

The Historical Association of Southern Florida

UPDATE

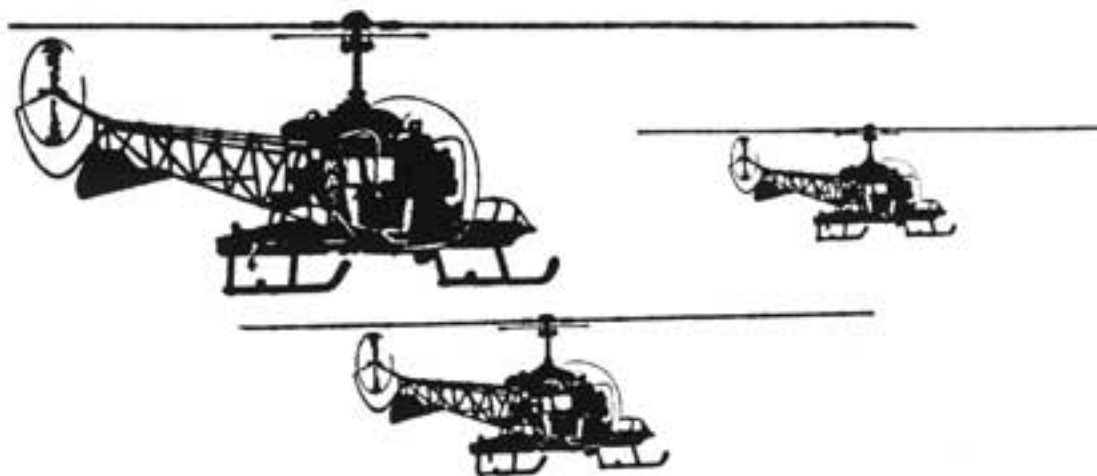
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THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA



M*A*S*HTM
IN
M*I*A*M*I

OPENING

JULY 4 1986

An exhibit from the National Museum of
American History, Smithsonian Institution

A gift of 20th Century-Fox 

M*A*S*H is back, and it's not a rerun. It's the largest exhibit ever loaned by the Smithsonian Institution: the actual Hollywood sets of the Swamp and OR. You'll see Klinger's finery, Hawkeye's still,

Hot Lips' clipboard — but you'll also be looking at military, medical, and entertainment history. You'll see why an irreverent comedy became the most relevant show of the decade.

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UPDATE

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On the cover: A young Frank Barker Shutts displays the confidence and thoughtfulness he brought with him when he came to Miami in 1910 to establish himself as a lawyer and newspaper editor. *(Miami News)*

AROUND THE MUSEUM

A SENSE OF DIRECTION

There are two desks in Randy Nimnicht's office. The visitor faces the Director of the Museum across a severe but handsome desk in keeping with the slightly high-tech look of the office wing of the museum. It is broad and flat and was piled with papers the day I was there – a public sort of desk, unexceptionable but featureless. At right angles to it, and facing nothing but a windowless wall, is the other desk, an old-fashioned, yellow oak roll-top with cubby-holes and lots of little drawers and voluptuous curves to its top – homely, efficient and loaded with personality. Sitting on it the day I was there was an illuminated viewing box covered with dozens of 35mm slides, which would no doubt have made the original owner of the desk scratch his chin in perplexity, trying to figure out what the gadget is for.

The two desks seem to embody two of the many sides of Randy Nimnicht: on the one hand the able administrator who has seen the Museum's revenues increase over 20 times during his tenure, the polished public man who represents us in the community; on the other hand the trained historian with a respect and affection but not an excessive nostalgia for the past. The past must serve the present, if only as a place to put the viewing box while he studies the slides for a new exhibit.

The present and future of the Historical Association and its museum are Randy's compelling interests. "In the past museums were rather elite places," he said. "Today a museum must be popular. This is not an ivory tower. We must constantly ask ourselves, 'What is the story we want to tell? And how can we reach out into the community to tell it?' We're not an art museum, although we share some characteristics. There's a different kind of communication game here."

The thrust of the museum's outreach is reflected in the temporary exhibits, which are addressed to different constituencies in the community. Think of Jewish Life in America, Alligators, Hispanic Theater, or the current Wings, to name a few. Randy and his staff come up with



Director Randy Nimnicht's antique roll-top desk and his sleek modern one have developed a compatible working relationship. (NASF)

a topic and then find the people and groups whose special interest can flesh out the topic with the salient information and the telling artifacts that make an exhibit live. I remember, for example, the elegant alligator travelling case that had belonged to Marcia Kanner's mother, and that seemed to epitomize a whole, vanished, pre-World War II way of

(Continued on page 16)

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Life in Cutler With Mrs. Deering As a Neighbor

BY ROSE CONNETT RICHARDS

In my mind's eye I can see her sitting in the porch swing, her small feet just touching the oriental carpet. I used to wonder by what magic Eusebio,¹ the butler, would suddenly appear until I realized there was a hidden button under the rug that she pressed with her toe.

Marion Deering might have stepped from a canvas by John Singer Sargent, whose elegant turn-of-the-century portraits fixed in time America's prominent families. The noted painter had been a close friend of the Deerings; Sargent, in fact, had tried to persuade Charles, because of his artistic ability, to abandon the world of commerce for the life of a painter.

When I knew her, Mrs. Deering piled her spun-sugar hair atop the crown of her head where it complemented the soft white voile dresses she wore over a little dumpling figure. She had an almost haughty mien that reflected the assurance bestowed by generations of wealth, yet she was compassionate, with a clear mind undimmed by her years and she was keenly interested in everything around her.

Charles and Marion Deering had come to Cutler when Mrs. Edith Richmond² sold the lush tract that had been the Richmond Hotel and Fishing Camp. A few years after the Deerings had come to Cutler, my family built a home next door, on the bay to the south.

In the 1920s Cutler was an outpost. Rural mail delivery, no phones, generators for electricity that went off at bedtime, even our own gas pumps. Ice and fresh milk were delivered daily from Homestead. The "town" itself lay at the gates of the Deering estate.

There was Mr. Brown's little country store and Olie Hill's one gas pump in front of his house where he also repaired cars. The MacCaw Brothers Nursery came to Cutler only in the winter when they shipped sansevieria plants to northern markets. His skin ever-reddened by sunburn, Mr. Hendry, the crocodile hunter, lived in a frame cottage across from the Deerings when he wasn't in the Cape Sable area collecting crocs which he sold by the foot to zoos.

That loud voice coming up the road would be Butler, an elderly black man who lived in the center of the village with his wife Frankie. As he walked home in the evenings, Butler sorted out the day's happenings in a full-decibel conversation with himself, so one could hear him approaching from afar.



Marion Deering in one of her soft white dresses displays her keen interest in her surroundings. (Lent by Mrs. Deering's granddaughter Marion Campbell of Chicago)

Next to us along the bay to the south was a small colony of neighbors.

The rather British Frederick Bodleys, who lived with a frenetic monkey LuLu and a scarlet macaw that lorded it over their patio; Weightman Stellwagon, a fragile man who always dressed in white suits and who succumbed to the loneliness of Cutler and shot himself one day; and the Paul Canneys, who formerly lived in Hawaii where he had been an engineer with one of the pineapple companies.

Though it was only a block from Mrs. Deering's door to ours, Avery would always chauffeur her to our house for visits, and my parents welcomed her because she was interesting and gracious. My sister and I, however, looked forward to these visits with childish delight for a totally different reason. They meant large boxes of exquisite candies or small cakes in delicate paper lace boxes along with numerous books from art galleries which we would copy in the evenings. (I still have the latter, watermarked by hurricanes.)

I can remember her concern when my six-year-old sister and I (age 7) strolled over for a visit not long after we had moved in next door. She had Avery grandly take us home in her limousine, unaware that every day we roamed for miles.

¹The Deerings had bought Eusebio Hernandez as a boy from Spain, where they had lived. The handsome young Spaniard remained in their service all his life, eventually marrying one of the maids. He died several years ago at Cutler Ridge Retirement Home.

²Mrs. Richmond still came back to Cutler for visits and one of these is indelibly etched on my mind though it happened when I was ten. She adored animals and when I told her proudly of my pet white rat, nothing would do but she see him and when she saw him she insisted on holding him, whereupon to my horror he seriously drenched her lap.

Rose Connett Richards not only has retained memories of Cutler half a century ago, she has kept some postcards and snapshots of the era, inspiration for more stories, hopefully.

In our little boat we explored the shallow coast where the natural jungle gym of mangroves was a grab bag of goodies. We found bottles with notes tossed from a cruise ship off Morro Castle or freighters passing in the Gulfstream, glass fishing floats, even a wooden sabot lost by some French fisherman.

The deer were long gone, as were the Indians, who knew Cutler as the "hunting ground." The only clue to the panthers that had tracked the deer were a few whitened bones at the bottoms of the great sink holes lined with maidenhair fern, into which we climbed. There were endless tracts of pines and palmetto where we picked bouquets of purple liatris spikes in the fall. Closer to the bay dense tracts of native trees bordered by scarlet coral bean harbored an abundance of small creatures, enough for that medieval treatise called a bestiary.

On spring nights we lay in bed listening to bull alligators bellowing saurian challenges to one another in the glades to the west. Each spring, too, we looked forward to the return of the bald eagles and ospreys who entertained us with aerial dogfights. The fish hawks would snatch a squirming mullet from the bay, only to be intercepted by an eagle. Turning and twisting in defensive chandelles, the hapless fish hawk would drop its catch where it was neatly fielded in mid-air by the eagle, who returned to feast on a pine branch while the osprey went back to its fishing chore. This was not difficult, for anytime we walked to the beach we saw glittering arcs of hundreds of mullet rise to escape the slash of a barracuda.

We rarely glimpsed a bobcat among the numerous small forest creatures, but in the cool of morning there were often small wildcats calmly sitting atop the stone walls that surrounded the Deering grounds as though

loathe to retire for the night. Running from Old Cutler Road to the bay, these high walls created barriers that would funnel hordes of clacking blue land crabs along their lengths in September. Then black families, originally from the Bahamas, would enter with large croker sacks. With a short stick they would deftly pinion a crab, break off all legs, leaving the big claws, and pop it into the sack. They then headed for home and a feast in half an hour.

Foxes made spring leaps from the headlights' glare when we drove in at night, and the ficus tree dropped its tiny figs. The foxes never depleted the colony of big leopard frogs in the pond beneath the timber bamboo, even though they shared them with untold numbers of raccoons. A dead tall palm tree in the yard was a screech owl condo where at dusk a dozen small faces would contemplate the approaching night from staggered nest holes chiseled out by red-bellied woodpeckers.

My mother so cherished the native stand of persimmon, bay, stoppers, and palms that blocked a view of the water from the house that my father added a third-story porch to enable us to see the bay. Besides a hive of bees, a family of barn owls liked this high, secure place and reared families in its attic. My sister and I delighted in peering in at the big puffy babies with unblinking eyes, and after they fledged we'd try to identify the small mammal boneyard they left behind.

Because of Cutler's isolation we had our own library. Like my father, I became an avid reader. Aware of my love of reading, Mrs. Deering, when her sight began to fail, asked if I would come and read to her in the afternoons. We sat on the airy porch facing southeast with its sun-washed sweep of trees, water and sky, where, after a session with books, we had tea.



Charles Deering bought this house from Mrs. Edith Richmond. The stone at the water's edge is part of the turning basin for boats Deering developed in the bay. (HASF, courtesy of Fairchild Tropical Gardens, negative number 80-162-12)

While her sight may have been diminished, Mrs. Deering's hearing was good. Once when we were on the porch she exclaimed, "What was that?" Because of my reading aloud I had heard nothing, but she described a muffled explosion.

Several days later we learned that "revenuers" had blown up a moonshine still hidden in the dense growth not far from the house. In those days of liquor prohibition we had a similar episode at our place where federal agents played a part.

One early afternoon there was a sense of excitement and my father started running to the beach. Over his shoulder he called to my sister and me to stay home. But curiosity was a strong magnet, so we tagged along, hiding behind trees, to see a group of men chasing other men in boats.

When the pursuers caught up with the men in the first boat and brought them to the dock, they asked my father's permission to bring their prisoners through our place to the road. They were revenue agents nabbing rum runners. They gave my father a large croker sack of confiscated booze which he buried in the yard to sample at leisure.

Occasionally Mrs. Deering and I would go into the main house to read and I can still see a rather depressing painting over the fireplace that reminded me of a parade of Ku Klux Klansmen but which I much later realized was a procession of hooded Spanish penitentes. In the extensive library were elegant busts of her daughters, Barbara and Marion, as well as other statuary. I recall one day when Eusebio came proudly to show her a classic bronze he had brightened up with shoe polish. She fairly reeled but calmly explained the polish would have to be removed as the original patina should be retained.

Once, too, when we were reading a volume of a Lincoln biography, I continually had to cut pages in order to read. Mrs. Deering finally suggested we stop. Now I suspect that what I held in my hands was most likely a first edition of Carl Sandburg's prose epic of Abraham Lincoln.

At that time the German war machine was rumbling toward World War II. As I was reading Nora Waln's **Reaching for the Stars**, describing the cruelties inflicted on the Jews, Mrs. Deering was so shaken that she sent for Mr. Morrissey, her caretaker,³ to tell him of the horrors. I remember that she described them to him because I told her it was too upsetting for me to reread.

³The house where Mr. Morrissey lived still stands on Old Cutler, a block west of the main house and grounds. The garage for grounds equipment stands nearby and facing north is a row of cottages where Avery the chauffeur lived along with other servants.



The Richmond Hotel, still under construction in this picture, was remodeled to contain the kitchen and dining room for the Deerings after the buildings were joined. (HASC gift of Kay Pancaost, negative number 74-8-1)



Mrs. Deering, in mourning following the death of her husband in 1925, is pictured with the sons of her daughter, Barbara McCormick. From left: Roger, now deceased; Brooks, International Harvester executive; and C. Deering, longtime Miami resident. (Lent by Mrs. Deering's granddaughter, Marion Campbell, of Chicago)

After our reading, Mrs. Deering and I would stroll the grounds, sometimes around the boat basin, under oak trees laden with cattleya orchids, where there was a small tea house set with shell mosaic in the ceiling like those at Vizcaya. Sometimes we would go north, following a path through the mangroves where the sprawled body of the resident alligator would often block the walk.

The old Pan American Clippers would drone by at five o'clock, headed for their base at Dinner Key. They were so punctual we could tell the hour by them. Once we had the thrill of seeing the ill-fated Hindenburg, its enormous bulk unbelievably quiet as it drifted by on a low flight down the coast.

Though my teenage mind could scarcely appreciate it then, this patient, cultured woman had a profound effect on me. As we traveled the globe through books, from the Russian steppes to the world's capitals, which she knew well, she enlarged on subjects, expanding my mind in an education without pain.

Our association ended when I married and moved to Coconut Grove. She sent me elegant silver as a wedding gift and we corresponded until her death. Over 45 years have passed since then, yet I still think of this gentlewoman who touched my life so indelibly and I realize my good fortune in having known her and a richly natural, earlier Cutler.

Historic Hurricanes of South Florida

BY DONALD C. GABY

The South Florida peninsula has been struck by numerous hurricanes over the centuries, but until the discovery of the New World and its occupation by Europeans, there was no one to record the effect these storms may have had on the history of South Florida. Even during the long period of Spanish and British occupation, when hurricanes were responsible for the loss of many ships along the Florida coast, there were few inhabitants of the mainland or Keys to record what effect such storms may have had. The account to follow begins with the 19th century and continues through 1985. It was developed from an exhibit of "Historic Hurricanes" prepared for the first Harvest Fair in 1976.

• Our story begins with "Miami's Earliest Known Great Hurricane," which struck this area on 14 September 1824 after a long passage through the Antilles (as described in the November 1984 issue of **Update**). It was significant because this hurricane evidently sank the ship bound from Boston with bricks and other material for construction of the Cape Florida lighthouse.

As a result, construction of this famous lighthouse was delayed for one year.

• Until at least 1829, maps of southeast Florida show the coast unbroken from the peninsula later known as Miami Beach to Virginia Key. Beginning in 1838, maps show an opening where Norris Cut is today, i.e., between Fisher Island (once the south end of Miami Beach) and Virginia Key. Hurricane forecasters agree that a hurricane moving from the southeast across the sound end of Biscayne Bay could have driven the water first toward the south and then, after moving inland, up into the north end of Biscayne Bay and seaward, thus forming a cut where before there had been none.

The hurricane of 15 September 1835 followed such a path and it is believed that this hurricane formed what today is known as Norris Cut. (See Chardon, R., 1977: Cartographic Analysis of Coastal Change, Natural and Urban, in Research Techniques in Coastal Environments, Louisiana State University Press, Geoscience and Man Series, Volume 18.)

• By the early nineteenth century the final stretch of Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad was under

construction in the Florida Keys. On 18 October 1906 a hurricane moving from the southwest passed over the "Overseas Extension" of the railroad. Many large quarter-boats used in this construction project were carried out to sea and approximately 135 lives were lost. More than 150 survivors were rescued at sea. Twenty-three lives were lost near Elliott Key when the old riverboat St. Lucie, anchored behind the island for shelter, was crushed and sunk by the backwash when the wind reversed. The calm of the "eye" at Miami lasted 30 minutes.

This hurricane ended the pineapple industry on the Keys, and many planters also abandoned their citrus groves.

• The Great Hurricane of 18 September 1926 is still well remembered by many Miami residents. Occurring before our modern means of observation, the warnings were less than adequate and the weather signs were deceptive. As late as 8 p.m. the evening before the storm the wind was only 18 mph and the pressure had been steady for 2 hours. By 6 a.m. the following morning parts of Miami had come within the "eye" of the storm. Many persons rushed into the streets and lost their lives as the back side of the storm reached them with strong winds and a high storm surge. Downtown Miami was just within the northern edge of the calm eye which was never experienced in the northern parts of the city although Homestead, 28 miles southwest, was included. The storm surge was 13 feet at Dinner Key, 12 feet at Miami Beach, and 11 feet at the Miami River. The maximum wind speed was at least 138 mph. There were 243 lives lost in Florida.

One result of this destructive hurricane was development of a much improved building code for Dade County.

• The hurricane of 17 September 1928 was one of the greatest of record. The minimum pressure at Palm Beach was lower than it had been two years earlier at Miami, and at 27.42 inches was the lowest recorded in the United States up to that time. The wind was probably 160 mph and there was a storm surge of 10 feet at Palm Beach. The greatest losses were around Lake Okeechobee where the waters overflowed the shallow rim of the southeast shore. Flooding included the towns of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay. At least 1,836 lives were lost.

A result of this hurricane was construction of the high protective dike that today impounds the waters of Lake Okeechobee.

• The Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 was the most severe storm of record in the Atlantic. On 2 September 1935 the minimum pressure was 26.35 inches at Lower Matecumbe and the wind was estimated at 200 mph. The storm surge was 15-20 feet at Long Key. This storm intensified rapidly as it approached the Keys and had a very small eye. Of an 11-car train sent to rescue a large group of World War I veterans in relief camps, all but the locomotive was swept away. At one point, probably due to wave action in addition to the storm surge, tracks and cross-ties were washed off a concrete viaduct 30 feet above normal sea level. At least 408 lives were lost.

This hurricane destroyed the Florida East Coast Railroad to Key West which had operated since 1912 and it was never rebuilt.

Incidental notes: Also in 1935 the central Hurricane Warning Service was moved from Washington, D.C. to Jacksonville, FL with other offices at New Orleans, LA and San Juan, P.R. It had been at Washington since 1902, having been established at Havana, Cuba during the Spanish-American War in 1898. In 1943 the National Hurricane Center was moved from Jacksonville to Miami, FL.

• One of the worst hurricanes to strike South Florida arrived on 15 September 1945. It destroyed the Richmond Naval Air Station where engineers calculated winds of 170 mph with gusts to 196 mph, although only 109 mph was measured at Miami. Richmond NAS was a lighter-than-air facility which included three huge blimp hangars made of wood except for the massive concrete and steel doors. At the time these hangars were the largest wooden structures in the world. Near the height of the storm they began to disintegrate and caught fire. Fed by 100 octane aviation gasoline, the temperature rose to 2,000°F and the flames consumed 25 blimps, 366 aircraft, and 150 automobiles. Little might one suspect that this was the site of today's Metro Zool.

Only 4 lives were lost in this severe hurricane, thanks in part to the advent of aerial reconnaissance of

Donald C. Gaby recounts the damages done by our hurricanes and the subsequent efforts to prevent future destruction.

tropical cyclones by Air Force and Navy aircraft, which greatly improved the warnings.

(The first penetration of the eye of a hurricane by military aircraft was made during World War II and by the end of the war such reconnaissance became a routine part of the hurricane warning service.)

- Two "wet" hurricanes occurred on 17 September and 12 October 1947. The first storm brought hurricane force winds along a path from Carysfort Reef Light to Cape Canaveral, with heavy rains causing flooding around Lake Okeechobee. Storm surges of 22 feet at Clewiston and 21 feet at Moore Haven were contained by the high dike constructed after the 1928 hurricane. The second storm brought additional heavy rains on already wet land which resulted in the worst flood of record in South Florida. Parts of Hialeah and Miami Springs were under water for three weeks.

These "wet" hurricanes of 1947 resulted in the establishment of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District (today's South Florida Water Management District) and the building of a levee west of State Road 27 to protect the heavily populated southeast coastal region from such storms in the future.

- Six hurricanes during 1954 and

1955 did not affect Florida directly, but have historic interest for this area. Hurricanes Carol, Edna, and Hazel of 1954, and Connie, Diane, and Ione of 1955 brought much damage and trouble to the Atlantic coast region including Washington, D.C.

As a result, the Congress was motivated to appropriate funds for a network of long range coastal weather radars begun in 1956. Such weather radars now are located at Miami and Key West.

Incidental note: From the discovery of America into the middle of the present century it was customary to refer to hurricanes by the date of their occurrence at some important location, by a saint's day in Catholic countries or by a national holiday in our own, etc. For a brief period during 1950-52 hurricanes were named by the letters of the phonetic alphabet, e.g. Alpha, Easy, etc. of any year. For a long period thereafter hurricanes were given women's names. In the 1980's they have been given women's and men's names alternately.

- Hurricane Donna on 10 September 1960 brought destruction in the Florida Keys reminiscent of 1935. It passed just northeast of Marathon, then near Naples and Fort Myers. Maximum winds were 140 mph with gusts to 180-200 mph in the Keys, about 100 mph with gusts to 150 mph at Everglades City and Naples. The storm surge was 13 feet in the Keys, 10-11 feet on the southwest coast. Almost all of the large man-

grove and mahogany trees in Everglades National Park that survived the 1935 storm were killed in Donna.

One result of this very destructive hurricane on the Keys was an improvement in the building code of Monroe County.

Incidental note: The year 1960 also saw the successful launch of the nation's first weather satellite, TIROS-1. Since the mid 1960's no hurricane has escaped detection by satellite.

- There may never be another hurricane like Camille of 1969! Although second to the Florida Keys hurricane of 1935 in terms of minimum central pressure, it was much larger and is widely regarded by meteorologists as the greatest Atlantic hurricane ever. A minimum central pressure of 26.73 inches was observed by reconnaissance aircraft near 25°N 87°W and 26.85 inches was observed at Bay St. Louis, Miss. Winds with gusts to 190 mph were estimated. The storm surge was measured as 25 feet at Pass Christian, Miss. and may have been a few feet higher. Lives lost came to 256 but would have been much more if a massive evacuation of the coastal regions had not taken place. What makes Camille historic for South Florida?

The author has observed that since Camille many of the old timers in Miami are less inclined to talk about the 1926 hurricane.



Post-hurricane sign on a small shop following the 1926 hurricane reflects the "clean up and get going again" approach Miami-ans take to hurricanes. (HASE, negative number X-239-1)



1926. By 8 p.m. September 18 the wind was only 18 mph and the pressure was steady. The next morning Miamians went out to



1935. Crews tackle clean-up of railroad tracks and equipment following the most severe storm on record in the Atlantic. Pressure dropped to 26.35 at Lower Matecumbe and wind was estimated at 200 mph.

(NASE gift of Seth Bramson, negative number 75-23-3)



1945. Richmond Naval Air Station had three huge blimp hangars, made of wood except for concrete and steel doors. In the storm they broke up and caught fire. Destroyed were 25 blimps, 366 aircraft and 150 automobiles. (NASE, courtesy of the Miami News, negative number 81-99-41)



devastation wrought during the night. The wind had reached at least 138 mph and the storm surge at the Miami River was 11 feet.
(HASF, negative number X-1046-1)



1945. Two of Richmond Naval Air Station's hangars following the hurricane. The area has metamorphosed into Metrozoo where the 40,000 members of the Florida Zoological Society keep the place jumping from koalas to toucans. *(HASF gift of Gordon Ames, negative number 82-241-1)*



1947. Two wet hurricanes, one in September and one in October, created the worst flood of record in South Florida. A flood control district (now water management district) was established and levee built.
(HASF gift of Alvin Samet, negative number 78-114)

The Visiting Nurse: A Post-War Pioneer

BY JEAN T. BRADFISCH

The first call made by a Visiting Nurse in Dade County was to the home of an 84-year-old man who had fallen and injured his side. Miss Mary Barclay arrived, tended him, cheered him, and referred him to further medical care. The visit lasted nearly an hour; the cost was \$1.50. The year was 1945.

It was July (after VE Day, but before VJ), just a few weeks after the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) of Dade County received its charter from the national organization.

These were the days before air conditioning. The sun was white. Sudden afternoon showers left steam rising in wisps from the pavement. Foreheads and backs were always moist, making thin cotton fabrics wrinkle and cling. Yet the nurse appeared neat and efficient with her wedge-shaped cap and her black medical bag, which was to be

made 2,473 home visits. Most were to the chronically ill, but visits were also made to the acutely ill, those with communicable diseases, and new mothers and infants. "On November 19," the report states, "a colored nurse was added to the staff and work in the colored district was started."

Besides her duties as supervisor, Adair also made home visits, was interviewed on radio, attended conventions, and made speeches to explain VNA's purpose and needs. She planned to help the organization get started and then leave. But it did not work out that way.

"I came to Miami in 1943 when my husband was stationed on Miami Beach with the Air Force as a photographer," says Adair, who was one of the many young wives who set up temporary housekeeping in small apartments close to hotel row

The nurse taught the family how to care for the patient, and as she healed, the nurse was able to visit less and less frequently until she was not needed at all.

her passport into any type of neighborhood and all types of homes — some tastefully furnished, but others without fans, electricity, or running water.

The young woman who made that first house call was one of two registered nurses, a supervisor — Mrs. Vera S. Adair — and a clerk on the staff of the newly-formed organization. Their territory was the city of Miami, Miami Beach, and Coral Gables. Their "office" was only a desk in space provided by the Health Department in the Dade County Court House. Each morning at 8:30, five-and-a-half days a week, the nurses would check their supplies and their street maps, pick up their black bags, and climb into their cars to answer calls. That first month, they answered 65. It was only the beginning.

Eight months later, when the first of its annual reports was filed, the VNA had moved to room 712 in the Postal Building on N.E. First Avenue. By then, there were six nurses, including the supervisor, and they had

while their servicemen husbands trained.

"After I was here for a while," she continues, "I began to feel guilty that I wasn't working. There was a shortage of nurses. I met the director of public health nursing in the Dade County Department of Public Health, Mary Matthews, and she asked me if I would consider coming to work for the Health Department." Adair agreed to, and was assigned to Miami Senior High School, where she was the nurse for a year.

"In the meantime," Adair says, "Mrs. Matthews and Dr. T. E. Cato, director of the Dade County Department of Public Health, were talking about starting a Visiting Nurse Association. The Zonta Club of Greater Miami was also interested, so they gave \$1,000 to the Community War Chest, and earmarked it for a Visiting Nurse Association."

The National League for Nursing was asked to make a study as to the need for a visiting nurse service. Once the need was determined, people in the community volun-



This is half the staff that made 65 calls the first month. Eight months later six nurses had made 2,473 home visits. (Visiting Nurses Association, negative number 86-64-1)

teered to serve on the committee. The Welfare Planning Council became involved, and a group of citizens was asked to serve as the board of directors.

The VNA of Dade County was chartered June 15, 1945. Chester M. Wright was the first president of the board. Mrs. Matthews was the executive director.

"Mrs. Matthews asked me if I would be the supervisor," says Adair. "I had done visiting nursing in New York City, and I really didn't want to. I said, 'Well, I'm learning the Health Department, which is a new experience for me. I'd just as soon stay here, but temporarily I'll go with the Visiting Nurse Association' ... and I was with the VNA for 32 years!"

How does one make a place for a baby to sleep if there is no bassinet or crib, or change a patient's dressing where there are no fresh supplies?

In the early days, many of those in need, besides the elderly and the ill, were young mothers, the wives of servicemen, who were away from home and family. They were having

Jean Bradfish has produced the award-winning *Sea Frontiers* magazine with an efficiency that gives her time for other projects and *Update* is a beneficiary.



A 1940s plaster-of-Paris pink flamingo greets a visiting nurse in her neat uniform and wedge-shaped cap as she takes her black medical bag with her into the small house of a patient. (Visiting Nurse Association photo, negative number 86-64-2)

their first babies, and they needed instruction and care. All of them lived on Miami Beach, which was like a small community. People got to know the nurse in their area and would tell others about her. She was a welcome sight to many a homebound patient. For the nurse, it was a gratifying job.

Then, as today, the visiting nurse had to be a special type of person. She had to be dedicated. Hot, cold, or wet weather could not deter her. She had to like going into strange communities and strange homes and meeting people in different settings. She had to be able to improvise, using her imagination if there were no provisions in the home. How does one make a place for a baby to sleep if there is no bassinet or crib, or change a patient's dressing when there are no fresh supplies?

In some homes, the nurse might have to spread out newspapers on a chair or the floor on which to open her black bag. A dresser drawer might be made into a newborn's bed. Improvising was time consuming, and time was of the essence. She usually made seven to eight visits a day, and unlike the hospital setting

where the nurse would go from room to room, the visiting nurse had to drive several miles from patient to patient.

One of the patients who was referred to the agency by her physician was a woman who had been discharged from the hospital following abdominal surgery. Her wound had not yet healed, and the visiting nurse made daily visits to change the dressing and give a medication by injection.

The nurse carried surgical scissors, forceps, cotton applicators, and hypodermic syringes and needles, but she had to take time to sterilize the equipment by boiling it on the patient's stove. The family had purchased sterile gauze and adhesive tape. In cases where there was no money to purchase surgical dressings, the nurse would instruct the family to use a hot iron on freshly laundered white cotton material. Nursing time was reduced significantly by the advent of prepackaged medical supplies.

The nurse taught the family how to care for the patient, and as she healed, the nurse was able to visit less and less frequently until she was not needed at all.

As the population of Dade County grew, the number of homebound clients grew, and the VNA grew, gradu-

Each morning at 8:30, five-and-a-half days a week, the nurses would check their supplies and their street maps, pick up their black bags, and climb into their cars to answer calls. That first month, they answered 65.

ally expanding its territory to include the whole county. Eventually an office was opened in Cutler Ridge to serve Homestead and Florida City, in addition to the central office at 5880 N.E. Fourth Avenue in a building purchased in 1976 through a bequest of Olive V. Levine.

Clients were accepted through referral by their physician or hospital, clinics, social health agencies, the veteran's administration, family, or friends. The charge was based on their ability to pay. From the 1960s

(continued on page 15)



The year 1985 marked the 75th anniversaries of two well-known Miami institutions, *The Miami Herald* and the law firm of Shutts & Bowen — both founded by Frank B. Shutts in 1910, the year he moved to Florida from Indiana.

Shutts was a prematurely graying 40, slender, tall for the time, bespectacled, confident but tending to be quiet and thoughtful when out of his element. The son of a poor Aurora, Indiana, cobbler, he had worked his way through DePauw University law school, graduating in 1892. He specialized in civil rather than criminal law but practiced both in order to make a living. Although he became a successful small-town lawyer, he won neither riches nor fame, and not until the eve of his departure from Aurora did he win a wife. She was his secretary. His courtship is a story in itself. But so are many other events in the life of Frank Barker Shutts.

Although life for Shutts, as measured in riches, fame and happiness, may have begun at 40, he owed much of his success to the meeting of Henry M. Flagler. The events leading up to this meeting began in 1907 when a recession swept the country. Scores of banks failed, among them the Fort Dallas National Bank of Miami. Shutts, experienced in bankruptcy procedures, was appointed a federal receiver. His first job had been liquidating a failed Denver bank. In 1909 he was sent to Miami as receiver of the Fort Dallas Bank.

After a 15-hour train ride from Jacksonville in a July heat wave, Shutts, who was impatient of discomfort, was prepared to dislike Miami. Stepping off the train at the Miami depot, N.E. Sixth St. and Sec-

Hoosier Frank Shutts Brewed Miami's Magic

BY NIXON SMILEY

ond Ave., he found the sun insufferable. He brushed the coal cinders from his suit and sought the shade. Mosquitoes covered him. Turning to his traveling companion, E. W. Bebinger, a federal bank clerk, Shutts swore.

"My God, this is a terrible place."

We have no way of knowing Shutts' thoughts during a hack ride from the depot to the Green Tree Inn at N.E. Second Ave. and Second St., for Bebinger remembered that he rode in silence as he puffed on a strong cigar to discourage mosquitoes. It being summer, the two major resort hotels, the Royal Palm and the Halcyon, were closed. But the Green Tree Inn, set off by royal poincianas which were in bloom, was an attractive place to stay. The lobby was orderly, the rooms clean, and the food good. Shutts met the manager, Mrs. Minnie Hill March. She knew everybody in town of any importance. She gave him addresses of persons he would have to see and suggested others not on his list. And she spread the news of Shutts' arrival, which next day the *Miami Morning News-Record* reported in a page-one story. "Frank B. Schultz/Is New Receiver," said the headline, misspelling Shutts' name.

The Fort Dallas National Bank had opened in 1902 and enjoyed a considerable success in the fast growing young city until 1905 when its president, W. M. Brown, made a sizeable loan to Salem Graham to build a 150-room luxury hotel, the Halcyon, on the Flagler Street site now occupied by the DuPont Building. Old colored post card pictures of the Halcyon remind you of a Walt Disney creation, a kind of "castle in the sky." Built of gleaming white Miami limestone, decorated by battle turrets and stone columns, and roofed with red Ludowici tile, the structure was perhaps Miami's most impressive building of its early years.

When Shutts arrived, the Halcyon was in receivership, along with the bank that had loaned the money to build it. Since it had opened at the beginning of the recession, the tim-

ing proved fatal. Few guests showed up and Graham was unable to make payments on his loan. As a result the Fort Dallas Bank failed. Unable to find a buyer who would pay the worth of the great white elephant, Shutts induced The Green Tree Inn manager Mrs. March to manage the Halcyon during the winter season of 1909-1910. She continued to manage it the following year, doing so well that she eventually bought the hotel for \$91,200, contributing greatly to Shutts' success in paying bank depositors 67 cents on the dollar when they expected little or nothing. (The Halcyon story is told at length in Thelma Peters's *Miami 1909* [Banyan Books, Miami, 1984].)

One problem remained for Shutts before he could return to Indiana. Flagler held a note on the bank for \$47,000. Shutts wanted to have the note recessed for a time, but no one in the Flagler System in Miami had authority to do so. On his way home, Shutts went by New York to see Flagler. Appearing before the partner of John D. Rockefeller in the Standard Oil Company Building, Shutts explained what was being done to straighten out the affairs of the closed Miami bank. It was essential, however, that Mr. Flagler's note be allowed to ride for a few months longer.

Flagler was agreeable. In the meantime he had become impressed by the clear and convincing argument Shutts had presented. To have a petitioner of such ability and confidence appear before him was a rare experience. He asked Shutts if he would be interested in representing the Flagler System in Miami.

Shutts thanked the 79-year-old Flagler, then without hesitation turned down the offer. Having a good

Nixon Smiley's profile of Frank Shutts was geared to the 75th anniversary of his arrival in Miami but gears of this historical magazine grind slowly, too slowly to make a 1985 issue after the manuscript was received.

practice in Aurora, he was disinclined to move. He had, however, changed his mind somewhat about Miami as a place to live. He liked the people, a rugged bunch of individualists like himself. Except for a few professionals like physicians, lawyers and ministers, most had little formal education, but they were bright and ambitious, and they possessed a sense of humor. They laughed uproariously at the sometimes risqué stories Shutts liked to tell. Yet he could see no benefit in leaving Aurora.

Whereupon Flagler offered him a retainer of \$7,500 a year if he would accept. That was more money than Shutts had ever earned in a year, or ever would earn in Aurora. He promised Flagler he would consider his offer, and did so on his way home. There was no doubt that Miami offered many opportunities. Its growth from three families living on the Miami River in 1895 to 5,000 in 1909 had been phenomenal. Meanwhile the Everglades was being drained, with the prospect that a million acres of rich soil would be opened for farming. At that moment Miami's future as a resort seemed less important, for it was summer and Shutts had seen only closed hotels and relatively empty streets.

Shutts had a personal reason for considering a move to Miami. He had been engaged to the same woman, Fannie Folk, for 20 years. Their marriage had been continuously postponed because of Miss Folk's ailing mother, whom she nursed. By moving to Miami he



Schutts, Smith & Bowen in 1915. From left, seated, are Miss Given and Miss Woodall, secretaries, Mr. Crate D. Bowen, Mr. William P. Smith and Frank Schutts. Standing, from the left, are Mr. E. W. Bebinger, the office manager, and Mr. H. H. Eyles and Mr. L. F. Snedigar, the firm's associates. (HASE, gift of the Bebinger family, negative number 78-182-1)

would leave this galling problem behind. By the time Shutts reached Aurora he had decided to accept Flagler's offer.

By the spring of 1910 Shutts had closed his Aurora practice, and his books and papers were packed and ready for shipment to Miami. He had only one regret, that he would be unable to take his attractive young secretary, Agnes John, with him. But in

those days a man did not take a young woman to a distant city unless she was his wife. But how would he break the formal employer-employee relationship that existed between them in order to propose marriage? He stopped at her desk and they talked about his departure and about what Miami was like. He described Miami as a frontier, with new people and new ideas, a place of unlimited opportunities. Miss John said that she, too, would like to go to a new place where the faces were new and the ideas new.

"Aurora is so dull," she said.

"Then why don't you come with me to Miami . . . as my wife?" asked Shutts.

Looking up into the angular face and seeing that Shutts was serious, Miss John reached for the handle that controlled the typewriter well of her desk and closed it as she rose to her feet.

"Let's go!" she replied.

In Miami, Shutts formed a partnership with Henry F. Atkinson. They took on a third partner in 1911, William Pruden Smith. Atkinson left the firm in 1912 to become a circuit court judge, but that same year Crate D. Bowen arrived from Indianapolis to join the firm, which became Schutts, Smith & Bowen. When Smith left in 1919 after being elected mayor of Miami, the firm became Schutts & Bowen.

(continued on page 14)



(HASE, negative number X-743-1)

Shutts and Bowen traced their friendship to Indiana Masonic conventions. There was less than a year's difference in their ages, but that was the only similarity. Shutts was outgoing and a storyteller of remarkable ability. His ribald yarns told to friends at street corners or on the courthouse steps – and many years later at the Coco Lobo Club – never failed to ignite an explosion of laughter.

Shutts collected friends with the avidity that coin collectors pursue their hobby. His memory for faces and names was superb. He had all the prerequisites of a politician ex-

cept deception. Having tried unsuccessfully to win public office in Indiana, Shutts recognized his shortcomings and never ran again. He was to become a power behind politicians seeking his support and that of *The Miami Herald*. In the 1940s Grady L. Crawford, a young lawyer who had joined Shutts & Bowen a few years previously, was walking down Flagler Street with Shutts, then in his seventies.

"I used to run this town," remarked Shutts.

Crate D. Bowen was the opposite of Shutts. Less outgoing, he stayed in the office and got the work done.

Shutts became the outside partner, Bowen the inside partner. As the years passed, Shutts devoted less time to the practice of law and more time to the promotion of his firm and his other interests, including *The Herald*. Bowen never complained, for together he and Shutts prospered far beyond the dreams of either when they joined their knowledge, talents, and wit in the practice of law.

Part 2: Shutts and The Miami Herald, see August Update.



Inloading rocks to make a wad bed. Indian Key draw.

INTO THE TRUNK

Dr. Thelma Peters recently assisted HASF in obtaining a number of donations, among them this photograph. The picture is a view of construction near Indian Key, one of a series of Overseas Railway construction photos in an album donated by Margaret Rogers Grutzbach. The album was compiled by her father, Frank M. Rogers, who worked on the railway, and also contains a series of photos of the raising and resinking of *The Maine*, of Spanish American War fame. FEC material is especially welcome, as HASF is planning a future exhibition on that railroad and its influence on the east coast of Florida's history.

(HASF, gift of Margaret Grutzbach, negative number 86-10-42)

Nurses from page 11

on. Medicare greatly helped meet the needs of the growing population of elderly. Through the years, resources for payment have also included veterans' benefits, health insurance plans, and direct payment from clients. The deficit of Medicaid reimbursement and clients' inability to pay has been made up in part with United Way funding.

In 1959, the first registered physical therapist was employed through the efforts of the United Cerebral Palsy Association. There were then twenty-two staff nurses. They made 35,311 visits that year, reaching one out of every 306 people in Dade County. The cost of a visit had more than doubled - to \$3.25.

As Cuban refugees began to arrive in 1959-60, the visiting nurses had to acquire a new skill - communicating with those who spoke only Spanish.

For seven years (1966-73), the Office of Economic Opportunity's Community Action Program made it possible for a visiting nurse to bring white man's medicine into the Everglades to those Miccosukees who needed and wanted it. "The first year, they wouldn't even look at me," Rose Marie Knigge said. "There weren't many whites out there then." But a bond of trust formed as she

went from village to village giving injections and teaching health care.

Where once the nurse did total care, in 1967 the first home health aides were hired to relieve the nurse of the patient's personal care. This included giving baths, and perhaps doing grocery shopping, errands, and laundry, as well as checking on the client between the nurse's calls.

Today, not only does the nurse have the assistance of home health aides, but of licensed practical nurses, and physical and speech therapists, too. The nurse gives the skilled care - changing surgical dressings, diabetic teaching, monitoring medical compliance, checking vital signs, and caring for patients with cancer and respiratory conditions. Working together, these professionals form an interlocking team.

A program of reorganization and diversification began in 1984. To better meet clients' needs, three organizations were formed: Visiting Home Service, Inc. (a for-profit corporation), VNA Foundation, Inc., and Visiting Health Resources, Inc. (non-profit corporations).

Today, the Visiting Nurse Association of Dade County has over thirty nurses, and Betsy Pegelow is executive director over a staff of eighty-five. The cost of a visit is far from \$1.50; it is between \$45 and \$50.

This may seem like a fortune to the indigent and a pittance to the well-heeled; but the warm voice, skilled hand, and black bag are of incalculable worth to both when they are immobile, homebound, and frail.

Information gathered from interviews with Hazel Brellis, VNA director of education, and Vera S. Adair, retired associate director; VNA annual reports, pamphlets and supervisors' reports; and newspaper clippings.

LETTERS

To the editor:

I have been reading Miami and Dade County, Florida: Its Settlement, Progress, and Achievement, by E. V. Blackman, President of the Dade County Historical Society. Facing page 14 is a 1921, or earlier, photograph of the Dade County Court House, predecessor of the current building. I am wondering what happened to the obelisk, which appears to be some sort of war memorial.

*Nick Sakhnovsky
2451 S.W. 24 Street
Miami, Florida 33145*

The obelisk, a Confederate War Memorial, is now in the Miami City Cemetery on N.E. Second Avenue at Seventeenth Terrace.



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Wit Ostrenko and members of the P.R. team.

Around the Museum

from page 2

life. In the case of the Wings exhibit it was the Greater Miami Aviation Association that provided much of the expert knowledge and many of the artifacts. All of us know of the singular contribution made by Dr. Joe Fitzgerald and his group of dedicated collectors to the map exhibit. And I can now boast that my grandmother's brass candlesticks are of museum quality, because, after all, they were in the Jewish Life in America exhibit.

It is part of Randy's purpose to create exhibits that have a life beyond the relatively short time they are on view at the museum. After it closes here, the Wings exhibit will be on display at Miami International Airport, whose Airport Authority has purchased it. Alligators has been travelling around the Southeast for many months. The reach of the museum is thus extended to thousands of people in other regions, whose knowledge of South Florida would otherwise be restricted to what they can pick up on Miami Vice. Speaking of exhibits, the upcoming M*A*S*H exhibit should be a S*M*A*S*H. Can you picture the museum swathed in thousands of yards of camouflage cloth? I saw a sketch of it taped on Randy's wall.

It's this kind of vivid presentation that is necessary to attract a popular response from a public satiated with television and movie spectacles. One of Randy's strengths is his public relations team. Top staffers Wit Ostrenko, Robin Kaskel and Tim Schmand meet with him weekly. A four-to six-month lead time is required to publicize an exhibit adequately: getting the story together, delivering it to the media, and then following up with an ongoing effort to get it into print and on the airwaves.

Randy stressed the need for this continual publicizing effort because the museum, like any organization, must break even to remain viable. "The museum is really a business," he said. "And like any business it must grow, and it has had an incredible growth. We now have 3400 members. But with growth come problems. Uncontrolled development can put intolerable strains on the budget, so we must watch all the processes carefully to be sure that they stay within our capacity to finance them." To safeguard the museum's financial stability, there is a constant attempt to diversify the sources of income.

Despite the success of the diversification campaign there is still a very great reliance on county funding, always a precarious situation, but especially so in a period of government cutbacks. "The museum is only one arm of our operation," Randy said. "In addition to the exhibitions we have the collections to maintain and expand. We are a research institution with links to many other scholarly institutions. We publish periodicals of high quality on a regular basis. We also have an important educational mission. All these things take money, and we must balance the costs with income."

The educational function is a source of joy to Randy. Each year all the fourth graders in the Dade County Public Schools are given a tour of the museum's permanent exhibitions by specially trained docents in Seminole costume. The fourth graders are a bright and sophisticated group of kids. "You can't fool 'em," says Randy. Their response to the tours has been so upbeat and positive that Randy is, in his words, "almost ecstatic. Not only are we educating them about the place they live in and its people, we are also building a constituency for the future."

"People" is a word that comes repeatedly to his lips. "People are what this museum is about," he says with conviction. "We represent all the ethnic, social and financial elements in this community. This is a museum for all the people."

That awareness of the importance of people includes the members of the board of directors. "One of the main reasons for the museum's growth has been the caliber of the board, not because they are successful, although they are, but because of their intense concern for and sense of commitment to this community. They are also characterized to an unusual degree by a sense of civility. They give the Historical Association and the museum great credibility."

I asked Randy what his goals are. He laughed and said, "To pay the bills." I suspect there's a lot more to it than that, but finding the resources to underwrite his expansive vision in-budget and out-of-budget, through volunteers and dedicated staff, and with the help of public-spirited members of the community, is a constant preoccupation.

So there you have Randy Nimnicht. A bit of a populist. A bit of P.T. Barnum. Educator, historian and administrator of a large and complex business. A man with a clear sense of the direction in which he wants to take the museum and just how he plans to go about it. I think we're lucky to have him.

WINGS

When I visited the workrooms of Dan Markus I saw this beautiful mahogany thing, like a Brancusi bird - the propeller from an antique plane. It has been on display in the Wings exhibit, and I hope that by the time you read this you will have seen this fascinating show.

Not to worry. If you missed it you will have the opportunity to see Wings II. The current exhibit stops at 1939. The dramatic events of World War II and the post-war exponential growth of the airplane industry in South Florida will be covered in the new exhibition.

Recently I had the chance to talk to Peter Reaveley, chief of aviation development at Miami International Airport. Mr. Reaveley is a particularly jaunty Englishman who was a fighter pilot in Korea and Vietnam. He has promised to talk to us about the history of MIA and to dig into the archives for some good pictures. We hope to bring this story out in conjunction with Wings II. It should be a lively yarn. Mr. Reaveley is witty and amusing and a fountain of obscure and interesting information about the early history of the airport.

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