Society. Any and all issues except 1944.

Small, John Kunkel, *Eden to Sahara, Florida's Tragedy*, 1929.

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MIAMI'S FIRST PLANE by Thelma Peters

In the summer of 1911 President Taft celebrated his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary; England had a new king, George V; economic optimism had replaced the 1907 panic; and the University of Florida had just graduated its largest class — thirty-one.

Miami was fifteen that summer: population five thousand, paved streets, twenty-five miles. The First National Bank had a capital stock of \$100,000, the local chapter of the W. C. T. U. met regularly to fight Demon Rum, a room at the San Carlos cost \$2.50 a day, E. B. Douglas sale-priced "elegantly trimmed ladies' drawers" for 99¢, and a kid with fifteen cents could swim in the pool of the Royal Palm Hotel.

It was a good summer.

With exuberant civic pride the city fathers proclaimed a three-day celebration of their Magic City's birthday. Mr. Everest G. Sewell, pioneer Miami booster, was named chairman of the celebration committee.

The top event during three days of parades, baseball games, excursions, boat races, and banquets was to be the actual flight of an actual aeroplane. Most of the people in Dade County had never seen one.

Mr. Sewell contracted with the Wright Brothers of Dayton, Ohio, to send down a Wright biplane by train along with a "bird-man" who would make six demonstration flights, three on July 20, three on July 21. The cost was \$7,500, money eagerly donated by merchants and other individuals.

An aeroplane in Miami? The excitement was almost too much to bear. A few weeks before the plane arrived the *Daily Metropolis* commented that a new disease of epidemic proportions had hit Miami — a disease diagnosed as "aeroplanitis" one symptom of which was a rubber neck. People with the disease kept tilting their heads back and scanning the sky.

The city name June 22 as Clean-Up Day. Store fronts got

fresh paint, back yards were raked, streets repaired and swept, and housewives aired the guest bedroom.

Preparations intensified as July 20 approached. Sheriff

Dan Hardie and a jail trusty climbed all over the two-story, native-stone courthouse draping it with red, white and blue bunting. Palm fronds, flowers, flags, bunting and even a large model aeroplane decorated the store

windows and the buildings along Twelfth Street (present Flagler), the route of the parades. Guests poured in filling all the hotels and the private "spare rooms."

The delegation from Key West, numbering almost five hundred, came partly on business: to advertise their own upcoming celebration of the completion of the Overseas Railroad scheduled for the following January.

Seminole Indians moved into tents in the rear of Girtman Brothers store: Cypress, Frank, Coffee and Teeth pull Tiger, Phillip Billie, Johnny Jumper, Harry Doctor and others, including squaws and children. Some were to ride on a float in a parade, some were to do a war dance on Twelfth Street. All were curious to see what the white man was up to.

At Miami Golf Links, as Miami's only golf club was known at that time, a grandstand was built near the fairway which was to serve as runway. The Golf Links were out in the country and up the Miami River — in the location of the present Civic Center. The local militia, the Miami Rifles, commanded by Captain G. D. Brossier, patrolled the field to keep spectators safely away from the plane.

Almost everybody in South Florida, guest or resident, was at the Golf Links on the afternoon of July 20. They came by foot, in wagons, on horseback, by bicycle, and in the high-wheeled, snub-nosed autos of that day. The crowd which the press called "monstrous" in size was probably the largest assemblage of people in South Florida up to that time. There might have been five thousand there — scarcely a splash in today's Orange Bowl.

With the band playing, two attendants wheeled the light wooden plane, its two wings cloth covered, onto the fairway and within sight of the spectators. Wild applause. Aviator Howard Gill appeared. More ap-

(continued on page 4)



Preparing the Wright Brothers biplane for its first Miami flight, July 20, 1911. —Photo by Frank Davis, Collection of Don Carson



Grandstand at the Golf Links is beyond the building. Local militia kept spectators off the runway. —Photo by B. Frank Davis, Collection of Don Carson



Everest G. Sewell, chairman of Miami's fifteenth birthday celebration, and one of the entries in the "decorated cars" parade. —From HASF photo collection

(continued from page 3)

plause. He took his seat at the controls, visible to all in the open frame. The prop was spun, the thirty-five-horsepower motor roared, and he was off down the fairway. Almost before a soul could breathe he was airborne, "exactly like a partridge taking wing" one spectator remarked.

The first flight was a low circling of the field not much above the tree tops. In the other two flights of the day the pilot went higher, performed stunts described as "spirals" and "rocking the boat." But it was on the second day, July 21, that he outdid himself. He climbed to 7,500 feet, a mere speck to the viewers below. Then the motor died. Had he cut it off? Was he out of control? The plane seemed to be plummeting to earth. Was he doomed? No, he was leveling off, the motor was on again. Five thousand people breathed again.

The pilot landed to wild applause. He invited Mr. Sewell, the celebration chairman, to take a ride with him. The crowd roared its approval. Would Sewell dare? He would. He calmly took a seat beside Gill, exposed, as Gill was, to the full force of the wind. Vicariously, five thousand people were about to have their first plane flight.

For his passenger's sake Gill kept this flight low and easy. They stayed under a thousand feet. Sewell, enjoying every moment, had his first birds eye view of the city he so ardently promoted.

Later Gill said Sewell was the coolest passenger he ever had. Sewell said flying was "a delightful sensation indescribably pleasant." Sewell became an aviation enthusiast for life that day.

After the last flight Gill, the hero of the day, asked if he could please have a glass of milk. He said flying made him thirsty.

A good many people still living in Miami recall seeing the first plane flight. Jack Sewell is one of these. He says that when he saw Uncle E. G. climb into that plane and then saw the plane go up in the air that he was

scared almost to death. No, he didn't enjoy the occasion at all — he was too worried.

Dorothy Dean Davidson, whose father, S. Bobo Dean, owned the *Metropolis*, remembers the day because of an auto accident. Mrs. Dean and her friend, Mrs. H. Pierre Branning, were being driven home from the Golf Links in the *Metropolis* car by one of the Brossier boys, when in the unusual press of traffic the car ran off the narrow rock road and ended in a slough.

Dorothy, who wasn't at the field that day, hurried home when she heard about the accident; she found the two ladies, unhurt but badly shaken, sitting in the back of the house drinking wine.

Why momentous? Because the Dean family never had alcohol in the house, Mr. Dean worked for Prohibition, would not accept a liquor ad in his paper, and Mrs. Dean as a young girl "had taken the pledge."

To this day Dorothy wonders where the wine came from.

The late Hoyt Frazier, whose *Memoirs of Old Miami* as told to Nixon Smiley were published by *The Miami Herald*, was another eyewitness of the first flight. He said the stunt flying did more than electrify the people. Horses and mules whinnied and ran away, cows jumped fences and chickens ran into the palmettos. One nearby farmer claimed that even his cat ran away.

The first flight set in motion a series of steps which were to make Miami a leader in aviation. Sewell was so convinced that flying would soon become commercially practical that he got the city to offer the Wright Brothers \$1,000 to bring a flying school to Miami. They declined but Sewell persisted and did bring the Curtiss Flying School to Miami. Until his death in 1940 Sewell worked tirelessly to improve Miami airports, to expand air traffic, and to better trade relations particularly with the Latin American countries. Historically he is the father of Interama.

PICTURING OUR PAST by S. J. Boldrick

The annual Miami All American Air Races began in 1929 and continued until 1950, hosting all of the famous aviators and displaying the latest developments of the aviation industry. After a

hiatus of years, Miamians in January 1973 were able to go to the air races again. Gleason Romer's camera preserved the personalities and planes of those early meets.



Army planes flying in formation past the timing stand of the 6th Annual races January 11-13, 1934.



Planes, including an experimental prototype helicopter, parked in front of the Curtiss-Wright Flying Service hangar during the 4th Annual races of 1932, bore the names of sponsoring petroleum companies.



1940s races featured this new Beechcraft plane "Miss Miami Aviation."
—All photos: Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library

EARLY AIRPORTS AND AVIATION NEAR MIAMI by Karl E. Voelter



KARL E. VOELTER

With all aspects of aviation in South Florida at such a high level, even old-time Miamians sometimes find it difficult to recall that less than forty-five years ago the industry as we recognize it today was not notably important in our area.

The late Glen Curtiss, I am told, ran a flying school in the area as early as 1911; then there was an airport in Hialeah that was occupied by the military during World War I, and I recall a small field, ostensibly an airport, in Hialeah in the late 20s. At about the same time a service known as New York, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires (NYRBA), later replaced by Pan American, was operating from the Dinner Key base. Chalk's Flying Service was doing business from their County (MacArthur) Causeway dock. Brown Field, south of the city, once important locally, has been taken over by developers and is no more. Curtiss-Wright had a seaplane base at 829 Biscayne Boulevard and a hangar at the old Miami Municipal Airport. Pan American had a base at the old Northwest 36th Street airport, the forerunner of today's Miami International Airport, properly Wilcox Field, named for the late

Congressman J. Mark Wilcox. All American Airport, a marginal operation opposite Miami Municipal, was in and out of difficulty, but more of that later.

Much of the foregoing information is hearsay, based on discussions with early-day fliers in the Miami area, now long gone; I hope no one holds me strictly accountable for full accuracy or omissions.

Late in 1929 a group of local businessmen and aviation enthusiasts prevailed upon Curtiss-Wright to assist in the technical operations of the first All American Air Maneuvers. I was sent here that winter for that purpose.

In reflecting back on that first visit to Miami, I well recall the ambition of the aviation enthusiasts who sought to stage an eight-day siege of air-racing and flying exhibitions. Not surprisingly, however, there was a void of flying experience that had to be filled. Fortunately, I was in charge of the well-known Curtiss Race Team, on which I also participated as a professional racing pilot. Hence I was able to provide a substantial amount of the necessary technical know-how, contributing to the overall success of the show.

This show took place in January 1930 at the airport then called Miami Municipal; some years later it became known as Amelia Earhart Field, now defunct as an airport and useless for its intended purpose. Its site was on the east side of LeJeune Road, between 105th Street and Gratigny Road. Here a beautiful,



In January, 1931, Pan American Airport on 36th Street was a four building complex that would eventually grow to become Miami International Airport. —Collection of HASF

modern hangar had been built by the Curtiss-Wright Flying Service (CWFS), which at that time operated 41 bases throughout the United States. Surprisingly, but typical of the status of aviation in Miami at the time, our local base ranked at the bottom of the entire list.

I recall how impressed I was with the rosy future I foresaw for aviation in Miami. When I returned to New York, singing the praises of that potential to the president of CWFS, I could see that he too was impressed. At any rate, by June 1930 my enthusiasm had prevailed to the extent that I was sent back to Miami to take over both the land and the water bases, plus CWFS bases in Atlanta, Raleigh, and Columbia, South Carolina.

In those days Miami was suffering other tribulations in addition to those in low-key aviation interests. I arrived in Miami on a

Clyde Line ship, with my car and a few furnishings from my former New York apartment, finding that the city's largest bank had closed its doors the day before. This obviously did nothing to help my plans. However, we soon found ourselves tremendously busy both at the airport and at the seaplane base, so busy in fact that by the following December Miami ranked seventh in the nationwide CWFS setup and by the May following that we were first. The latter was both good and bad, bad for me because by then I had become well established locally and did not want to leave. CWFS finally prevailed on me to go to Pittsburgh, where the situation was similar to that earlier in Miami.

I went to Pittsburgh against my better judgment. Our finances were not good, and our operations were about twenty years

(continued on page 12)



Curtiss-Wright Flying Service operations in Miami centered around this hangar complex. —Collection of HASF

Karl Voelter is national secretary of the OX5 Pioneers, editor of OX5 News, and an aviation consultant and business advisor. His other credits include service with aircraft manufacturers and Federal aviation interests.

HENRY T. "DICK" MERRILL by Walter Hill

Long-time Miamian, Dick Merrill, is, in his own time, one of flying's legendary figures. An aviator of the first rank, his early career carried him from carefree barnstormer and Hollywood stunt pilot to intrepid flyer of the night air mail and, finally, veteran Eastern Airlines captain. Dick is most distinguished, however, for his historic flights across the North Atlantic.

Dick was at one time the only pilot to have flown four non-stop crossings, the first to demonstrate the possibility of round-trip crossings within the span of a few days (he did it twice), and he was the first to prove the reliability and suitability of air transportation for fast commercial service over great distances and on a scheduled basis.

The Merrills have resided on Di Lido Island since 1938, where Dick first brought his bride, Toby Wing, the Paramount Pictures star. From this bay island between Miami and Miami Beach, Dick and Toby have impressed their personalities on both communities, and both are better places for the church, civic, air transportation and social interests they have pursued over the years.

Now eighty, Dick is enjoying an active retirement in vigorous health. Certainly one of his pleasures is showing friends, with pardonable pride, some of the many awards, trophies, record citations and pictorial memorabilia in his collection at home. Renewing an old friendship with Dick recently, he recounted for me his North Atlantic adventures more or less as follows.

During the 1920s, Dick's ambition to pilot one of the prize-winning "Firsts" across the North Atlantic was always frustrated one way or another. Finally, nothing was left to be done except the round trip. Never losing sight of this goal, Dick seized the opportunity in 1936 when his friend, Harry

Richman, bought an American Air Lines single-engine Vultee monoplane.

Broadway nightclub entertainer Richman saw the publicity potential in the plan Dick laid out, and the flight was on. Preparations were carefully detailed in every respect including modifications of the airplane, such as provisions for 1000 gallons of gasoline in a cabin tank and substitution of a more powerful engine to lift the added load. One highly publicized idea was the stuffing of ping-pong balls into all the spaces inside the wing and tail surfaces. The durable but ultralight little balls would provide flotation in the event of an ocean ditching.

Bearing the name **LADY PEACE**, proud and hopeful amid ominous rumblings of war between nations, the Vultee labored aloft from Brooklyn's Floyd Bennet Field on the afternoon of September 3, 1936. Some eighteen hours later Dick and Harry were over England, probing into bad weather. The radios had all conked out long since and, unable to find London's Croydon Aerodrome in the dense fog, they landed in a small pasture near Cardiff, Wales. Later, on to Croydon and still later, to Paris.

Ten days and as many adventures later, Dick aimed **LADY PEACE** down the long, firm beach at Southport near Liverpool, and coaxed the heavily laden little plane into the air and on course for New York City. Climbing in steps as fuel consumption gradually reduced her 127% overload, **LADY PEACE** bored through the clear air of a beautiful day, urged on by a brisk tail wind and an increasingly euphoric crew.

On and on, half way across the boisterous North Atlantic at a speed which undoubtedly would be a record to stand for years, then suddenly — **TROUBLE!** The cabin tank unexpectedly ran dry. Unaccountable. Leaked away, spilled away — who knows — but over



Dick Merrill (right) and Harry Richman study the flight plan for their first west to east crossing in the single engine **LADY PEACE** in 1936.
—Photo from the collection of W. C. Hill



Harry Richman and Dick Merrill loaded ping-pong balls into the tail and wing sections of the **LADY PEACE** to provide flotation in the event of an ocean ditching. —Photo from the collection of W. C. Hill



Spectators on the Southport, England beach surround the **LADY PEACE**, Vultee monoplane before its east to west crossing in 1936.
—Photo from the W. C. Hill Collection

Walter Hill is a veteran EAL captain and a previous contributor to **UPDATE**.

400 gallons of gasoline which should have been there was gone. A landing short of the goal was inevitable.

Switch to the small wing tank with an unknown amount of fuel remaining; look at the violent surface of the sea; think of the ping-pong balls and think also of the many crews already lost attempting this crossing. Ditch LADY PEACE? No way!

Grimly holding the original course, expecting the engine to sputter and die at any moment, they hoped. And their luck held. Three hundred miles farther on, the coast of Newfoundland loomed out of the afternoon haze. Seizing upon the first flat place he found to land, Dick glided into a cran-

berry bog and like Alcock & Brown's Vinny years before, LADY PEACE vaulted squarely up on her nose.

But this was not the ignominious end that was flashed around the world by radio. When Captain Eddie Rickenbacker arrived in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, the next morning with an Eastern Airlines crew and rescue plane, he found LADY PEACE and her crew undamaged and on the flight line, ready to continue to New York.

The unplanned and somewhat embarrassing stop in Newfoundland dulled the drama of the first round-trip crossing. But clearly such a trip had now been made — by a single crew in the same airplane, over a span of two

weeks. Now it was time to abandon the "stunt" approach to epic flights and get on with the serious business of demonstrating commercial flights between the continents.

Eight months later the commercial flight had been planned and done. Howard K. Vanderbilt's twin-engine Lockheed Electra air yacht was obtained and converted to a long-range transport. With Miami's Jack Lambie as copilot, Merrill again flew nonstop from New York to London on May 8/9 and returned to Boston on May 13/14. The east-bound payload was photographic coverage of the spectacular crash of the airship Hindenburg at Lakehurst, N.J. on May 6 and the westbound trip brought to America photographic coverage

of the May 12th coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

International News Service (INS) had underwritten the flight to scoop the other services on the coronation pictures for the American press. The tragic Hindenburg crash provided an unplanned opportunity to do the same for the European press. Thus an operation scheduled without regard for wind or weather was demonstrated.

In recognition, Dick Merrill received the coveted Harmon Trophy, presented by President Roosevelt. And as a consequence route surveys were begun almost immediately by both American and European commercial airlines.

AVIATION AND THE HURRICANE by Gordon E. Dunn

The U. S. Air Force (USAF), then the Army Air Corps, organized its first aerial weather reconnaissance unit in August 1942 at Patterson Field, Ohio, in response to World War II meteorological requirements. The unit received its first aircraft, a C-45, on 16 November 1942. Operations began in the North Atlantic in the summer of 1943, but winter weather and hurricanes were considered too hazardous for twin-engine aircraft operations.

The first individual to fly intentionally into the vortex of a hurricane was Col. Joseph B. Duckworth, a veteran pilot of Eastern Airlines, experienced in bad-weather flying and in 1943 teaching instrument flying at the Army air base at Bryan, Texas. On the morning of July 27 he heard that a hurricane was approaching Galveston. He decided to fly into it 'just for fun' and took off in a single-engine AT-6 with a navigator named O'Hair. They flew into the eye and returned to base, finding less turbulence than usually encountered in an afternoon thunder-



USAF WC-130 "Hurricane Hunter" planes such as this have provided location and intensity information for the National Weather Service since 1946.
—Collection of HASF

storm and demonstrating that hurricanes could be reconnoitered safely.

News of Duckworth's feat spread rapidly. Several other flights were made into hurricanes in 1943, including one by this author in a PBY, as well as several in 1944. In December 1944 a conference was held in Washington with representatives from the Weather Bureau, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and others and a program for regular aircraft reconnaissance agreed upon to begin the following year. Since 1946 the "Hurricane Hunters" of the Air Force and Navy have

provided the National Weather Service with round-the-clock location and intensity information and other data.

Much credit must be given the courageous Air Force, Navy and National Weather Service's Research Flight Facility (RFF) fliers. While most flights are uneventful although hot, tiresome and crowded, some are turbulent and violent and a few — very few fortunately — have resulted in deaths and injuries. The only hurricane hunter plane lost in the Atlantic area was a Navy aircraft which flew into Hurricane Janet on 26 Septem-

ber, 1955, at approximately 800 feet. An observation was received indicating that penetration of the inner core was beginning, but no further trace of the plane was ever found. The center of Hurricane Janet passed over Swan Island the next day with winds estimated at 200 miles per hour. Injuries and aircraft damage from turbulence have been reported on other occasions; in fact, during the Korean Campaign a former combat pilot, returning from a recon mission with 150 sheared rivets in his plane's wings, jokingly asked for reassignment to the battle zone.

Several typhoon reconnaissance planes have been lost in the Pacific but most if not all met with disaster outside the storm area.

Currently the AF hurricane reconnaissance squadron is located at Keesler AF Base at Biloxi, Mississippi, a very poor spot for working Atlantic hurricanes. The squadron composed of seven WC130s, commanded by Col. Donald R. Gibson. The Navy squadron, based at Jacksonville, is composed of four WP3s, headed by Cdr. Richard Sirch. It is impossible to estimate the number of lives and amount of
(continued on page 11)

Dr. Dunn, for 44 years a government meteorologist, retired in 1968. Since 1955 he had been in charge of National Hurricane Center.

STREET RAILWAYS OF MIAMI — Part Two by Edward Ridolph

When the city of Miami bought out the defunct Miami Traction Company and ordered new cars, city officials had no intention of involving Miami in the day-to-day operation of the trolley system. Since the Miami Beach electric railway had been operating successfully since late in 1920, Miami entered into an agreement with the Beach company whereby the city retained ownership of the lines and equipment but all operations were handled by the Beach Railway. A specified rental figure was paid by the Beach company to the city. This agreement remained basically in effect throughout the life of the rail system. Under the agreement, fares in Miami proper were originally five cents. In 1929, the fare was increased to seven cents, the extra two cents going to the city. In 1938, fares were rolled back to a nickel.

Local streetcar operation in Miami proper returned to the city on January 7, 1922, when two safety cars, running on a 20-minute headway, started operating from downtown Miami to Buena Vista. The Flagler Street line, originally scheduled to begin service at the same time, ran into difficulties. The Florida East Coast Railway, not anxious to have the trolley line crossing their railroad, had a crew rip out the crossing on Flagler Street late at night, storing the trackwork in their freight house near the river. This only caused a few days' delay, and by January 15 trolleys were running out Flagler Street to 16th Avenue, where they turned north to the ball park at 5th Street. These two local lines in Miami and the line across the causeway linking Miami and the Beach would comprise the city's street railway system until the coming of the boom.

In March 1924 the Miami Beach Electric Company and its rail subsidiary were sold to the American Power and Light Com-

pany. The sale coincided with the beginning of the great Florida land boom, but neither American Power nor the city of Miami was unprepared. The Miami Beach Railway was set up to operate the rail system, and immediate plans for expansion and improvement of the system were announced. This coincided with Miami's long-range plans, because late in 1923 the city had begun a gradual expansion of the rail system.

By 1925 the Florida boom was wide open. Miles of new track were built both in Miami and on the Beach. In 1924 and 1925 the city had bought 27 more new streetcars, now owning a total of 39. In January 1925 the N.W. 2nd Avenue line began operating, and in February the N.W. 3rd Avenue line and S.W. 6th Street lines opened. Only the N.W. 7th Avenue line, which opened in 1927, remained to round out the system. On the Beach, new lines were built up Alton Road to the Nautilus Hotel and Polo Grounds at 45th Street, and up Sheridan and Pine Tree Drive to 50th Street. The original single-track line across the causeway had been double tracked in 1925-26, and 12 large, deluxe cars arrived just in time to inaugurate service on the improved line. In addition to the street cars, the Miami Beach Railway was operating 50 buses on less heavily traveled lines. A constant complaint of the company, though, was the expense of operating the unprofitable bus lines as well as the profitable street car lines.

One of the most profitable and interesting lines was the N.W. 3rd Avenue line. This line ran from downtown Miami out 3rd Avenue to N.W. 20th Street, and so served the area known as the central colored district. In an era of total segregation, this was the only line in the city and probably one of the few in the south where the black passengers were permitted to sit anywhere in the car, rather than being confined to the rear. Veteran motormen recall the heavy loads the line



Five cars line up on Ponce de Leon Blvd. for a parade on April 30, 1925, marking the beginning of trolley service to Coral Gables. At the opening ceremony, William Jennings Bryan extolled the streetcar as "the apostle of democracy." —Photo from the collection of Stephen Maguire

carried, particularly on holidays, and how passengers would board the car and ride only a few blocks before getting off, encouraged by the low fare.

Meanwhile, George Merrick recognized the importance of linking his new development in the southwest section with the rest of Miami. In 1924 crews began laying track westward along Flagler Street from the end of the city carline at 22nd Avenue, then south on Ponce de Leon into the Gables. On April 30, 1925, a 5-car parade rolled out Flagler Street and turned south to Coral Way, where a large crowd marked the occasion with appropriate ceremony. William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued orator, made a speech extolling the streetcar as "the apostle of democracy."

The Flagler-Ponce line provided a strictly local service to the Gables, but on May 28, 1926, the Coral Gables corporation began service over the high-speed line that became the company's pride. Operating out of downtown Miami over South Miami Avenue and S.W. 3rd Avenue to Coral Way, the line then ran due west on Coral Way into Coral Gables. Ten deluxe interurban cars, equipped with every luxury the company could buy, operated over the line. Full-page advertisements in major newspapers extolled the virtues of the new, modern service. As an aside to present-day Miami, it should be noted that the rapid-transit

cars ran every 15 minutes, required only 20 minutes to travel from downtown Miami to downtown Coral Gables, and charged only a dime.

In addition to the 2 lines already described, the Coral Gables rapid-transit company also operated several local lines within the city itself. A loop line, originally serviced by the Coral Way high-speed cars, but later a separate route, ran down Ponce from Coral Way to Bird Road, along Bird to Segovia, up Segovia to Biltmore and back to Ponce. A single "Toonerville Trolley" rattled up and down this line until it fell victim to the depression and was abandoned in December 1931. Another even shorter-lived line, the result of the ballyhoo that accompanied real estate development in the 20s, was the Seaboard depot line. Cars left downtown Coral Gables and ran out Bird Road to Ludlum Road, where they turned north to Coral Way, then west to the large Seaboard depot in the vicinity of the present-day incinerator. Service began on January 4, 1928, but the area was so sparsely populated that \$2.65 was the most money ever taken in on a single day. Twice, 45 cents was a day's high, so it was no wonder that service ended on May 20, 1928, less than 5 months after it had begun with such high hopes.

A final route, which lasted somewhat longer, operated along Ponce to the fledgling University of Miami, then south along pres-

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During the last days of street car operation a Miami Beach railway car serving as a school car for Miami High discharges passengers in downtown Miami. —Photo from the Ridolph Collection



In the early 1930s a Miami Beach railway car travels along Alton Road toward the terminal. In the background is one of the buses operating on the less heavily traveled local routes. —Photo from the Ridolph Collection



The City of Miami celebrated the coming abandonment of street car service by decorating car #214 as a hearse and parading it through downtown Miami, complete with "pallbearers" marching along side. —Photo from the Ridolph Collection

ent Maynada Street to Sunset. This service, which began on November 18, 1926, and was operated principally for students at the University and at old Ponce de Leon High, lasted until 1931. Traffic was so light on this line that service was usually suspended during the summer.

By 1935 the Coral Gables Municipal Railway was operating

only the Coral Way high-speed line, and even this line was only a shadow of its original glory. Only 4 of the 20 trolleys the city owned were required to maintain service on the line. On November 4, 1935, an unexpected hurricane touched Miami. Much of the overhead wire on the Coral Way line was destroyed. The city of Coral Gables, which contemplated replacing its last

trolley line with buses anyway, decided that the estimated \$7,500 for repairs was too much. A dump truck was pressed into service to tow the last trolley, stranded in downtown Miami, back to the Gables.

The 1930s were not good times for the other trolley systems in Miami, either. The depression cost the lines passengers, as well as the growing dependence on private automobiles in an era when the auto, rather than mass transit, was regarded as the solution to transportation needs. The city-owned lines were forbidden by charter to go beyond the city limits, even if the funds for construction could have been raised. By the 30s, the city had begun to spread beyond its original boundaries, and now buses and jitneys were siphoning off the long haul traffic and much of the short haul, too. School cars were still popular, carrying students to Miami High in the morning and home in the afternoon, and many a native Miamian and some old-time motormen still recall the rowdy conditions that prevailed on these cars.

Early victims of the depression were the local beach lines, on Alton Road, Washington Avenue, and Sheridan-Pine Tree. By 1933 the last of these had been replaced by buses, and only the original intercity causeway line still operated between Miami and the Beach. In 1934, the Kiwanis Club spearheaded a campaign to rid Miami of streetcars and modernize the city transit system, and the newspapers took up the cry. On the afternoon of October 17, 1939, only hours after receiving official permission, the last trolleys rolled across the causeway, ending the service that had begun nearly 20 years before. In the rush hour the next morning, 30 buses seating 23 passengers each were required to handle the loads that the 12 trolleys, carrying 48 passengers each, had handled the morning before.

Finally, on October 8, 1940, a special election granted the Miami Transit Company the authority to run buses throughout the city. The final conver-

sions were set for November, and on the afternoon of November 14 a gala parade, celebrating the passing of the trolley, rolled through downtown Miami. One of the cars was cut down to resemble a horsecar, a mode of transportation never used in Miami, and 2 Georgia mules pulled it along the tracks. Another car, completely covered in black crepe and decorated with palm fronds, was escorted down Flagler Street by 8 somber pallbearers, complete with top hats and tails. The funeral was slightly premature, for in order to get in the Saturday business the company ran the cars for 2 more days.

On the unusually cold night of November 16, 1940, the last trolleys rolled along Miami's streets. One car on the S.W. 6th Street line, inbound past the Orange Bowl where the University of Florida was lambasting Miami's Hurricanes that cold night, collided with an automobile on 16th Avenue, in a final gesture of defiance. Limping off to the barn, it joined the other cars that shortly before midnight ended street railway operation in Miami.

The last reminder of trolley service remaining in Miami today is the Coca-Cola plant on Ponce de Leon in the Coral Gables industrial section, which occupies the old Coral Gables car barn. Most of the track was ripped up in the World War II scrap drives, and the rest has long since been paved over. Most of the trolleys were scrapped, except 2 which went to St. Petersburg to run until 1949, and the 12 large Miami Beach cars, which ran in a large Brazilian city until 1967. Finally, it is interesting to note that the proposals for Miami's new rapid-transit system call for early construction of a line across the MacArthur Causeway through South Beach, following almost the identical route taken by Carl Fisher's little trolleys that morning on December 18th, 1920.

EARLY HISTORY OF SOME PLANT IMMIGRANTS OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

by Dr. Margaret J. Mustard

When one considers the diversity of tropical and subtropical fruits now grown commercially or as dooryard trees in southern Florida, it is difficult to realize that many of these have been introduced into this area during the past century or century and one half. We are prone to accept them as part of our heritage giving little thought to their origin. Without the enthusiasm and foresight of such persons as Perrine, Fairchild, Swingle, Popenoe, Webber, Rolfs, Robinson, Krome and others who were instrumental in their introduction and propagation, southern Florida would lack one of its greatest attributes.

The mango is indigenous to eastern India, Burma and the Malayan regions, where it has been cultivated for approximately 4000 years. The Portuguese have been given credit for its introduction into Brazil around 1700. From Brazil it was introduced into the West Indies around 1740 and into Jamaica around 1780. Sometime early in the 19th Century it reached Mexico. Mexico is believed in turn to have been the source of the first mango trees introduced into Florida by Henry Perrine in 1833. The next introduction into Florida was made by Dr. Fletcher around 1860. These seeds were planted on the south side of the Miami River. One of these seedlings is believed to be the so-called "No. 11 mango" which was the first mango to produce fruit in Florida. Around 1868 Barnes and Faulkner planted seeds in Snapper Creek Hammock south of Coconut Grove. These seedlings are the probable source of our present turpentine mangos. The first grafted variety of mango in the United States was the Mulgoba introduced by the USDA from India in 1889 and grown by a pioneer mango grower, Professor Elbridge Gale of Lake Worth. He named his property in Lake Worth "Mangonia". A seedling of the Mulgoba, obtained by

Capt. Haden from Professor Gale and planted in Coconut Grove, later became one of the leading commercial varieties named the Haden. Most of our commercial mango varieties today are Florida seedlings which have been propagated vegetatively.

The avocado is indigenous to Central America where it has been grown for centuries by the Indians. It is believed that the Spanish explorers were responsible for its introduction into the West Indies and Florida. Apparently seedlings were planted rather extensively along the east coast of Florida by the early settlers. When the first permanent settlers came to Miami in the mid-eighteen hundreds, they found West Indian seedlings growing wild in the hammocks. The first recorded introduction of avocado trees into Florida was made by Henry Perrine in 1833. The fate of these trees on his grant of land in Dade and Monroe County is unknown. The true potential of the avocado in southern Florida was recognized around 1900 by which time there were several groves of West Indian seedling trees. In 1900 George B. Cellon established the first commercial avocado nursery of budded trees. The first commercial grove consisted of 20 acres of budded trees planted by Mr. S. B. Bliss in Miami in 1906. Other commercial plantings followed in rapid succession until by 1911 several acreages of budded avocados existed along the east coast of Florida including those of Mr. J. S. Collins consisting of one hundred acres at Miami Beach; Joseph L. Hickson's planting in Miami and a couple of groves of one hundred acres each of mixed avocados and mangos. Commercial shipments from Florida were by this date being well received in the northern markets. Some of our present commercial varieties including the Pollock, Trapp, Taylor, Lula, Booth 7 and Booth 8 have been propagated vegetatively from seedling collections made in the Miami and Homestead areas in the early 1900s.

The lychee was grown in China since long before the beginning of the Christian era. This fruit was introduced long ago into India, Ceylon and other parts of the Orient. Some confusion seems to exist concerning the exact time of the introduction of the lychee into Florida. Groff refers to the fact that specimens of the fruit grown in Florida were on exhibit at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society on June 26, 1883, whereas, Dr. Wilson Popenoe believes that the lychee was first introduced into Florida around 1886. Apparently Florida provided California with its first lychee tree about 1887. For many years the lychee has been a popular dooryard tree throughout the southern portion of the state. It was not until the early 1940s that the commercial possibility of the lychee became widely recognized. The late Col. William R. Grove not only devoted considerable time and effort to the perfection of the technique for air-layering the lychee but was also instrumental in 1951 in founding the Florida Lychee Growers Association.

Limes are indigenous to the East Indian Archipelago from where they have spread to the Asiatic mainland and other tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The Persian or Tahiti lime in its early culture in the United States was apparently grown as seedlings from fruits imported from Tahiti. The exact date of the selection or introduction of this fruit into Florida is apparently unknown but Warner in 1886 listed Tahiti and Persian limes as two separate varieties then growing in Florida. It is interesting to note that Mr. Herbert Webber stated that in 1905 the lime had only recently become of commercial importance due to its use in preparation of limeade and at that time most of the limes available were seedlings and there were only a few named varieties in existence. Subsequently in 1932 Webber observed that the lime had proved very satisfactory and that small quantities

were being shipped from Florida to northern markets. Today the Persian lime is one of the major agricultural fruit crops of Dade County.

The papaya is native to tropical America probably having its origin in southern Mexico. The Spanish apparently introduced it to Florida's east coast as it was described by Bartram as growing along the St. Johns River in 1773. Although some large fruited varieties had been developed by 1887, the papaya was considered of only minor importance until around 1900.

The guava is another native of tropical America, believed to have been introduced into Florida from Cuba in 1847. It is well adapted to growth in south Florida where seedling guavas are growing wild in many areas. Selection and breeding in recent years has resulted in several outstanding varieties.

Many other tropical fruits have been introduced to southern Florida some of commercial importance, grown chiefly as dooryard trees. Efforts are continuing today to introduce more unique tropical and subtropical fruits to our area and it can only be hoped that future generations will enjoy these more recent plant immigrants.

No attempt has been made by the writer in this brief compilation to enumerate the various references consulted as source material.

HISTORY'S NO LONGER A MYSTERY

Answers to Puzzle

ACROSS: 1) CURTIS 6) RAF
7) UAL 9) LOENING 13) IF
15) LDC 16) RR 17) NET 19) KEY
20) LEI 21) GEAR 23) SING
24) STRIP 26) TEETH 27) TORCH-
ES 29) FM 31) AB 32) ME
33) DR 35) MS 37) LR 38) AT
39) RESIT 41) TO 42) CAPTAIN
44) CUP 45) LIP 46) MERRILL
DOWN: 1) CAL 2) UFO 3) TEND-
ER 4) SUN 5) SAG 8) WINGS OF
MAN 10) ELK 11) ICY 12) WRIGHT
BROS 14) FEET 16) RENT
18) TART 20) LIES 22) RIO
23) SEE 25) PR 26) TH 28) CC
30) MET 31) ALT 33) DRAPE
34) REF 35) MIA 36) STILL
40) STAR 42) CUM 43) NIL

Dr. Mustard is professor of Tropical Botany at the University of Miami.

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property saved by the information provided the forecasters by the intrepid Hurricane Hunters, but it undoubtedly is large.

According to an article in the Miami Herald of 9 June, 1974, the Department of Defense aerial reconnaissance of Atlantic hurricanes may soon be terminated. The Navy effort is tentatively scheduled to end after the 1974 hurricane season, while the Air Force will continue during 1975. It is possible that National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) RFF might assume full reconnaissance responsibilities, although currently it does not have the necessary equipment. Many meteorologists believe that the latest sophisticated weather satellites provide such excellent data that aircraft reconnaissance is no longer necessary. Some satellite picture experts believe that hurricane positions can be determined within ten miles and maximum winds estimated within 15% from satellite pictures. Most hurricane forecasters, however, feel that vortex positions and especially intensity data from aircraft are required to provide the precise forecasts of storm surges and winds for coastal warnings.

Another aviation unit which has played an important scientific role in meteorology is NOAA's RFF, based in Miami. RFF was originally part of the Weather Bureau's National Hurricane Research Project, established in 1956. It became a separate unit in 1960, its scope of activities being broadened to include atmospheric studies other than hurricanes. In 1963 for example all RFF aircraft and crews flew for three months out of Bombay, India, during the International Indian Ocean Expedition. RFF has participated in snowstorm, tornado, hurricane modification, lightning, hail, cloud and precipitation physics, sea-air interaction, jet stream, air pollution and other meteorological research. RFF has never had a serious accident although over a period of some twelve days its aircraft were struck by lightning 28 times.

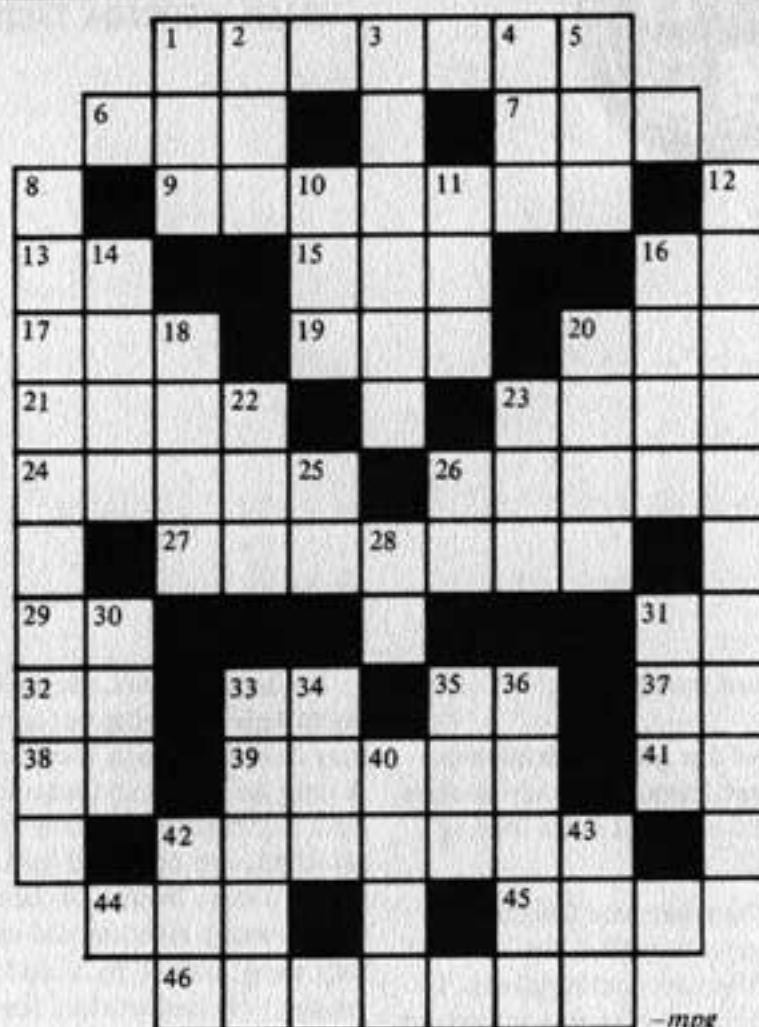
Currently RFF is participating in the GATE project from its Miami base. (GATE is a second-order acronym for a jaw-breaking research operation — Editor.) It is composed of 25 to 30 scientists and technicians headed by Dr. James McFadden and has two aircraft. Some expansion is planned by 1976 when it is expected that typhoon modification experiments will be conducted in the western Pacific.

Civilian airlines, especially Pan American and its Miami Division, have played an important role in the development of meteorology in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Many of the surface and upper-air weather-observing stations as well as some of the national meteorological services, were started by PAA. PAA's Miami meteorologist Robert Bush, now retired, established many of these stations. Prior to the weather satellite, PAA's forecast office in Rio de Janeiro forwarded to Miami's National Hurricane Center many observations from its planes flying between South America and Africa, giving the first indication of a developing tropical storm in the eastern Atlantic.

Commercial airlines are primarily concerned with the safety of their passengers and planes. Their aircraft usually give hurricanes a wide berth and do not seek to take advantage of possible favorable tail winds. Ground facilities are buttoned up well in advance of the storm, aircraft being dispatched to fields outside the path of the hurricane.

The long, intimate relationship between aviation interests and Miami's National Hurricane Center has been going on for thirty years or more. Although the weather satellites may replace the airplane as the principal hurricane tracking tool in the future, the present relationship seems destined to continue for a long time.

HISTORY'S A MYSTERY



ACROSS

- 1 Early air-trainer, Glenn ____
- 6 British war pilots
- 7 United Air Lines
- 9 Aviation pioneer Grover ____
- 13 Whether
- 15 Long distance carrier (ab.)
- 16 FEC crossing
- 17 Kind of profit for airline industry
- 19 Dinner ____
- 20 Gift at Hawaii airport
- 21 Lowered landing ____
- 23 Planes fly; birds also ____
- 24 Landing place
- 26 Painted on fighter planes
- 27 Carried for "old flames"
- 29 AM- ____ radio
- 31 Air base (ab.)
- 32 National's "Fly ____"
- 33 Passenger Kissinger's title
- 35 Women's title
- 37 London-Rome on ticket
- 38 All ____ once
- 39 Take seat again
- 41 Fro and ____
- 42 Rickenbacker
- 44 Fruit ____
- 45 Mustache area
- 46 WW I ace Dick ____

DOWN

- 1 LAI airport state
- 2 Unidentified flying object
- 3 Rough flight not for ____ - hearted
- 4 Sought by tourists
- 5 Droop
- 8 Eastern's slogan
- 10 "Animal" who flies to Lodge convention
- 11 Feared wing condition
- 12 Kitty Hawk boys
- 14 Altimeter measurement
- 16 Hertz operation
- 18 Small "pie" in the sky
- 20 Extreme prevarication
- 22 PAA Brazil stop
- 23 Orb purpose
- 25 San Juan is. (ab.)
- 26 Taxi helicopter (ab.)
- 28 Spanish yes yes (phonetic)
- 30 NYC opera
- 31 Height syn. (ab.)
- 33 Manner of hanging
- 34 Nixon's party (ab.)
- 35 Fla.'s biggest city on ticket
- 36 In the future as in the past
- 40 ____ light ____ bright
- 42 ____ laude
- 43 Translation of "nada"

(Answers on page 10)



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ahead of the public's readiness to accept them. A steady decline in CWFS resulted in its folding in 1932.

In the meantime Curtiss offered me a beautiful buy on their Miami airport holdings. I was offered the hangar, complete shop equipment, a well-equipped stockroom, and all furnishings for \$10,000. I wanted it badly but foolishly held out for a better price, knowing how bad off the company was. But they sold it to someone else. So, more or less frustrated, I returned to Dade County late in 1932.

Soon I leased All American Airport. The previous operator had gone broke there; Texaco had the key to the hangar, containing two decrepit aircraft. I bought out Texaco's interest, leasing the field from the Curtiss-Wright interests of Miami Springs. It was a dump and an almost impossible operational problem. There was no electricity, no water, not even a telephone. I bought an electric generator, drilled a well, and even had to construct a two-mile telephone line before I could get service. But All American, with all its problems, proved a winner for me. I did student training and had charter business galore. I went through several hurricanes there, that nearly blew my stuff into Kingdom Come. It was a job, well worth it; Miami aviation was growing rapidly.

In the meantime, more airports were springing up; some may have even been there earlier. A strip on Venetian Causeway, with a combined seaplane base attached, was operated by Lloyd Fales. Sunny South, on Northwest Seventh Avenue, did rather well there, owned by a lad I had trained. He had worked for me as a combination night watchman and mechanic, receiving \$3 a week and free flying time. Then of course there was the Goodyear blimp base in Opa Locka and their operations base on Watson Island, where it remains.

In 1930, ground was broken in Opa Locka for a Naval Reserve Aviation Base (NRAB). In the late 30s it became a Naval Air Station, one of the foremost in the nation. I had a close affiliation with that operation, being placed on permanent active duty there in 1938, as Commanding Officer of Marines and Chief Flight Instructor (CFI). Later a Naval Air Facility was attached, with a full-fledged dirigible base, complete with mooring mast and all other facilities necessary to handle the largest commercial and military dirigibles of the day.

In the meantime I had been able to work my way back onto Miami Municipal, where in 1936 I set up my operation in what was known as the "tin hangar", previously leased to the Coast Guard and Eastern Airlines. I then was in competition with my former hangar and its later

owner, now the City of Miami. Since the airport was owned by the city and I was a lessee, my problems increased. I was doing more business in my smaller and more poorly equipped hangar than they were. The city did everything possible to discourage me, including making me sign a month-to-month lease when my original annual lease expired.

Having gone on active duty with the Marine Corps, I shuttled back and forth between my military duties and my commercial operation. But later on in 1938 I gave up trying to operate under such conditions as were forced upon me. Within a week I had sold fourteen airplanes and all my equipment, becoming a full-time Marine officer. I remained in Miami until March 1942, transferring successively to the MCAS, Cherry Point, North Carolina; NAS, Bunker Hill, Indiana; MCAS, El Centro, California, where I was in charge; then to combat; and finally in command of a front-line fighter base, IeShima, beyond Okinawa.

Today, south of Miami, is the tremendous Homestead Air Force Base, a fine and most important facility for the purpose intended. Opa Locka, a Marine Corps Air Station after its Navy history, later became an important general aviation base, several times ranking No. 1 in activity nationwide. Homestead has its own local airport which receives its well-deserved share of activity.

Several years ago Tamiami Airport, west of the city on Southwest Eighth Street (US 41) became so busy that its traffic pattern began to interfere with that of Miami International. Finally Tamiami was forced to close down, being succeeded by New Tamiami, southwest of the city. That fine new field now has high-density traffic and operations and is an important segment of the Miami-area general aviation complex.

Miami International is one of the nation's largest and busiest. It is almost strictly commercial, although it does have a general aviation complex within its borders.

Unfortunately the Everglades strip, north of Forty Mile Bend, originally intended as an international jetport, then downgraded to a practice and familiarization site, suffered little use after its first few years of activity. It eventually will have to be abandoned, for no good reason except politics. The conservationists who feared disturbance of wildlife, water levels, and the ecology won their battle without having had to prove justification.

And so the heritage of the old-timers in Miami's aviation memories now continues in great volume, a heritage that we almost casually recognize. The road has been a long one, but justified.