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**The Founding Father of Florida Horse Racing**

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**Grand Opening, Grand Hotel**

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**The Fiercest of the Seminoles**

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**A Tropical Garden's Anniversary**

**The Historical Association of Southern Florida**

# **UPDATE**

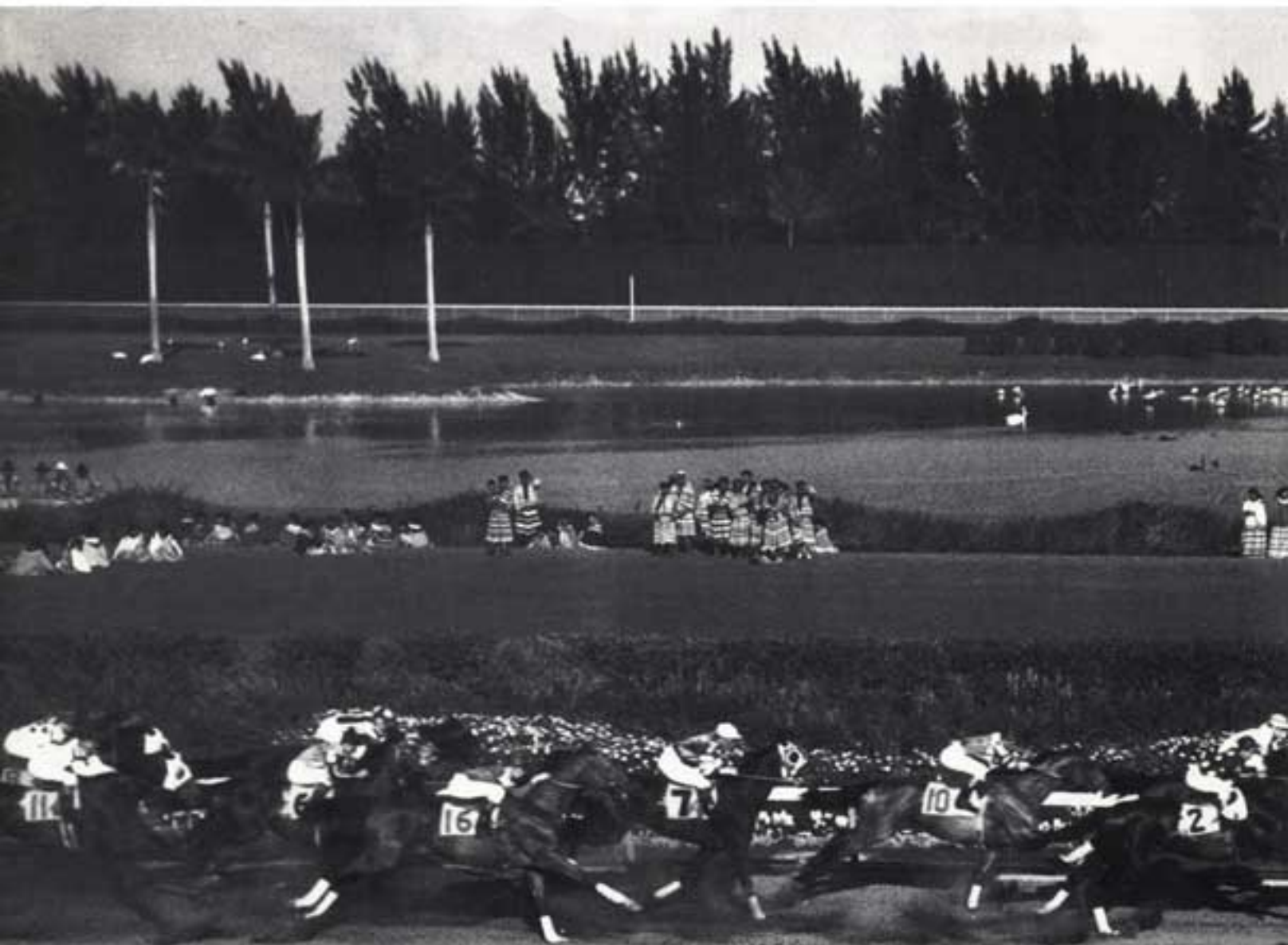
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Volume 15, Number 1

February 1988

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The Historical Association of Southern Florida

# UPDATE

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

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PRINTED BY  
**Swanson Printing, Inc.**

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

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

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**On the cover: Seminoles watch from infield as thoroughbreds race past at Hialeah.**



**Jim Bright's ranch**

## AROUND THE MUSEUM

In the Historical Museum's Education Department we tell students that artifacts are anything made or used by man, a basic concept that helps them differentiate between, say, a fossil and a pot sherd. But, I must admit, I lost sight of that concept when it came to the artifacts the Museum received from the *Nuestra Senora de Atocha*. (Stock holders in Treasure Salvors Inc., salvors of the *Atocha*, donated stock shares to the Museum that to date have brought the organization nine silver bars, one gold bar, a number of silver coins, a crushed silver bowl and a crushed silver incensor.) I failed to connect these particular materials to people. I thought of them only as jewels and precious metals - having some inherent worth removed from the historical process. But, as I began my research for this article a whole new vision of these objects began to develop. They are more than jewels - they are pieces of history handed from one period to another - and, because of Eugene Lyon's excellent work, *The Search for the Atocha*, we can look back and understand the people of that time.

At the beginning of the 1620s the Castillian Spanish Empire outwardly appeared to be at its zenith. It controlled Portugal and all its possessions, southern Europe from Gibraltar to Italy, parts of North Africa, the Philippines, and the gold and silver mines of the New World. In 1621 when, at 16 years of age, Philip IV ascended the throne, he inherited an empire that was beginning to show signs of weakening. The royalty and the upper classes had created for themselves a luxurious lifestyle that depended on foreign goods. The purchases, made on credit, were mortgaged against the annual arrival of gold and silver from the mines of the New World. The debts were never completely paid off, but the creditors could be staved off another year. I imagine this to have been the Spanish Empire's version of revolving credit. In 1622 the entire empire waited for the safe arrival of the fleet.

On September 4, 1622, six weeks behind schedule and well into hurricane season, the fleet of 28 ships sailed out of Havana harbor. The clear weather of the fourth belied



Silver bar etched with A and R mark.

the future. The seas roughened on the fifth and reached hurricane force on the sixth, scattering the fleet and dashing the *Atocha* and a smaller ship, the *Santa Margarita*, against the reefs off the Florida Keys. Two hundred and sixty people were lost from the *Atocha*. Despite the salvage efforts of the Spanish, the *Atocha* remained lost for more than 300 years.

Currently the *Atocha* materials are being held in a Sun-bank vault, but when they are displayed in the Museum I would ask that you think about the following when you have an opportunity to view them. Think about the 13,000 Indian slaves who worked the mines at Potosi to bring the silver out of the ground; the Spanish bureaucrats, soldiers, merchants and clergy living at the outer edges of the empire; a 16-year-old King ruling a disintegrating empire; Lorenzo de Arriola, a Potosi merchant, whose A and R mark is clearly visible on one of

*(Continued on page 15)*



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Opening day at Hialeah, January 15, 1925.

## Bright Brought Ponies to Hialeah

By EVERETT A. CLAY

"In the beginning" was Mr. Bright.

In the early summer of 1907 a 42-year-old retired St. Louis laundryman arrived in Tallahassee bearing a letter from the Governor of Missouri to Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, Florida's chief executive.

The retired laundryman, cattleman and "gentleman rider" was James Harris Bright. He was to have an important influence on Florida history for the next half century.

Governor Broward was bubbling with plans to turn the Everglades into farm lands and cattle pastures. The Florida legislature had just reaffirmed his commitment to drainage and had approved the tax to support the program. He showed Bright the details for digging new canals, and for widening and deepening existing canals, particularly in Dade County, which then extended far up the East Coast. The result would be thousands of acres for cattle to graze, information of particular interest to Bright as a cattleman.

From Tallahassee, Bright and his brother, Charlie, came down to the frontier town of Miami which had a population of about 7,000. They purchased and continued to purchase thousands of acres of water-covered land west and north of Miami. Most of it was along the planned drainage canal and included the present sites of Hialeah and Miami Springs.

Two years later Bright brought his wife, Lou, from St. Louis to see "the land." Water was up to the hub caps of the buggy as the horses slogged their way to high ground.

She took a look at the vast expanse of prairie and exploded: "Jim Bright, have you lost your mind?" In the

language of the Seminole, the word Hialeah means "beautiful prairie." She disagreed.

Bright has been neglected and overlooked for his major contributions to Florida since those early days when his sanity was questioned by his wife. He was dedicated to upgrading the Florida cattle industry and proved that high grade beef could be raised in Southeast Florida. He brought in Holstein cattle, among the first in the state. Likewise, he was among the pioneers in importing Brahma bulls from India to breed to the native stock. No single breed has had a greater effect upon the Florida cattle industry than the Brahma. By crossing native Spanish and English breeds with Brahmas, hybrid stock has been produced ideally suited to Florida range land.

It was Bright who bred Brahma bulls to Holsteins in what has been called the first step toward the development of the famous Santa Gertrudis cattle. He also imported Parra grass from South America, another boon to the cattle industry.

He was active in the campaign which resulted in the eradication of the dangerous Texas fever tick. He took the heat from "sportsmen" hunters who resisted the necessary killing of wild deer to control the ticks. Later he fought a winning battle against the screwworm which imperiled the state's cattle.

The late **Everett Clay** knew the Hialeah race course story in and out, as sports editor of the *Miami Herald* and later as head of sports publicity at the track.



**Board of Hialeah Race Track. Left to right: Front row: Dr. Whitten, James H. Bright. Back row: Fred Peters, John Clark (President of Hialeah Track) and Sam McCormick.**

It was Bright who put his friends, the Seminole Indians, back into the cattle business at the Brighton (named for him) Reservation, north of Lake Okeechobee. Herefords were brought to Florida from the middle west in the 1930s and sold to the Indians at cost. Cattle raising, one of their great loves, had been given up for almost 100 years after the Seminole Wars. During the early 19th century, the Seminoles had raised choice herds near Gainesville at Payne's Prairie, which is said to have the best cattle grass in all of America.

The Brighton Reservation consists of the 40,000 acres Bright purchased in 1916 for a ranch.

Bright was the father, of course, of Florida thoroughbred horse racing. He persuaded Joe Smoot to

build Hialeah Park, supervised the construction in 1924, interested Joseph E. Widener in taking over the track in 1930, was again in charge of the reconstruction in 1931—and was active in the track's operation until his death in 1959.

He started the Florida thoroughbred breeding industry, which has already produced a Triple Crown Champion and three other Kentucky Derby winners, as well as Dr. Fager, one of the fastest horses of all time. Percentage-wise, the state now ranks second to Kentucky in producing the winners of blue-ribbon stakes races.

Bright was a strong believer in the superiority of the Florida horse, even the Cracker cow pony. When he first came from Missouri, he brought cow horses from the West. But after working cattle on the range with the heavier Western horse, he came back to the Cracker pony, enthusiastically proclaiming, "Two Florida ranch horses will do the work of three of the best Northern-bred horses."

At the 1934 Dinner Stakes at Hialeah Park, Jimmie brazenly told the stuffed shirts of racing how Florida would become a great horse breeding state which one day would turn out champion after champion.

An amused Joseph E. Widener rose from the head table for rebuttal: "Mr. Bright, you leave the breeding of race horses to us in Kentucky. You Florida Crackers stick to raising alligators and rattlesnakes."

In 1936 the first Florida-bred thoroughbred was foaled at Bright's farm, near Davie, and named Martha's Queen for his daughter, Mrs. John (Martha) Cheatham.

He preferred Southeastern Florida for breeding race horses because he felt the muck soil helped grow strong feet. At the same time, he was encouraging his friend, Carl G. Rose, of Ocala to start a breeding farm on the limestone ridge of Central Florida. He helped Rose acquire his first stock: horses that their owners and trainers didn't



**Lots for sale in Hialeah.**

think good enough to ship back to Northern tracks.

Even before the Hialeah horse track, Mr. Bright was instrumental in building the first greyhound race track in America donating the land for the plant. He did the same for the first jai alai fronton in the United States. Bright was the force behind the creation of the municipalities of Hialeah and Miami Springs. He was the first president of the Hialeah Bank. He persuaded the City of Miami to put its well field in Miami Springs to tap what is now known as the Biscayne Aquifer as a source of fresh water. He pushed the State legislature to pass the law which provided racing revenue for old age assistance.

Bright's roots trace back to Virginia. His parents, Edwin Charles and Martha Bigby, moved from Appomattox County in the late 1850s to a small Missouri town on the Mississippi River named Louisiana. Both parents were



Test of drinking water wells in Miami Springs.

born and raised in Appomattox. They had three girls and five boys. The last of the eight was James Harris Bright, born November 23, 1865.

It was the simple farm family life of mid-19th century America with all the Bright children helping with the chores. Jim or Jimmie, as he was called, was a tyke assigned to herd the sheep in the summertime in the Missouri Ozarks. He attended a combination grammar and high school known as Central Louisiana. Later he went to Baptist College. In 1882 his father moved the entire family to California.

A year later, the oldest son, Charlie, went back to St. Louis to start the Imperial Laundry. He wrote Jimmie to return and join him as a partner. Later the older brothers came into the business. Charlie was president, Jimmie was the public relations man, Josh the bookkeeper, Ed the mechanical superintendent and Rod the personnel manager.

As the "front" for the laundry, Bright displayed the imagination, showmanship and personality which were later so important in making Hialeah Park the world's most famous race track.

He came up with an attention-getting team of spotted mules to pull an Imperial Laundry wagon. It became the company trademark. Now spotted mules are not easy to come by, and it took months and hundreds of miles of hunting to round up the necessary three.

His love for horses went back to early childhood on the farm. He drove trotters at many of the county fairs in Missouri. Much to the dismay of his father, he wanted to

be a race horse jockey. Small in size, Bright was five-foot-two, and never weighed more than 105.

To fit his stature, he had tiny feet, and always had trouble finding small enough shoes. Later in Florida he had half-boots handmade in Mexico. His hands were strong and he had "a way with horses," proving an outstanding amateur rider at the St. Louis Jockey Club. The race he best remembered was when he finished second on his wife's horse.

Another race he and the crowd long remembered was at the Mexico Missouri Fair. He was riding the favorite and making his move coming into the stretch turn when two horses fell in front of him. Too late to go around, Jimmie jumped the tangle and won the race!

Bright also became interested in horse shows, an interest which continued until his death. It is said that better than 90 percent of his entries took the blue ribbon. Before the turn of the century, he and other horsemen started the now famous St. Louis Horse Show.

In spite of horses and laundry, he still found time to court Lou Tinsley. They were married in 1900 and Martha Tinsley was born 12 years later. The Brights were back and forth for nine years between 1910 and 1919



With wife on hand, dapper Joe Smoot is resplendent with characteristic two-toned shoes, straw hat and cane.

before making Hialeah their permanent home.

As the canals drained the water from 3,000 acres north and west of Miami, Bright started his cattle ranch. He brought the Brahmas from India and the Parra grass from South America. He also operated dairy and poultry farms. Fondly remembering his boyhood days in the Ozarks, he had a small herd of sheep.

Two of boomtime Miami's most influential citizens brought Bright and Joseph M. Smoot together in a meeting which resulted in the Hialeah horse track. One was Frank B. Shutts, then publisher of *The Miami Herald*, a leading lawyer and power-dealer. The other was Miami Mayor Ed Romfh, president of the First National Bank of Miami, one of five bankers elected to run the city commission during those hectic times.

Many times during the early 1920s, Bright had discussed a race track with Shutts, Romfh, and a later mayor, Ev Sewell. In riding horses near Hialeah he found acres of "Allapattah marl," black soil which he knew would be ideal for a racing surface.

Shutts wanted a horse track for Miami as a tourist attraction, and knew winter racing here would draw sportsmen and big-time bettors who made the game popular in the summer in the North. Mr. Sewell agreed. The Mayor,



Hialeah Clubhouse was a busy spot on opening day.

while not a sportsman, could see the value. Bright agreed to provide the land, and purchase stock to finance the construction.

The scene was set for Joe Smoot's arrival. Early in 1924, the impeccably dressed Virginia gentleman, wearing two-toned shoes, a flat straw hat, and carrying a cane, sauntered into the office of Banker Romfh. Smoot, who liked red convertibles, blondes, and horse racing, had just sold a brokerage firm in Buffalo, N.Y., for \$300,000, a large sum in those days. A compulsive gambler, he was on his way to Havana to play the horses at Oriental Park, but had stopped off in Miami, to "look for investment opportunities."

Romfh had a knack for sizing up a man. While Smoot's loud clothes may have made the conservative banker blanch, Smoot had a flair that he liked. Reaching for a telephone, Romfh called Shutts.

"Frank, I've found the man Mr. Bright has been looking for to promote that horse track. He's right here in my office. Come down and meet him."

Shutts, whose law offices occupied two floors of the bank building, reacted immediately. He was as much impressed by the quick-thinking smooth-talking Smoot as Romfh was.

"We need a horse track in Miami," said Shutts, "and you're the man to put it over."

Smoot was introduced to Bright and to Glenn H. Curtiss, pilot and aircraft manufacturer, who had become Jimmie's partner. By the time Smoot left for Havana, a decision to build a horse track at Hialeah had almost reached the contract-signing stage.

Talks continued while Smoot was in Havana. Jack Cleary, a local businessman, was brought into the picture, and by the time Smoot returned, and group was ready to organize the Miami Jockey Club and begin work on the track.

Bright provided the land, 200 acres for a token \$10. During construction, he was on the scene daily, super-

vising every detail. When Friday afternoon came, time to pay the workmen, if the money wasn't available, he would draw it from his personal bank account. Once when three trucks were needed, he went out and bought them with his own money.

Rattlesnakes in the infield were a problem. To ease the apprehensions of the workmen, Bright called in a specialist: a Cracker character, Rattlesnake Pete, who operated a thriving business of catching and selling the poisonous snakes.

Using a long stick with a forked end, Pete would pin down a rattler behind the head, pick it up with his right hand and drop it into a gunny or croaker sack.

"He made it look easy," recalls A. G. (Whitey) Caswell, Hialeah's oldest employee who was a waterboy on the job. "He cleaned the infield in no time, and came back a few days later to get those he missed."

Rattlesnake Pete charged a quarter per snake without regard to the size, and resold his catch at \$1.50 per, highly profitable, if you care for that kind of business.

When it came to paying off Pete, there was never any question as to how many snakes he had in the bag.

"You can count 'em if you want to," he would offer.

Since there was no unloading platform at the track, all race horses had to be walked from downtown Miami to the barn area. The distance didn't faze the trainers or stable help. The rattlers between Miami and the track were another matter, veteran trainer Mose Shapoff remembers. Pitchforks were carried in hand to keep them off.

The opening of Hialeah Park on January 15, 1925, got more space in *The Miami Herald* than any sports event up to that time. And not until pro football was it equalled on the front page. Virtually every important person in South Florida was present. The Florida East Coast Railway put on a special train from West Palm Beach. The cream of Palm Beach society was on board.

(Continued on Page 13)





The Biltmore under construction.

## The Biltmore Beamed on Miami

By HELEN MUIR

They lit up the Giralda Tower for the first time and celebrated the official opening of the Miami Biltmore with a running series of shining events, beginning with the banquet at the Country Club for a select two hundred "dignitaries" on January 14, 1926.

Photographs of George Merrick, who actually invented Coral Gables, and John McEntee Bowman, daddy of a string of Biltmore hotels, appeared on the cover of an oversized handsome souvenir menu which offered pheasant and sea trout among other delicacies and, oh yes, a few well chosen words from the pen of Dr. Frank Crane, hired to write advance blurbs for the Miami Biltmore.

His prediction was that "many people may come and go but this structure will remain a thing of lasting beauty."

Bowman, rising to speak at the banquet, declared: "Another vision has become a reality and we have,

through brain, brawn and muscle, a 1950 [sic] hotel model built like a modern Biltmore noted for beauty, utility and endurance."

Merrick remembered that "only twenty years ago . . . my father and myself were clearing little vegetable patches around it . . . Even eight years ago I was growing tomatoes on the very ground on which this great hotel is built."

People were streaming in from northern cities on special trains marked "Miami Biltmore Specials," and the trip from New York was establishing a new record of thirty-six hours, twenty-three minutes.

The Formal Opening Inspection of the hotel and club and the Formal Dinner Dance and Fashion Show were set for the fifteenth of January. Those in charge "deeply regretted" the fact that only fifteen hundred guests could be accommodated for the evening and that thirty-five hundred had to be turned away for that event.

In order to appease those who could not dine and dance at the opening, there was scheduled the following week daily showings of the lavish fashion show, which featured two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of feminine finery. Fifteen of Manhattan's most in-demand models, called "manikins," were transported along with the clothes, measured to provide a total of three hundred and fifty outfits.

Prunella Wood, who made her mark as a syndicated fashion writer, recalled it this way: "Lovely gowns and gorgeous furs, heavenly scents and beautiful jewels." She observed that "satin was the pet fabric, mostly

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**Helen Muir**, a long-time resident of Coconut Grove, is the author of *Miami, USA*, a former journalist and recipient of the national Trustee award of the American Library Association.



Hotel guests enjoyed rides in an imported gondola.

white or in glowing gem tones. Skirts were long and slim, topped by elaborate bodices contrived with bead embroidery or sheer lace."

The men stuck to the traditional black and white; many wore tails. Prunella had a good word to say for them too.

"I remember only handsome men," she said, "and ever so many of them."

The "inspection" of the hotel, posted by the management as a feature of the opening festivities, was warranted. There were four hundred guest rooms and suites. Each had a private bath and at the ready was a staff of a thousand to care for guests. One of the three ballrooms was large enough to permit "five hundred fox-trotting couples."

Do you suppose they counted couples on the floor the night of

January fifteenth? No matter, there was room for dancing all over the place, both indoors and outdoors. Paul Whiteman and two other orchestras played, the later recruited from the Westchester Biltmore along with the head chef, a fellow named Durand with his large staff. Lanterns flickered and champagne corks popped, evidence that the Riviera of America was being properly launched "under the sheltering palms."

Prohibition was ostensibly in effect but one observer of the scene during the boomtime maneuvers declared that "there must have been more alcohol per head consumed in Florida than in any other country in the world."

Too bad about the lady who upset the gondola, complete with gondolier, imported from Italy to grace the swimming pool. At the height of the festivities, overcome by excitement, she plunged into the swimming pool, causing the handsome Italian to fall into the drink along with her.

It is rumored that the Tower light blinked once. Suffice it to say the combined openings proved breathtaking enough for all concerned. The *Miami Daily News* called the formal opening "such splendor as has been rarely seen," while the *New York Times* stuck to statistics by pointing out that Coral Gables was now "a city of ten thousand acres covering sixteen square miles with population of more than seventy five hundred."

The gondolier, one of several imported to brighten the scene, spent the remainder of the highly successful season ferrying guests on the canals where he succeeded in avoiding being dunked.

One of the town's favorite stories occurred when a prominent matron, Mrs. Harry (Grace) Hector experienced a similar fate as that of the gondolier's and certainly not of her doing.

It was during a dramatic moment in a Bobby Jones play in one of the exciting golf tournaments that dotted the greens at the Biltmore, and Mrs. Hector was one of many crowding a small bridge over the canal in order to catch a better view. The bridge began to give way under the weight of the occupants, and while others scurried to safety, Mrs. Hector was caught in the middle. At the story was stated she "went down with the bridge."

Her daughter Emily Maxted, remembers that "she sank in her white suit and as she rose she said, 'My, that was refreshing.' A son, lawyer Louis J. Hector, reports her



Helen Muir on her way to the Biltmore to cover a 1935 story for *The Miami News*.

picture was taken by an alert photographer covering the golf match, and that it appeared in *Time Magazine*. Another son, Robert C. Hector, longtime State legislator, recalls that the Biltmore picked up the dry cleaning bill for his mother.

The Biltmore collected its share of headlines in the weeks following the opening, as morning horseback rides competed for attention in a crowded schedule of events. The *Miami Riviera* declared that "Coral Gables had achieved permanent fame as a resort of superior quality and character" and proceeded to print a roll of honor of those who showed up. On the list were Otto Kahn; Bernard Baruch; Albert Lasker; Feodor Chaliapin; Mary Garden and the entire cast of the Chicago Grand Opera Company, including Giovanni Martinelli.

Add Ida M. Tarbell; and, from the film world, Jesse L. Lasky, Adolph



The great Bobby Jones, far left, with three golfing fans.

Zukor, Thomas Meighan, and Lila Lee; throw in important sports figures Gene Tunney, Tex Rickard, and Gene Sarazen; and you have a fair idea of who was walking the fairways or riding the gondolas in the winter of 1926. Assuredly, the Biltmore was living up to its press agency and attracting visitors from all over the world.

The affable James J. Walker, who left the State Senate to beat out John F. Hylan for Mayor of New York, a role he played to the hilt, appeared on the scene. A "mayoral walking tour" was arranged by Doc Dammers. Wearing a tweed cap and suit with a vest, Jimmy had little trouble keeping up with the "Doc" (the nickname came from having been a pharmacist, it was said) as they traveled about, followed by a cameraman lugging heavy equipment.

One of the highlights of Walker's visit was the arrival of the cruiser *Cuba*, the flagship of the Cuban Navy, to transport him to Havana for an official visit. Nothing would do but that Doc Dammers go along as Mayor of Coral Gables and, as usual, he traveled with a retinue of sorts. His automobile was adorned with a coronet that lit up so that his visibility was undoubted. His companions on the trip to Cuba were Charles Flynn, who had "personally supervised" the building of the Miami Biltmore, Police Chief M. P. Lehman of Coral Gables, and publicity man T. H. Weigall, the British journalist who joined the Coral Gables corporation as a publicity writer.

A special delegation was accompa-

nying the flagship on its mission, so it was decided the Mayors & Co., would board the flagship as a courtesy gesture before the delegation was transported to an elaborate luncheon at the Miami Biltmore Country Club. Also arranged was a police escort to the hotel with officers from both Miami and Miami Beach joining the Coral Gables force to present a united welcome front bordering on a parade.

The weather did not cooperate at the moment for boarding the Cuban vessel, and the frustrated members of the party aboard the *Marionette* were thoroughly drenched and tossed about. All they could manage two miles out where the *Cuba* lay at anchor was to wave a feeble white

handkerchief (that would be Doc) and retreat "half stunned and half drowned," as Weigall described it.

They made up for it with the reception committee ashore where an orchestra remained on the alert. As the visitors from Cuba came ashore, the music broke out: the "Cuban National Anthem" first, of course, then "The Sidewalks of New York" for Jimmy Walker.

What with one thing and another the party sat down to luncheon at exactly five p.m. It went on until dark so that there was scarcely time to change for the formal dinner, but change they all did, and that night the rafters rang to toasts raised to the United States of America and the Cuban Republic.

Breezes stirred the palm trees in which lights twinkled along with the stars in the heavens and, from time to time, eyes turned to the light in the Tower which seemed to encompass the scene in a most friendly fashion.

It was close to dawn when the party raced toward the Royal Palm docks and prepared to board a waiting launch to carry them to the flagship waiting to transport them all to Havana. That is quite another story, but rest assured Doc Dammers had in mind selling some Coral Gables real estate when they reached the Sevilla Biltmore in Havana.

There a new round of gaiety, with the Cuban government playing host, went on for days, and where the debonair Jimmy Walker went on making friends and influencing people while enjoying horse racing, jai alai, and endless listening to "The Sidewalks of New York," all of which he took in graceful stride. It was a heyday for Hizzoner as well as the Biltmore.



Ready for a morning canter at the Biltmore.



Halleck Tustenuggee, in foreground canoe, on the St. John's River.

## “Hunted Like a Wolf”

By W. S. STEELE

From 1835 till 1842 the United States Army, Navy and Marines fought the Seminoles up and down the length of the Florida peninsula, striving to subdue the Indians and send them to reservations in the west. No Indian war chief resisted more fiercely than Halleck Tustenuggee.

As the war dragged on, his determination to fight removal only hardened. He threatened to kill the envoys of the military who sought talks with the U. S. government.

Death would also be a reward for those of his own people who proposed submission to the Army. It was not an idle threat. When his own sister made such a suggestion, he cut her throat and left her body to be devoured by wild dogs.

As a leader during the most violent of times, Halleck Tustenuggee chose a manner of rule which elicited fear and respect from both his own people and enemies.

Yet there was another side to this remarkable Miccosukee. Described as having a face as smooth and “delicate as a female’s with a smile that has all the sweetness of a woman’s.” Halleck, who was born about 1807, was considered to have the bearing of a high-bred gentleman. Lieut. John Sprague, who wrote *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War* in 1848 observed that “Intellectually he was a remarkable man,” while another army officer described him as a “courtier.”

On Christmas Day, 1837, the biggest battle of the biggest of all Indian wars was fought on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee. When Sam Jones and his warriors fled at the first fire from the advancing U. S. Army forces, it was Halleck Tustenuggee who stepped in to reassemble Jones’ men and keep the battle going.

After the battle, Sam Jones took his people south of Lake Okeechobee to

the Everglades, west of the New River; the Army often expressed its willingness to allow the Indians to occupy this area. Halleck defiantly maintained a position between Ocala and the St. John’s, an area the Army would necessarily contest.

The warriors of his band were armed with the best of weapons, acquired from their enemies. Two years before the war started Halleck Tustenuggee began storing the gunpowder his warriors would use.

Attacks on army detachments and settlements by this band spread such fear throughout the territory that one

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**W. S. Steele**, operations manager at the Historical Museum, is the author of *The Battle of Okeechobee*, published by Florida Heritage Press. His account of the fierce Halleck-Tustenuggee is adapted from this work.

officer stated his belief that a war against such a foe could never be brought to an end.

In May of 1839 Halleck acted as the spokesman or "lawyer" for the assembled Indian leaders with whom General Alexander Macomb negotiated. The treaty that resulted was a failure. Instead it led to renewed frontier violence.

In November of 1840 the wily chief came to Fort King. By giving the most ardent assurances of peace and friendship, he obtained supplies from the Army. His people carefully remained out of the Army's reach, coming into the fort a few at a time to receive supplies.

With consummate skill Halleck played a game of deception that dawned on the Army only after its soldiers awoke to discover that the chief and his people had disappeared. Troops were sent immediately in pursuit but "not even a track could be discovered."

Halleck's uncanny ability to move through the Florida wilderness without leaving a trace of his movements led to a two-year search for his band. This search seldom revealed as much as a single track.

On December 20, 1841, a band of Halleck's warriors attacked the settlement of Mandarin, about 20 miles south of Jacksonville. Two men, two women and an infant were killed in the attack. This event spread more fear through the frontier.

Halleck, however, paid a heavy price for this raid. Trackers following the trail of the band which struck Mandarin finally located his hiding place. Detachments of the 2nd Infantry destroyed the Indian settlements.

On January 25, 1842, a rear guard action was fought by Halleck to cover the retreat of his people. One soldier was killed and two were wounded. At least two Indians were wounded.

The Army continued its pursuit of Halleck and on April 19 again brought him to battle, this time in the Big Hammock of Peliklakaha. Halleck's presence was conspicuous in the four-hour battle; his voice was heard above the din. The fight was inconclusive. The Indians again managed to escape.

Halleck's father-in-law, captured in the battle, was sent to the chief to try to convince him to give General William Jenkins Worth an interview at the military camp at Warm Springs. To the surprise of the soldiers, Halleck rode into their camp on the morning of April 29. Accompanying him were two wives and two children, aged ten and twelve.

When the General asked Halleck if it would not be better for the Indians to "come in" rather than continue the war, the chief replied: "Here my father was buried, and I thought I might as well die here as go to another country and die. . . ."

My people . . . start at the cracking of a bush . . . there are many who will say we have no place to live, no fields to plant, no friends and relatives to talk with. Our wives and children are gone. Let us go with them."

Halleck told General Worth that his people would not believe him if he called them to "come in." They would conclude it was a scheme to make money for himself. He told the general that a truce must be announced and the Indian leaders brought in to hear the talks between Worth and Halleck. Five messengers were sent out to carry the news to Otiarache and Sam Jones.

While awaiting the messengers' return, Halleck and his people in-



**Re-enactor Huland Hunt as Halleck Tustenuggee at re-created Battle of Okeechobee.**

creased their demands for supplies. Worth grew suspicious. The requests for more supplies than they could possibly use convinced him that Halleck was stockpiling the goods with an eye toward taking his leave at some opportune moment.

Worth set about turning the tables. He invited Halleck to accompany him to Fort King, where the chief, he said, could obtain powder and lead from the post sutler (store keeper). Halleck accepted the invitation.

Worth ordered Colonel John Garland to take advantage of Halleck's absence by waiting for the right moment to surround and capture Halleck's band. The ruse succeeded.

An excited horseman rode hard to carry the news of the capture to the general at Fort King. When Halleck was told, "He stood erect, quivering with excitement, brushing his fingers through his long, black hair, his eyes sparkling with fire, his breast heaving in agony, as though about to grasp and tear in pieces the perpetrators in this closing act."

Halleck was taken to Fort Wacassassa. Here the five messengers came in to give Otiarache's reply to the talks. Unaware of the capture of their leader and his people, they too became captives.

Sitting around the fire late at night the messengers and Halleck discussed the recent events. The messengers upbraided the chief for selling out his people.

Hardly had the words been spoken when Halleck rose and struck down two of the men. Two others ran out of his reach, the fifth, ". . . a stout athletic man, he struck in the breast with both feet, then, grasping him by the throat, thrashed his body upon the ground and seizing his ear in his mouth, severed it close to his head."

Standing up, he extended "both hands to heaven, with his eyes and nostrils distended with rage, he ground the ear in his teeth, like a mastiff, the, spitting it on the ground . . . screamed, with savage delight and vengeance, 'Tustenuggee! Halleck Tustenuggee!'"

On July 14, 1842, Halleck Tustenuggee left the land of his inheritance forever. His parting words were tragically memorable: "I have been hunted like a wolf and now I am to be sent away like a dog."

Viewed through modern eyes his career appears brutal with few of the humanitarian qualities by which we wish to judge our leaders. Perhaps it is better to let a contemporary, someone more familiar with the times, evaluate him. Lieutenant Sprague gave this assessment of Halleck Tustenuggee:

"Whatever sins may be laid to the charge of this Indian chieftain, or however diabolical the instinct of his nature, his land was dearer to him than life. For it he had fought boldly and unceasingly . . ."

"Confidence in himself and those within his influence allowed no question of policy, expediency, or necessity, to alter his resolution, or to restrain him from predatory or cruel acts. . . ."

"If this trait in the savage be patriotism, Halleck Tustenuggee's name should stand eternally side by side with the most distinguished of mankind."



Dr. David Fairchild plants a baobab tree at dedication of tropical garden.

## Baobab Spreads Out at Fairchild

By JEANNE BELLAMY

The big baobab is a little older than its present home, but not much. It was planted in the Fairchild Tropical Garden (FTG) on March 23, 1938—the day the garden was dedicated.

The garden is named for Dr. David Fairchild, America's most famous plant explorer. He collected baobab seeds in West Africa between 1925 and 1927, and raised the sapling which he planted at FTG 50 years ago. Its girth today is 11 feet, 4 inches. It will be a lot larger 100 years from now. Baobabs live for 500 years or more, spreading all the time. In Africa, old baobabs are hollowed out and have been used as houses.

FTG has grown, too, since that day in 1938. It contains more tropical plants than any other spot in mainland United States. More than 6,700 have been brought in and planted. Like the baobab, none reached maturity overnight.

An early introduction, the talipot palm from Jamaica, bloomed spectacularly in 1984 and drew 69,270 visitors. The talipot blooms and then dies. Even without the Christmas-tree-like flower stalk atop the talipot's 50-foot trunk, the garden in 1986 received more than 60,000 visitors.

A month of celebrations will occur in March to mark the 50th anniversary of the garden's dedication. The list:

March 9, a picnic for volunteers in the garden's amphitheater. (Picnicking normally is forbidden at FTG.)

March 19, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., open house with tours of the research center (usually closed to the public) at the Montgomery Foundation, 11935 Old Cutler Road.

March 23, 7:30 p.m., the annual meeting of garden members in the Nell Montgomery Garden House, with a lecture by Dr. John Dransfield, curator of palms at Kew Gardens in England, on "Palms of Madagascar."

March 23, at 7:30 p.m. in FTG's Corbin Education Building, a scientific lecture, open to the public, by Dr. Natalie Uhl, plant anatomist at Cornell University, on "Evolution of Corythoid Palms."

March 27, Palm Sunday, free admission for the public to the garden at 10901 Old Cutler Road. (Admission is usually \$4, free to members.)

March 31, 7:30 p.m., the anniversary gala dinner-dance benefit,

"Night of the 50th Moon," under marquees in the garden.

The idea for a tropical botanical garden in Greater Miami originated from the late Robert H. Montgomery, founder of a global accounting firm. After moving to Florida from New England, Montgomery became acquainted with Dr. Fairchild, who helped him plan the garden.

Both men were among the speakers at the dedicatory program. So were half a dozen noted plant scientists. The ceremony was held outdoors on the site chosen for the garden, then raw land. After the speeches, they planted trees saluting other botanists and agriculturists such as Dr. Henry Perrine, who brought sisal and other economic plants to Florida from Mexico. Dr. Perrine was killed by Indians attacking Indian Key on August 6, 1840.

Another speaker that day was

(Continued on Page 14)

**Jeanne Bellamy**, a frequent contributor to Update, is a former editorial writer for the *Miami Herald*.



Nell Jennings at baobab tree 50 years later.

(continued from page 6)



Hialeah Park race track dominated the Hialeah landscape in 1932.

Hialeah's clubhouse and grandstand, built for a 5,000 capacity, was overwhelmed by a crowd exceeding 17,000. People came from as far as Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa.

"They're off!" was the way Doris Stone, feature writer, began her page-one story. Miss Stone followed this shouting lead with two thousand words of vibrant description—about the excited crowd, the swift horses, the new racing plant, the prominent visitors. Sportswriter Walter St. Denis sought to outdo Miss Stone in extravagant description. Wrote St. Denis:

"Never in the history of the opening of any track, not even the famous Belmont Park or of Saratoga's picture track, was there such a glittering assemblage."

Although only 300 horses were available, Hialeah, with the help of *The Herald's* promotion, enjoyed a highly profitable 51 days of racing in January, February and March of 1925. Even the loan from Romfh's bank was paid off.

As far as legality, Florida's then Governor, John Martin, looked the other way on the betting at Hialeah. By coincidence, Governor Martin and Florida's first two Kentucky Derby champions, Needles and Carry Back, have the same birthplace in Marion County on what is now Ocala Stud.

Florida's anti-gambling laws were circumvented in 1926 by selling photo postcards of every horse in every race. If you had a "good" postcard after the race was run, the track would gladly buy it back at a premium price. A print shop near the track worked all night getting the cards ready.

The track was closed in 1927 and 1928 because of pressures from church groups. The following winter Hialeah was turned into a brokerage house, so to speak. Each horse in each race was "incorporated" and you could sell back your "shares" if the animal was first, second or third. All the legal work was being done, and done legally, by a young attorney from Americus, Ga., named Dan Chappell. Those were the days before the S.E.C.

The winning rider of the first race ever run at Hialeah on January 15, 1925, was—you guessed it—James H. Bright.

To give the players loose at the selling windows, it was decided to have a race once around with ponies.

After a mighty charge from behind in the stretch, Bright won it on his favorite Florida cow pony.

The first "official race" at Hialeah was won by a horse ridden by Ivan Parke, who later became an outstanding trainer and handled the 1944 Kentucky Derby winner, Hoop, Jr., the first thoroughbred ever owned by Fred W. Hooper.

**INTO THE TRUNK**



This view of the Royal Palm State Park Lodge comes from a 1922 photo album compiled by a Florida tourist, and recently donated by Milton and Doris Sadoff. The lodge was near the present day Anhinga Trail in Everglades National Park.

(continued from page 12)



Fairchild Tropical Garden Ramble, 1958.

Charles H. Crandon, then chairman of the Dade County Commission. He later accepted deeds from Montgomery to 68 of the garden's 83 acres so that the Civilian Conservation Corps could terrace the garden and build walls, the vine pergola and so forth. The CCC, created to give jobs to young men during the depression of the 1930s, was allowed to work only on land owned by public agencies.

A recent venture of the garden is protecting endangered species. The Center for Plant Conservation was founded in 1984. Its job is to protect endangered plants in the United States. FTG is one of 19 botanical gardens taking part in the program. The center assigns the plants within a region to each institution. FTG is responsible for plants native to South Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

FTG's newest venture is research in tropical fruits. Frank Smathers, Jr., a retired banker and longtime member of the garden's board of trustees, endowed a curatorship of tropical fruits to start this work. Plantings began at once at the Montgomery Foundation, the estate being donated for the garden's research work by the widow of the founder, now Mrs. Alvin R. Jennings.

The growth of the garden over the past half-century is sketched in a new history titled *The Dream Lives On* by Bertram Zuckerman, one of the garden's most faithful volunteers, (Banyan Press, \$5.95)

From the outset, Zuckerman writes, plants have been given to garden members, who now number more than 7,000.

Since 1962, he continues, seeds have been sent to members and institutions all over the world. "In 1986, 27 volunteers harvested,

cleaned, packaged and shipped more than 30,000 seeds. . .

"The grounds of many homes in Greater Miami have been ornamented with plants obtained from the garden by members. To learn how to care for such plants and gain other knowledge of the green world, 13,716 persons have enrolled in the 659 classes taught at the garden since 1974. . . Each year the garden offers from 80 to 100 courses. . .

"These classes are for laymen. Attractions for scientists are also plentiful. From 1961 to 1986, the garden's staff published more than 600 scientific papers. Visiting scientists can study the notable collection of more than 500 palms in a natural setting.

"Cycads, which date back to the age of dinosaurs, are of special interest. . . The garden has cycads representing every one of the 10 genera and most of the 160 known species.

"Also useful to scientists for identifying plants is the herbarium which has 60,000 specimens. . . Police once came to the garden to find out if a burr found on the pant leg of a suspect could grow in a marsh, the site of a murder.

"Garden staff members also advise laymen about plants suitable for specific purposes such as landscaping the grounds of a major oceanfront hotel.

"Volunteers lead walking tours of the garden. . . and have conducted over 6,000 tours. Each Tuesday and Thursday, from October through April, special tours are given to fifth-grade pupils. . . Since 1980. . . more than 15,000 children have been taught about the importance of plants in our lives."

## THE FINAL WORD

Now that the national publishers have discovered the "new" Miami, it's a good thing The Pickering Press is here to save the "old."

In just one year, Pickering, a newcomer to publishing, has given us four Miami books in its Florida History Series: *The Biltmore: Beacon for Miami*, by Helen Muir; *The Early Birds, A History of Pan Am's Clipper Ships, and Children and Hope, A History of The Children's Home Society of Florida*, both by Lawrence Mahoney, and *Broadway by the Bay, Thirty Years at the Coconut Grove Playhouse*, by Carol Cohan.

Miamian Charity Johnson, editor of the Press, explains the Pickering philosophy: "We are publishing anecdotal, non-academic histories, told through the people who lived these stories."

The anecdotal approach, based on the two I've read, the Biltmore and Pan Am books, produces easy-to-read, human-scale volumes that overcome the complaint that history is too often an obstacle course for the short attention span of today's readers.

You can see for yourself in an excerpt from Helen Muir's Biltmore in this issue of *Update*. Those of you who have had the pleasure of reading her *Miami, USA*, published in 1953 by Henry Holt, one of those out of town publishers, know she writes with a lively style about the people that made Miami. Fortunately, the grand old hotel is a subject worthy of her skills.

In a later issue we are planning to run an excerpt from Larry Mahoney's book on the old Pan Am clippers that used to fly from the waters of Biscayne Bay to the far reaches of the earth.

The Pickering Press is a division of C. E. Pickering Investments, Inc., a company with interests in Canada, Great Britain, New York and South Florida. We are delighted to have them here in Coconut Grove. Good regional publishers aren't all that easy to find.

*Stuart M. Dow*

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(Continued from page 2)

the Museum's silver bars; Juan Banon, a slave of the Spanish salvor Francisco Nunez Melian, who received his freedom by bringing up the first silver bar from the wreck of the *Santa Margarita*; Eugene Lyon whose research in the Archive of the Indies led to the rediscovery of the wreck; Mel Fisher of Treasure Salvor's Inc., who salvaged the materials and lost a son and daughter-in-law in the process; and finally, Judge Robert Bork, who as Solicitor General of the Nixon administration would decide whether the Federal Government would challenge Treasure Salvor Inc.'s right to the materials from the *Atocha*. And please remember, artifacts are anything made or used by man.

### The Best Laid Pipes. . .

From October 16, 1987, through January 17, 1988, the Historical Museum featured a special exhibition, "From Mayaimi to Miami: the Story of the River". The exhibition explored man's relationship with the river from prehistoric times through the present. The Miami River exhibition was scheduled to take place at the same time as the Miami River Festival, and the Museum's Education Department had planned programming around both the exhibition and the festival. One particularly interesting program was called, "Taste of the River." It involved canoeing from restaurant to restaurant along the river: cocktails at the Hyatt, appetizers at East Coast Fisheries and entrees at Joe's. Prior to the opening of the exhibition, members of the education staff went on a test run up the river to make sure that getting from restaurant to canoe and back again was an accomplishable feat. The trip proved doable. As we paddled past the Metro-Dade Water and Sewer Authority pumping station back to our put-in site, Canoe Guide Jerry Emerson asked a worker on the bulkhead why the water around there was lime green. The worker shrugged his shoulders and said he didn't know.

The next day an article by Arnold Markowitz in the *Miami Herald* began, "A big hole in one of Miami's main sewage pipes, 25 feet below the surface of the Miami River. . ." Later articles advised that playing near, in, or



First Street Bridge with East Coast Fisheries in background.

around the river was not recommended. The Miami River Festival was canceled as were all the educational programs we had planned. For some reason a "Taste of the River" didn't sound as appetizing as we had first thought.

TIM SCHMAND

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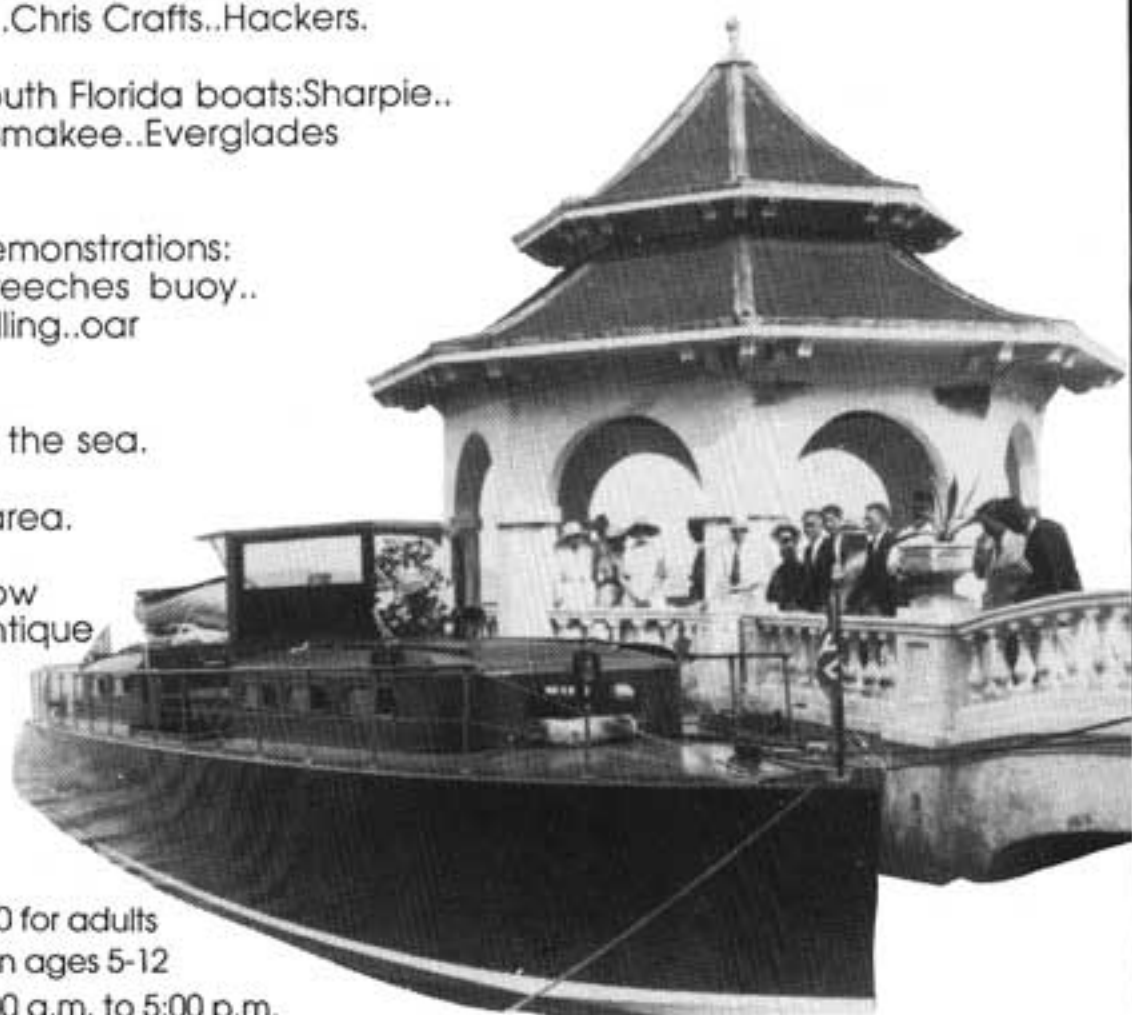
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Gar Wood's boat dock Miami, 1922.

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