Three Authors Write About Research

Twenty Years Since Cleo, The Last Hurricane

One Family's Century With The Alligator

The Historical Association of Southern Florida

UPDATE

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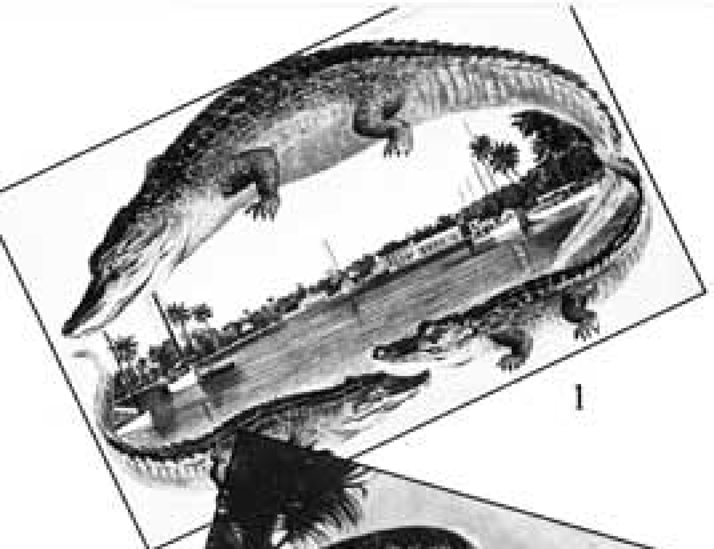

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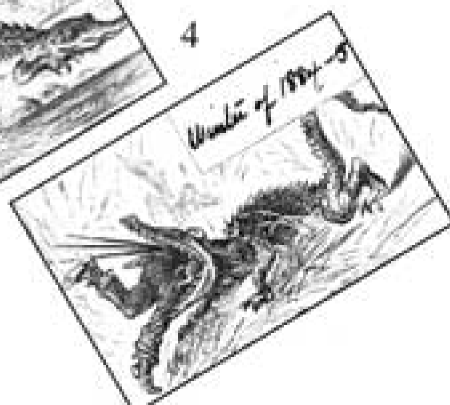

Alligators!

Man has been fascinated by saurians through the years. The Egyptians built a temple at Kom Ombro to them. In the 18th century when Europeans became fascinated with the new country across the ocean a German artisan at the Meissen porcelain factory in Dresden created a personification of the new country: a creamy white Indian maid wearing a crown and girdle of feathers, clutching flowers and fruits, astride an alligator. The reptile has been a star performer in Miami's history.

The museum has spent a year mounting a ten-week exhibit of alligators that opens the last of November. Funded by a $41,635 grant from the Dade County Council of Arts and Sciences, it will have artifacts, graphics and live alligators, assembled from around the state. Curator Daniel Markus toured the state, ranging from zoos and licensed hunters to the state university in Gainesville and historical St. Augustine. Curator Rebecca Smith assembled graphics. Wilderness Graphics in Tallahassee mounted the show and Assistant Director Linda Williams orchestrated.

Among the graphics are postcards, No. 1 featuring the mouth of the Miami River framed in alligators; photographs, No. 2 showing early settler "Judge" George Worley holding an alligator, accompanied by his wife and three of their six children; tourist pamphlets put out by the State of Florida, No. 3; and bookplates, No. 4 designed by Ralph Munroe in 1884.

Live performances by the alligators themselves and alligator wrestling, long a tourist attraction in Miami, will be among the exhibits. Something for everyone.

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Plaza Level Exhibit Hall

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The Historical Association of Southern Florida

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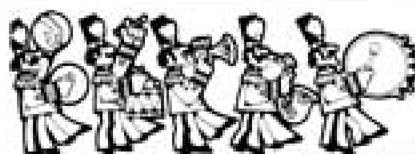
On the cover: Charles Torrey Simpson sits beside a reflecting pool at his home on the bay near Little River in the early part of this century. (See Out of Trunk page 15.) *(HASF)*

AROUND THE MUSEUM

A SONG



SING PROUD, MIAMI!

MIAMI'S FOR ME

Not an old song, but a new one, which the Miami's For Me people hope will be around for a long time. *(Miami Is For Me)*

Had "Miami's for Me" been written back in the Era of the Bay it is possible that the residents could have found it befitting and joined the chorus with great gusto. Miami was certainly for them; that was why they were here.

That reasoning does not always suffice three-quarters of a century later. People have increased in numbers a thousandfold. Life is complex. Singing the catchy ditty can reaffirm one's resolve. That, at least, is what the Miami's for Me organization believes. The MFM, an affiliate of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, wants you to like more people, help more people, feel better about yourself and they encourage this at a variety of events. You don't even need an event as long as you feel Miami is "where I want to be."

A LETTER

In the course of her research on her new book, **Miami 1909**, (see **Update's** lead article) Dr. Thelma Peters came across this letter written to the new editor of the **Miami Metropolis**, S. Bobo Dean, and published July 21, 1909: Editor **Metropolis**: I was told once that I stood second or third on the subscription list of the **Metropolis** and anyway was certainly close to the top but never since have enjoyed any number better than that of last Saturday and wish to show you my appreciation. The editorials were to the point and the report of the political meeting was excellent.

In the column by K.N. Pepper was some advice to the Miami people to get up earlier in the morning, etc., which struck me in a tender spot of long standing as follows:

When I arrived on this bay thirty-two years ago and up to the advent of the railroad we managed our affairs on what is called mean or sun time, which of course divides our mornings and afternoons into nearly equal parts, and on my front lawn stands the old sun dial which with an equation of time table handy was used to regulate the bay clocks.

When the first train arrived running on central or 90th meridian time, everyone in Miami set his clock by it. This was 39′ 4″ slow of our mean time and at first we thought of following suit, but a little reflection suggested that it was a wrong move and that our time if changed at all should be put ahead and accordingly in order to make calculation of difference more easy we did so, making it 75th meridian or Washington eastern time, just an hour ahead of Miami.

At first sight our contentions as to the desirability of the faster time seemed to have little weight and even after these many years there are people now who hold us up as a set of cranks on the time question, not withstanding all mechanical pursuits are practically running by our time, even the railroad work. The clocks are not the same but breakfasts, dinners, etc, are, and whyfore not the clocks?

If most of us were not creatures of habit and could arise in the morning, eat our meals and go to our business independent of the clock, there would be no need of a change. The advantage of a fast time, especially in tropical or semi-tropical countries is or should be self-evident, but Coconut Grove has been held up to such scorn all these years that we just went ahead and said nothing. Within this last six months the daylight bill before the English people with such men as Winston Churchill at its head and the movement by our own government attached strongly in its favor by the thinkers of this country show that we

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Book Review

"A Stately Picturesque Dream . . ." Scenes of Florida, Cuba, and Mexico in 1880 by Frank Taylor. Gainesville, Florida: University Gallery, College of Fine Arts, 1984. Foreword, Acknowledgements, Preface, Bibliography. $7.50.

"A Stately Picturesque Dream . . ." is a catalog for forty-seven brush drawings on exhibit in the University Gallery at the University of Florida in Gainesville. This book should be of interest to historians because it depicts an almost-forgotten incident in the history of Florida and the United States.

The pictures in this book were drawn by Frank H. Taylor, an artist for **Harper's Weekly**. He traveled with former President Ulysses S. Grant on a tour of Florida, Cuba, and Mexico in 1880. This trip was planned as a public relations effort to prepare Grant for his attempt to be nominated for a third term president. Taylor's paintings were used to produce woodcuts to accompany articles in **Harper's** that reported the trip.

The pictures are interesting for other reasons. They show how Taylor's original drawings were censored by eliminating Cuban flags to avoid offending Spain. The images show how events were brought to the mass media before the widespread use of photographs in newspapers. The drawings also are an incredible example of how valuable pieces of history were rescued from a trash heap.

The introduction is well-written and well-documented by Nancy Gustke. Anyone who enjoys the byways that can be taken into state and national history should enjoy this book.

Nixon Smiley. **On the Beat and Offbeat with Nixon Smiley**. Miami: Banyan Books, Inc., 1983. 157 pages. $7.95.

On the Beat and Offbeat is a collection of thirty-seven stories about people met by the author during his career as a newspaper reporter. It is an interesting study in contemporary history dealing with well-known and obscure individuals and their contribution to Florida's unique history.

Smiley's career spanned many years and even more characters, both famous and unknown, wealthy and poor, and just plain odd. Because Smiley realized "how much personalities enriched our lives, adding color and flavor to our too-often humdrum existence" he kept records of many of those he met and has collected them into this book. Included are gardeners, financiers, Coconut Groveites, crackers, artists, rural philosophers, and cattlemen. All of their stories say something about life in Florida and the human condition in general. ■

— DANIEL O. MARKUS

ANYONE CAN WRITE IT

Ingredients Count When you Recreate History

By THELMA PETERS

Writing history is not the same as writing fiction. With fiction one can pick a place, any place in the world, get a word processor, typewriter or 39-cent yellow tablet, rev up the psyche, open the tap on imagination and let the story flow. History writers have to run about picking up bits and pieces; to the museums, libraries, courthouses, state and national archives.

Like the shards found and catalogued by archaeologists, every piece of information a historian picks up must be evaluated for authenticity, identified as to source and date, and a record kept. Imagination gets a historian in trouble and memory is of limited value except to answer the question: "Now where did I put my notes?"

Each of us who attempt to write history has a way of collecting, storing and retrieving facts. We are forced to adopt a system or end in chaos. My own system — imperfect as it may be — works for me. It is also obsolete in this age of high tech so *you* may want to go on computer.

For the last four years my concentration has been on Miami in 1909. On a guess I have 30,000 little historic chips I have picked up about the Miami of that time: Names, businesses, recreation, education, crime, morals, trends and trivia. I use a three-by-five card, assign each card a number and accent-mark key words, entering the key words as topics or headings in a sturdy record book, sturdy because it gets a lot of usage.

For example the letter C in my index for **Miami 1909** has under it 92 headings and under them a total of 302 cards. One heading is "Chinese in Miami" (ten cards). At random I pick a card from the ten — Number 666. This is the story in the **Miami Metropolis**, January 21, 1909, about a series of religious revivals at the Baptist Church. The preceding evening an unusual event occurred: Joe Cheong, a Chinese laundryman (Miami had three Chinese laundries in 1909), was baptized, "the first member of the Mongolian race" ever baptized in Miami. The same Number 666 card is also indexed under "Church Revivals."

Under the Rs is a heading "Roosters in Miami, Complaints of," (eight cards). Most of them could have been entered under "Humor". One of the delights of this intimate trivia research is stumbling upon the droll, the audacious or the unexpected. The cards reveal that in the early months of 1909 with the tourist season in full swing there were just too many roosters disturbing the sleep of the dear tourists. An official attempt was made to ban chickens from downtown.

But many small hotels and individuals in that area kept chickens. The editor of the **Metropolis**, S. Bobo Dean, who lived just over the river in Southside in the Brickell Hammock, not only had chickens but a cow. He didn't see any harm in roosters crowing. He managed a few sly editorial cracks to reinforce his views:

1. As editor, Dean exchanged newspapers with other editors around the state. On February 1 the **Metropolis** reported the reaction of the **Apalachicola Times** to Miami's rooster problem: "Here we like roosters. But maybe Miamians should get rid of theirs and plant trees — trees are silent."
2. On another day Dean quoted the **Tampa Tribune**: "How are Jacksonville boosters like Miami roosters? They both crow and strut."
3. When the circus came to town the editor got in another dig (**Metropolis**, March 19, 1909): "With the circus in town the roaring of the lions makes the roosters sound about like mosquitoes."

The ordinance to ban chickens in downtown Miami failed to pass.

But the card system is only part of the method of retaining information. All of the **Miami Metropolis** for 1909 and most of the **Miami Morning News-Record** for 1909 are available on microfilm and where there are microfilm readers — like the downtown Miami library — there are also microfilm copiers. For a few cents one may get printouts of anything in the papers: main articles, ads, household hints, photographs.

Then a local historian seeks out the people who were here at the time of the story. I found many who were here in 1909 and happy to talk. The pursuit of people and their

Continues on page 4

Dr. Thelma Peters writes cutlines for over 100 pictures in her new book *Miami 1909*, based on the diary of a seventeen-year-old girl, Fannie Clemons. (The Miami Herald)

Dr. Thelma Peters, an **Update** mainstay, should have her new book out before Christmas, so put **Miami 1909** on your shopping list.

memories is not only fascinating but one makes many new friends. One of my most delightful informants is Dorothy Dean Davidson, the daughter of editor S. Bobo Dean, the intrepid, controversial, sardonic, intellectual editor of the **Miami Metropolis**. I not only gained insight into the life of her remarkable father but Mrs. Davidson remembers a great deal about 1909.

Why spend four years on Miami 1909? Because of the splendid diary of Fannie Clemons. When her diary came to me through Fannie's daughter-in-law, Ruth Dillon Corson, I was hooked on Fannie's Miami. But the study of any year can be rewarding.

Fannie, seventeen, the daughter of a senior railroad locomotive engineer, wrote in her diary every day from January 1, 1909, through December 31 — 209 legal-sized pages in a clear hand. She was friendly, active, observant and articulate. During the year she dated a number of boyfriends, thought herself in love a couple of times, adored the little children in the neighborhood, never missed Sunday school or church. She rode her bike or rowed a boat wherever she wanted to go.

No other person has been found who recorded so much information about movies, live theater, circuses, and other entertainment in Miami in 1909. Her accounts square with and complement the newspaper accounts. She held her own personal mirror up to Miami. Mentioned are 235 people, neighbors and friends.

Because of the value of the diary for genealogists as well as historians the original diary will be placed in the Historical Museum of Southern Florida along with an index of names to make it easy for researchers.

The role of Fannie writing in her diary is the unifying agent for **Miami 1909**: the string holding all the beads. But the book is much more than the diary. The year 1909 was important in Miami's history; the economy was recovering after the Panic of 1907; the railroad extension was halfway to Key West and the Panama Canal was half dug; Miami got its first legitimate theater; and the dredge **Miami** moved up the Miami River to start Everglades drainage and the canal to Lake Okeechobee. The population was 7,115 and the slogan of the city fathers, always optimistic, was "10,000 by 1910."

Finding one hundred photographs for Miami 1909 was a treasure hunt. The majority of them came from the large collection of photographs at the historical museum but others came from individuals and now these "new" pictures can be added to the museum collection.

Writing local history is like a giant game of jigsaw and just getting the pieces is only half of it. When the pieces are all gathered the coordination begins — this stays in, that goes out. Of course I did not use all 30,000 pieces. To do so would have been fatal: readers would choke on Chapter One. There must be selection, emphasis, unity, forward motion: the readership, which determines the success or failure of a book, depends on these. It is sometimes painful but some of the information must be pruned away.

Not all of Fannie's diary is revealed. Were there twenty-seven boy friends? To tell it all would be to tell too much. It would deprive *you* of a pleasant bit of historical digging on your own. ■

Island Research Needs Dogged Determination

BY SANDRA RILEY

"Research." The very word conjures up the picture of an aged and bespectacled scholar, perched on a high stool, poring over a huge volume of almost indecipherable symbols, remaining so long at the task that he or she too seems to have collected the dust and spiderwebs of the ages. Even to my own mind, this is the picture the word recalls—and I am that scholar. Harriette Arnow, historian and novelist, said that research is very much like mining for precious gems. "You search and search until you find just what you want, and when you find it—it is just like finding a diamond—it's just that exciting." On the other hand, I have been told that "Research is the application of the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair." Both definitions are valid—but no one would have the interminable patience necessary to do the latter if he or she did not have hope of locating those rare gems of information.

Genuine research is much akin to archaeology; the qualities requisite to success are stamina, tenacity and dogged determination. Searching records is as frustrating as sifting through the earth at a dig—what you seek may not be where you are digging—regardless of the number of authoritative sources which state otherwise. Or worse, one of your predecessors may have already come upon what you need—and walked off with it. Archives are very much like archaeological sites in that a great preponderance of what you can easily find is of no earthly use to you.

The difficulty of the search enhances the joy of discovery and in my research on the Bahamas, the necessary material was both scant and scattered over the world. As a graduate student in theater, I had done in-depth research, finding almost anything I needed in the stacks of the university library. As an historian, I discovered that my education had just begun as I traipsed from island to island, from the southern United States to New York and from Florida to London.

The scarcity of original documents pertaining to the Bahamas was only the first of my difficulties. The condition of what documents still exist is at best appalling. Tropical insects have feasted on them and they are blotched by mildew and faded by time. The number of papers completely destroyed by human neglect is considerable. At the Lands and Surveys Office in Nassau, I looked up from my work to see little pieces of brown paper flying out of the two hundred-year old land grant books as the clerks flipped through them. The microfilming of old records did little

Sandra Riley is at home in the theater, in teaching, in real estate, in research and in writing, both fact and fiction.

The *San Salvador Express* before it sank with all the Island's records. (Sandra Riley)

to remedy this situation—for the most part by the time the historical documents had been filmed, they had already reached the point of illegibility. A clear photostat of an indecipherable page is of no help at all. The handwriting styles of the 18th and 19th centuries were also a challenge to my imagination and intuition as I found myself forced to conjecture meanings from the context for illegible or missing passages.

Records in the Bahamian Family Islands have been destroyed in hurricanes, misplaced through carelessness, or simply left to rot in old government buildings. Sometimes the fate of archival material is more dramatic. In 1974, Dr. Don Gerace of the College Center of Finger Lakes field study school on the island of San Salvador flew the island commissioner over to Rum Cay. They diligently boxed up all the old records and put them on the mailboat addressed to archivist Gail Saunders at Nassau. That trip, however, the **San Salvador Express** sank. The passengers and some of their belongings were put on a rock to wait for a helicopter to pick them up. They sent the cargo of goats and personal goods up to the helicopter first, knowing that if the passengers went up first, everything else would be left behind. The records? You guessed it. At least we don't have to search for the Rum Cay records: we know where they are, lying beneath cerulean waters somewhere between San Salvador and New Providence.

Months of preparation go into any research trip, to the southern United States or London. It takes me ten times longer to get my papers together than to pack my clothes. More important than my wardrobe I have found are the appropriate letters of introduction and recommendation necessary to gain access to the treasures of the Public Records Office and British Library in London. Even with these letters, I often gathered the distinct impression that my presence was not truly welcome.

Once, inside the rare book room at the New York Public Library, I found myself locked behind two sets of doors. My personal belongings were confiscated (after being searched, of course) and I was assigned a seat at a table where I was allowed to make use of pencil and paper (pens were strictly forbidden). I worked diligently, hoping that I wouldn't have to sneeze since even my facial tissue had been left in my briefcase.

Each library has its own atmosphere, created as much by its physical characteristics as by the personalities of the librarians who guard the treasures. Many of these custodians of knowledge are as helpful and entertaining as newly-discovered old friends. Others remain formidable and distant, taking their task of being Cerberus very much to heart. Becky Smith of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, Betty Bruce of the Key West Library and Gail Saunders and her crew at the Nassau Archives are among the former type—generous souls whose willingness to help is both welcome and much appreciated. The latter—well, let us leave their solitude undisturbed.

Researching in Nassau has its own peculiar problems, many stemming from the isolation of island living. Electrical power mysteriously shuts off at any time of the day or night. Once, when I had only a single week to work in Nassau, the power was on for only a couple of hours each day. Besides having to rush from place to place, I found myself going around in circles. It seemed that everywhere I had been, I had to go back again. The Lands and Surveys Office printed the wrong maps. The Methodists brought the wrong records from Turton House—three days in a row. The place I could usually go for photo-copying could operate their machine for only a few hours a day.

At the Nassau Library, I could work by an open window during the day, even without electric lights, distracted only by the sounds of the usual automobile accidents at the corner of Shirley and Parliament streets as the policeperson went off duty and by the sound of the Goombay drums. In warm weather the place was stifling and in rainy weather it was impossible as the windows had to be closed so the books wouldn't get wet. These particular island difficulties gave the Nassau Library a charm which is a far cry from the chilly austerity of the British Library.

Research does not end when you leave the archives. You must research

Continues on page 6

your research, study every bit of information, put the material into some kind of order, even if it's wrong, study that, sleep on it, leave it alone for a time, and then come back to it. The researcher works with family records until the people begin to speak to you. Then you just begin to learn their stories.

Since the people of the Bahamas, both prehistoric and historic, left so little of themselves behind, the researcher must use every available method to uncover even hints of their life styles. Besides reading their papers, you must walk about their plantations, visit their familiar haunts, fantasize about their lives and get in touch with their spirits.

As I walked the streets of historic Charleston one mid-December morning and looked at the magnificent colonial architecture, I tried to imagine what the city had been like on December 14, 1782, as American Loyalists made their way along the streets toward the Bay. Carrying their few belongings they probably kept their eyes on the cobblestones to avoid the stares of their one-time friends, the rebels who had banished them from their homeland. Who were the people exiled that day? What were they thinking? Who were the people peering out their partially closed shutters and what were *they* thinking? Was that day as clear and crisp as this one? I tried to envision the scene at the harbor with mobs of people boarding transports as distraught captains issued orders to confused refugees. Engrossed in my thoughts, I looked up, expecting to see many tall ships riding at anchor, but instead found a lone ugly gray battleship. Tiny waves lapped at the shore as they had centuries ago, but the few people on the bay this morning had no thought of the tragedy that had befallen their fellow Americans on this same date two hundred years ago.

As part of my research on the American Loyalists who migrated to the Bahamas, I explored the ruins of some of their plantations on the island of San Salvador. I hacked my way through the bush as the vicious haulback snatched at my clothes. I tried to draw pictures of the buildings and their relative location on the Farquharson plantation but I rarely knew the direction I had come from or where I was going. Sometimes I would get myself so turned around that it was hours before I could find my way out of the bush. When the children of San Salvador get lost in the bush they take off their clothes, turn them inside out and put them on again, a method which they vow will work. I should have tried it.

Two-year search for two graves on Farquharson plantation brought success but within months the graves were desecrated by natives searching for gold. *(Sandra Riley)*

Exploring the Family Island plantations was always a difficult prospect, and I soon learned I had to confine my research to following definite leads. In a botany report printed by the field study school, the students had noted the discovery of two tombs on the Farquharson plantation. I knew they must be the tombs of Charles Farquharson and his companion Kitty Davies, but it took me two years of intermittent searching to find them. Finally two men said they could take me right to the place.

They took me to a low-lying area with a few trees and some stones lying about on the soft red dirt. "Dis da graveyard," they said with certainty, "'mongst dese stopper trees." No botanist at the Finger Lakes field school would have ever designated this place as a graveyard, I thought, preparing myself for further exploration. This was definitely not the place.

I had been all over the area of the main yard dozens of times over the years and had seen nothing. Once again we marched up the hill to the great house. Usually I watch where I'm walking so that I don't break my neck, but this time I looked at the dense bush along the road for a sign, any kind of sign. I spotted what looked barely like a path. The men cut the bush and I followed.

There it was, two tombs enclosed by a short stone wall with an opening where a wooden gate had once been. One hand-hewn fencepost blocked our way. The smaller grave was badly broken up and there was a large hole at the foot of Farquharson's grave.

When I went back to the site several months later, it was clearly visible from the road. The entire area had been burnt and cleared for planting, the natives said. Since the place was covered with rocks, it was obvious that no planting had been or was about to be done there. The graves had received further desecration by gold hunters. I was told that island people often went to the places I had been in hopes of finding gold. My hope now is that scholars will follow behind me and find the treasures I have missed or take my lead and find new treasure.

As for the people of San Salvador who could not believe I would search so desperately for anything but treasure, they are right, but my sought-after treasure is not gold but the diamond of historical truth. ■

1824 Storm Search Is Rewarding

BY DONALD C. GABY

"One hundred years ago a severe hurricane came here and tipped me over. Then I began to send up this vigorous young sprout and now this greater tempest has utterly destroyed me." These words, written by Charles Torrey Simpson in describing damage done at his home in the famous hurricane of September 1926, set this writer on a quest for evidence of that earlier great hurricane. This effort extended over a decade. It may serve to illustrate how even an amateur historian can make an interesting and sometimes useful contribution.

Charles Torrey Simpson sits in front of a fallen oak similar to the one that produced the new growth that fell in the 1926 hurricane. (HASF)

Dr. Charles Torrey Simpson was a fascinating person. A botanist with the Smithsonian Institution, he spent much time in Florida during the late 19th century and made his final home in Miami early in the 20th. He had personally experienced many hurricanes in Florida and Cuba, and had also visited soon after where other hurricanes had passed in order to assess the damage, especially to plants. He was quite knowledgeable about these storms.

In 1903 he bought a 15½ acre homesite near the mouth of the Little River and proceeded to build a home. This property consisted of a beautiful stand of red mangroves along the shore of Biscayne Bay, tropical hardwood hammock on the higher ground, and pine woods. Simpson wrote several books on South Florida, and in **Florida Wildlife** (1) he described in telling detail the effects of the 1926 hurricane on his hammock.

There was a very old oak tree that had been tipped to an angle of 45 degrees in some earlier storm with its top twisted off, but it had thrown up a vigorous shoot, no doubt immediately after the storm that injured it. By 1926 this shoot had reached a height of 50 feet and a diameter of 16 inches. The '26 storm twisted the whole off at the ground and threw it across a path through the hammock. In clearing the path, Simpson sawed off the shoot and, being a botanist, he counted the tree rings. There were about an even hundred!

The '26 storm also felled a great many pine trees and, wherever these were cut to clear roads or yards, Simpson counted the rings. He found that nearly all of them were about 100 years old, with here and there an older tree. Simpson was 79 years of age when he made this record, and 85 when his book was published. Here was clear evidence, speaking from the past, of a great hurricane that passed over this same area about a century before, that is, about 1824!

Simpson's account intrigued me. Being a meteorologist and at that time employed at the National Hurricane Center, I began to wonder how one might learn more about this early hurricane, who might have observed it where Miami later was to develop, and what effect, if any, it had on our local history. I began to read all that was available on American hurricanes of that period. More important, I asked the advice of knowledgeable friends. As in all such endeavors, the help of others is indispensable, and so it proved for me. Arva Moore Parks, noted local historian, made several valuable suggestions. Among these were that I should read the **Territorial Papers of the United States** (2) in the University of Miami library, plus other references (3). She also suggested that, if ever in Washington, D.C., I should read the **Cape Florida Lighthouse Letters** (4) at the National Archives.

I first read the Territorial Papers and other references and from these learned much about who was living in the area to become Miami in the 1820s. In 1821 the United States acquired Florida from Spain and one of the Government's first responsibilities was to determine land ownership. Several families did reside near the mouth of the Miami River and on Key Biscayne, but no written record was found of what must have been a frightening experience in the wilderness.

Other reading included **Early American Hurricanes** by David Ludlum (5) which contained accounts of hurricanes in 1824 and 1827 that might have been the storm. The 1824 hurricane he described as passing into Georgia after having previously passed through the Lower Bahama Islands. He stated further that "Its previous history is shrouded in silence. Neither Poey nor Tannehill mentions any activity in the West Indies at this time."

I had read Tannehill's famous book **Hurricanes** (6). The equally famous listing of hurricanes by Poey (7) was not available in any local library. Dr. Ludlum was a renowned historian and had obviously read Poey, and this was taken to mean that this hurricane must have reached the Bahamas over a passage across the

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Donald C. Gaby, a meteorologist who has been lured into research and writing, promises Update more articles.

open ocean north of the West Indies! This initial period of reading hurricane material available in Miami took place in 1970-71.

In early summer of 1972 I was fortunate to obtain a new position as manager of a field station of the National Environmental Satellite Service being established in Miami. One benefit of the new job was the requirement and opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. at least once a year to meet with the other station managers and our chief. That summer our first meeting ended on a Friday at noon and at last came the opportunity to visit the National Archives. Acting on a tip given by Arva Parks, upon arrival I asked for a Dr. Holdcamper who was familiar with the Cape Florida Lighthouse Letters. She immediately showed me how to obtain these and I sat down to an afternoon of most interesting reading.

In those days the lighthouses were under the Commissioner of the Revenue who also had collectors of the revenue at selected cities and a fleet of revenue cutters. These letters contained correspondence among the collectors at Key West and St. Augustine and their chief at Washington, and after construction of the Cape Florida Lighthouse also contained correspondence with the lighthouse keepers. I was able to read the letters from 1823 through 1829 before having to leave to catch my flight home. Among valuable information gained was the following:

1) That the Congress had appropriated money for three lighthouses along the Florida coast during the 1823-24 session, one of which was to be built at Cape Florida.

2) Of a contract made with Mr. Samuel Lincoln of Boston to build the Cape Florida lighthouse and the presumed loss of his ship with materials in the "gale" of September 1824. ("Gale" was a term commonly used for hurricane.)

3) Reports of damage to buoys in the Keys that same month.

4) No other references to storms from 1823 through 1829.

By late 1972 I thought I had enough material for a story and began to put it together. All of the evidence appeared to point to the September 1824 hurricane as the one that had devastated Simpson's hammock and sunk the ship laden with materials for construction of the lighthouse at Cape Florida. A preliminary "most probable track" for the great storm was drawn.

In order to avoid criticism of bias, I asked Gilbert C. Clark, experienced hurricane forecaster at the National

Bayfront of the Simpson property strewn after the 1926 hurricane. *(HASF)*

Hurricane Center, to prepare the track. Gil Clark was most happy to assist in this way. The track fit Ludlum's account of a passage through the Bahama Islands as well as other evidence. **(See Figure 1.)** In August 1973 my very first version of "Miami's Earliest Known Great Hurricane" was sent to Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau who was then editor of **Tequesta**, the journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida.

During October 1973, while researching an 1876 hurricane for Arva, I found an error in the **Monthly Weather Review** track for that hurricane near Washington, D.C. I wrote to the National Climatic Center to inform them of this error and mentioned working on the September 1824 hurricane in Florida. W. Hodges of the Center wrote to thank me, and for my study he included weather observations taken at Tampa (Fort Brooke) and St. Augustine during that early period.

Although the observations at St. Augustine did not indicate clearly the passage of a hurricane that month, they were such as to indicate that the 1824 hurricane, in passing from South Florida to Georgia, must have moved sufficiently far offshore as to cause no noteworthy weather at St. Augustine.

Also during October 1973, I borrowed from the National Weather Service library at Washington a copy of Poey's listing of hurricanes. Most hurricane forecasters at Miami had not seen this classic work. Poey did make reference to a hurricane at Guadeloupe on 7-8 September 1824! Ludlum had erred in stating otherwise! This new knowledge provided the basis for a significantly different hurricane track that showed the storm moving from a much lower latitude across the Lesser Antilles near Guadeloupe. Because no mention of this storm appeared to have been recorded in Puerto Rico, the track was drawn with the storm passing well east and north of that island, placing it in the weaker left rear quadrant where the winds are usually much less. Again Gil Clark constructed a most probable track, it being shown as **No. 2 in Figure 1**.

During 1974 the "final" story was put together, revised a couple of times after suggestions by Professor Tebeau of the University of Miami and by Arva. Galley proofs were returned in October. **Tequesta** 1974 was published in early 1975 and contained the article "Miami's Earliest Known Great Hurricane" with the second track indicated as the most probable for this hurricane in 1824.

Several years passed. Then in July 1979 a man came to my office who would add another chapter to my story. Sr. Jorge Rovira was an attorney from San Juan, Puerto Rico and an avid amateur weatherman. Our conversation naturally led to

"my" hurricane of 1824 and I asked if he might know of any evidence for this storm in Puerto Rico. Rovira replied that he did not, but that he had a friend who most certainly would, if the storm had affected Puerto Rico. He told me of a book by Luis A. Salivia, M.D. treating the hurricanes that had affected that island. Upon his return home he graciously sent me a copy of **Historia de los Temporales de Puerto Rico y Las Antillas (1492 a 1970).**

This book **(8)**, published in 1972, had been unknown to me and was not available in the library at the National Hurricane Center. Imagine my delight in reading in detail of the passage on 9 September 1824, of this hurricane across the southwest corner of Puerto Rico. It had been one of the most severe hurricanes to strike that island up to that time.

With this new information, yet another storm track was revised by Gil. This appears as storm track **No. 3 of Figure 1**.

One suggestion made by Arva had still not been followed. It was that I should visit the public library in Key West and ask Betty Bruce, chief librarian, for her help in finding any early newspaper accounts in Key West that may have mentioned this storm. Although that suggestion had been

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Storm Power Scale Designed By Miamians

By JEANNE BELLAMY

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

Category	Description	Mean wind speeds (mph)	Storm surge (ft.)	North Atlantic & Gulf examples	
1	Minimal	74-95	4-5	Agnes	1972
2	Moderate	96-110	6-8	Cleo	1964
3	Extensive	111-130	9-12	Betsy	1965
4	Extreme	131-155	13-18	David	1979
5	Catastrophic	Greater than 155	Greater than 18	Camille	1969

Herbert Saffir devised scale, gave it to the Hurricane Center; center director Robert Simpson added storm surge heights. (Herbert Saffir)

The Richter Scale is to earthquakes as the Saffir-Simpson Scale is to hurricanes.

People have been understanding the magnitude of earthquakes for nearly half a century since Prof. Charles F. Richter published his scale in 1935. The power of hurricanes stayed nameless until a Miami engineer devised the Saffir-Simpson Scale in 1971.

In that year, Herbert S. Saffir wrote a report for the United Nations on low-cost construction to resist high winds. While studying hurricanes all over the world for the project, he devised a tabulation to explain the destructive strength of these tropical cyclones. The full text spells out the kind of wreckage to be expected at each level of wind speed.

For instance, a Grade One storm is "nominal," with winds only 74 to 95 miles an hour. The worst kind, Grade Five, would be "catastrophic," like the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 which knocked over a railway train in the Florida Keys and drowned 400 persons with a storm surge that roared over the low islands 11 to 18 feet higher than the normal level of the sea.

The narrative part of the Saffir-Simpson Scale gives this frightening description of a Grade Five storm: "Winds greater than 155 miles per hour. Shrubs and trees blown down; considerable damage to roofs of buildings; all signs down. Very severe and extensive damage to windows and doors. Complete failure of roofs on many residences and industrial buildings. Extensive shattering of glass in windows and doors. Some complete building failures. Small buildings overturned or blown away. Complete destruction of mobile homes. And/or: storm surge greater than 18 feet above normal. Major damage to lower floors of all structures less than 15 feet above sea level within 500 yards of shore. Low-lying escape routes inland cut by rising water 3 to 5 hours before hurricane center arrives. Massive evacuation of residential areas on low ground within 3 to 10 miles of shore possibly required."

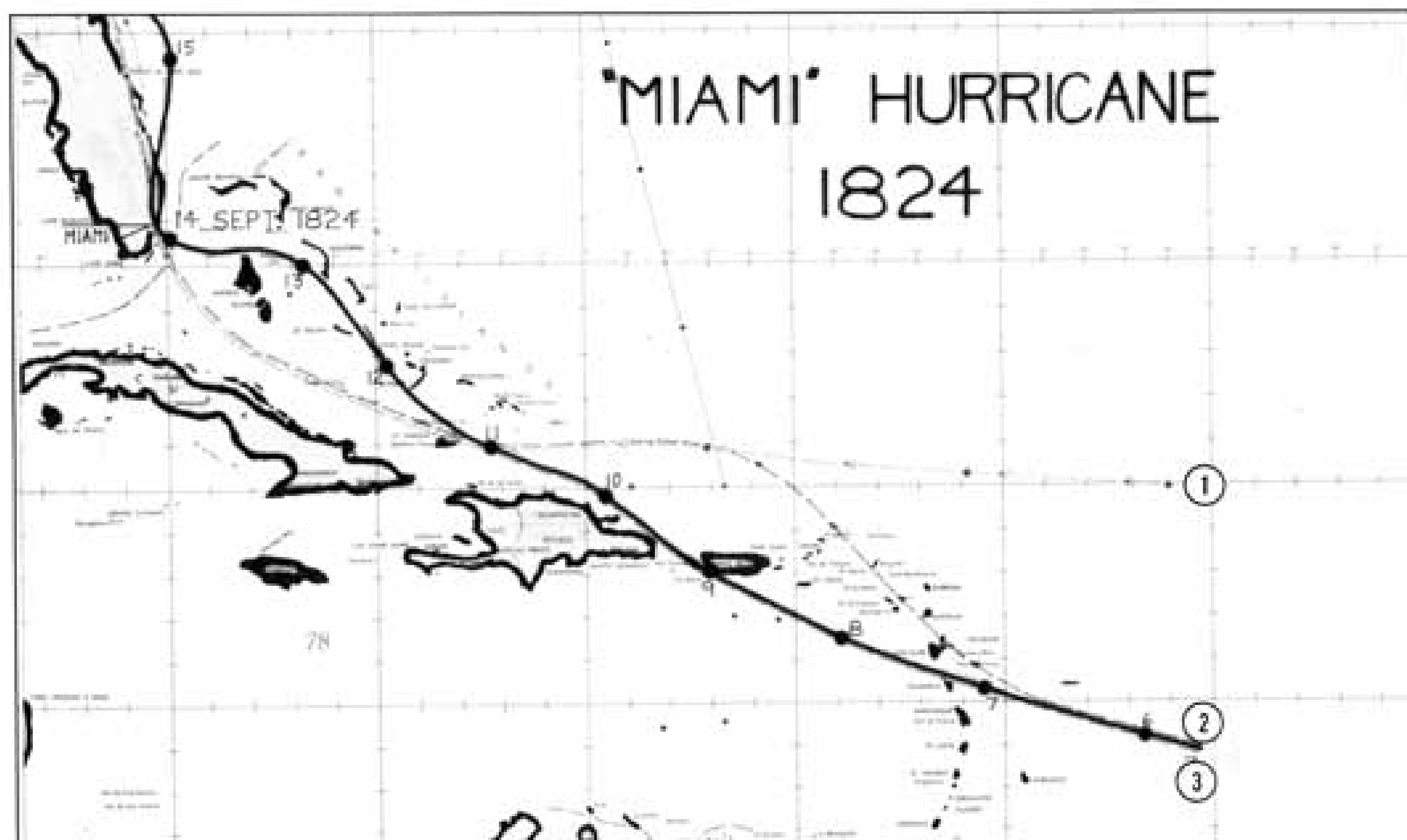
Saffir gave the scale to the Hurricane Center in Miami for the use of its forecasters. The director of the center, Robert Simpson, added the estimates of the height of storm surges, so the table has been known since then as the Saffir-Simpson Scale.

Saffir, the head of Herbert Saffir Consulting Engineers in Coral Gables, has studied and reported on hurricane damage to structures in many parts of the world for 30 years. He is the author of the South Florida Building Code's section on wind load requirements. His work made this code the first in the land to set design standards based on sound engineering principles.

Few laymen know that wind gets stronger with height. A three-story building would feel a 120-mile-an-hour wind at that speed. The same wind would strike the top of a 30-story skyscraper at 167 miles an hour, according to a widely used engineering formula. On this basis, Saffir recently calculated exactly how strong buildings must be at various heights to survive hurricanes. Using these figures, the South Florida Building Code will let one-story buildings be a little weaker than those 30 feet or more in height, thus saving construction costs.

The 120-mile-an-hour wind is Grade Three on the scale — one likely to cause extensive damage once in 50 years. Saffir explains that building for total resistance to hurricanes would be very expensive and not practical.

Saffir's report on a tornado that battered parts of Fort Lauderdale on May 24, 1979, was printed for the convention of the American Society of Civil Engineers at Miami Beach in 1980. He found that the tornado's wind speeds at touchdown were those of a Grade Five hurricane, at least 155 miles an hour. He concluded that the destruction he saw was "the type of damage that would ensue under hurricane conditions even with a strong hurricane-resistant code." ■



Tracking the history of a hurricane can take longer than tracking the actual hurricane. Donald C. Gaby has plotted four courses for the 1824 "Miami" hurricane, based on information collected in research over a decade. Earlier versions are numbered and the heavy line is the latest. *(Donald C. Gaby)*

made in 1977, it was not until March 1981 that events conspired to place me in the Key West library on a rainy afternoon.

Mrs. Bruce and her sister were most helpful. After regretfully informing me that a newspaper had not been published in Key West until 1829 (too late for my storm), they suggested that I read the **Royal Gazette**, published at Nassau, Bahama Islands in 1824, which the library had on microfilm. The **Royal Gazette** (9) added much new data.

During September 1824 there were many reports of ships lost or damaged, including a Royal Navy survey vessel. In October, the Gazette published the Meteorological Diary for September. This gave the observations of wind strength and direction, plus weather, and the record clearly showed that the hurricane had passed east and north of Nassau and very close to that city during the evening of 13 September 1824 while moving westward.

In our earlier reconstruction of most probable tracks, the evidence seemed to indicate that the hurricane reached the region of the Miami River on 13 September 1824 and this was shown in the version previously published in **Tequesta**. Now a final correction could be made. The path of the great hurricane of September 1824 is most likely close to track No. 4 (unnumbered, shown in Figure 1 as the heavy line extending across the Leeward Islands and the southwest corner of Puerto Rico, then through the Bahama Islands to Miami, and finally off the Florida coast near Palm Beach before moving into Georgia). It must have reached the area that is now Miami on 14 September 1824.

Is the job yet finished? Probably not. Although I now feel confident about the major features of the storm's track, there is certainly room for adjustment. Also, perhaps someday an eye-witness account of the storm in Florida will be found in an old trunk in someone's attic.

Things I learned along the way about historical research included these points: (1) Ask for help wherever it may be found and do your best to follow suggestions given. (2) Don't trust any authority, even the most renowned make mistakes and may not have done their research well. (3) Always go to the original sources when those are available. (4) Expect to be led from one source or person to another, some of the best leads are found this way. (5) Don't hurry! Don't even start, if you don't have plenty of time. ■

(1) **FLORIDA WILDLIFE**, Charles T. Simpson. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1932.

(2) **TERRITORIAL PAPERS OF THE UNITED STATES, Vol. XXIII**, pp 94-95, and **VOl. XXII**, p 17, Washington D.C.

(3) **THE EARLIEST LAND GRANTS IN THE MIAMI AREA**, Henry S. Marks, Tequesta, **No. XVIII**, pp 15-21, 1958

(4) **LIGHTHOUSE LETTERS**, John Rodman, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. 1824.

(5) **EARLY AMERICAN HURRICANES, 1492-1870**, David M. Ludlum, American Meteorological Society, Boston, 19

(6) **HURRICANES, THEIR NATURE AND HISTORY**, Ivan R. Tannehil, Princeton University Press, 1944.

(7) **TABLE CHRONOLOGIQUE DE QUATRE CENTS CYCLONES QUI ONT SEVI DANS LES INDES OCCIDENTALES ET DAN L'OCEAN ATLANTIQUE NORD, PENDANT UN INTERVALLE DE 362 ANNEES (DEPUIS 1493-1855)**, Andres Poey. Paris, 1862.

(8) **HISTORIA DE LOS TEMPORALES DE PUERTO RICO Y LAS ANTILLAS (1492 a 1970)**, Luis A. Salivia, M.D., Editorial Edil, Inc., San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1972.

(9) **THE ROYAL GAZETTE**, Nassau, New Providence Island, . . . 1824 . . .

20 Years Ago Cleo Roared In On Dead Aim

By DR. MICHAEL KESSELMAN

Twenty years ago this August, 1984, Ranger 7 radioed to earth the first close-up pictures of the moon, the North Vietnamese attacked two United States destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, and a wind whirl began its formation south of Dakar, Africa. August 27, 1984 marked the 20th anniversary of Cleo, the last hurricane to strike Miami directly.

August 15, 1964, was the day this tropical disturbance was spawned off the African Coast. August 18 the German ship Lichtenstein reported a falling barometer and heavy rains. August 20 a circulation began to develop and the tropical storm was dubbed Cleo. The storm reached hurricane intensity the next day, taking dead aim at the island of Guadeloupe. After leaving 14 dead and 44 injured in Guadeloupe, Cleo intensified south of Puerto Rico with winds of 140-150 miles per hour. On August 23, a Navy reconnaissance plane was severely damaged, and seven crewman injured after penetrating the storm's eye.

Passing just south of the Dominican Republic on the 24th, Cleo veered north, entering land east of Les Cayes, Haiti. One hundred and thirty people lost their lives and the storm caused considerable destruction. Cleo lost much of its former intensity overland, however, and was a minimal hurricane when it passed over a narrow peninsula of Cuba, east of Cabo Cruz, and then into the Gulf of Guacanyabo. During the trek across Cuba, Cleo's winds probably dropped below hurricane intensity. According to Chief Forecaster Dr. Gordon Dunn, "Cuban weather stations cooperated fully with the National Hurricane Center." Amazingly, no weather stations in Cuba reported more than twenty-mile-per-hour winds. Forecaster Gil Clark noted that the mountainous terrain sapped the strength from Cleo's center. He also said that there were no major weather reporting stations in the storm's path.

Chief Forecaster Gordon Dunn had already had a busy day August 26, 1964 when at 2 a.m. August 27 Cleo's eye wobbled left instead of right and came directly across Miami, the first hurricane since King in 1950 to hit Miami directly. *(The Miami News)*

Shortly after emerging from Cuba's north coast, Cleo regained hurricane intensity and began moving on a northwest-to-north course toward southeast Florida. By midday on the 26th the storm had winds of 85 miles per hour with a 29.06 barometric pressure. Aircraft reconnaissance penetrated the storm thoughout the afternoon and found no intensification. However, in the three-hour interim prior to the eye reaching Key Biscayne Cleo intensified at a rapid rate. This intensification was mainly due to the warm temperatures of the shallow water between the western edge of the Gulf Stream and the coast.

As the storm approached Miami the difficulty of predicting its actual landfall was magnified. According to present-day Chief Hurricane Forecaster Dr. Neil Frank, who was a forecaster in 1964:

"Cleo clearly exemplified the constant problem we face in predicting the actual landfall of a hurricane. The Hurricane Center thought it would not strike because of the constant wobble of the storm's eye. If the eye wobbled right Miami would escape unscathed as it did during Hurricane David in 1979. However, at the last moment, the eye of the hurricane wobbled left and moved into Key Biscayne at 2 a.m. August 27, 1964."

Cleo was the first hurricane to deliver a direct blow to Miami since Hurricane King in 1950. The sustained winds reached 110 miles per hour when the anemometer atop the aviation building blew away. Gusts were estimated to have been as high as 135 miles per hour. Based on present-day Hurricane Center categorization, Cleo would be classified as a category two storm which is a borderline major level storm at best. The lowest barometric reading was 28.57 at North Miami. Rainfall in the city totaled 6.80" but Chief Forecaster Dunn claimed that the actual rainfall was nine or ten inches as some of the precipitation was blown from the gauge. Dr. Frank also noted that Cleo's rainfall was lower because of its swift rate of forward speed. The highest tides only reached 5.5 feet above normal at Pompano Beach. Forecaster Gil Clark noted that if Cleo approached from the east today it would generate 8- to 10-foot tides above normal. Cleo's passage was also accompanied by especially vivid flashes of lightning around the storm's eye.

The geometric center of the eye passed over Virginia Key and reached the west side of Biscayne Bay at the 36th Street Causeway. Extensive damage was reported along Miami Beach while Perrine, Homestead and areas west of the Palmetto Expressway escaped with minimal destruction. Trees were uprooted, plate glass windows broken, automobiles overturned and communication disrupted in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. At least two dozen fires broke out from downed power lines. A warehouse fire caused one-half million dollars in damage as firemen could not cope with the raging flames fanned by the gusting wind. Forecaster Clark noted, "The noise was so loud from the wind that you could not even hear yourself talk."

At Opa-locka airport, a DC-3 plane was lifted off the ground and found in a canal a mile from its original spot. Plush lobbies in the Fontainebleau, Deauville, Kenilworth and Carillon Hotels in Miami Beach suffered extensive damage with broken plate glass windows, collapsed ceilings and ruined furniture. Sand and trees made Collins Avenue completely impassable. The eastern end of Tamiami Trail was blocked by fallen trees.

According to Miami Sanitation Director J. Grady Phelps, "This storm spewed more twigs, leaves, boards, paper and general junk into greater Miami than any other hurricane. I have been around after every hurricane since 1926, and

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Dr. Michael N. Kesselman has ranged from hurricanes to naturalists to schools in his **Update** contributions.

this one tops them all for bringing down the trash." The Red Cross reported 1,200 homes, 71 small businesses, and 90 trailers severely damaged. Two hundred traffic lights were downed in the metropolitan area.

The 110-mile-per-hour winds of Cleo wreaked havoc on buildings in Dade County. Wind damage exceeded $15,000 at Jackson Memorial Hospital. An estimated $250,000 damage was reported at Dade County parks. Oak and ficus trees were felled at Fairchild Garden while the press box was blown away at Miami Central High stadium. Windows were smashed all along Miracle Mile in Coral Gables. Electricity was disrupted in more than 300,000 homes in Dade while telephones were out in 61,000 homes.

Local institutions of higher learning felt the wrath of Cleo. Extensive water and wind damage was reported at Miami-Dade Community College and the University of Miami. Numerous windows were smashed at the Lindsey Hopkins Education Center. Widespread damage was reported at Barry College. One hundred trees were leveled, windows were broken and the roof torn off the chapel.

The local airports also felt the brunt of the storm. Twenty private and commercial planes were damaged at the Miami International Airport. Two buildings were damaged at Tamiami Airport and at Opa-locka Airport nine planes were damaged extensively.

The National Hurricane Center was housed in the "old aviation building" located at 36th Street and 27th Avenue. The nine-story building, which has since been torn down, was begun as a hotel, then called the chicken coop in the 1940s because chickens were raised within its confines. When the aviation industry and National Airlines purchased and modernized the building in the late 40s the Hurricane Center, which had been located at the Lindsey Hopkins Education Center until 1959, was moved to the radar-equipped aviation building.

Forecaster Gil Clark and map-plotter Tom Dow watched and monitored Hurricane Cleo from the aviation building. Clark recalled that fateful day in which he was trapped on an elevator during the apex of the storm. According to Clark:

"Tom and I wanted to actually see the storm in action. We took an elevator to the top of the building during the eye and observed an eerie calm including clear skies and bright stars. On the way down, the elevator stopped above the floor as the wind gusted to hurricane strength disrupting power after the center's passage. We both crawled through a narrow opening in the door. If the elevator had started again, it would have sliced us both in half."

The winds blew away the anemometer at the aviation building, giving a boost to Gordon Dunn's longtime argument for stronger wind measuring instruments. The Hurricane Center was moved the next year to the new modern offices at the University of Miami with more sophisticated wind-measuring equipment.

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared Dade and eight other counties in Florida ranging northward to Volusia as major disaster areas. Fortunately only three persons lost their lives during Cleo in the state. Thirty-eight injuries were reported in Dade County. The final monetary damage total statewide reached $125,000,000.

The entire east coast of Florida felt the winds of Cleo. Thirty per cent of the state's grapefruit crop and ten per cent of the orange crop were destroyed. Tornados were reported in Davie, Titusville and New Smyrna Beach.

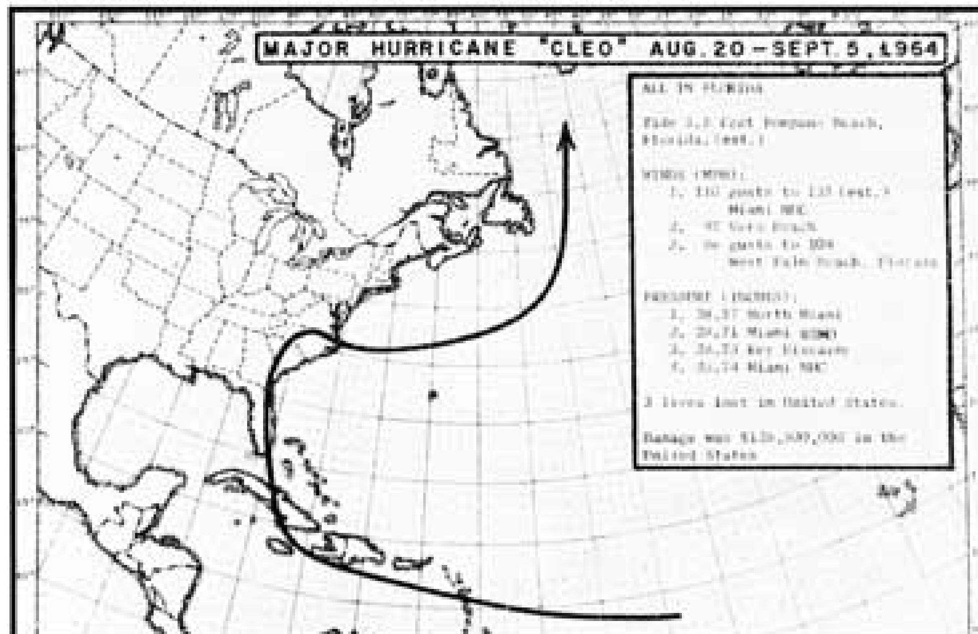
In retrospect, Chief Hurricane Forecaster in 1964 Gordon Dunn said he was surprised by Cleo's intensity. "We felt we had our finger on the intensity and it fooled us. Next time we will probably increase our margin of safety, or in other words, we are going to make it a little harder for anyone to accuse us of slicing the bologna too thin."

The dilemma of precise prediction of a severe hurricane's landfall continues to plague weather forecasters today. There is tremendous pressure on forecasters to pinpoint an exact landfall of a hurricane with adequate advance warning to facilitate sufficient evacuation procedures. The margin of error can be based on a slight wobble of the storm's eye to the left or right.

Although the cost of securing and evacuating the area is great, it is a meager price to pay when considering the potential catastrophic ramification of a category 4 or 5 storm. According to Dr. Neil Frank, Chief Hurricane Forecaster today, "A hurricane like Cleo would have only a mild impact on the community today, however a storm equal to 1926 would bring the community to its knees with death and destruction.

"We were lucky in '79 as David wobbled to the right, but we may not be as lucky in the future. What is needed is a rapid evacuation. It will take twenty-one hours to evacuate Dade and Broward County."

Many agonizing questions still remain unanswered. Will enough people heed advance warnings? Is 21 hours sufficient time to evacuate the area? Hopefully these and other questions will not be answered in 1984, the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Cleo. ■



Spawned off the African coast August 15, 1964, Cleo took twelve days to reach Key Biscayne and then come onto the mainland at the Julia Tuttle causeway. *(HASF)*

Clockwise from top left:
Allan W. Davis was one of a number of white men who wrestled with alligators at Musa Isle tourist attraction for almost 50 years. One Indian uses a steel rod to call alligator from its den; the other stands ready to shoot when it appears. Henry Coppinger performed with alligators in shows throughout the country. *(HASF)*

Family Copes with Gators Through Four Generations

By PATSY WEST

My family has never been fond of alligators and crocodiles. Its first real contact with the reptiles was in 1888 when my great-grandparents, William and Adeline Freeman, moved with their children to Little River from Marion County, Florida. Great-Grandfather Freeman hunted with the Seminoles, which doubtless included hunting gators. Family picnics to the beach entailed crossing Crocodile Hole—a black-water creek fringed with large mangroves, brackish water, and an abundance of crocks.

A local character who came to be associated with saurians and who popularized them as an early tourist attraction was Alligator Joe, nee Warren Frazee. Joe was known for his alligator exhibitions in Palm Beach and south to Miami from the late 1890s to 1915. According to my grandmother, Ethel Freeman West, Great-Grandfather Freeman helped Alligator Joe catch a fifteen-foot crocodile at Crocodile Hole, probably around the turn of the century. Joe kept the animal penned in a partially-sunk derelict boat on Little River for tourists to see. After the Freeman family caught Joe trying to feed it a live dog, however, Joe was not welcomed on Little River.

Joe later opened a crudely built attraction at the juncture of Wagner Creek and the Miami River, stocking the slough area with alligators and crocodiles. This site was considered a bona fide tourist attraction by 1911 and was featured on the sightseeing boat tours of the Biscayne Navigation Company. The **Miami Herald** stated: "More visitors see Joe's performances in Florida each winter than go to any other single attraction (**Miami Herald**, April 1, 1911)."

In May 1911 Joe took a reported 3,000 alligators and crocodiles of all sizes to a resort near Denver, Colorado (**Miami Herald**, May 12, 1911). In 1915 he booked his saurian attraction at the San Francisco Exposition, during which he died of pneumonia.

Joe left an unusual estate consisting of 148 alligators valued at $2,000; 25 crocodiles, $2,700; 500 baby alligators, $250;

In the depression years when money was tight, it was not uncommon for young Floridians to hunt alligators for extra income. My cousin Clarence Phinney hunted in the Daytona area west of Port Orange. He said that the best method of hunting was to carefully steal up to a pond where the gators were swimming or sunning on the bank and get in a shot. Any noise and they would scatter for the water or hide in their dens under the bank.

Then came tedious work for the hunter. The alligator's den had to be located. One hunter would push a thin steel rod down into the ground until he hit the den. Then he would gradually work the alligator out into the water, where sooner or later the gator would have to surface for air and could be shot.

Seminole Indians and white hunt-

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Patsy West, who, like Thelma Peters, wrote for **Update's** first issue, October 1973, is now busy being a mother in Fort Lauderdale.

ers also employed an additional strategy of "calling" the alligators out of their den. Laying the steel rod against their throats, they would imitate the gator's mating call or "grunt," which vibrated down the rod to the gator. Thinking his territory was being invaded, the gator would swim to the surface where he could be shot (interview Clarence W. Phinney, Sr. 1/19/80; interview Allan W. Davis, 1/22/80).

In Miami, the former success of Alligator Joe's business efforts had not been forgotten. In an interview with Henry Coppinger, Jr. in 1975 concerning the Seminole Indians' role in Miami tourist attractions I learned of Henry's involvement in popularizing alligator wrestling in the 1920s and 1930s. He performed in major South Florida shows as well as in pools throughout the country, even going to a Canadian exhibition. Henry's wrestling was a spectacular show and a real crowd-thriller. He actually dove out of a canoe into the water to capture and then wrestle the alligator, then put it to sleep by stroking its belly.

At Musa Isle tourist attraction, alligator wrestling by Seminole and white wrestlers was a key feature until the attraction closed in the 1960s, thrilling crowds of tourists for almost 50 years.

Alligator wrestling was not without casualties and was not for the inexperienced to attempt. Among daredevil feats, placing one's head in the alligator's open mouth was a very popular showpiece. At the time it became a popular stunt, however, the Seminole men were wearing their hair combed back with a long front bang. On occasion a man's bang fell forward, touching the gator's palate. The jaws snapped shut and even after the gator was shot, it was difficult to pry the jaws from the man's head (interview Allan W. Davis, 1/22/80). Among the many Seminole Indian wrestlers in Musa Isle's lengthy history were Henry "Cowboy" Billie, Henry Sam Willie, Mike Osceola, and Bobby Tiger. Notable white wrestlers were Allan W. Davis, Phil Wofford, Tex Farless, and Tommy Carter.

Alligator hides, once a major source of income for the Seminoles, as a market were on their way out by the 1930s. When Bert Lasher, the entrepreneur/owner of Musa Isle tourist attraction from 1922 to 1932, left the attraction, the Musa Isle trading post closed. As a result, William McKinley Osceola, head of Musa Isle Indian Camp, and Allan W. Davis, the attraction's foreman, went into business together to pick up Musa Isle's hide trade, one of the last

Charlie Tommie, armed with steel rod and gun, is off to hunt alligators. *(HASF)*

such businesses in the area.

I grew up on Tidewater Creek on the North Fork of New River in Fort Lauderdale, which had its share of alligators. They were looked on as a threat. When our house was under construction in 1947, an alligator crawled out of the creek and fell into the pit dug for the septic tank. It was a topic of conversation for neighborhood children for years. Neighborhood dogs were known to have been eaten by alligators. The greatest scare my parents ever had was when they were walking our two Samoyeds by the creek and an alligator charged the dogs, throwing one up the bank. My father beat the 10-foot alligator off with the dog's metal link leash.

One of my earliest recollections was my father giving me a stern lecture on what to do if I was ever chased by an alligator. He said to run in zig-zags. An alligator could run fast on a straight course, he said, and a zig-zag course would throw him off and slow him down. Then climb a tree fast, he said.

My parents were not very happy with my grandfather, Clarence West, a real animal lover, when he began feeding an alligator off our landing. One day he learned his lesson when he went to the dock without any gator food and got treed up a coconut by the hungry, disappointed gator.

Evening visitors to our house were always "treated" to a view of the creek at night. With a high-powered flashlight, we would "shine" the gators down the creek, their eyes showing as large, red, illuminated glows.

When the subdivision Gill Isles was built in the late 1950s in the dense hammock across the creek from our house, the bulldozers cut a swath which disturbed an alligator and her nest. She had to be shot. That weekend, my father took a friend of mine and me to see the nest. The eggs had hatched and we posed for the camera holding the aggressive baby gators.

Two family friends once got into a great feud over whether or not alligators were naturally aggressive. One friend was in the sightseeing boat business, the other lived near us on the creek. Folks in our neighborhood had no love for alligators. We were all too afraid for ourselves, our children and our pets. Yet, in this period when conservation and preservation of the species were beginning to gather momentum, it was hard to explain to the officials that alligators could not only be a nuisance, but a threat. In 1950, my grandmother wrote to the governor and our senator concerning our local plight. Their reply suggested that the alligators' aggressiveness was "greatly exaggerated."

Nor did we have much help on a local level from the game wardens. Unless we had the gator contained (like in the septic tank pit) where they could easily capture and take it away, they could do nothing. The police recognized the potential danger, but could not give permission to discharge a gun in the city limits.

Since there are now seawalls all along the creek, the alligators have gone elsewhere. They are no longer on the endangered list and a few licensed individuals are now allowed to dispatch the pests quickly off to gator heaven if they cause trouble in a populated area.

In September 1982 the "Kiplinger Florida Letter" reported that alligator farming was really catching on. Now people have developed a taste for the meat which is served in many area restaurants.

The welfare of crocodiles is now an issue and they are the recipients of renewed interest, special laws, and handling. Fortunately, theirs is a more select habitat and they will probably never cause the consternation that the alligators did. Have you seen the "Crocodile Crossing" signs on Key Largo's Card Sound Road? Ironically (in light of the family's feelings towards saurians), in the past year we have been approached by the federal government to sell them a portion of real estate on North Key Largo for . . .of all things, a crocodile refuge! ■

WHY IS IT CALLED THAT?

Tigertail Avenue

BY WELLBORN PHILLIPS

Tigertail Avenue in Coconut Grove is named for a famous Seminole Indian, Tiger Tail, who was born in Spanish Florida about 1790. His real name was Thlocklo Tustenuggee, or Fish Warrior. His father was chief of the Tallahassee branch of Seminoles.

Young Fish Warrior grew up to be a conspicuous figure: over six feet tall, athletic, powerfully-built, with dark skin, deep furrows in his face, and a nose and mouth that were considerably larger than the average.

The First Seminole War (1817-18) occurred while Fish Warrior was still a young man but his tribe remained friendly with the white man. He lived for a while with the Robert Gambles, a prominent plantation family and developed polished manners. He spoke English fluently, was baptised a Christian, kept the Sabbath, and had many friends among the whites.

The United States purchased Florida from Spain in 1821 and two years later Governor William P. Duval sought a peaceful solution with the Indians. During negotiation of the treaty of Moultrie Creek, he arranged for extensive athletic activities to keep the Indians busy. Young Fish Warrior became the star athlete. During the races and ball games, he wore a strip of panther skin dangling from his belt. Friends referred to him as a "human tiger", and he was nicknamed "Tiger Tail."

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek called for the Indians' removal to a 4,000,000 acre reservation stretching from Ocala south to Charlotte Harbour. It pleased no one. Charges of bad faith and fraud flew. During the next 12 years moderate Indian leaders like Neamantha and John Hicks lost influence and were replaced by firebrands such as Micanopy, Billy Bowlegs, Osceola - and Tiger Tail. These new chiefs led their tribes to war.

The Second Seminole War (1835-1842) was one of the most savage, costly wars in American history. Casualties included 1,466 American troops and thousands of Indians killed; numerous plantations, their owners, slaves, and livestock, were destroyed. (Mysteriously, the Robert Gamble Plantation, almost alone, escaped destruction.) Tiger Tail earned the reputation with the whites as the most talented and devious of all chiefs.

Thlocklo Tustenuggee, also known as Fish Warrior and Tiger Tail. (HASF)

The Indians were not completely defeated. There was no peace treaty. America declared "we won" and sent the troops home! Some Indians had retreated into the Everglades; where their descendants remain today. Others were killed or captured and shipped off to the Oklahoma reservation. Osceola was captured under a white flag of truce and died in prison.

One night the village where Tiger Tail was located was surprised by American troops and supposedly everyone was captured. The Indians showed the whites a large and very old Indian on a bed whose facial features were not recognizable as he supposedly had been beaten up in a drunken brawl. The whites were told "That is Tiger Tail".

The jubilant whites put "Tiger Tail" and the rest of the prisoners on ships headed for New Orleans on their way to Oklahoma. The Indian the Federals thought was Tiger Tail died in New Orleans.

More recent evidence indicates that Tiger Tail actually escaped and lived on. Some believe he escaped that night from the camp into the swamps; others say he went along, unrecognized to Oklahoma, then escaped to Mexico, then found his way back to Florida.

In the 1860s an Indian arrived in Dade County and settled in the area that was soon to be known as Coconut Grove. He was believed to be about 70 years old but he was still strong, well-built, over six feet tall, with dark skin, furrows in his face, and a large mouth and nose. He said his name was Tiger Tail. He camped on the bluff in the area north of where Aviation Avenue is today. At the time there were a few "squatters" in the area and very shortly permanent settlers such as the Beasleys, Frows, Peacocks, and Pents. Tiger Tail became friendly with the whites, wandering up and down the trails, sometimes trading, other times just visiting.

At this time, there was an ill-defined trail that was actually a branch of the main trail that ran along parallel to the coast. It began about where 27th Avenue is today and continued off into the woods to about the location of present day 17th Avenue. This trail was soon nicknamed "Tiger Tail's Trail" after the white settlers' new Indian friend.

In 1882, the old Indian Tiger Tail was standing under a tree during a rain storm when he was struck and killed by lightning. The chance to establish his identity for sure died with him. Tiger Tail's Trail remains!

When developers began platting subdivisions starting with the First Amended Plat of Silver Bluff in 1912, they named the new street located wherever the old historic trail crossed their subdivision Tigertail Avenue and the board of county commissioners made it official when it accepted the plats. ■

Reprinted from *The Miami Realtor*

Wellborn Phillips, our Realtor-Associate writer, continues his series on well-known names in the Miami area.

OUT OF THE TRUNK

Update's cover picture of Charles Torrey Simpson by his reflecting pool came out of HASF's trunk. If you have not looked at **Update's** back cover, do so. The picture is a nearly perfect example of which side is up. When you make up your mind, give us a call at 375-1492.

Around the Museum
Continued from page 2

Groveiers were not so foolish as we looked to Miami and I am thinking that I might enlist the **Metropolis** in this cause which would be the saving of much money and the giving of much more health and pleasure to our people.

R.M. Munroe

Ralph Munroe could and did take a stand on almost any subject, including time zones and daylight saving, which we are still arguing about. When he arrived in Miami in 1877 he was considered one of the "swells" which Helen Muir describes in her **Miami USA** as a "well-traveled bunch who exclaimed in flowery language over the colors of the bay, the sky, the colored fish and the sea gardens. They lived in boats and in tents and finally they crowded the Peacock Inn which evolved because of their coming as the first hostelry, barring the Tropical Hotel on Indian Key."

Munroe soon built his own house on the bay and the front porch of that house has been recreated in our new museum. Sit on that porch and watch the film projected in front of you and you can almost whiff fish drying or the acrid smell of fire under a huge washing cauldron in the yard. Visualize afternoon tea at the Peacock Inn, dances at Spivey's Hall in Lemon City or the picnics and socials around the Grove school.

Take these scenes home with you by making a stop at The Indies Company on your way out of the museum. Pick up **Miami USA**, Thelma Peters' **Lemon City**, Gertrude Kent's **The Coconut Grove School** or Arva Moore Park's **The Forgotten Frontier**. As long as you are about it, why not buy all four? Christmas is coming.

A RECIPE

Afternoon tea continued through the Bay Era and World War I and was still fashionable when Ralph Munroe asked his twenty year-old daughter Patty was she looking for a husband or did she want a tea house. He offered to build her a tea house across the street from their home, The Barnacle, and Patty accepted. Brother Wirth built the house under Daddy's supervision, Patty made the curtains, tablecloths and napkins and her friend Alice Ayars, a ceramist who joined Patty in the business venture, arranged imports of artifacts: Indian rugs, Japanese parasols, and tea from China along with a Chinese tea chest, from which the tea room got its name.

Tea and tea sandwiches made up the fare. A cup of tea went for twenty-five cents; iced tea was thirty cents. The most popular sandwich, nutbread, was available plain or toasted, with or without butter, for thirty cents. Here is their recipe:

Nutbread

4 tbsp sugar, placed in a bowl
add ¾ cup hot water
add ½ cup molasses
add ¾ cup milk
sift in 1 cup each of whole wheat, graham and white flour
6 tbsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 cup cut-up nut meats

Turn into a well-greased bread pan and allow to stand for 15 minutes. Bake in a moderate oven for one hour or until a thin knife or broom whisk comes out clean. (That would be 350 on today's gauges.)

The guest book of the Tea Chest speaks well of its popularity. Visitors from the midwest, most of the eastern seaboard, gulf states, Canada and two from as far away as Paris were among the swells of the 1920s who signed.

The Tea Chest back in the 1920s when Patty Munroe and Alice Ayars ran it has a handmade quilt displayed outside. (Patty Catlow)

Among hometowners were John Bryan, Rev. Benjamin Soper, Mrs. A.B. Gardner, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Adm. Albert Ross and Julia Fillmore Harris.

After a year Alice Ayars' ceramics drew her to Cleveland. The next year Patty became ill and the Tea Chest was closed. La Casita restaurant operated on the site for years and when you go in the Taurus restaurant these days you will see the fireplace Wirth Munroe built.

If you haven't read "Growing Up at the Barnacle" by Patty Munroe Catlow as told to Jean C. Taylor, stop by the library the next time you are in the museum and ask for the June 1977 issue of **Update**. "I didn't make a cent out of the Tea Chest," she says with no regret. Patty finally married Bill Catlow, with whom she had grown up, in 1932 and they lived away from Miami until 1964.

— ALICE P. WILLEY

THE FINAL WORD

After my good friend Jeanne Voltz, one-time food editor of **The Miami Herald**, became food editor of **Women's Day**, reputed to have the largest circulation among monthly magazines, I was visiting her in New York one June and she was grousing about the hassle in the office over which picture to use for the Christmas cover in December. Accustomed to a daily deadline of 6 p.m., I said, incredulously, "That's six months away."

I now work on a six-month production schedule and am hard-pushed to meet it. As I write, it has just turned September. Arthur, Bertha and, briefly, Cesar have appeared on the hurricane-watchers' list. None watch more nervously than I. This November issue has hurricanes in it. It was assembled last February, built around a phone call last fall from Mike Kesselman, suggesting a story on Cleo to run in August, the 20th anniversary of her whirlwind visit, the last Miami had at that point.

August is early in the hurricane season and I felt safe with a story coming out August 1.

However, in April the museum was finally to open. The **Introductory Museum Guide**, which had been in the deep freeze for months was thawed, pictures taken, and printed, taking precedence over the May issue of **Update**, which was ready to print April 1. It quickly became the August issue and the hurricane material was rescheduled for November.

Arthur, Bertha and Cesar seem no threat at the moment. There is the rest of September and October to sweat out. We had three hurricanes one October, I remember.

Little ninos winds that keep away hurricanes, I need you.

Marie Anderson

HARVEST

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...most families do

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