Many Magical Plans

Industry Dreams That Faded

Nature Wins Some, Loses Some

1984

The Historical Association of Southern Florida

UPDATE

Volume 11, Number 3 August 1984 $2.00

Some Things Vanished ▲

▼ Others Never Appeared

Changing Perceptions: Mapping the Shape of Florida, 1502 to 1982

For 480 years people have been mapping this finger of land called Florida. The maps change. The land changes. The perception of the land by those who people it changes.

The opening exhibit at the new Historical Museum gives people a chance to look back as they go about the business of thinking forward. Its curator is Miamian Joseph H. Fitzgerald, an avid and knowledgeable map collector. He has assembled his exhibit of Florida and the Caribbean maps from private and public collections and hopes it will encourage donations to the museum's collection of maps, particularly nineteenth century maps.

Fitzgerald is a curative man. Not only does he tend the development of an exhibit, he tends the healing of the body as a physician and has tended the strengthening of the Historical Association of Southern Florida as its president.

September 21 - November 18, 1984
Plaza Level Exhibit Hall

101 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130
375-1492

THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

the museum is accredited by The American Association of Museums

The Historical Association of Southern Florida

UPDATE

Published quarterly by
The Historical Association of Southern Florida
101 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130

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Update is the magazine of popular history published quarterly by the Historical Association of Southern Florida.

Receipt of Update is a privilege of membership in the Historical Association, a non-profit cultural, educational and humanistic organization dedicated to providing information about the history of South Florida and the Caribbean and to the collection and preservation of material relating to that history. Association programs and publications are made possible by membership dues, gifts from private sources and grants from federal, state, and local government agencies.

Categories of membership in the Association are senior, individual, family, donor, sponsor, fellow, corporate. For information regarding membership fees and benefits, contact the Association at the address above.

Typography, mechanical preparation, and printing by Award Graphics, Inc.

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On the cover: Coconuts and casuarinas lining the beach on Key Biscayne before post-World War II development began. *(HASF)* **Photo taken June 1, 1971 of sign off US1 anouncing coming of Interama.** *(The Miami Daily News)*

Movers and shakers gather on Flagler Street and Miami Avenue in front of Brady's store. Time is 1901. See Letters column for identification.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

The rains came on Friday, April 13, but so did the people, among them the state's governor and officials of the city, county and state. The Historical Museum on the Plaza became a reality. People liked what they found.

During the opening weekend, the crowds at one point reached legal capacity, necessitating a temporary closing of doors.

The annual meeting May 6 brought together members of the HASF family in their own meeting room. These members, who had faithfully supported the association despite setbacks, toured the gallery, shopped at the Indies Company and shared the excitement and delight of the museum. All doubts of moving "downtown" were dispelled. Metrorail opening drew another capacity weekend.

Mid-May it was the Commodore's family who came, the descendants of Ralph Munroe, whose **The Commodore's Story** was written for his daughter Patty and son Wirth. Patty Munroe Catlow with her daughter Marilyn and Wirth's wife Mary Monroe with her sons William and Charles and Charles' wife Mimi toured the building. The museum's younger staff were enchanted with them and found out that they were actually meeting living history, William and Charles having grown up at "The Barnacle", now a state museum.

The Barnacle family was pleased with what it found. Mary Munroe declared that one visit was most certainly not enough and that she would be back. Patty, who for many years volunteered in the gift shop, said: "It was so different from what I expected. It's very unusual and tremendous!"

The small staff of a decade ago has become a sizeable extended family. A museum that had been totally covered on weekends by one supervisor has spawned a weekend staff of eight plus volunteers. The regular weekday staff of the museum also has grown and has been augmented by ten teachers and museum aides plus more valuable volunteers.

The new group includes the museum aides and floor managers (two bright young men who cover a myriad situations deftly and efficiently). The newcomers have backgrounds in history, political science or art; some are teachers, one is a writer and they are providing a well-rounded and knowledgeable staff.

Although **Museum History Mysteries!** is not available at The Indies Company, the museum's gift shop, it is HASF's most widely circulated publication. School fourth-graders are introduced in this grade to Florida history and each child is given a copy of **History Mysteries!** for classroom preparation before a visit to the museum.

The 16-page booklet includes games (unscrambling letters to provide the word for which a definition is given), answers to questions like "What is a museum?", and a story of the trolley car and its restoration.

Three museum staff members have reached celebrity status because their pictures are used to

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LETTERS

This picture was taken about 1901 in front of Brady's Grocery Store at the corner of what is now Flagler Street and Miami Avenue (Avenue D and 12th Street). The men are, from left, Charles Burkner, E. L. Brady, George Rumph, Frank Wharton, Jim Hawkins, Jim "Boss" Clopton, John Gardner, B. A. Rutherford and R. E. McDonald.

I found this picture among my father's pictures (Lem T. Clopton). Jim Brown Clopton, "Boss," was my father's uncle.

I was born in Miami in 1919 in a house at 815 W. Flagler Street. I have a picture of it probably made at the time. My parents were John H. and Zada Schleucher. My sisters live in Miami—Jane C. Hall and Betty S. Curry.

Peggy S. Clopton (Mrs. William)
P.O. Box 450228
Atlanta, GA 30345

The picture taken in front of Brady's store made its way to HASF from Atlanta after it had been sent there in 1983 by Peggy Clopton's niece, Suzanne Curry Jones, who was helping her mother, Bettye S. Curry, pack up to move. Bettye's husband Tommy had died November 13, 1982 and Bettye needed to move from the home she had known 35 years. The house on W. Flagler Street and 30th Avenue had been built by a German builder in the '20s.

Suzanne Curry Jones wrote about the development of Tommy's Boat Yard in the October 1979 issue of **Update**. She and her mother are founts of Miamiana, with Suzanne mentioning the Magee sisters, Bessie and Mamie, who operated a bawdy

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Plans Plans Magic Plans

BY ELIZABETH PEELER

Everyone who moves to Miami has a dream. Some have plans. Many plans have been proposed for the city. Many have materialized. Some have not. But there is no diminution. As early as 1827, Richard Fitzgerald bought land and planned to build a fine colonial mansion of native stone, but this auspicious start for the city was thwarted by the Seminole Wars. Julia Tuttle had great plans, and disposed of her land in alternate lots so as to facilitate them. Many of her plans succeeded.

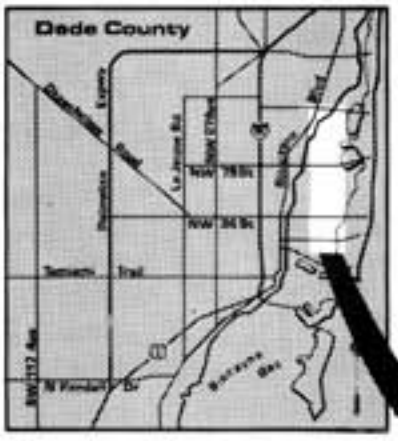
The name of Magic City has been recognized as appropriate almost from the beginning of settlement here. The 1904 **Official Directory of the City of Miami** includes the statement: (p. 87-88)

> Springing up as if by magic and appropriately called from the beginning the "Magic City," Miami furnished perhaps the only instance on record in which a full fledged city came into existence at one bound without first having been a town. A city that was never a town is a unique product of American hustle.

It is not possible to portray or even to name all the proposals and plans

Portion of *The Miami News* weekly feature Miami: "The Way We Were" by Editor Howard Kleinberg (Pelican Island, July 30, 1983) showing proposed nine islands in Biscayne Bay and Chamber of Commerce approval.

Elizabeth H. Peeler, who proofreads **Update**, has turned author this issue, delving into microfilm.



(From The Miami Daily News and Metropolis, June 16, 1925)

MIAMI CHAMBER GIVES APPROVAL OF BAY ISLANDS

Directors Act For Formation of Better Business Bureau

Approval of the Miami Chamber of Commerce was given the proposed building of nine islands in Biscayne bay north of Venetian Islands when directors of the chamber in regular meeting Monday night voted in favor of the plan.

Action of the directors came after a referendum of the chamber's membership showed a vote of 266 to 104 in favor of the project. The votes were counted at the meeting.

The directors, refused to go beyond the sentiment expressed in the referendum when they declined to adopt reservations presented by the Miami Real Estate Board to regulate width of streets and sidewalks, shape of the islands, and provide free use of the streets, boulevards and bridges by the public.

The referendum ballot included arguments for and against the project.

Establishment of a Miami Better Business Bureau was assured at the directors' meeting, when Walter Scott Bigelow, Lon Worth Crow and M.O. Fullman were appointed as a committee to take immediate steps to bring about the organization of such a bureau. A member of the national vigilance committee of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World is to come here in September to help organize the bureau.

Prior to World War II plans were made to establish a Pan American Trade Mart on Watson Island. *(Miami News)*

MIAMI SKYLINE OF 1996

By Frank McAleer, *Artist*

City of Miami's 50th anniversary in 1946 featured scale model of proposed downtown Miami skyline of 1996. *(HASF)*

PROPOSED 41-STORY RAIL TERMINAL FOR FEC

Elevated Concourse Would Cover Tracks

Architect Charles Nieder's plan for the FEC station in 1996 has an elevated concourse covering tracks where Metrorail now runs. *(HASF)*

In 1946 50th anniversary program *The Miami News* published sketch of proposed expansion of News Tower similar to recent hotel plans. *(HASF)*

which have been made for this area. Perhaps photographs of some will characterize the unbelievable efforts that have been made to enhance the Magic City. The plans of Carl Fisher, George Merrick and Glenn Curtiss, to name a few, have influenced the development of the area in a lasting manner. Others have been less successful, but still others will not die and are reintroduced, changed or not, over and over again. Many of the plans have dealt with development in the bay. Perhaps even more with the bayshore.

One plan which was approved by the Miami Chamber of Commerce, but which fortunately for the life of Biscayne Bay did not develop was the idea put forward in 1925 to build a series of residential islands from north to south in the middle of the bay, connecting them with a roadway to be called The Camponile, which intersected Venetian Causeway on DiLido Island.

About 1939, a Pan American trade mart was proposed for construction in the bay on land connected with the County Causeway (now McArthur) in the vicinity of Watson Island. The 1939-1945 War probably put an end to that plan. But an amusement (or theme) park on Watson Island is still talked of today.

In 1946, when the City of Miami celebrated its 50th anniversary, an exhibition was mounted at Bayfront Auditorium. Chief among the exhibits was a three-dimensional model for the proposed development of downtown Miami. "Miami Skyline of 1996" by Frank McAleer, artist, was a 34-foot panoramic scale model.

Looking from west to east (from the river to the bay) in the foreground was a civic recreational center, and

Aerial photograph of the Graves tract east of US 1 at 163rd St. published in *The Miami News* in August 1952.

Projection of proposed Interama complex superimposed on aerial photograph of the tract. (*Miami News*)

Interama

In 1950 a group of influential Miamians, led by Dr. William H. Walker, announced plans for the development of a permanent Inter-American Cultural and Trade Center on the Graves Tract in North Miami Beach. The major thrust of the "Interama" project was intended to "symbolize the friendship, peace, security, solidarity and understanding which can only be achieved through a mass intermingling of the peoples. And Miami is the logical spot, geographically, for such a mingling." Although the idea was kept alive for 25 years, the ambitious project was never built. In 1975, however, Florida International University opened a campus on the site, making at least one part of the dream come true.

— ARVA PARKS

at the left foreground, The Great Solar Turbo Electric Generating Plant. "This system is the economical source of our electric power. Ideally situated in Miami, this great plant, working 365 days each year, would supply the city and the country for miles around, with cheap power and light."

A building in the center with "its own landing field on top for airplanes of tomorrow is a great trading center where commodities of all manufacturers might be purchased. It contains everything from an orange juice drinking fountain to a completely staffed hospital."

In the program for this exhibition, the **Miami News** took an advertisement page with a proposed enlargement of the News Tower with a skyscraper wrapped around it.

Also, a proposal for a 41-story terminal to be built on the site of the FEC station provided an elevated concourse with parking space for several thousand cars. East-west overpasses would keep traffic moving on Flagler Street, SW First and Second Streets and NW First, Fourth, and Fifth Streets. This plan was delineated by Architect Charles P. Nieder of Miami. It admittedly conflicted with the master city plan of that day which called for the relocation of the FEC station to NW 14th Street, and for the right-of-way south of that point to become Pan American Overseas Boulevard. Today this site houses the cultural center and the government center, and AMTRAK stops in Hialeah!

In 1960, the Dade County planning department issued its "Magic City Plan" for a cultural and trade center on the Miamiarina site. But instead of the Magic City Center, Miamarina was built and opened in 1970. The proposed cultural center was then designated for Chopin Plaza and Ball Point. Today we see the new Pavillon Hotel and South-

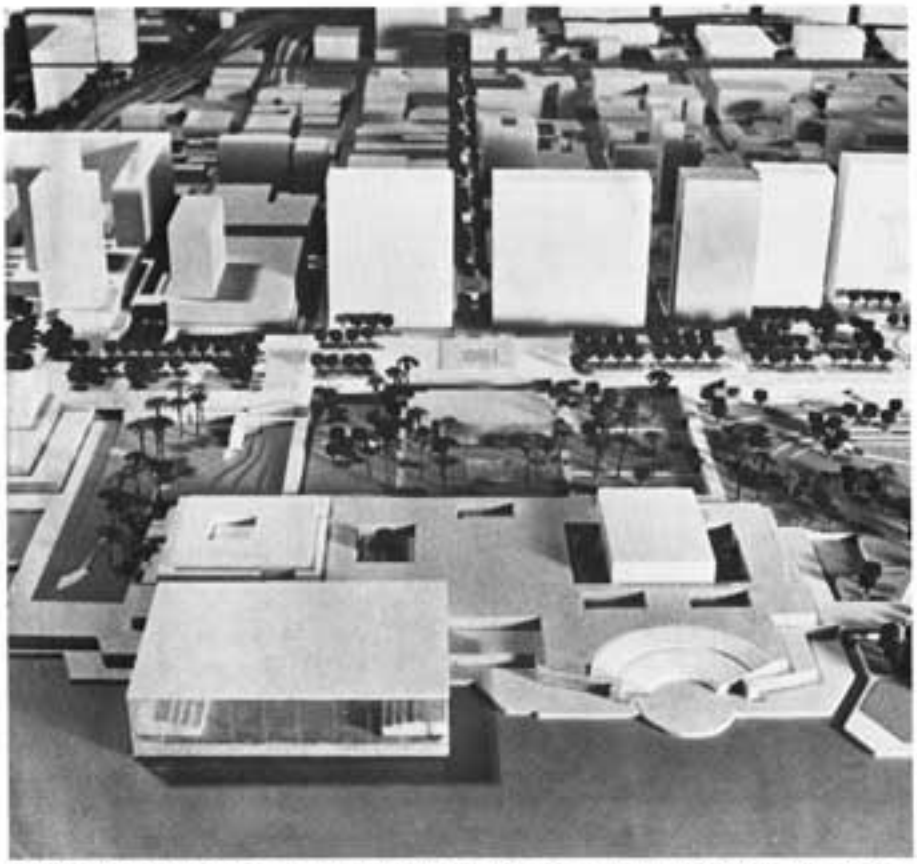
east Bank Building on that site, and read of the plan for "Bayside" which will cover 20 acres of Bayfront Park around the Marina.

In 1973, the City of Miami issued "Downtown Miami, 1973-1985, an Urban Development and Zoning Plan" which was to improve the area from the Miami River north to I-395, with a new "in-town residential community" to be located north of the Community College campus. This area to be known as Biscayne West was also the site involved in an architectural competition to mark the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976. The plan has had many transformations, but will not die, and may yet become a reality.

Bayfront Park has been the object of plans since its soil was first dredged up from Biscayne Bay. Hard-fought battles by some citizens brought about the construction of the building for the public library there, and no sooner was it in use than alternate plans for the site were introduced. In 1968, Greek expert, Dr. C. A. Doxiadis prepared elaborate plans for the redesign of Bayfront Park and also the downtown government center, which was to include the area from SE First Street to NW Fifth Street west of Miami Avenue.

This plan went by the wayside. Then a Japanese architect, Isamu Noguchi prepared a plan for the park. To date this plan has not been begun, but the new building for the public library is located in the cultural center, and some disposition will soon be required of the old building in the park.

Aerial of Bayfront Park taken in 1967. *(The Miami Herald)*

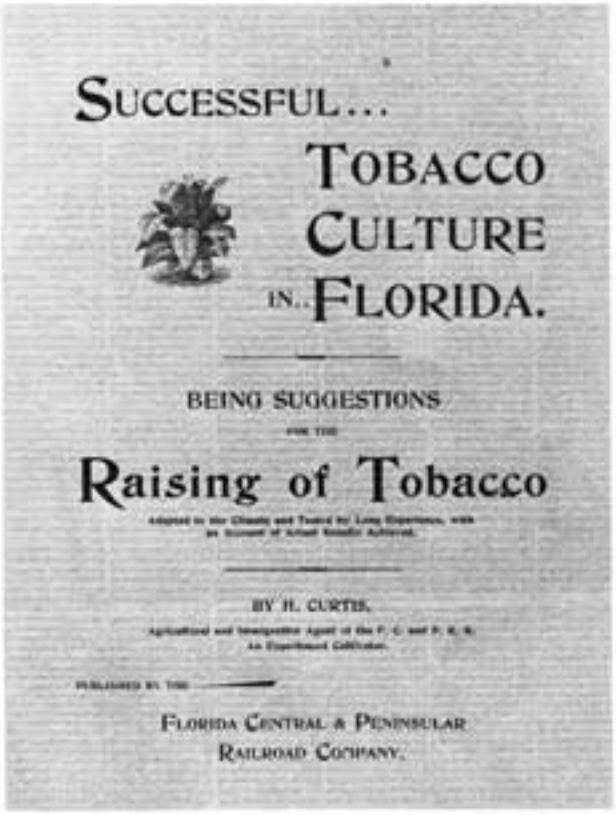


Photograph of model by Greek planner C.A. Doxiadis covering same park area. Two shaded buildings are the two existing hi-rises in photograph above. *(The Miami Herald)*

Has Miami had more unrealized plans and dreams than the average city? It would seem not. It's just that Miami's history has been so short and things have happened so fast that we are more aware of the continuous changes. One authority has stated that it usually takes ten years from the time the idea is born until its fruition. Another expert points out that without adequate and actual financial backing, plans can not materialize no matter how good they are. To which the former adds, not all plans should come to completion. But what would the city be like without the visionary projects that have materialized in our seventy-seven years? It is indeed a Magic City.

Latest plan for Bayfront Park is the Rose company's marketplace. *(The Miami Herald)*

Coconut Palm trees planted on Commodore William Matheson's plantation on Key Biscayne were still flourishing in 1944 when this picture was taken. *(M-D Public Library Romer collection)*



Tobacco, which had done well in the Tallahassee area for many years, was promoted by the railroad as a good crop for early South Florida settlers. *(HASF)*

The Long Gone Dreams

BY THELMA PETERS

Sports complexes, theme parks, convention centers and sixty-five-story highrises impel today's Big Dreamers. Back in the early days there was no less dreaming, it was just different; then it sprang from the soil.

South Florida's first industry was the manufacture of arrowroot starch from the roots of a native cycad, coontie, a process pioneers learned from the Indians. As early as 1855 a large mill with many employees was operating on the Miami River, its product, worth about eight cents a pound, was sold in Key West and Havana and used as a substitute for wheat flour, for puddings, or for thickening gravies. In 1926 the supply of roots was running out and when the hurricane of that year destroyed the last mill the industry came to an end.

A century ago, and before the railroad came to South Florida, pineapples were grown for the northern market. The fruit held up well enough to survive the trip to market by sailboat or the occasional steamer. Eventually competition with Cuba and Hawaii and the bad freeze of 1917 blasted the pineapple business.

A headline in the **Miami Morning News-Record**, February 26, 1909, read: ANOTHER GREAT INDUSTRY ASSURED FOR DADE COUNTY. a castor oil company was coming. Castor oil, then a well-known and — ugh! — repulsive laxative, had largely been supplied by beans grown in India. But the shrubby tree-like plant with large medallion leaves and clusters of knobby pods had been introduced into South Florida where it seemed to thrive. That much touted company did not even get off the ground — not in 1909.

But then came World War One. The entry of the United States into the war boomed aviation and the aeroplane engine of that time required castor oil. It became the patriotic duty of farmers of the warmer states to raise castor beans. By 1918 Dade County had 1,500 acres in castor beans. When the army worm attacked some of the fields Boy Scouts were recruited to go up and down the rows plucking worms off and dropping them into cans of kerosene. The crop was saved.

Before the crop could be harvested, however, the war ended. More than that; a new aeroplane engine had been developed which did not require castor oil. Farmers were left with a crop not even worth harvesting. They demanded redress from the federal government (not yet a common procedure) and eventually up to 5,000 Florida farmers did receive something, best described as "niggard."

As for the plants themselves they took to the woods, the fence-rows and canal banks, and are today spread all around the county. Admire them but don't eat the seeds which are poisonous.

Also during World War One there was a shortage of cotton and Dade County farmers not into castor beans were urged to plant sea island cotton, a long-staple variety resistant to boll weevil, and one which had been demonstrated during the 19th century to grow well in South Florida. Farmers responded and produced four hundred acres of cotton, duly harvested. But there was no local gin to remove the seeds and the demand

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Thelma Peters can produce an article about Miami on almost any given subject. This one cropped up with a little harrowing.

Castor Bean was a hard luck crop during the ten years it was promoted in South Florida. The industry failed but the bean flourished in vacant land. (HASF)

Pineapples were grown in South Florida before the railroad came, making the trip to northern markets by boat. A 1917 freeze destroyed the crop. (HASF)

fell with the end of the war. The farmers promptly gave up cotton and went back to raising vegetables for the northern market, sometimes lucrative, sometimes a losing gamble.

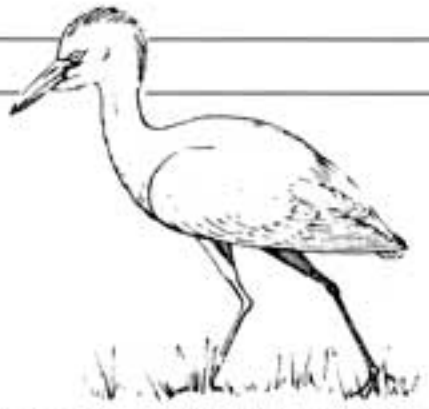
Among early homesteaders German-born Frederick Matthaus of Lemon City raised, processed and smoked his own tobacco. Charles Oxar, whose father homesteaded the property which today is Omni, raised, dried, ground and drank his own coffee as late as World War II. For a time, beginning in 1904, there was a tannin factory on the Miami River making tannic acid, a product used in processing leather, from mangrove trees. When the supply of trees dwindled in the Miami area the factory was moved to Shark River on the southwest coast where it limped along until 1923 and came to an end.

On Key Biscayne early in this century Commodore William John Matheson, developed his own personal paradise on one of the world's most beautiful tropical islands, and that included a coconut plantation with 4,000 trees. The plantation gave employment to many people even if it did not always operate at a profit. When the Rickenbacker Causeway made the island accessible to everybody the island paradise and its great coconut plantation fell to development.

Cotton, castor beans, coffee, coontie, coconuts — they inspired real dreams in their day — dreams now faded away. But that does not mean there is an end to dreaming about what the soil will produce in future. A recent suggestion: water chestnuts. The Everglades is said to be ideal for them and between *nouvelle cuisine* and oriental dishes the market should be good.

Coontie was South Florida's first crop. The Indians taught the pioneers to make arrowroot starch. (M-D Public Library Romer collection)

Mangrove trees were used to make tannic acid in 1904. The acid was used in processing leather. (HASF)



Cattle Egret: at home abroad. *(Mort Cooper sketch)*

Assets or Menaces?

Exotics

BY ZANNIE MAY SHIPLEY

It began as a chance remark at dinner one night:

"When my husband and I came to South Florida, the only cattle egrets we saw were in the Everglades. Now I'm seeing them on Granada Boulevard, at the Gables bus station, and even on the 79th Street Causeway." The others around the table added more locations and from this the conversation expanded to other exotic birds, animals and fish.

We treat these foreigners as curiosities but in their own way many are as menacing as the water hyacinth and the Melaleuca. Florida's lakes and canals now teem with twenty-nine newly established species of imported fish. The best known of course is the walking catfish. When these were imported from Thailand in the 1960's, they were little two-inch aquarium charmers and no one knew they could walk. But one night a heavy rain fell on a fish farm and they walked away. Now they have been seen crossing the Tamiami Trail on their way to Everglades National Park. They will eat anything, including other fish, and dominate any pond they occupy. No program of eradication works; if a pond is poisoned they simply walk away.

Another ominous aquarium fish gone native is the black acara, a pugnacious, rapid-breeding species from South America. When it was superseded in popularity by other exotics, large numbers were dumped and now range throughout much of South Florida. Unlike bass and crappie, for instance, they spawn every month and are ferociously territorial. They eat the young of other fishes, and if you put your hand into the water, they'll bite you.

You thought that undesirable trait belonged mainly to piranhas, didn't you? Well, we have piranhas too. They have been found in a Dade County rock pit and in some canals, and are still being imported illegally for the aquarium black market where they bring $40 a fish. Again they ultimately get dumped and if enough survive on their own they can become established. Where are the "Rock Pit Rangers" of yesteryear? (There was once a contest that called upon elementary students as "Rock Pit Rangers" to make up a slogan that would warn against the dangers of swimming in rock pits and canals.)

Exotic animals have been introduced into South Florida for seemingly sound reasons, only to become pests. The giant toad, **Bufo marinus**, was imported to combat sugar beetles in the cane fields, but it turned out they eat anything—bugs, garbage, and especially pet food—and their poison can be lethal to small dogs. The toads in Miami backyards are descendants of escapees from a damaged crate at Miami International Airport.

Another population explosion resulted when a small boy smuggled a single giant African snail into Miami. Shortly giant snails were eating everything in sight, including the paint off of houses.

The western black-tailed jackrabbits that frolic on the runways at the airport were brought in to train greyhounds to chase rabbits, but in the way of rabbits their population could explode if they reach the pasturelands of our cattle country.

So far imported lizards, some of them stowaways on freighters, other used for scientific studies, seem to pose no threat to the native lizards, although the large, vivid green, Cuban knight's anole may crowd out our smaller chameleon chased by generations of small boys.

This, of course, is the tragedy: when the exotics thrive, native species become endangered.

Birds seem to pose the least problem. The range of the cattle egret now reaches to maritime Canada, although the first confirmed sightings were in Maine and Florida in 1952. It is pretty generally agreed now that the bird migrated from Spain to South America to Florida and found conditions acceptable from the Texas Gulf Coast to Canada without forcing out other birds.

The spotted-breasted oriole has delighted Miamians since 1949, although its origin is still the source of many conflicting stories by bird-watchers. Even Roger Tory Peterson, the ornithologist, lists it as "escaped?" in his bird books.

No such mystery surrounds the scarlet ibis. Carter Bundy arranged to obtain twenty-four eggs from Trinidad and placed them in the nests of the white ibises at Greynolds Park. Some hybrids from this experiment still nest there, but Jim King, a Dade County naturalist, reports that the birds are a washed out pink or salmon pink, and the whole family flies away before the young pass the juvenile stage. Two have been sighted on the mud flats at Flamingo, one with a brown neck!

More troublesome—they are noisy and potentially hazardous to Florida's economy—are the parrots and parakeets that occupy the royal palms from Dinner Key to the Tamiami Trail. These are escaped cage birds that are flourishing in our area. Dr. Oscar Owre, a University of Miami ornithologist, warned in 1973 that the parrots might be flying "time bombs." "They have extremely strong jaws; they can bite right into oranges. I don't see anything to stop them from getting into our citrus groves." So far they have not reached central Florida but they are causing grief to Dade County mango growers.

Dr. Owre points out that the introduction of exotic trees and plants in our landscape has made it possible for the imported birds who escape to become established because they find food that is similar to their native habitat. He cites the explosion of the red-winged bulbur population from India which may endanger the habitat of our native mockingbird. He suggests that we might adopt a philosophy of not introducing any species of plant or animal which if released might compromise the ecosystem.

Since the peninsula of Florida is a geologically recent land foundation it could be said all flora and fauna have but lately found a home here. Compared with nature's slower methods, though, our human interference is disorderly and unbalanced, and it is happening alarmingly often.

Zannie May Shipley scored a home run in this issue. See also her trilogy starting on page 13.

Crocodile Hole, small mangrove canopied bay along Indian Creek. First crocodile in North America found here at end of 19th century. Alligator was known in Florida from time of discovery. (NASF)

Prophesies

Some Came True, Some Did Not; Most Were Ignored

BY JEANNE BELLAMY

Let's look at a few of Florida's doomsayers. They've been at it for more than 50 years. Some of their dire prophecies have come true. Others have not. Mainly, they were ignored.

Threats visible today were not in sight earlier. Neither were happenings which may brighten the future of South Florida's outdoors.

First a sampling of jeremiads:

In 1920, Charles Torrey Simpson's book, **In Lower Florida Wilds**, recorded his observations: "From 1882 to 1886 I made my home on the southwest coast of the state and have lived near Miami since 1902. When I first came to the state the greater part of Lower Florida was an unbroken wilderness . . . Today most of its hammocks are destroyed, the streams are being dredged out and deepened, the Everglades are nearly drained; even the pine forests are being cut down."

Simpson mourned the changes he witnessed: "There is something very distressing in the gradual passing of the wilds, in the destruction of the forests, the draining of the swamps and lowlands, the transforming of the prairies with their wonderful wealth of bloom and beauty, and in its place the coming of civilized man with his unsightly constructions—his struggles for power, his vulgarity and pretensions."

He also had a clear view of the future: "Soon this vast, lonely, beautiful waste will be reclaimed and tamed; soon it will be furrowed by canals and highways and spanned by steel rails . . . In place of the cries of wild birds there will be heard the whistle of the locomotive and the honk of the automobile."

Next came John Kunkel Small with his 1929 book, **From Eden to Sahara—Florida's Tragedy**. He had visited the state in 1916 and returned in 1922 for a tour of botanical exploration. He found that "the wholesale devastation of the plant covering, through carelessness, thoughtlessness and vandalism, in the Peninsular State, was everywhere apparent . . . This reckless, even wanton, devastation has now gained such headway that the future of North America's most prolific paradise seems to spell DESERT."

Small specifically denounced the damage wrought by fire. He pointed out that burning destroys the humus, the organic portion of soil formed by the partial decomposition of vegetable or animal matter. Such humus, including the black muck of the Everglades, is a source of food for plants.

The illustrations in Small's book are "before" and "after" photographs of vegetation as he first saw it, then after fire or land-clearing.

"Local hammocks or pinelands might restore themselves in comparatively short periods," he wrote, "but the Lake Okeechobee region might take a million years."

At the end of his slim volume, Small quotes two very early visitors under the heading of "Prophecies." The first is Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, who arrived in 1528 and wrote angrily of the Indian practice of using fire to wipe out mosquitoes and root out small animals for food. The second is John Bartram, the first American botanist, who came to Florida in 1765. Bartram deplored the custom of Georgians of his day in setting fires in the pinewoods near the Florida border.

Small's exploration in 1922 found no trace in the wild of two present-day menaces—the Melaleuca and the

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Jeanne Bellamy not only writes about Florida's water problems, she participates in efforts to solve them.

John Small, who first visited Florida in 1916 and returned in 1922, revisited Crocodile Hole, which he described on facing page, with above picture showing change. (HASF)

Schinus, often called the Brazilian pepper or the Florida holly. The now-dreaded Melaleuca had landed around 1909. It was introduced proudly by John Gifford, forester, who recorded in 1912: "My trees are now 12 to 18 feet in height, and I received the seeds in a letter from Dr. Maiden in Sydney, Australia, about three years ago."

Gifford's own voice turned out to be an uncertain trumpet. His enthusiasm for draining the Everglades was almost as strong as his espousal of planting Melaleucas. In 1911, he wrote: "It is more than a drainage scheme alone, since, by means of dams and locks, the water table may be kept at all times just where it is needed for irrigation purposes." He later changed his mind and opposed canal digging. Instead, he favored planting trees, especially the prolific, fast-growing Melaleuca.

"Now close to a quarter-century after its introduction," Gifford wrote in **Ten Trustworthy Tropical Trees**, "this tree has gradually crept into its own and will probably in a very short time, with just a little help, change the landscape of the wet, mucky lands of South Florida . . . The natural method of drainage is by the use of trees. Every tree is an efficient pump which never needs repairs or fuel for power."

His 1911 forecast on another point proved a mistake: "The soil is usually a black muck, in places several feet in thickness . . . Although it will shrink some, I doubt if the shrinkage will ever prove a serious drawback."

Up to 38 years of measuring the thickness of the muck led John C. Stephens, a soil scientist, and Lamar Johnson, an engineer, to report in 1951 "that the average loss of organic soils was about one foot elevation every 10 years, and that by the year 2000 there would be very little farming in the present agricultural area of the Everglades.

"The rate of subsidence," Johnson continued, "is directly related to the water table depth maintained in the organic soils. Some crops, such as pasture and some varieties of sugarcane, can tolerate a higher water table than many other crops. But any way you cut it, the average loss is about one foot of soil depth in 10 years for farmed land. Wild land, given equal drainage, has even a greater loss."

Perhaps the most vivid sketch of change came in 1930 from the pen of Ralph Middleton Munroe in his autobiography, **The Commodore's Story**. Coconut Grove had been his home since 1885. The commodore wrote feelingly:

"Fifty years ago frost was unknown in Jacksonville, and had been for a generation, and the country around it was bowered in orange groves; the scarlet flamingo, the roseate spoonbill, hordes of brilliant parakeets and uncounted millions of egrets and other plume-birds gave a marked tropical effect to the incredibly crowded mass of bird-life, and made the whole peninsula an ornithologist's dream; while not even a feverish imagination could exaggerate the size, number and variety of game and food fish which filled its varied waters almost to overflowing, and leaped at the crudest lure with savage ferocity. Panthers were still to be found, wild turkeys were plentiful, deer numerous, alligators and crocodiles of huge size filled every river and lagoon, green turtles swarmed on the southern beaches and shoal-water feeding grounds, and the cumbersome manatee was common.

"As usual, tourists took it for granted that these conditions were permanent and not to be affected by their puny efforts at shooting and fishing. Each St. John's River steamer carried a circle of 'sportsmen' on her forward upper deck, armed with the latest repeating rifles, and popping away at every alligator that showed his nose. Every cruiser collected bird-skins and the height of his ambition was to take home as many spoonbills, flamingos and other rarities as he could get. Plume hunters annually 'shot out' the great rookeries of the south, killing literally millions of the dainty and harmless herons. The fish fared better for a time, for mere hook and line could hardly affect their numbers, but as markets became available the destructive net came in, and in the last generation it has done

John Gifford introduced the Melaleuca in 1909 to dry up the Everglades. "It has crept into its own," he said 25 years later. Now, 40 years later, it is a menace. (NASF)

its fatal work among the shoal-water fish. At the same time the cruising purse-netters have pretty well swept the sea clean of menhaden and other small school fish (for everything that comes to their net is oil and fertilizer to them and nothing more), and only recently are we coming to realize that these small fry were the food of the finer game fishes of the Reef, and that the latter, with the extinction of their food, visit us no more.

"So now," the commodore concludes his lament, "the big game is all gone, the brilliant birds are a half-forgotten memory, most of the shoal-water food fishes, including the luscious pompano, the sea trout, and to a certain extent the Spanish mackerel, are rarities, the delicious green-turtle is only a tradition, the manatee is dying out, the crocodiles, once so common in the brackish waters of the southeast coast that I have seen twenty at a time in Indian Creek, at the present Miami Beach, are nearly forgotten—and so it goes."

Another with a prescient view was the great plant explorer, David Fairchild. "Florida in 1912" is a chapter in his autobiography, **The World Was My Garden**. He quotes his report on a 1912 visit: "I would not be surprised to see the day when one hundred thousand people are living along the coast between Palm Beach and Homestead. During my visit in 1898, when people talked of the East Coast as the Riviera of America, I thought they were dreaming. Now, in 1912, I believe that this is likely to come about. The drift of all classes of people from the cold north southward is one of the most interesting spectacles of American life. I believe that it is a psychological phenomenon which will grow immensely during the next few years, and affect the development of subtropical agriculture more rapidly than any other existing factor!"

Although naturally ebullient, Fairchild was an early skeptic about drainage. "The question as to whether draining the Everglades has been a mistake," he wrote in 1938, "is too controversial to discuss here. It is true that almost everybody except expert soil chemists had an exaggerated idea of the fertility of the Everglade soils. Also, the hazards of frosts and flooding have proved greater than anyone considered possible."

In 1944, Thomas Barbour, a naturalist, published a book with the self-explanatory title, **That Vanishing Eden**. His first words nearly tell it all: "Thirty years ago Florida was one of the most extraordinary states in the Union, but being flat and quite parklike in character (a large part of the country consisted of open pinelands) it was an easy state for man to ruin, and he has ruined it with ruthless efficiency. . . A large part of Florida is now so devasted that many of her friends are disinclined to believe that she ever could have been the Paradise which I once knew."

Like Small, Barbour saw the ruin caused by fire: "Thousands of acres of the southern Glades, along the Tamiami Trail, have already been completely destroyed by fire. In some regions, the thin layer of black muck burnt off completely with the first fire. In other cases, where rains have brought relief, it has taken several fires to accomplish this result. In the regions where the deep muck gets burning no ordinary shower will affect the situation at all."

Thus went the litanies of men who loved tropical Florida's natural greenery and wild creatures. Theirs was no mere nostalgia for "good old days." The wreckage they saw was real; it continues.

Today, in 1984, the worst enemies of South Florida's outdoors are:

1—The Melaleuca, the Schinus and the Casuarina
These exotics are displacing native vegetation, wiping out wildlife habitat and hastening the drying of wetlands by sucking up moisture and breathing it out into the air.

2—Pollution of Groundwater
by garbage dumps, toxic chemicals, human and animal wastes and runoff from urbanized areas. Nearly all of South Florida's drinking water is pumped out of the ground, which itself is full of holes that can pipe poisons straight down into the groundwater.

3—Overdrainage and Misplacement of Water
Farmers eager for profit by selling to developers are lobbying for lowering the water table in wetlands so they can farm there, then perhaps sell out again. So are builders in search of cheap homesites. Overdrainage lets brine from the ocean seep into the water-bearing rock. Already, 87 Florida communities are desalting the sea or brackish water, at great expense, while others spend millions to move wells inland, away from the salt front.

The most dangerous misplacement of water was the attempt to move the main watercourse that feeds the Everglades National Park and pinch it down from a width of 40 miles to 10 miles. Unless this is corrected, the park's wildlife and verdure are doomed. Another sad sight is the skeletons of dead cypresses alongside the Loxahatchee River. After the head of fresh water was weakened by a drainage canal, salt moved upstream and killed the cypresses.

4—Rising Demand for Irrigation
which uses two-thirds of South Florida's water. As the black muck shrinks toward uselessness, sugarcane and other crops are moving into the mineral soils west of Lake Okeechobee. To the east, in the Indian River region, today's 200,000 acres of citrus are expected to grow to 250,000 or more. Both areas look for irrigation water to Lake Okeechobee, where foreseeable demand outstripped foreseeable supply long ago.

An often-heard myth is that irrigation puts water back into the aquifer. This is untrue. The rule-of-thumb in Dade County, for example, is that one inch of irrigation water will moisten the soil to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. If the water table were that high, irrigation wouldn't be needed.

But irrigation in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties is likely to decrease as farmers move elsewhere after selling their land for urbanization.

All is not lost. Few other world-class cities can equal Miami's parklike setting, if the right things are done soon.

One Time Only

BY ZANNIE MAY SHIPLEY

Head-On Collision

If you have always felt slightly superior to the Romans whose ideas of entertainment included throwing Christians to the lions, consider this:

On February 15, 1931, the **Miami Daily News** carried a half-page advertisement announcing a "Genuine Head-On Collision" between two giant 160 Ton Pacific Type locomotives going a mile a minute, to be held Sunday, Feb. 22.

According to the ad, the spectacle was sponsored by the Miami Junior Chamber of Commerce Summer Tourist Committee, and directed by the American Amusement Company. As a preview of the crash, the locomotives began running nightly Feb. 16 through Feb. 21 at a spur track on Red Road between Flagler and 36th Street, with a gigantic fireworks display as an added attraction. These events were free; viewing the crash would cost one dollar for adults, and fifty cents for children.

Somewhere along the line, the crash date was postponed to Monday, Feb. 23, and the weather washed out the fireworks on a couple of nights, but the Florida East Coast railroad caught the fever and reduced round trip fares to the crash site, and announced all trains due to arrive February 22 would have stop-over privileges until Feb. 25. The fireworks on Friday night attracted close to 5000. The collision itself was expected to draw the largest crowd in the south. In previous crashes, the smallest crowd had been 128,000 in Erie, PA, and the largest in Los Angeles: 203,000.

D.E. Leonard, supervisor for American Amusement Company, described the crash in an interview in the **News**:

"The engines start out slowly and gather speed until they reach 30 mph. At that point both the engineers and the firemen jump, leaving the throttle wide open. These two locomotives will accelerate to 50 mph within 1000 feet, with whistles screaming and bells ringing. When they hit, they sometimes force each other off the track. The impact is sufficient to crash through the base of the Chrysler Building. These spectacles cost us about $40,000 each and we haven't been on the red side of the ledger yet."

Here are the two engines obviously before the crash, such as it was. *(Dr. Thelma Peters)*

American Amusement had directed 61 crashes before this one. After each of the previous crashes, the engines were sold for junk and the company brought in a crew to remove the wreckage, which could take up to a week. Then the track had to be repaired to the owner's satisfaction, in this case the Atlas Rock Company.

The page one headline in the **News** on Tuesday, Feb. 24, read: Officials Deny City Is Linked To Train Wreck." The crash was a fiasco: it began two hours late; one engine made a slow run almost to where the opposing engine stood before the other moved. When they hit, they were traveling at 15-20 miles an hour. The front trucks were damaged but the headlights weren't even broken. The 3814 spectators, far short of the expected 100,000, left grousing and the promoters landed in jail for embezzlement.

One of the promoters blamed airplane noise for the failure. The planes were making so much noise the engineers couldn't hear each other's signals, he said. He decided to get into one engine and go for a conference with the other engineer, but that engineer thought that the act was on and he began going full speed. So the promoter hit the brakes and jumped.

Officials of the City of Miami were busy ducking the issue. The Assistant City Manager brought forth a copy of a letter showing that he had ordered that the City have nothing to do with the promotion. The president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce had no comment. A member of the Jaycees' summer tourist committee was also a city employee and most of the recriminations fell on his head.

While the promoters languished in jail, refusing to bond out, the fireworks firm had the promoters' secretary arrested for embezzlement. The Atlas Rock Company sued for damages because the locomotives were not removed and the company had to build another spur around the engines to reach their rock pit.

Once was quite enough for Miami's train wreck.

Fulford's Folly

On August 24, 1925, M.C. Tebbetts, a developer of Fulford-by-the-Sea, carried out one of the most preposterous schemes of the boom, the building of Florida's first, and perhaps only, mile-and-a-quarter wooden bowl for automobile races. The word "preposterous" is deserved, because he did it while building supplies and even food were scarce due to a transportation tie-up. Granted that the track was smashed in the Hurricane of 1926, still had there been a real interest in auto racing in a wooden bowl in Florida there would have been more than one race in the spring of 1926. Tebbett's track, sometimes called "Fulford's Folly," may have been the world's only course to have had but one race.

Oldtimers remember the gigantic piles of lumber that were unloaded at the dock on the Oleta River not far from the Fulford depot and then transported by truck to track site a mile or so northwest of Fulford-by-the-Sea. The one-and-a-quarter-mile wood track has been described as a "lopsided saucer;" it was steeply banked at the ends and only slightly banked at the sides. The track itself was built of two-by-eight-inch planks **narrow side up**. In addition there were the grandstand, bleachers, and separate garages for each race entry, all of wood—enough wood to have built at least two hundred homes.

The big three-hundred-mile race was set for Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1926. Qualifying races were run several days prior to race day, with a few hundred spectators in attendance. To qualify, a driver had to reach a speed of 120 miles per hour. By race day eighteen drivers had qualified. On the last day of the trials Bob McDonough in a Number Four Miller Special set a new

Fred Cromer in a Miller Special raced in the Washington's Birthday event, first and last for Fulford's track. *(M-D Public Library Romer collection)*

world's record—he had done a lap in 31.49 seconds.

Timing and recording for the race were managed by the American Automobile Association, the cup was donated by Carl Fisher, prize money in the amount of $30,000 had also been collected, and all drivers had been luncheon guests of Harvey S. Firestone at his Miami Beach estate the day before race day. The **Herald** quoted T.E. "Pop" Myers, general manager of the Indianapolis Speedway, as saying that the Fulford Track was "the finest he had ever seen." The flag starter was Barney Oldfield, the most famous of early race champions.

The race was won by the favorite, Pete de Paola, who had won the Indianapolis 500 the preceding year. He drove a Duesenberg Straight 8—called a "banana wagon"—set a speed record of 129.29, and carried off the Carl Fisher Cup and $12,000 of the prize money.

No additional races were planned for the spring of 1926, it may be assumed that Florida was not ready for board speedways. The hurricane of 1926 badly damaged the track, and a fire later burned some of it. Some of the lumber was salvaged and used to repair storm-damaged homes all over the Fulford and Ojus area. According to Albert Frohoc, Tebbetts turned the infield of the track into a farm and dairy.

Condensed from *Biscayne Country, 1870-1926* by Thelma Peters, 1981 Banyan Books, pp. 282-285.

Biscayne Babies

With a background in auto racing, Carl G. Fisher, who built and owned the Indianapolis Speedway, transferred some of his love of cars to boats during his years on Miami Beach. He established the Fisher-Allison trophy which was awarded during the Miami Beach Mid-Winter Boating Regatta, and in 1924 decided to expand the scope of the regatta to include small speedboats. The "Biscayne Babies" were to be piloted by famous auto racing drivers instead of owner drivers, who, Fisher declared, "are always late—they have something busted just before the start of the race or have to change their golf stockings to some other outfit!"

In addition to using auto drivers without boating experience, he ordered eleven boats built that were identical in size and speed so that no one would have an equipment advantage.

He asked his friend W. D. Edenbrun of the **Detroit Daily News** to round up available drivers.

Fisher commissioned the boats and then wrote business leaders and developers, offering them a chance to buy the boats for about $2400 each. There was so much enthusiasm for the race that Fisher anticipated that the following year it could be expanded to twenty or twenty-five boats.

Fisher put up the $10,000 prize money and bought the uniforms for the drivers: white duck trousers, white jersey vests, red life jackets and red toques.

Although Gar Wood, the world's most famous speedboat driver, and Webb Jay, one of his greatest rivals, were competing for the Fisher-Allison Trophy, the race of the "Biscayne Babies" generated the most excitement. The **Miami Herald** estimated that 15,000 lined Biscayne Bay. There was a grandstand at the Flamingo Hotel for hotel guests, and parking at one dollar per car on Star Island and at the Fleetwood and Flamingo Hotels but the rest of the vantage points were free.

The drivers drew lots for the boats, but Fisher anticipated that in the following year the owners could select their own drivers.

The race was run on March 20-21, 1925. Two of the "Babies" sank when they hit obstructions, and one was sinking when a patrol boat rescued it and the driver. During the race, a running story was carried on radio WMBF, and the results were wigwagged to the telegraph station from the judges' stand. The first prize winner was Louis Chevrolet, followed by Wade Morton, L.L. Corum, and Jerry Wonderlich.

Although Fisher had hoped for this to become an annual event, and had additional boats on order, the Fisher papers on the "Biscayne Babies" end on February 14, 1925—on a note of high optimism but with no further correspondence.

Book Review

Stuart B. McClure. **Fort Lauderdale and Broward County: An Illustrated History.** Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, Inc. 1983. Patrons, Acknowledgements, Bibliography, Index. 232 pp. $24.95.

Fort Lauderdale and Broward County: An Illustrated History, is the latest of metropolitan area histories made possible by local institution sponsors. Stuart McIver has written the seven chapters that deal with different eras in Broward County's history. The eighth chapter contains histories of the 58 sponsoring institutions.

The author's style is polished and his story flows smoothly through each era. He manages to weave the histories of several towns and cities into an overall history of the area without interrupting the story's steady progress toward the present. In particular, he has been able to project the rapidity with which this area grew from a very quiet community into part of the great South Florida megapolis which runs from Miami to Palm Beach.

Vitally important to any "coffee table book" are its illustrations. Those chosen for this work complement the text and are provided with excellent captions. Photographic portraits, postcards, historic photographs, and tourist shots all help to make this history come alive with personalities and images of the past.

The author has provided a bibliography but, as with other books of this genre, there are no footnotes. This lack of footnotes makes these books more acceptable to the general public, but it limits their usefulness as a reference work.

— DANIEL O. MARKUS

Why Is It Named That?

Merrie Christmas Park

BY WELLBORN PHILLIPS

Any story about Merrie Christmas Park, formerly Barbarossa Park, must include its humble beginning. For years it was an excavation that supplied gravel to widen and improve Old Cutler Raod and nearby streets. This gave the 4.5 acre park its topography—high around the edges, low in the middle, which gives neighbors the feeling they live on a hill. After all they are twenty feet above the bottom of the park. Children playing there enjoy an unusual thrill. In how many other places of South Florida can you roll down a hill?

Merrie Christmas, for whom the park was named, was the daughter of Miami Mayor Randy Christmas. The youngest of his three daughters, she was a bright, happy, attractive little girl despite her health. She was also a brave little girl who won the admiration of Miami as she fought a long battle for her life, one she knew she could not win.

Merrie was born with only one kidney, but was three years old before the condition was correctly diagnosed. An operation was scheduled, with Merrie's mother planning to donate one of her own kidneys to her daughter. The transplant was impossible, however, because of Merrie's deteriorated condition. The prognosis: the three-year-old would live only a few more months.

The Miami City Commission, reacting to a citywide wave of sympathy for Merrie and her family, in her honor renamed Barbarossa Park which is part of the western boundary of Miami along LeJeune Road. When it became Merrie Christmas Park in 1958 it was a fitting gesture, for Merrie and her sisters had spent many happy hours playing in the park. The family lived only a block away on Hardie Road.

Years later Merrie's mother recalled, "The Commission voted to name the park after her because they thought she would not be able to live long enough to enjoy it. But she proved them wrong. Every year she would go to the park for her birthday. She called it her park. Sometimes we would go down there on Christmas."

Former rockpit, park commemorates bravery in face of death of Miami Mayor Randy Christmas' young daughter. *(City of Miami)*

Merrie lived on for eleven more years and twelve major operations. She made a partial recovery, wrote short stories, became an avid collector of coins and seashells, and completed Kenwood Elementary and Glades Junior High. Almost to the end she refused to miss school.

Merrie was already enrolled in Killian High when her condition became fatal. She died on March 28, 1969, six days before her fifteenth birthday. How nice, though, that Merrie Christmas Park is her memorial—her park.

Reprinted from *The Miami Realtor*

Around the Museum
Continued from page 2

answer the question "Who works in an Historical Museum?" Shouts of recognition erupt when Exhibits Curator Dan Markus, Reseach Curator Becky Smith or Director Randy Nimnicht is spied during a tour.

The fourth-graders flock through the museum 180 strong four days a week. HASF teachers guide them through the museum and are available to answer questions during an individual discovery period until the sound of the conch shell tells them it is time to leave.

The booklet is part of a social studies project between the historical Museum of Southern Florida and Dade County Public Schools with Education Director Kathy Pierie of the museum and Judith Stuzin of the school system collaborating. Asterie Baker Provenzo was project consultant and writer.

From Latitude 27° (Florida's Lake Okeechobee) on the north to 10° (Venezuela's Lago Maracaibo) on the south and from Longitude 85° (Honduras' Laguna de Carataska) on the west to 66° (Barbados' Kitridge Point) on the east lies the West Indies archipelago. Indians originally from Asia, Blacks from Africa and Whites from Europe have peopled it and been woven into Miami's history, so much so that the founders of the historical association included the Caribbean and West Indies in its charter.

The association's new museum has space for a real shop, not just a cubby, and manager Heidi Stollen has taken her cue from the shop name, The Indies Company, to expand the merchandise to include imports from the Caribbean. Spices, dolls and crafts from Jamaica and primitives and delicately decorated boxes from Haiti join the clothing, dolls, books and baskets of the Seminoles and cigars, fabric and art from Key West, plus local arts and crafts.

Conceptually The Indies Company will offer historically related merchandise; in reality it is a charming place to browse, the ambience planned for leisurely shopping. Merchandise ranges from sand castle candleholders to a brass diver's helmet to porcelain figures of Audubon birds.

Tidbits and treats for take-home sampling are available and there is a fruit-shipping service. A special children's section has books, toys and historical memorabilia.

And of course there are books. The favorites, the scholarly, the historical; cookbooks, a few in Spanish; a small selection of Florida fiction. Broadening the scope of subject matter to the whole Caribbean area makes for a more diverse selection.

Volunteers assist The Indies Company staff. They await your visit; remember your membership discount of ten percent on purchases.

— ALICE P. WILLEY

THE FINAL WORD

Update no sooner finished celebrating its own first decade than George Orwell's **1984** was upon us. Not that **Update** presumes to move into the political affairs of mankind, but the arrival of the date itself seemed as good a reason as any to look back, which it normally does more often than it looks forward.

However, it felt the need to define such a backward look and happily came upon it in the 1975 edition of **The New Columbia Encyclopedia.** Under "geography" it separates natural from human geography.

"Human geography places man in his physical setting; it studies his relationship with that environment as well as his conscious activities and continuous progress in adapting himself to it (and to other men) and in transforming his environment to his needs."

So says **The New Columbia Encyclopedia** and that seems to put this issue of **Update** in focus.

Dr. Thelma Peters, who usually has an anecdote about, or resource for, any given subject that comes up in a discussion of South Florida history, suggests the possibility of establishing a Trivia Bank.

A splendid idea. Should something you read in **Update** remind you of a long-past incident (your past is part of HASF's future) jot it down and send it to the Trivia Editor, **Update**, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 101 West Flagler St., Miami, FL 33130. It may not be momentous but it can be good reading.

If readers suspect the "after" picture of the Crocodile Hole on page 11 is not the correct picture, they are not alone. However, that is the way it is identified in John Small's book. Any information on the subject is welcome.

Update lost a former member of its advisory board when Jack Kassewitz died in mid-April. **The Miami News** lost a popular columnist and Miami-Dade Community College lost a respected trustee. **Update** is pleased that Governor Bob Graham has appointed Arva Moore Parks, another **Update** advisor to the MDCC trusteeship.

Marie Hudson

OUT OF THE TRUNK

In a newly acquired collection, primarily of the Royal Palm Hotel, Curator of Research Materials Rebecca Smith has found the above picture. It was taken around 1900. Dr. Thelma Peters says that the two black men at work are drilling a hole for a water pump. She, however, is not sure of the locale of the picture.

If any reader recognizes the location and/or knows anything about the scene, write **Update**, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130.

Letters
Continued from page 2

house on the street behind the Curry home and mother Bettye, who teaches china painting, recalling Shirttail Charlie in his side-vent shift who came to town from his home in the Everglades to beg for money. "Me mudder and my fadder froze to death," he would explain.

LIFE'S FULFILLMENT

As a realist attaining my 84th birthday August 21, 1984, I know there is only a limited time left and all of it uncertain. Reflecting on my past life, and hoping that it has been of some value, I try to recall what was worthwhile.

Memory is not keen in later years, so I delved into old printed matter for refreshers. I found a Mahi Shrine brochure with many of my activities from 1929 to 1956. The accomplishments, while not overwhelming, are at least conclusive that my time was not idly spent.

Without documentation, time has not dimmed my remembrances of the 59 years of marriage to my good wife Frances and, with her skillful, tireless, and understanding efforts, the raising and educating of two great, normal, decent and talented children.

Phyllis, a graduate of Stephens College and the University of Georgia, operates a successful real estate business in Homestead. Phyllis and Charles Douglas Kirk's only child, my only grandchild, Jeffrey, was elected a Homestead councilman at age 22.

Tom attended the University of Florida, got his wings and commission from the U.S. Air Force and has been a captain for Eastern Airlines over 16 years. He also has degrees in law and business administration from the University of Miami.

After fulfilling life's destiny, if I have a choice, I prefer to be remembered as one who tried hard to score on stewardship.

B. Hiram Blakey
11001 S.W. 88th Court
Miami, FL 33176

Well put, Colonel Blakey. Many happy returns.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters relevant to previous issues as well as appropriate historical topics should be addressed to: Update Editor, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130. Letters should be signed. Letters may be edited to meet space restrictions.

Historical Association of Southern Florida

'ten-shun!"

The Pine Needles Club, shown performing a broom drill, which they did at various 1890s community functions, was Miami's first volunteer group for girls. The first male volunteer showed up in 1567 when Jesuit missionary Francisco Villereal came to live among the Tequesta Indians.

The largest private regional history museum in the Southeast is still looking for a few good men and women volunteers.

The **Indies Company** needs hands to write tags about the history cultural importance and function of each item . . . the **Collections** curator needs hands to accession, conserve, photograph, inventory and catalog artifacts . . . the **Education** director needs tour conductors, exhibits interpreters and demonstrators for school children, in the museum and at historic sites . . . the **Research Center** needs helpers for people doing research, people looking for pictures or maps or manuscripts, people asking questions.

How about planning a plaza event? Transcribing oral history tapes? Researching and coordinating a temporary exhibit?

Call 375-1492
Ask for Coordinator of Volunteers

101 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130

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