

Update



THE GRAND OPENINGS



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COVER

At the May 22, 1913, opening of the Collins Bridge, celebrants had to lift and turn the cars around to get back to Miami. *Photo from the HASF Collection.*



Groundbreaking for the Seaboard Air Line Railway's extension from West Palm Beach through Miami to Homestead took place on January 20, 1926, at Hialeah with (left to right) Hialeah mayor Grethen; John M. Bowman, Miami-Biltmore Hotel president; E. G. Foley, contracting company president; Davies Warfield, Seaboard president; and Coral Gables mayor E. E. "Doc" Dammers. (Photos courtesy of the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

UPDATE

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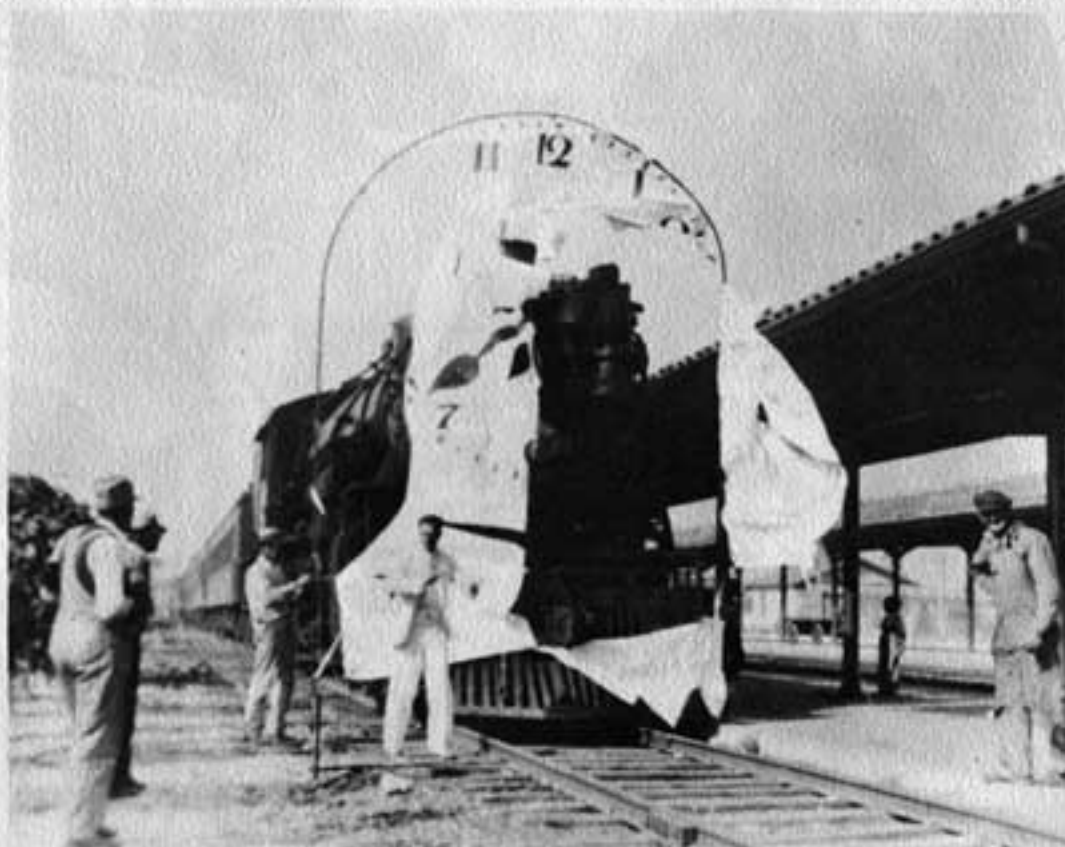
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For many years the Orange Blossom Special was "Florida's Distinguished Winter Train." The 1931 inaugural trip breaks a paper barrier on arrival at the Seaboard's Miami station. (Photo courtesy of the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

OPENING NIGHT AT THE CAPITOL THEATRE

BY DICK LEHMAN

It was a hot Friday night, ordinarily not the ideal time to go to a movie in Miami, but the opening-night crowd at the city's newest and most lavish motion-picture palace, the Capitol Theatre, was to be treated to a new type of ventilation system consisting of huge fans sending out "currents of refreshing air" that had been forced through a spray of ice-cold water, maintaining a temperature of 70 degrees.

The theatre, the first "first-run" or "class" motion-picture house built by the one-year-old Wolfson-Meyer Theatre Company (later shortened to Wometco), had been under construction for a year in boom-time Miami. The owners, Mitchell Wolfson and his brother-in-law Sidney Meyer, faced crisis after crisis in obtaining materials and workmen; they even had to import a contractor. Finally, it was finished at a cost of \$300,000.



Crowds line Miami Avenue for a solid block waiting to attend the Capitol Theatre in 1926. "Breakfast in Hollywood" starring Beulah Bondi, Bonita Granville and Billie Burke was the featured attraction. The Capitol was Miami's first "first run" motion picture house and cost \$300,000 to build in the 1920's. Within five years the Capitol would be turned into a television studio for WTVJ. (Photo courtesy of Wometco Enterprises.)

While this primitive type of air conditioning would probably not measure up to today's standards, it made even more enjoyable a dazzling opening-night program for 1,500 first-nighters who occupied every seat in the Capitol. Invited guests sat in the orchestra, while the public filled the balcony. Several hundred people had to be turned away, according to the front-page story in the next day's *Herald*.

Mr. Lehman is Wometco's Director of Public Affairs.

On June 25, 1926, Miamians crowded into the lavish structure, patterned after the Capitol Theatre in New York, at 300 North Miami Avenue to see a foyer done in exquisite mosaics, a magnificent chandelier, and a color scheme predominantly orange, ivory, gold, and green, giving the interior "the beauty of a gorgeous tropical sunset."

The audience was welcomed by Mr. James Donn, then they heard a long-forgotten singer (Seigbert Asher) do his rendition of the "Volga Boatman," witnessed a performance by Miss Evelyn Brown - "Danseuse" - and



The first-night program for the Capitol Theatre was a souvenir for the 1,500 who attended on June 25, 1926. The highlights of the evening were the performance of the Capitol Theatre Orchestra and William Gilroy and Lee Broyde playing the "mighty Wurlitzer Organ." (Photo courtesy of Wometco Enterprises.)

watched a newsreel. The feature film that opening night was a Universal Picture production, "The Midnight Sun," a drama of Russia under the czars, starring Laura La Plante and Pat O'Malley.

The highlight of the evening, however, was the Capitol Theatre Orchestra, playing classical jazz music, under the baton of Mario Armellini, who had been musical director at the Roney Plaza, Royal Poinciana, and



The interior of the Capitol Theatre was "air-conditioned" by fans blowing water-cooled air. The color scheme of the new theatre reminded patrons of "a gorgeous tropical sunset." (Photo courtesy of Wometco Enterprises.)

Continued on page 9

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE — THE ROYAL PALM HOTEL

BY THELMA PETERS

The Royal Palm Hotel was scheduled to open January 1, 1897. In the feverish rush to meet that deadline at least one thousand persons were employed on the hotel or grounds. They lived where they could, the carpenters, plasterers, masons, painters, glaziers, plumbers, roofers, landscapers in palmetto-thatched A-frames, in tents or shacks, or at the dorm-like Miami Hotel. Many were transients who had come without families. Most of them took their meals in the "mechanics" dining room of the Miami Hotel.

On weekends the Mechanics, as they were called, competed in riotous baseball games. The plumbers fielded one of the winning teams. And they were among the first of the various trades to complete their work. When the last faucet was in place early in December they gave a celebration ball at the Miami Hotel the like of which South Florida had never seen.

The Royal Palm was the seventh in a chain known as the Florida East Coast Hotel System. To the owner of the chain, Henry M. Flagler, the role of the booming shacktown on the Miami River was to serve and support his newest extravaganza. No need to plan a city — a crosshatch of a few streets would do. Off-season, Miami would be a quiet fishing village.

By Christmas 1896 a few guests had arrived at the Royal Palm, and they were not turned away in spite of near chaos. The deadline was moved to January 15. The final bricks were placed on the huge smokestack which was to become a Miami landmark, a few docks were built, the ice plant and the boilers were finished and tested, the staff properly uniformed and coached.

There was also a rush to pave a mile of road so that visitors would have a pleasant place for a carriage ride or for try-

ing one of the popular new contraptions known as a wheel. Biscayne Drive followed the easy curve of the bay northward from the hotel to the city limits, its crushed oolite surface gleaming in the sunlight.

January 16 is generally regarded as the opening day of the Royal Palm but the only festivities that marked that event occurred Sunday evening, January 17. Forty townspeople joined the hotel guests in the spacious diningroom resplendent with flowers, gleaming silver and fine linen. The menu ran a gourmet's gamut from green turtle soup to tutti-frutti ice cream. Following dinner the guests moved into the rotunda and listened to the Royal Palm orchestra play such favorites of the day as "My Old Kentucky Home."

The hotel, like most in the Flagler chain, was built of wood in a style called "modern colonial." The outside was clapboard, the interior plaster over wooden laths, the roof mansard. Overall the hotel measured 680 by 267 feet and had five stories except for the rotunda which had six. Above the rotunda was a lookout platform where every visitor of any consequence went to look at the ocean to the east and the mysterious Everglades to the west.

Like most of Flagler's hotels and railroad stations the exterior was painted a shade known as Flagler yellow, trimmed with white. The roof was red.

The elegant main diningroom seated five hundred but there were three other diningrooms: for guests' maids and guests' children, for white hotel staff, for



The Royal Palm Hotel about 1915. Built in the "modern colonial" style by Henry Flagler, the hotel was painted yellow and white with a red mansard roof. The one-story veranda on the lower left was a popular promenade where people went to see and be seen. Behind the trees at the right is the one-story bathing casino. Coconut trees landscaping the property were brought from Elliott Key. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

The Plumbers Ball had been vastly more fun.

Flagler's newest hotel was very grand. The site was the choicest, for it had both river and bay frontage. That it was also a historic site was ignored. The ancient Indian mound was leveled without a recorded qualm and the six barrels of human bones exposed in the process were secretly buried elsewhere, the copper bowls taken home as keepsakes by workers or curious bystanders.

The rockiness of the ground was covered over by trainloads of sand from Jupiter. Half-grown coconut trees from Elliotts Key were used for instant landscaping.

black hotel staff. The guest bedrooms numbered about 350 but another hundred took care of guests' maids and hotel staff. Bathrooms numbered 200 — which may give us a clue as to why the hotel became obsolete by 1930.

An unusual feature of the hotel was a veranda 578 feet long and 18 feet wide which went around the eastern wing of the hotel connecting the north portico to the south portico. It was roofed and free standing, being thirty feet from the walls of the building, and served as a popular promenade where one could see and be seen. The rocking-chair brigade generally congregated on the wide and sunny south portico.

Dr. Peters is president elect of the Florida Historical Society.

Editor's Note: The Dupont Plaza hotel and part of the parking lot to the northeast now occupy the site of the Royal Palm.

The Royal Palm Bathing Casino occupied a separate one-story building in the northwest corner of the grounds.

Hotel guests paid 25¢ to swim but townspeople could swim for 15¢ from seven to ten in the evening. Many a



The west wing of the Royal Palm Hotel (right) and the home of Julia Tuttle, the old Fort Dallas (left) in 1897. About 1900 the Tuttle home became a discreet gambling club largely patronized by Royal Palm guests. The steam yachts of hotel guests tied up at the Royal Palm's private docks. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)



The water for Miami's first swimming pool was pumped from the bay. Townspeople were allowed to swim here at night or out-of-season for fifteen cents. Hotel guests paid twenty-five cents in addition to their \$6.00 daily room charge. There was no charge for watching from the gallery that surrounded the 40 by 150 foot pool. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

The word "casino" has undergone a change of meaning. In 1897 it meant a bathing pavilion. The Royal Palm Casino had one hundred dressing rooms and a pool 40 by 150 feet, with water from the bay continuously fresh flowing. (Miami's first sewer, completed about this time, emptied into the Miami River at the foot of present South Miami Avenue.) Around the pool was a gallery for visitors who wanted to watch. No charge for watching.

Miami pioneer learned to swim in this, Miami's first swimming pool.

J. N. Chamberlain, the hotel's official photographer, had his studio in the casino. He photographed many a bathing belle but was equally in demand as the charter fishing boats returned with the day's catch. Chamberlain's scenic photos of Miami were made into postcards, some of which survive as collectors' items.

During its heyday the Royal Palm was host to some of the richest and most famous people in the world. The finest private steam yachts tied up at the hotel docks, and the greatest artists were brought to give concerts in the hotel ballroom. Since there was no airconditioning and windows had to be open on warm nights, many townspeople made their first acquaintance with classical music standing among the crotons outside the windows – a custom not forbidden by the management.

The climax of the season was the Washington's Birthday banquet – a tradition established at the Royal Palm during its first season. From a letter written in Miami February 25, 1897, preserved in our Historical Museum files, we get a glimpse of what the first such celebration was like.

The letter was written by W. W. Culbertson to his daughter Lucy, presumably in the North, since he says he is 1560 miles from home. He comments on Miami's being a "new town cut right out of the forest," and on the fact that the Royal Palm Hotel Band seemed to be playing all the time.

"On February 22, Washington Day," he continues, "at dinner each guest had a little box which looked like an apple. On picking it up a door was discovered; on opening it a canary bird flew out, and butterflies were flying through the immense diningroom."

Further along he confesses that he himself is not staying in the Royal Palm where the tab is \$6 a day but in the Miami for \$2.

By early March the docks were empty, the rockingchairs stowed away, the furniture draped in sheets, the boiler fires cooled and the shutters closed. The first season had ended.

Historical footnote: many pioneer Miami businessmen and community leaders were later to brag that they had gotten their start by being one of the "mechanics" working on the Royal Palm Hotel for \$4 a day.

THE WOODEN WAY TO MIAMI BEACH

BY MARTY GRAFTON

The first bridge to Miami Beach was Collins Bridge, which later became Venetian Causeway. Its opening ceremony was June 12, 1913, but there had been a motorcade on May 22 also. Both of these events were held to greet what was then, at 2½ miles, the longest wooden vehicular bridge on earth. In addition, they recognized the fact that the advent of the bridge "had marked the turning point for Miami Beach as certainly as the coming of the Flagler railroad (1896) had marked the turning point for Miami".*

The May celebration had its own 'turning point', though things began quite simply. A party of owners, builders and invited guests gathered at the Miami end of the bridge. They filled seven automobiles and rattled merrily eastward at 15 m.p.h. out over beautiful Biscayne Bay. They stopped at the draw to pose for pictures, and they proudly inspected the draw as it opened, allowed a sailboat through, and then closed again. In still-logical order, the parade continued.

At the Beach end of the bridge however, there was yet no ramp to the land! Now, backing up 13,000 feet was out of the question. Turning around on the proverbial dime seemed equally impossible. The result was some hilarious shifting of formal posture. Indeed dignitaries in straw-hat Sunday best had to pick up the nose of each mechanized chariot and aim it homeward. Happily, the camera kept right on clicking.

Thousands of people took part in the June festivities. The Miami Daily Metropolis called it "one of the largest

**Magic of Miami*, by Charles Edgar Nash

Mrs. Edward G. (Marty) Grafton, born a Pancoast on Miami Beach, has been a lifelong observer of the community scene. She is a board member and former officer of HASF.

crowds of Miami and Dade County citizens that has attended any function in years." There was a red, white and blue-draped barricade waiting to be lowered at the west end of the bridge. There were even little flags fluttering atop the draw. Vehicles of all descriptions choked the nearby streets as the eulogies began. Representing the Board of Trade and acting as master of

Fortunately Collins, a short, goateed gentleman, was significantly long on determination. He was a fairly successful Quaker farmer from New Jersey who first came to the Miami area in the '90s, before the railroad. Having once invested \$5,000 in a coconut-farming venture on the offshore peninsula, he was at least somewhat curious to see why it had brought no return. He



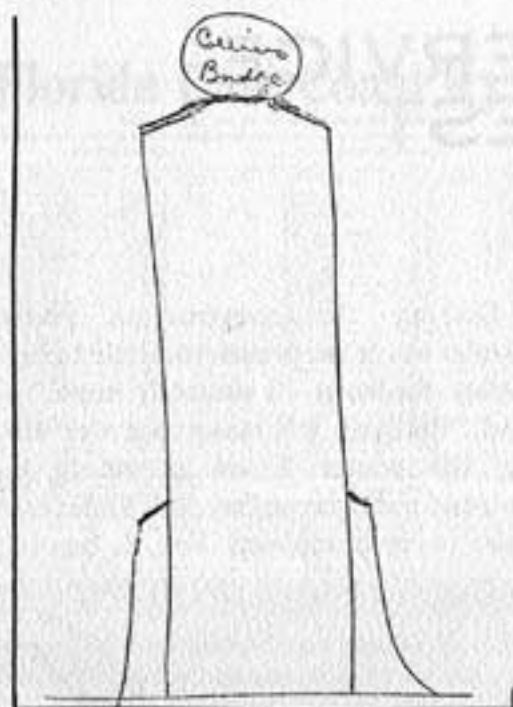
Property owners, builders and invited guests filled seven cars and crossed the Collins Bridge in a motorcade on May 22, 1913. They posed at the draw section for this photo and continued to Bull Island only to have to manually turn their cars in the opposite direction. (See cover photo.) (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

ceremonies was George A. McKinnon. Other speakers included Mayor J. W. Watson, T. V. Moore for the County Commissioners, and Crate D. Bowen, representing Collins.

The story of the bridge, even in brief, is an integral chapter in the story of John Stiles Collins, then in his seventy-fifth year. He attended neither the May nor the June celebration of his bridge. Getting it built was his greatest dream, and he preferred to leave the hoopla to others. Fair enough; the bridge, as Polly Redford put it in *Billion Dollar Sandbar*, had been "one damned thing after another."

hired two blacks to row him across Biscayne Bay. He learned that the tender shoots of nuts which did germinate were eaten by rabbits, woodrats, or other animals. Anxious to find out what crop could be grown more profitably, he began to pursue the answer.

Little by little he acquired and cleared land, planting much of it in avocados. Miami Beach was being born in a hard and very costly battle of man against mangrove and swamp. Collins' sons and son-in-law, Thomas J. Pancoast, came down to see what the old man was digging into that was digging into the family savings so rapidly. Equally enthusiastic



This hand drawing of a gate post and light was suggested by designer Collins for placement on either side of the bridge entrance. He felt the extra expenditure of \$50.00 "would be quite desirable."

about this admittedly wild but beautiful and promising place, they determined to back his efforts all they could, and the Pancoasts moved down to help. Tomorrow, as the saying goes, lay in the balance.

As the farming continued, the first wide-scale planning of real estate began. More special root-cutting and sand-dredging machinery was ordered from the north and floated across the Bay. Collins Canal was dug in order to boat the avocados back to the mainland for shipping to northern markets. Meanwhile, at the south bathing beach, Smith's Casino was part of a ground swell of development and a foreshadowing of the world-famous tourist mecca that the eight-mile length of Miami Beach was to become.

The first decade of the nineteenth century brought discussions of a bridge for the public. (Despite stories to the contrary, the bridge was not built to transport farm products.) By 1912, the Collins clan had undertaken the challenge, fighting city hall for the right to build, fighting objections of the Biscayne Navigation Company, which operated excursion boats to Smith's, and eventually fighting the tremendous complexities of actual construction. One nightmarish detail was protecting 2100 pilings from wood-riddling shipworms and marine borers. Layers of

concrete were poured in riveted sheet-iron 'sleeves' around the piles, that operation alone costing \$10,000. Finally when pilings and planks stretched nearly to Bull Island, the money ran out.

Incidentally, Bull Island soon became Belle Isle. It was the only natural island of the later-built Venetian Islands, which except for San Marco became a nominal part of the Beach. In further fact, Collins Bridge only reached Bull Island in mid-1913; but there were, by the public opening at least, a concreted turning area and a ramp!

To continue with the money crisis, the bridge seemed dead all right. A "Collins Folly". Luckily, though, flamboyant Minneapolis industrialist, Carl G. Fisher, advanced \$50,000 on Collins' bonds, receiving a return courtesy of 200 acres, a strip 1,800 feet wide and almost a mile from ocean to bay. Fisher was to invest much thereafter in the early promotional years of the Beach.

Thus was predicted County (McArthur) Causeway (1920), followed by 79th Street (North Bay), Broad, and Tuttle.

Fifteen months after the grand pageant, Carl Fisher wrote a letter to Thomas Pancoast. Its 'light-note after thought' about the bridge reads:

"P.S. I hope you will find it convenient this Fall to construct the large gate posts which we talked about, on each side of the entrance to Collins' Bridge and with the light on top. If these lights were to consist of two large red globes, when lighted at night they would be very attractive, and in the day time they would be a constant reminder to travellers along the road that they must go over the bridge. I would not suggest this extra expenditure if I did not think it would be quite desirable - and I do not believe it would cost more than \$50."

Stapled to the letter is Fisher's full-page pencilled drawing. An artist he was

COLLINS BRIDGE 2 1/2 MILES LONG	
TOLL SCHEDULE	
TOLL DUE UPON ENTRANCE TO BRIDGE	
PEDESTRIANS - ROUND TRIP	5c
BICYCLE	5c
MOTORCYCLE	10c
WITH SIDE CAR	15c
ONE-WAY	10c
ONE HORSE RIDER	10c
TWO SEAT	10c
ONE SEAT	10c
TWO	15c
EACH ADDITIONAL HORSE	20c
ONE HORSE DRAY	15c
TWO	25c
LIGHT AUTO DELTRUCK	15c
MEDIUM	25c
HEAVY	50c
ONE HORSE DRAY	30c
TWO	50c
MEDIUM TRUCK	50c
HEAVY TRUCK	1.00
EXTRA CHARGE 3 TON LOADS	1.00
NO LOADS PROHIBITED	

The toll schedule for the Collins Bridge listed charges varying from five cents for pedestrians to \$1.00 for a heavy truck. Automobile charges depended on the number of seats and horse drawn vehicles upon the number of horses. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

The gala opening of Collins Bridge, then, commemorated both John S. Collins and the auspicious beginning of Miami Beach. There were, of course, fine flowery phrases about the honoree, his spirit, his enterprise and his donation of a beach-front park (where today stands the Miami Beach Public Library). The Metropolis concluded, "It is rare that a man is found who without asking for a single concession from the public, will spend a fortune in the building of a bridge for public use." Mayor Watson predicted "that in two or three years traffic over the bridge will have grown so large that another bridge, probably larger than this, will be necessitated."

not, but an idea man he was, and you guessed it - an automobile-headlight-company pioneer executive!

Up to this time, Miami Beach as a whole had never been named, though owned sections had been called "Alton Beach" (Fisher), "Ocean Beach" (Lumus brothers, J.N. and J.E.) and "Miami Beach Improvement Co." (Collins-Pancoast). Incorporated as a town in 1915 and as a city in '17, the Beach had reached all of 644 permanent residents by 1920. At that point, having served the Bay area for seven years, Collins Bridge was sold, replaced by

Continued on page 9

THE OPENING OF RAIL SERVICE TO MIAMI AND KEY WEST

BY SETH BRAMSON

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the reasons why the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) eventually was extended from West Palm Beach to Miami. History has it that, following the disastrous 1895 freeze, which wiped out tender crops as far south as Palm Beach County, Mrs. Julia Tuttle, one of Dade's early landowners, sent railroad magnate Henry M. Flagler an orange branch showing undamaged foliage and blossoms, hoping thus to induce him to extend the FEC to Miami. The FEC, incidentally, that same year succeeded an earlier corporation, the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Indian River Railway.

Railroads everywhere were building more trackage. Hence it probably was only a short time until the FEC would have come to Miami anyway. Basically, the only concern was to make the surrounding countryside productive enough to pay for the expansion of a railroad into new territory. Still, Mrs. Tuttle deserves much credit for giving Mr. Flagler a nudge.

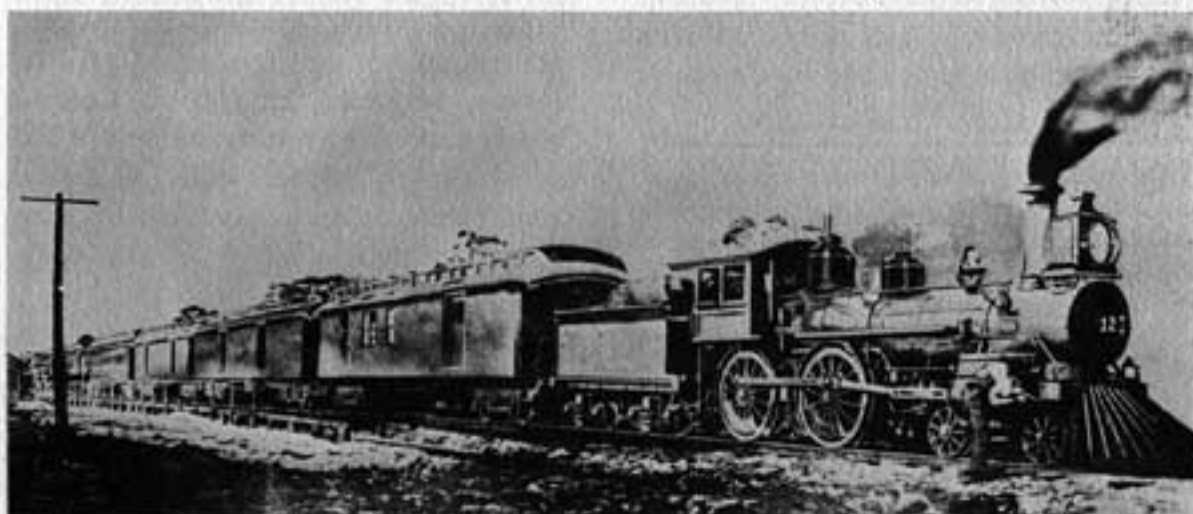
The locals were undoubtedly pleased at the decision in 1895 that the railroad would soon be extended into Miami. Although it was said by Sidney Martin, "The coming of the railroad was the biggest single event in the city's history," there was then little if any local history, other than Indian raids. Hence the event, taken unto itself, was not of great consequence *at the moment*.

There was another, more technical point that caused opening-day enthusiasm to be less than it could have been. The forces of the railroad were building trackage in both directions, south from West Palm and north from Miami. The FEC actually didn't build into Miami; they closed a gap, thus connecting Miami to the rest of the railroad.

Mr. Bramson, a local restaurateur, is a long-time student of FEC history. He has the largest private collection anywhere of FEC memorabilia.

The road was completed to Miami on April 15, and the first regularly scheduled passenger train operated into Miami on April 22, 1896. Preceding that train there had been special trains, work forces, and so on, into and out of Miami for some time.

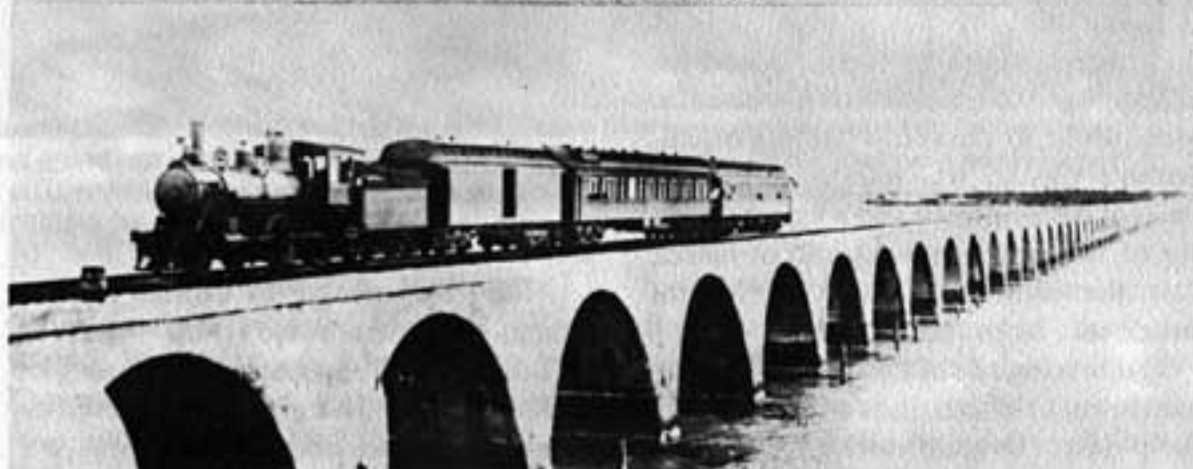
During the construction phase, Flagler wrote the president of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, "I sincerely hope," he said, "that you will make us a visit during the winter. I am extending the railroad to Biscayne Bay. It is under contract to be completed Feb. 1, but like



Controversy surrounds the correct date but this photo shows the first regularly scheduled train into Miami on April 22nd or 23rd, 1896. Fifteen years later Henry Flagler would ride to the island city of Key West on the southernmost extension of the FEC. (Photo courtesy of Seth Bramson.)

FLORIDA EAST COAST RAILWAY—KEY WEST EXTENSION

Passenger Train Service Extended to Knights Key
FEBRUARY 5, 1908



The Florida East Coast Railway's first train to Knights Key was photographed crossing the Long Key Viaduct. The viaduct was built of reinforced concrete and was over 2½ miles long. (Photo courtesy of Seth Bramson.)

So, what did happen when the first train came to Miami? Well, it was a construction train, and probably 150 to 200 people did turn out to see it roll slowly in. Except for some handshaking and congratulatory thoughts, that was basically it. So, when the first scheduled train arrived a week later, trains were old hat.

many such enterprises may be delayed 10 to 15 days. Fla. is very beautiful at this season."

The first passenger train did roll into town on April 22, 1896. The photograph generally identified as that first train has been much doctored, and Florida writer Nixon Smiley thinks it was taken on the

Florida East Coast Ry.

Time Table No. 60 is Effect June 15, 1904

SOUTH-WEST.					SOUTH-EAST.				
STATIONS.	Nov. 21.	Nov. 22.	Nov. 23.	Nov. 24.	STATIONS.	Nov. 21.	Nov. 22.	Nov. 23.	Nov. 24.
1.1. Southampton	4.30	4.40	4.50	5.00	1.2. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.2. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.3. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.3. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.4. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.4. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.5. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.5. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.6. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.6. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.7. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.7. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.8. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.8. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.9. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.9. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.10. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.10. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.11. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.11. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.12. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.12. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.13. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.13. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.14. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.14. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.15. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.15. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.16. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.16. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.17. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.17. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.18. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.18. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.19. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.19. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.20. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.20. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.21. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.21. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.22. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.22. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.23. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.23. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.24. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.24. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.25. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.25. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.26. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.26. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.27. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.27. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.28. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.28. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.29. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.29. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.30. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.30. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.31. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.31. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.32. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.32. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.33. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.33. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.34. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.34. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.35. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.35. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.36. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.36. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.37. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.37. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.38. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.38. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.39. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.39. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.40. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.40. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.41. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.41. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.42. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.42. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.43. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.43. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.44. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.44. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.45. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.45. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.46. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.46. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.47. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.47. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.48. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.48. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.49. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.49. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.50. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.50. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.51. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.51. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.52. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.52. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.53. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.53. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.54. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.54. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.55. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.55. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.56. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.56. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.57. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.57. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.58. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.58. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.59. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.59. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.60. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.60. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.61. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.61. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.62. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.62. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.63. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.63. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.64. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.64. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.65. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.65. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.66. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.66. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.67. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.67. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.68. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.68. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.69. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.69. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.70. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.70. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.71. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.71. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.72. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.72. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.73. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.73. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.74. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.74. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.75. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.75. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.76. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.76. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.77. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.77. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.78. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.78. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.79. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.79. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.80. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.80. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.81. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.81. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.82. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.82. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.83. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.83. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.84. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.84. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.85. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.85. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.86. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.86. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.87. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.87. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.88. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.88. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.89. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.89. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.90. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.90. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.91. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.91. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.92. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.92. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.93. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.93. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.94. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.94. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.95. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.95. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.96. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.96. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.97. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.97. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.98. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.98. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	1.99. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
1.99. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	2.00. Maidstone	6.30	6.40	6.50	7.00
2.00. St. Albans	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30					

[illegible]

This FEC time table became effective June 15, 1896. A train from Jacksonville to Miami ran daily except Sunday, and the ride took 12 hours and 15 minutes. Arrival or departure times were "not guaranteed" nor were "any consequences arising therefrom." (Photo courtesy of Seth Bramson.)

23rd. While this is a possibility, we shall let local history lie peaceably and accept the fact that the first regularly scheduled train operated into Miami on April 22,

There is little to commemorate that opening of rail service in terms of ribbons, booklets, brochures, or other memorabilia. But 15 years and nine months to the day later, things had changed radically. On January 22, 1912, Henry M. Flagler, his eyes dimmed, his hearing deteriorated, his back bent, and his body generally withered from his 82 years, was helped off the first train to the island city of Key West. The scene was total madness!

The first official train to cross the Keys Extension of the FEC arrived at Key West at 10:43 a.m. Ten thousand people yelled and cheered themselves hoarse, clapping and waving and babbling in Spanish, French and English. Many were seeing a passenger train for the first time, having been born in the Caribbean or having always lived in Key West. "Flagler's Folly" was a reality. Flagler told aides, "Now I can die fulfilled."

The railroad had been advancing the Key West extension idea for years, having overcome bad publicity, senate inquiries, unofficial government opposition from certain quarters, and several hurricanes. For years, FEC maps had shown the extension by a dotted line connecting Key West with Miami.

In comparing the arrival at Key West with that at Miami and accounting for the differences, there are several factors. First was that Mrs. Tuttle helped to persuade Flagler to bring his railroad to Miami. In continuing to Key West, it was Flagler who told his associates, "Gentlemen, the railroad will go to sea."

The building of the line to Miami was, in the eyes of the builders, chancy at best. Later, in going to Key West, the railroad builders felt sure that the great boom in trade that they thought would result from the opening of the Panama Canal would cause Key West to become one of the great ports of the world. It did not.

The railroad that went to sea expired in 1938, after a lingering illness caused by the 1935 Labor Day hurricane. Death was difficult. Even today, off Channel 5, a length of rail pokes skyward from the water.

The FEC people were wrong about Miami. The great city was to be on the mainland, not the Keys, and now, many years later, Miami has become a chief reason for the road's existence. The big blue EMD GP 40-2's (technical jargon describing the engines) roar past grade crossings day and night with 60- and 70-foot long freight cars bound for Northern markets.

But if you listen carefully, especially on those magnificent tropical nights in April, you can hear the sound of escaping steam, and you can smell the wood-burning 4-4-0's rolling slowly over the main line. If you are a believer, a real believer, you can hear Henry Morrison Flagler, that's him on his private car, No. 91, saying to FEC President Joe Parrott, "Joe, we went into this for the land. Frankly, I don't think this place they're calling Miami will make it. I feel bad for all those folks. But we'll give it a go. And maybe history will be kind to us."

They did. And it was.

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A letter in the author's collection

THE WOODEN WAY TO MIAMI BEACH

Continued from page 7

concrete spans and renamed "Venetian Way".

Few remain to remember the historic moment when the bridge actually opened to the world. After all the speeches, "the stentorian whistle of the dredge Florida" (also decorated in the national colors) signaled the start of a seemingly endless procession across the remarkable new viaduct. The day's tally was 200 cars and carriages, 145 bicycles and "something like 200 pedestrians."

Personally, I wish that the MC could know that someone still really enjoys his poetic "We are glad to have the veil lifted between Miami and the Atlantic Ocean."!

OPENING NIGHT AT
THE CAPITOL THEATRE

Continued from page 3

Breakers hotels. Mitchell Wolfson recalls that the orchestra received a standing ovation and thunderous applause. Because there was no Philharmonic or civic orchestra at that time, the Capitol Theatre Orchestra from that night on became a favorite of Miamians.

Col. Wolfson also remembers that next to the orchestra, the other opening night segment, of the program to be wildly received, were the performances of William Gilroy and Miss Lee Broyde on the \$60,000 "Mighty Wurlitzer Organ." Gilroy had formerly been organist at the Capitol in New York, and Miss Broyde had come down from Yonkers.

The opening-night success was just a hint of what was in store for the Capitol, and the theatre would remain for the next 25 years "Miami's favorite" for many people, until, in 1951, beginning to show her age, she would be transformed into one of the most modern television studios in the United States, the home of Wometco's WTVJ Channel 4, which had been born two years earlier in a back room of the theatre.

THE BILTMORE DEBUTS

BY PRUNELLA WOOD

On the evening of January 16, 1926, an elegant and opulent new beauty made a smashing debut in Coral Gables, lighting up society for miles around. The occasion was the grand opening of the Coral Gables Biltmore Hotel, a huge and handsome rococo pile, still an impressive landmark nearly 50 years later. The gala attracted visitors from all over, the alluding publicity having been widespread for months concerning any event in the brand new playground, fabulous Miami, Florida.

Extra Pullman cars were added to the daily runs from New York and Chicago, just before the 16th, and automobile traffic from the rest of the state poured in for the party. Adding them all together, it is quite possible that the crowd actually lived up to the hotel's vaunted capacity: room for 500 couples to dance in the ballroom.

As you may know, the hotel entrance was on its second floor, at the center of a driveway which arched across the entire facade, rising from the street. And now I blush remembering my ascent of that arch the night of the gala! My Ford two-seater had never before encountered so much as a hummock and gave up the struggle just short of the apex, thus paralyzing the long line of limousines following me. Nothing to do about it but steer backward down to the road into a monster traffic jam.

The scene in the big reception hall was stunning, once inside. Such lovely gowns and gorgeous furs, heavenly scents and beautiful jewels. Satin was the pet fabric, mostly white or in glowing gem tones. Skirts were long and slim, topped by elaborate bodices contrived with bead embroidery of sheer lace, and cut very low. As to the ladies' escorts, I remember only handsome men, and ever so many of them.

Our author moved to Coconut Grove in 1919 and now lives there in retirement. She has written for the Coconut Grove Times in 1922, the Miami Daily News in 1924, the Havana Post 1925-1929, the New York World-Telegram and the King Features Syndicate.

The floor-to-ceiling doors and windows in the ballroom looked out over the huge swimming pools, two Olympic-size pools flowing into each other at right angles, and floating on them two gondolas straight from Venice (Italy, not Florida) complete with gondoliers, both of whom gave out with "O, solo mio" and such like, adding decibels to the obbligate of the guests. The crescent-

It was a night or two later, but definitely incidental to the ball, that a practically priceless floor-length chinchilla fur coat was stolen from a guest's bedroom suite, along with a further fortune in jewels.

According to local custom, on the way home from the ball our group stopped at the dairy snack restaurant on Bird Road to hash over the evening - if



Coral Gables' Biltmore Hotel opened in January of 1926. The hotel boasted a ballroom for 500 couples, two olympic-size pools and a golf course. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

do peaked when one lady diner, overcome by the beauty of it all, dove into the pool and climbed aboard a gondola, tipping the soloist into the drink, ending his song with "gulp!"

From then on history hints that a small rumble came about. I had left the revelling at a decent hour. But the post mortem on January 17 told a tale of minions dragging the pool by dawn's early light, reaming out much smashed glass and china, and considerable flat silver which had settled on the bottom. Another roguish happening was the light-fingered, jolly "souvenir" lifting of many, many blankets from unoccupied bedrooms, left open for inspection.

cornflakes and beakers of cold milk can be labelled hash. The dances at the Coral Gables Country Club never lasted long after midnight, even if Paul Whiteman or Jan Garber were providing the beat. Hence our stopoff at the dairy, which was open all night, the only lighted place until you hit Douglas Road, after leaving the Country Club.

We swapped light gossip about our gay evening, and discussed various coming events planned for the stunning new hotel. For example, there would be a "Biltmore Hunt Club" which was to be as worthy as the Peacock hounds, or the

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OPENING DAY AT HIALEAH RACE COURSE

by Jerry Pardue

Hialeah Park, said by the management to be "America's most beautiful thoroughbred race track", has a special interest in rolling back the years half a century, because Hialeah opened on January 15, 1925.

What later was to become the area's No. 1 tourist showplace was on opening day still a little rough; it was so far out in the country that, although there was a railroad, no unloading platform existed, so that the nags had to be unloaded in Miami and walked ten miles to the track.

as were Bill Reardon, dancing partner to lissome Irene Castle, and movie producer Edgar Selwyn. Also present were many big-name socialites from Dade County and elsewhere. Just as today, the crowd was dubbed well dressed, looking like a million dollars.

Parimutuel wagering, although illegal, was tolerated in 1925; it became legal in 1931. The total first-day handle was said to be half a million dollars, and compared to today's two million average that was respectable, all things considered. Purses then ran about \$7500, about average for winter racing at that time.

Harry Payne Whitney, the nation's leading owner and breeder, shipped 30 of his horses to Hialeah, adding considerable class to the meet, although none of them seem to have been entered on opening day. Mrs. Payne Whitney's Cup of Tea, Greentree Stable, finished sixth out of twelve in the third race, with Ivan Parke up. Parke, the leading jockey in 1924, combined efforts with owner-trainer Mose Goldblatt to star that opening day. Their allowance runner Braedalbane was home first in the opener, paying \$9.20, and their Corinth took the featured fifth, the Miami Handicap, paying a satisfactory \$13.40. Johnny Callahan, another national leading jockey, finished in the money with four of his five mounts that day.

The seventh race got off at 5:33, a dingdong battle all the way, Johnny Callahan winning aboard Superbum. Ken Noe on Quesada finished second. Half an hour later the fans had started walking, found their busses, unscrambled their cars, or boarded the FEC special train which had brought them from Miami. Winners and losers alike seemed happy, all convinced that thoroughbred racing was here in south Florida to stay for a long time.



Hialeah's clubhouse was bustling on opening day January 15, 1925. Over seventeen thousand spectators celebrated and the total first-day handle was said to be half a million dollars. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

That year was notable in many ways. J. Edgar Hoover was serving his first year as FBI head; two women, Ross of Wyoming and Ferguson of Texas, became the first governors of their sex; Clarence Darrow defended Loeb and Leopold in the Bobby Franks murder case and John T. Scopes of Dayton, Tennessee, in the famous monkey trial, being opposed in the latter by our own William Jennings Bryan. Floyd Collins lost his life in a long-drawn-out, highly publicized episode in a Kentucky cave.

This article is based largely upon material furnished by Lou Cunningham, of Hialeah's publicity department.

Jimmy Bright, a horse lover, had arrived in the area from St. Louis in 1909, and Joe Smoot came down from Buffalo at boom time expecting to deal in real estate. Instead, Joe met Jimmy. Joe had \$100,000 and Jimmy had much land. Joe made a token payment to Jimmy of \$10 for some 160 acres; their groundbreaking took place on January 14, 1924.

The track's opening, a year and a day later, drew 17,000 racing fans and spectators, a goodly crowd even today. On hand to witness that seven-race card were many celebrities. Gilda Gray, who invented the famous shimmy, was there, supposedly in street clothes; Gene Tunney, a heavyweight boxer, soon to be world's champion, was pointed out,



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Meadowbrook, in the North. To this end, several dog foxes and a large complement of vixens had arrived, or were about to arrive, in Coral Gables.

The foxes really did materialize, although the Hunt did not. They were released in the Everglades when the Hunt dream collapsed, to cope with

nature. But, canny creatures that they are, they mistrusted the wilderness and doubled back to civilization, skipping Coral Gables, and choosing to settle in Coconut Grove, my own love affair in Florida for 56 years. Once in a great while I see one of them at night on our leafy by-streets, and I remember how I put out chicken bones for them at dusk,

all through the '30s and '40s.

The Biltmore of Coral Gables has had some blistering ups and downs, but none were shameful or truly destructive. If it becomes now the home of the prestigious Miami Art Center, as proposed, what an appropriate trust for a famous beauty just approaching middle age.