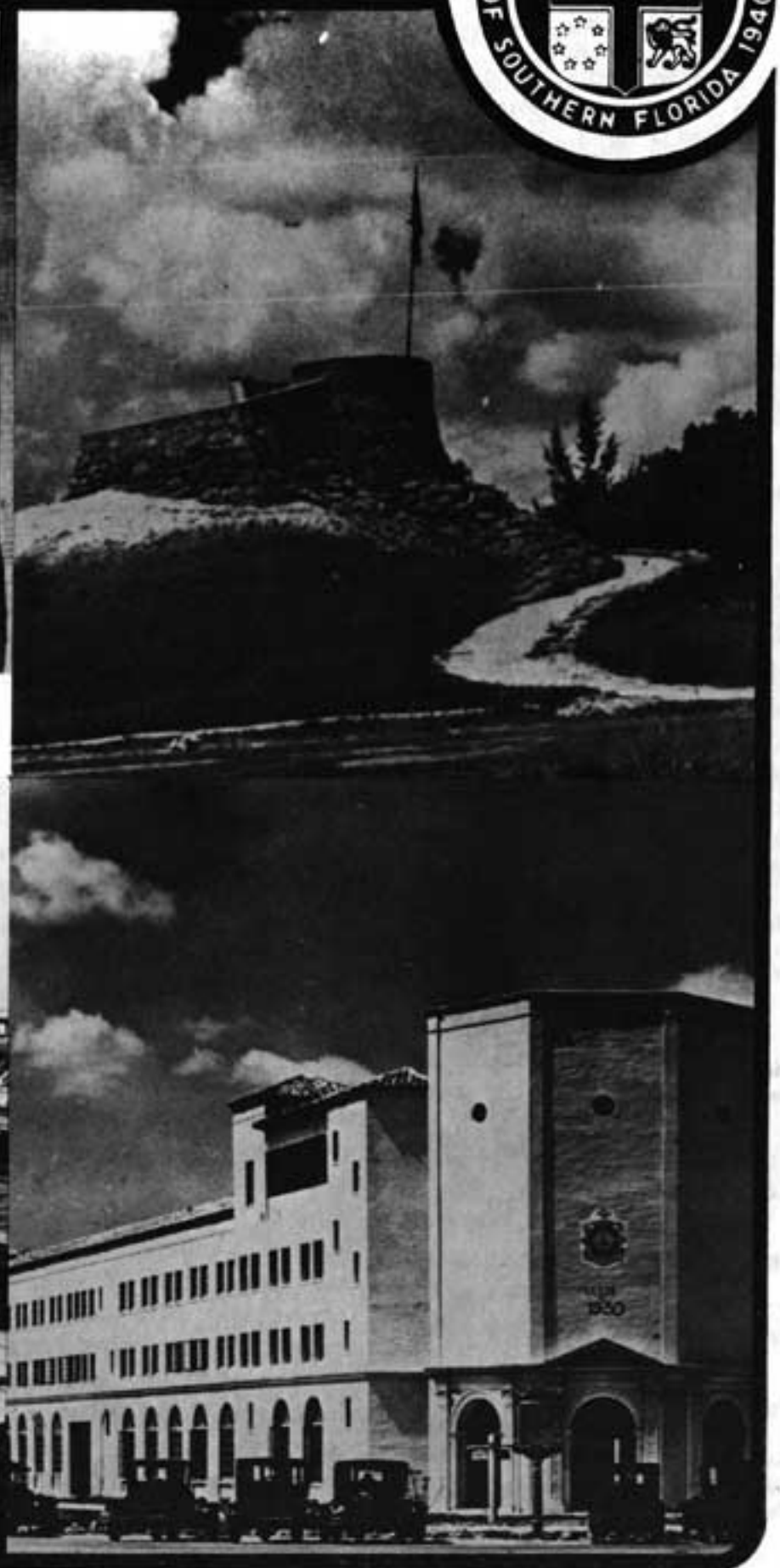


# Update



## POTPOURRI



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## UPDATE

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## A PICTURE HISTORY OF U.M.

by Zee Shipley

Dr. Charlton Tebeau, Professor Emeritus of the University of Miami, editor of *Tequesta*, and charter member of HASF, opened the Association's 1976 program series with "A Picture History of the Origin of the University of Miami."



DR. TEBEAU

Dr. Tebeau is the official historian for the University of Miami's Fiftieth Anniversary and the photographs are part of his "work in progress" which will be published October 15, 1976, on the anniversary of the opening of the University.

After sketching the history of the University briefly, Dr. Tebeau presented striking photographs of the development of both the University and the city of Coral Gables. At one point he showed a narrow paved road flanked by pines with not a house in sight: Granada Boulevard, Richard Merrick remarked. Next, a similarly deserted road: Coral Way. Dr. Tebeau said Mrs. Merrick always urged the cab drivers to make good time between Miami and Coral Gables so prospective buyers wouldn't be so conscious of the distance between the two cities.

From the beginning the University was visualized as the Pan American Outdoor



Visualized as Pan American Outdoor University, the University of Miami opened its doors in the Anastasia Hotel, in 1926. The "cardboard college" served the University for twenty years. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

University, and the University's first letterhead in 1916 bore those words. In all of the promotion for development of Coral Gables, George Merrick emphasized that there would be a university in the city. He set aside land for the University and gave five million dollars and 160 acres of land.

Dr. DuPuis, chairman of the committee for the development of Dade County, recommended three goals for the community in 1923: a fair, which became the Dade County Fair; a university; and a Pan American Exposition. Of the three of course only Interama has not materialized.

By the spring of 1926 the boom had run its course and fund-raising had tapered off, yet the University opened in the Anastasia Hotel in spite of the September hurricane. The "cardboard college" served the University for twenty years.

In 1928 Professor J. F. W. Pearson, who was to succeed first President Bowman Foster Ashe in 1952, initiated the establishment of a school of marine biology. He introduced students to underwater science in the bulky diving suits of the pre-scuba era.

With the onset of World War II, the University was again in peril, but the foresight of the President sav-

ed it once again. He urged the Navy to use Anastasia as a barracks and ultimately the Royal Air Force also quartered its trainees there. As a result, the Duke of Windsor came from the Bahamas to inspect the RAF troops. After the war Sir Winston Churchill received an honorary degree in the Orange Bowl.

Dr. Tebeau discussed the troubles the University has overcome: the 1926 financial bust, hurricanes, and war; in context, the present crisis seems less ominous. Such is the value of a historical perspective.

Dr. Thelma Peters introduced "Dr. T." as she said, "With pleasure and pride - and a tear," for he is moving back to his boyhood home in Springfield, Georgia, next year. He will continue to be active in our association and will edit *Tequesta* but we will miss his counsel and wit in the day-to-day business of the association. "Gentleman, Educator, Scholar" and outstanding teacher to us all.

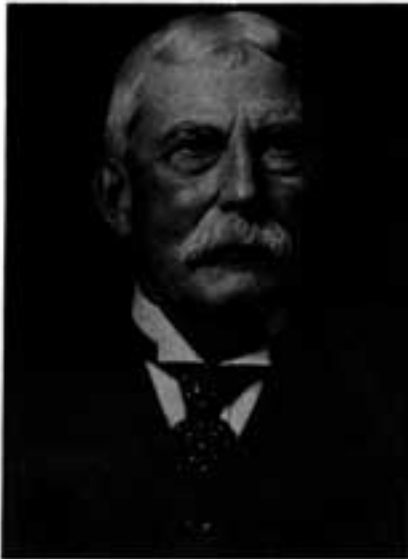
## FROM THE EDITORS

Regularly we receive contributions which do not fit into any of the established categories for forthcoming issues. We have been hoarding these valuable articles until we had enough of them to make up a collection of mostly unrelated pieces, hence our theme, "Potpourri".

## IT ALL BEGAN WITH FLAGLER

by Seth Bramson

It was almost as if, in the beginning, a Biblical scene was being recounted. During the winter of 1883-84, a man named Henry Morrison Flagler, 53, late of Standard Oil, arrived for the first time in St. Augustine. What he saw was good. Flagler said, "Let there be hotels," and, lo, there were hotels.



HENRY M. FLAGLER

Then Flagler said, "Let there be railroads—and land companies—and cities—and paved roads—and water works—and visitors. And, lo, there were.

But, most importantly, there was Flagler. And today's promotion, by cities, by airlines, by hotels, by development companies, as well as by Auto-Train and Amtrak, is derived, in both concept and appeal, from the groundwork laid by Flagler's promotions of the East Coast of Florida as the American Riviera, a superb place to farm, to fish, to vacation, and to live.

*Seth Bramson has contributed to Update on several previous occasions. He is noted for his collection of FEC Railway and Florida transportation memorabilia.*

In 1888, on January 10th, the magnificent Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine opened its doors. This was the first of the great resort hotels to be completed and opened. A brochure issued in 1887 to announce the new hotel proclaimed St. Augustine as "The American Riviera," with a climate superior to that of Mediterranean resorts. The other great event of '88 was the first operation of an electrically lighted, vestibuled train from Jersey City to Jacksonville. This train later became the famed "Florida Special."

For all intents and purposes, it was the winter of 1887-88 that set the stage for all that was to follow.

As the predecessors of the FEC pushed south, Flagler continued to build, or buy and enlarge, major hotels along the route. In Ormond Beach, there was the Hotel Ormond; in Miami, the Royal Palm; and in Key West, the Casa Marina. The FEC began the promotions and the cities and FEC's connecting railroads carried it out.

Major roads advertising and promoting the East Coast included the Seaboard, the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL), Louisville and Nashville (L&N), Pennsylvania (PRR), and Illinois Central (IC). Until the Seaboard reached Miami in 1927, through trains were handled by the FEC.

Not to be overlooked in the drive to populate the East Coast were the steamship lines. In the very early days, beginning somewhere shortly after the Civil War ended, picturesque river steamers plied up and down the St. Johns, along the banks of which grew up a number of small towns and resorts. Soon the Hart Line and DeBary line began

to take over and operated strong (albeit somewhat unpredictable) river services following the St. Johns all the way to Sanford and Maytown.

Soon, however, the "Big boys" jumped in, and Clyde Lines initiated a New York and Jacksonville service, promoting strongly the pleasures of an ocean voyage.

Soon enough, they were joined by the Munson lines, by the Mallory Steamship Company, and by the Merchants and Miners Line. As the East Coast grew,

The campaigns to encourage the Northern populace to seek sunshine and good health in a Florida that was inhabited by a minority of men when compared to the mosquitoes was engendered by the Flagler people. Whether it was a steamship company or a "City" Company, such as Merrick's Coral Gables Corporation, there was nothing to compare with the artistry and eloquence of the early FEC publicists.

In the words of the FEC, "The East Coast of Florida is Paradise Regained." This was



Visitors traveling the FEC's "Florida Special" landed at this South Florida terminal. Like all Flagler buildings, it was painted yellow and white. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

steamship service expanded to Miami, with the P&O operating service from Miami to Havana and Nassau. All of these companies maintained Northern offices for the express purpose of promoting the splendors of Tropical Florida. (See also a report on the Mueller lecture elsewhere in this issue—Editor.) Another point of consequence is that simultaneous with the development of the East Coast, Henry B. Plant and others were carrying out a similar, though perhaps less extensive campaign to popularize the West Coast.

the supreme apex of the publicist's prose, for nothing else could compare with the image of the sun shining out of the clouds on the East Coast of Florida.

Volume after volume heaped praise on the East Coast in general and the Southeast corner in particular. Palm Beach became "The Beautiful," and Miami, "The Magic City." Promotion continued unabated, because Flagler, in his wisdom, had established a hotel company, several land companies, a steamship company, and an agricultural company, and all with a

*Continued of Page 12*

# HALISSEE HALL

by Valerie Fisher Lassman

Amidst the daily hustle and bustle of the busy medical complex expanding around Jackson Memorial Hospital stands an eye-catching, imposingly elegant monument to Miami's colorful history. It is Hallssee Hall, the beloved home of the late John Sewell.



JOHN SEWELL

The stately mansion is one of Miami's landmarks. It was constructed by John Sewell, one of Miami's founders and its third mayor, on the highest point of land in the city. Its cornerstone, now partially buried by the surrounding asphalt pavement, is inscribed: Hallssee Hall, erected by John Sewell. Construction begun July 20, 1912.

Hallssee Hall is discussed at some length in Sewell's book, *John Sewell's Memoirs and History of Miami, Florida*, published in 1933. In his account of the construction of the house he said, "I have shown in my preceding notes that my main 'Bug' in the early days of Miami was to utilize the most common product of Dade County which is called Miami stone. I discovered how to use it for roads and pushed it to all of its worth for building stone . . . After getting all of the county and city

*Valerie Fisher Lassman is an English teacher in Dade County and is presently completing her Master's degree at Barry College.*

buildings made of Miami stone, I went out in the woods and built my own home, 'Hallssee Hall,' out of the boulder rock grubbed up on the hill and built the best home in Florida, not the most expensive, but the best home with 18-inch walls of solid stone and cement, three stories high, with half an acre of floor space. In this case, I did not have to consult the supervising architect about the material for my home, beautiful Hallssee Hall!"

Mr. Sewell spent years beautifying Hallssee Hall with stained glass windows, a ballroom on the third floor like a fantasy from the Tales of the Arabian Nights, and a sweeping staircase whose well he had to rebuild so it would be high enough to permit him to pass without stooping. He kept peacocks on the grounds and had a barbecue pit where once every year he personally cooked an outdoor feast to celebrate the occasion.

He found his greatest enjoyment in promenading along Flagler Street, watching the progress of the city he helped build, and in lounging about his huge home where he spent much of his time in colorful pajamas, even receiving guests while in this informal attire.

A jovial giant, Mr. Sewell had not been ill since 1926, and apparently kept his good health intact until the moment he died.

Born in Elbert County, Georgia, on July 20, 1867, Mr. Sewell was the son of Dr. J. W. Sewell, physician and surgeon, and Albina Gaines. The family moved in 1874 to Franklin County, Georgia, where young John was raised

on a farm. When he was nineteen years old his parents and their four children, Herbert, John, Jeremiah W., and E. G. Sewell, moved to Kissimmee, Florida. There John delivered ice for two years, tried his hand for only four days at teaching school, but returned to the ice business. He joined his brother in buying a sawmill in Acton, Florida, which was closed in 1890 when John Sewell went to work for J. S. Oliver, railroad contractor.

his brother E. G. opened the first store north of the river on Avenue D which is now Miami Avenue. Begun with a capital of \$1,500 as a shoe store, the establishment was later enlarged to include the sale of clothing. E. G. Sewell was in charge of the store while John continued to work on the construction of the luxurious Royal Poinciana Hotel.

Flagler's Herculean construction projects created jobs



Construction on Hallssee Hall began in 1912. The "Miami stone" used in building the house came from the property, the highest point of land in the city. Walls of the home were 18 inches thick and Hallssee Hall's third floor was a ballroom. Today the landmark is part of the Jackson Hospital Medical Complex. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

In March of 1892, he decided to study medicine, only to return six months later to Oliver's staff, laying railroad tracks from Daytona Beach to Rockledge under a contract from Henry Morrison Flagler. After running a material train from Titusville to Rockledge for several months, Mr. Sewell was transferred to the staff of J. A. McDonald of the firm of McGuire & McDonald, which built all the Flagler hotels, to work on construction of the Royal Poinciana Hotel at Palm Beach.

During this period of carving a town out of the dense wilderness, John Sewell and

for many men so the influx to Miami grew quite rapidly. Many men rushed to the construction sites; some of them would remain as pioneer residents. This growth was so large that in June of 1896 the Flagler interests considered the time right for incorporation of a new city. Sewell was asked to make an estimate of the number of residents for this purpose. Sewell relates in his memoirs that, "I made the survey, going to each shack or tent and boarding house, making inquiry as to how many people lived at each place. When I got through and checked up, we had 3,000 people - men, women, and

children, white and black." The incorporation election was held on July 28, 1896, with some 502 persons voting.

On June 16 of the following year, John married Miss Jessie Byrd Keller of Daytona, a native of Alabama. They had three children - Jacqueline, who died at age four, John Jackson, and Crozier Keller. Jessie Sewell died in 1925 and John later married Miss Louise Deans of Washington.

In 1899, Sewell resigned his position with the Flagler interests to devote himself to his other business affairs. From 1901 to 1907 Mr. Sewell served as a member of the county commission, using his road building experience to advantage in laying out the county's first hard-surfaced roads.

Sewell's insatiable thirst for adventure and challenge shines forth in passages such as these from his memoirs, finished in 1933: "The penalty of being a pioneer is to go broke and bankrupt, but it is better to be a has-been than never to have been a success in life."

Sewell, like Flagler, possessed the Midas touch, for both men left great works and magnificent houses behind them as testimonials to their business acumen and achievements. Halsee Hall embodied "Big John's" lavish tastes.

Although today nearly engulfed by the surrounding medical buildings, Halsee Hall was once Miami's showplace. Sewell called his house "Halsee Hall" from a Seminole word meaning "New Moon." He spent thousands on its building and furnishings, and had more elaborate plans for the interior, but the house was never really completed. The boom ended and he had to be

satisfied with the place as it stood.

The ornate rooms were decorated with costly ancestral portraits, rugs and furniture. Most of the principal rooms of the mansion had fireplaces. There was one in the master bedroom where a massive walnut carved bed stood ten feet high covered by a beige-and-gold canopy. The huge masses of furniture were brought to Miami by schooner from Mobile, Alabama. All the bedrooms were on the second floor which was reached by a grand staircase with carpeted steps. These led to the third-floor ballroom, the focal point of the house and the scene of many a glittering social event. Between dances, guests could walk through French doors onto a terrace for an unobstructed view of Miami, Miami Beach, Coral Gables and the Miami Country Club golf course.

In the library just off the living room were hundreds of bound volumes. Also in this room was a costly piano with heavy lion-claw legs. The grounds surrounding the house were shaded by graceful palms and brilliant poinsettia bushes.

Toward the end of his life Sewell remarked: "I claim to be the daddy of Miami because Mrs. Tuttle, who gave me the property, and Mr. Flagler, who put up the money, are both dead. I put their plans into operation."

In 1938 the gregarious giant, 6'4" tall, died of a heart attack at his beloved Halsee Hall hours after a party given to celebrate the beginning of his fifty-third year in Florida. After his death, Louise Deans Sewell, his widow, sold the house and grounds to the city of Miami for \$60,000. She dis-

*Continued on back cover*

## PICTURING OUR PAST by S. J. Boldrick



Golf year-'round was one of boom-time Miami's big selling points. This 1928 view shows the elegant style of the Miami Country Club. (Photos from the Romer Collection of the Miami-Dade Public Library.)



Flapper hats and baggy pants galore in this 1929 crowd at Miami Country Club's International Four-Ball golf tournament. That's John Sewell's home, Halsee Hall, in the background.



The Miami Springs Golf Course Club House was a good example of that city's "pueblo" architecture theme.

## FROM ONE BOOM-TIME THEATRE TO A MIAMI ENTERTAINMENT EMPIRE: A Reminiscence with Mitchell Wolfson

*(Mitchell Wolfson, born in Key West in 1900, has been president of Wometco Enterprises, Inc. since 1925, when the company was founded. He served as mayor of Miami Beach in 1943 and is currently chairman of the board of Financial Federal Savings & Loan Association, Miami-Dade Community College, and the City of Miami Off-Street Parking Authority. He was interviewed by Dick Lehman of Wometco's Community Relations office.)*

### Interviewer:

How did the Wolfson family get into the motion picture business?

### Mitchell Wolfson:

We moved to Miami from Key West around 1915, and my father expanded the East Coast Wholesale Corporation, which was a drygoods business. My sister, Zenia, married a young man named Sidney Meyer from Omaha, Nebraska, who worked for William Fox Films, and they went to live in New York when Sid became general sales manager for Fox. But Zenia missed Miami, so he quit his job and joined the Wolfson family business, of which I was treasurer at the time..

Sid was unhappy with his new work and always talked about motion pictures, and he and I decided one day that we'd go into the movie business. Sid went to New York to talk with William Fox and persuaded him to grant us a franchise at \$52,000 a year, which would give us one feature film a week, all of his short subjects, plus newsreels. It's interesting because nowadays we often pay more than \$50,000 for one feature film!

We then formed the Wolfson-Meyer Theatre Company (later shortened to Wometco) and proceeded to construct the Capitol Theatre on the west side of Miami

Avenue between Third and Fourth Streets. Because of the great building boom in 1925, it was impossible to find a local architect or contractor who was free to take on another job. We ended up hiring an architect from Chicago and a contractor from out of town, and after many hardships finding men and materials to complete the project, the theatre opened on June 25, 1926, with a gala opening-night program. The opening film was "The Mid-



The Capitol Theatre was the first movie house constructed by Wometco. Built in 1926, it was later converted into a television studio for WTVJ, Channel 4. (Photo from the HASF Collection).

night Sun," a drama starring Laura LaPlante.

In the year before the Capitol opened, we had picked up several existing theatres, but the Capitol was Wometco's first "first run" or "class" theatre.

The great September 1926 hurricane struck Miami almost immediately, and the Capitol was used to house homeless residents until the flood waters receded. My wife Frances and I were newlyweds

living high up in the Everglades Hotel and had to abandon our apartment for a few weeks until electricity was restored and elevator service resumed.

### Interviewer:

What was the motion picture business like in Miami in 1926?

### Wolfson:

As I recall, when we opened the Capitol Theatre, there were the Olympia, Hippodrome, Paramount, and State Theatres on Flagler

Despite the summer lag, we had to keep open, both to serve the public and also to satisfy our contractual obligations with Fox Films and our other distributor, Universal Films. We had determined even before the Capitol opened that we would have to book more than one feature a week into the theatre because there was not a large enough audience in Miami to sustain a film for a whole week. So we order to get their product, had to give Universal a free half-interest in the theatre. But by showing two films a week, we could generate much more business and turn a profit. We later bought back Universal's interest and operated the Capitol until 1951, when we converted it into a modern television studio for Channel

### Interviewer:

How did the coming of sound affect your motion picture business?

### Wolfson:

We were very excited about sound, and I think we were among the first to install sound equipment. We did not do business with Warner Brothers at that time, and Al Jolson's "Jazz Singer" played at the Hippodrome. But as soon as Fox and Universal had talking pictures, we ran them.

### Interviewer:

How did you expand your theatre business?

### Wolfson:

We built or took over a number of theatres, including one on 40th Street (now Decorator's Showcase) called the Biltmore. The Biltmore holds a special place in entertainment history because it was there in 1931 that the

Street, and all were open the year round. In fact, the Capitol was air conditioned, as was the Olympia, which had opened earlier. Air conditioning was not as perfect in those days, but we could keep the temperature of the Capitol at 70 degrees, which was quite comfortable. The only seasonal theatre was the Community Theatre, located on Miami Beach, although summer business was slow all around.

nation's first Mickey Mouse Club was started on Saturday afternoons. The late Sonny Shepherd, who was manager of the Biltmore, came up with the idea, and he became quite friendly with Walt and Roy Disney. Some of our leading citizens today, including Congressman Dante Fascell, were members of the Mickey Mouse Club at the Biltmore.

We also had the Rosetta Theatre in the Little River area at that time, and of course later on we built suburban theatres, including the Gateway in Ft. Lauderdale and the Miracle in Coral Gables, and the Plaza was our first theatre on the Beach. Then came a number of drive-ins, plus several new downtown theatres. Today, 50 plus years later, we own or operate about 40 theatres in Florida, 13 in Alaska, 25 in Puerto Rico, and 11 more in the Bahamas, Virgin Islands and Dominican Republic.

**Interviewer:**

Tell us about the world premieres that used to be held in Miami.

**Wolfson:**

Sonny Shepherd was the man most responsible for making Miami a center for world premieres of motion pictures. He was friendly with Darryl Zanuck and other film executives and with just about every well-known star in Hollywood. Sonny conceived the idea of a Miami premiere, and we induced the sales manager of Universal to bring down the cast of one of the pictures we were going to show. This was around 1930, and we had a big party at the old Biltmore Hotel, searchlights at the theatre, and nationwide press coverage. Miami was considered a very romantic place, and the publicity from our premieres helped the film industry and also spread Miami's image across the nation.



Two early Wometco theatres were the Carib on Miami Beach's Lincoln Road (above) and the Town on Flagler Street (below). In 1931, the nation's first Mickey Mouse Club was started on Saturday afternoons at Wometco's Biltmore Theatre. (Photos from the HASF Collection.)



From 1936 to 1941, we had more premieres at the Lincoln theatre on Miami Beach than at any theatre outside of California, and there were other premieres at the Mayfair, Miami, Carib, and of course the Capitol. Wometco had at least one world premiere every winter from each of the four companies with whom we held a franchise (Universal, Twentieth Century Fox, Columbia, and United Artists) as well as premieres from the independent companies. I remember visits from such stars as Al Jolson and Ruby Keeler, Warner Baxter, Bing Crosby, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert, Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth, and many others.

**Interviewer:**

What made you decide to expand Wometco beyond the theatre business?

**Wolfson:**

When I returned from the Army in 1946, I had seen how important communications was to modern society and became convinced that a new form of communication called television would be the educational and entertainment medium of the future. When I opened WTVJ/Miami as Florida's first station in 1949, television was considered a very risky financial venture, and it was several years before Channel 4 operated at a profit. We also purchased stations in Asheville, North Carolina, and Bellingham, Washington.

Wometco's vending and soft-drink bottling businesses were natural outgrowths of our experience in confections and food service at our theatres, and the tourist attractions we later added (notably the Miami Seaquarium) fit in perfectly with our philosophy of sticking to leisure-time goods and services that are affordable, expendable, and enjoyable.

## SAWMILLS IN SOUTH DADE

by Jean C. Taylor

Originally most of the land south of Miami was covered by a thick, virgin pine forest except for the low marl prairies or glades. The trees were large for pines and tall,

*something resembling "lightid".—Ed.)*

The pines in South Dade now are puny sticks compared to the virgin growth, but the big trees, except to the In-



Workers at the Drake Lumber Company's Princeton mills worked twelve hours a day or later with no lunch hour and no overtime pay. About 150 men were employed at Drakes and they were paid between \$1.25 and \$2.25 per day. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

their huge boles up to six or eight feet in girth growing straight skyward. With only a slight breeze there was a constant sighing in the treetops like the wind in a ship's sails and the smell was heavenly. When a tree was cut the stump was soon covered by a sticky gum. The wood was full of pitch, so hard it took a skilled carpenter to drive a nail in it without bending. The wood in a stump or log that had been scorched by fire was so resinous it was red in color and would burn like pure pitch with a thick black smoke. This red pitchy wood is what the old timers called "lighter wood" as splinters of it could be easily ignited with a match and used to start a fire. (In some parts of the South, this word was shortened to "lighterd" or even to

dians, hunters and lumbermen, were enemies to be overcome before homes could be built or crops planted. Small wonder then that the sawmill played an important role in the settling of South Dade.

One of the first sawmills was brought from Jacksonville by railroad and switched to boat at Lemon City as Miami was quarantined for yellow fever in 1899. James Henry Young landed his mill at Cutler and floated it across the east glade to what is now U.S. #1 and Richmond Road so as to be near the timber. He bought stumpage from Model Land Company, owned by the Florida East Coast Railway. Settlers no longer had to send to Key West if they wanted to live in anything better than a log cabin. On Richmond

Road, near Cutler, Mr. Young built his family a home which is still standing.

The grand-daddy of all the mills in South Dade was owned by Drake Lumber Company. In 1904 Gaston Drake, a member of a wealthy North Florida family, bought land 23 miles south of Miami and built a huge sawmill, with 100 homes for workers, a commissary and a hotel. He called the place Princeton after his alma mater and painted all the buildings orange and black — the school colors.

Mr. Drake's connections with the FEC Railway permitted him to lease lumber rights from Model Land as well as individual leases from the land owners in the area, so that the entire operation covered around 40 square miles. The Drake Lumber Company employed 150 men and cut much lumber. The logging operations required more than twenty miles of standard-gauge railroad

Drake" and is now pulling the tourist train at Key West.

The cut pines were loaded on the railroad car by an A-frame arrangement called a skidder. It took five white men, fourteen blacks and seven mules to run the skidder operation. Two blacks and one mule cut and hauled wood for the boiler. The other six mules took turns hauling out three cables attached to the cut timber. They changed mules every half hour or so or oftener if it was hot. One man was assigned to care for the mules and keep them shod. The men worked twelve hours a day from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. or later with no lunch hour and no pay for overtime. The blacks were paid \$1.25 per day, the whites \$2.25 per day and the boss man \$2.50.

Up until 1912 the lumber company ran a commissary car on the track where the men were working, with supplies for sale. At that time Will Anderson, who ran the



The Drake Lumber Company was built in 1904 by Gaston Drake. He called the land, 23 miles south of Miami, Princeton after his alma mater and painted all the buildings orange and black — the school colors. The company provided much of the lumber used in buildings in Miami, and Vizcaya. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

which covered much of the Redlands and Silver Palm Districts. As one area was cut over, track would be torn up and relaid in another location. The engine that pulled the loads was named the "Gaston

commissary car, opened his own store at Anderson's Corners so the commissary car was discontinued.

The Drake Lumber Company provided material for much of the building in



Miami, Vizcaya, the causeway bridge to Miami Beach and the Flagler Railway extension to the Keys. After the extension was completed, the mill shipped lumber to Cuba by car ferry and loaded sailing vessels for the West Indies. In 1923 when the timber gave out the mill was taken down and shipped to Palm Beach County. The only one of the Drake Lumber Company houses remaining is located across from the Nazarene Church on Bayview and is no longer painted orange and black.

When the first passengers to ride the FEC south of Homestead stepped off the train at what was to be called Detroit (now Florida City) in 1910 they could hardly believe their eyes. There was no town, no station, not even a store. A wobbly plank led the way from the railroad bed to the

end of Palm Avenue. Just north was Brown's sawmill - nothing else..

The settlers stayed at the Redland Hotel in Homestead while their homes were being built. Dade County pine was sawed into lumber by the mill, and the houses were built of green boards within a week. After the lumber started to dry and shrink, wide slots were left so that at night with the lights on it looked like a picket fence. Later, when the drying was complete, battens were put over the cracks. A blowing rain must have presented quite a problem in the early stages of drying. The floors were not nailed down until the lumber dried and shrank. Then the boards were pushed together and another added to fill up the space.

The first mill in the Silver Palm area was Zapps Mill located at Farmlife and Silver

Palm. They closed up shop when Drake Lumber opened but Charlie Graham had a mill on Hainlin to take care of local needs. As the South Dade area developed, small mills sprang up wherever there were timber and settlers needing lumber.

Most of the mills had few employees and were moved as the area was cut over. Many pioneers remember playing in the big piles of sawdust on the way home from school or earning 50¢ a day helping the owner. One mill established by the Hainlin family is remembered by the road built out to their place on the corner of Redland Road, Hainlin Mill Road.

The Glass Sawmill just west of Ludlam and Sunset cut cypress and pine for most of the houses in Larkins. The story goes that two colored fellows worked there - both

with an arm missing - victims of their machinery. Glass paid ten cents a tree for raw lumber. Lamar Paxton operated the Paxton Lumber Company across from the A. B. Hurst Starch Mill in Kendall at what is now U.S. #1 and S.W. 104th Street. Walter and Ora Frazier drove a horse and buggy from Topeka, Kansas in 1910 to homestead in South Dade and operated a sawmill and lumber company in the Redlands for many years.

The trees are gone now, the great virgin pines that provided wood so hard it frustrated the termites. Gone too are the mills, large and small, that denuded South Dade of its great forests and provided the area with one of its first industries and the pioneers with space and materials to build their homes and till their fields.

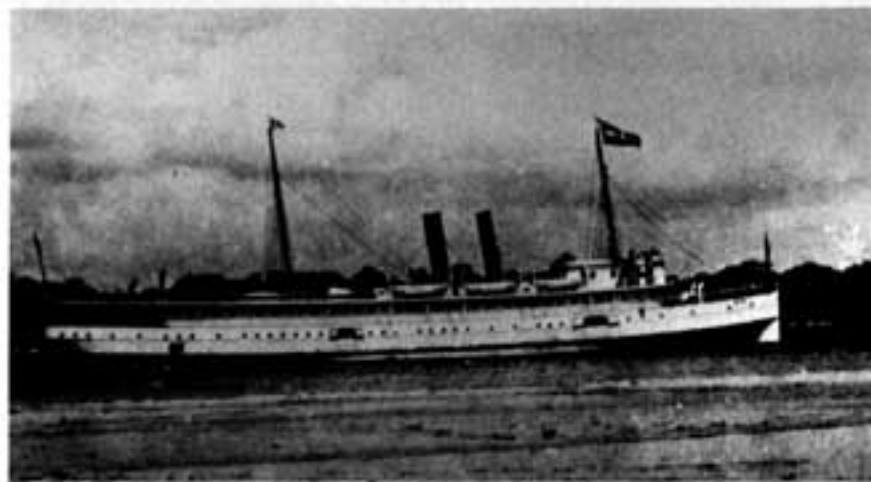
## STEAMBOATS FROM FLORIDA

by Zee Shipley

Mr. Edward Mueller, Director of Transportation for the Jacksonville Transit Authority and former Secretary of Transportation for the State of Florida, presented the Association's February program "Steamboats from Florida to Havana."

Mr. Mueller is the outstanding Florida authority on steamboat travel and has edited "Steamboat Bill," the journal of the Steamship Historical Society of America, and a nautical research journal published by a society of a thousand ship-model builders.

His illustrated lecture covered the development of ocean-going steamship travel by Henry Plant and Henry Flagler. Though Plant's goal was to reach Havana and Flagler's to reach Nassau, both men used similar systems



Henry Plant and Henry Flagler developed ocean-going steamship travel to Nassau and Havana on vessels such as the steamship "Miami". (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

to ensure to ensure the commercial success of these ventures. Both built hotels to accommodate their rail passengers so that ocean-going passengers had the option of staying in a Plant or Flagler hotel before embarking on a Plant or Flagler steamship. Flagler emphasized the luxury hotel; Plant the expansion of the railroad.

After Plant's death in 1899,

the two steamship lines merged into the Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company with runs from Miami to Nassau, Miami to Key West to Havana, Tampa to Key West to Havana, and Miami to Key West. Flagler dominated this company and was responsible for its success.

Most of the steamships of the P & O were built in

America and many were in service for thirty years or more. A few sank but no lives were lost. As they were replaced by more modern ships, they were adapted to other uses, such as day excursion boats and barges.

During the construction of the overseas railroad, Flagler used a steamboat as headquarters, mooring it alongside the tracks as the railroad was built.

He repeated the historian's lament, "Curiously, it is easier to find information on the early days than it is more recent events and my documentation on the recent past is therefore sketchy."

As has been true of each program this year, how provocative are the ideas explored: the importance of the system Plant and Flagler developed to the exploration and settlement of Florida; the

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## GREYNOLDS PARK AND THE JUNKPILE MOUNTAIN

by Ida Perdue Myers

In the early days there was a county stockade near Ojus and most of the convicts there worked on the county roads. When the stockade was moved in 1918 the land was offered for sale, and my father purchased 42 acres of it, including a house, the two-story jail and some barns. He paid \$800 and owed \$400 more to be paid within two years.

My parents, Will and Delilah Perdue, came to Ojus in 1914. Dad was born in Georgia and my mother in Lake Mary, Florida. I was the second of eight children. Dad was a section foreman of the Florida East Coast Railway and we lived in the company house in Ojus - a two-story frame house painted yellow and white like most of the railroad stations along the East Coast. One of my brothers who was born in Ojus was named John DuPuis Perdue for the well known Doctor DuPuis of Lemon City who delivered him.

Dad used to ride his bicycle to the beach - the only road went through Hallandale - to look for turtles. If he found one he waited until the eggs had been laid and then he would turn it over on its back and get a friend with a truck to haul it home for him where he would butcher it.

At the time we moved to the farm in 1918 there were six of us children and we had two cows with calves, several hogs, a flock of chickens, some turkeys and one large Belgian hare. Dad put ten acres in fruit trees, pineapples and a little sugar cane and five acres in market garden, using the rest for pasture. He needed to supplement his salary as section foreman to support our large family. We had one hired man, so we children all helped with the garden.

We kept our pet Belgian hare in the old jail but one day he managed to escape. We children went about everywhere looking for him but no luck. A few days later our hired man, Lewis, came in with a large rattlesnake which he had shot. It had a large bulge. That was the end of the search for our hare. He had supplied a meal for the rattlesnake.



Will Perdue poses with a turtle he captured for food. The Perdue family lived on a farm destined to become Greynolds Park. Perdue sold the farm for \$3300 before being donated to Dade County in 1933, and it became part of a rock mining operation. (Photo courtesy of Ida Perdue Myers.)

Our white turkey hen built a nest under a large oak tree on the bank of Snake Creek, now called Oleta River. Knowing the hen would never survive attacks of wild cats and raccoons during the four weeks it would take the eggs to hatch, Dad built a wire pen around the nest and we children had the job of feeding and watering the turkey each day. That winter we had plenty of turkey to eat.

When Mr. A. O. Greynolds of Palm Beach, who had a rock company, tested the rock on our farm and found it very

good, he offered Papa \$3300 cash for the farm and we moved back to the company home in Ojus. Mr. Greynolds made the old jail building into an office, bought additional land, and ran a spur railroad line in. The lakes and high rocky banks of Greynolds Park came from rock mining. After all the good rock had been removed the Greynolds company moved their machinery

most beautiful parks in the county.

The young men were housed in the Dade County Armory in Miami and went back and forth daily to Ojus in trucks. Local stonemasons taught them to cut and shape rock and lay in to walls which are still beautiful today.

Rock buildings were constructed in the park. Carpenters taught the men to work with wood, for the roofs, landings and bridges were of wood.

The main entrance off the Dixie Highway was the original railroad spur. At the west of the spur there was an abandoned rock crusher upon which the CCC men piled all the other rusting machinery and railroad rails which they had gathered up. Then they covered this junk pile with a huge mound of rock and sand and created a spiral rock stairway to a lookout tower at the top.

Before the trees grew so tall one could see ships on the ocean from the top of this tower. During World War II we all rushed to the mound and climbed it to see off the beach a burning ship which had been torpedoed by a submarine.

When the park opened, swimming was allowed but it is not allowed now. The water is no longer considered safe enough. Mr. Jess Webb, one of the early park attendants, made a pet of an alligator in one of the lakes and visitors loved to watch that alligator come when Mr. Webb called "Jo, oh, Jo!" One day an alligator attacked a school boy and after that the alligators were removed from the park. With the alligators gone the bird life showed a tremendous increase.

to Naranja, leaving behind some that was worn out.

In 1933 Mr. Greynolds donated 105 acres of land along the Oleta River to Dade County and this was the beginning of Greynolds Park. We were in the Great Depression and President Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps to care for the thousands of unemployed youth in our cities. Two hundred young men from New York City came to transform the abandoned rockpits and abandoned railroad spurs and machinery into one of the

## BOOK REVIEW

*MUD SHOW: A Circus Season.* By Fred Powledge. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. New York. \$12.95. 1975.

Reviewed by Robert E. Livingston

"Children of all ages!" With that traditional call, the circus show begins. For us outsiders, this is a rare occasion, the show being complete in and of itself. For the performers, the bosses and the hands of the circus, the show is only part of the bigger picture, coming twice a day, every day, for an eight-month long season.

A mud show is a truck-and-trailer circus that plays under the big top, usually on vacant lots. *Mud Show* describes a recent grueling, fascinating season of the Hoxie Brothers Circus, as it wends its way from winter quarters off the Tamiami Trail to its first date in Sweetwater, and from there north, south, east and west, into and out of that unlikely glory-land of circuses, New Jersey, and back down to the last date in Georgia.

Hoxie Tucker of Hoxie Brothers Circus ("Brothers" is like a lot of circus tradition, not to be taken literally) lives in Miami in the brief off-season. He is perhaps best known to his neighbors for the elephant manure he uses on his yard. He has a fine yard, a fine circus, and a terrific public-relations bureau. *Mud Show* is the latest in a line on Hoxie Brothers, earlier articles appearing in *Playboy* and *National Geographic*.

The circus is one of the oldest forms of entertainment. It has survived, if not

*Robert E. Livingston is a Miami attorney and HASF member.*

*Reprinted by courtesy of The Miami Herald.*



Griffin Smith aboard Alice, a Hoxie Circus elephant, attended by John Loomis. (Photo courtesy of Edison High School yearbook.)

thrived, into modern times. It is an authentic, live event, to be contrasted with much of what passes for entertainment these days.

Circus life is hard. Powledge develops this. From the performers who perfect their acts for years, to the winos who set up the tent in the morning and take it down after midnight every night, to the elephants who perform before the crowds and then double in brass to move the tents and equipment off the lot, everyone works very hard to get the circus to you. It is what it seems to be, and more.

*Mud Show* reveals the timeless rhythm of a circus season. No one person, not even Hoxie, is necessary to get the show on the road. No one act is essential. Even when the big cat act, around which the circus show was structured, disappeared before the start of the season, the show went on. Even when the elephants got sick, the show went on. Powledge theorizes that perhaps the big top, the great canvas circus tent, is essential, but even it blows down on very rare occasions.

The circus is made up of people, animals and equipment, traveling through time and space from show to show. Some of the performers come

from great circus families such as the Christianis, who trace their circus lineage several hundred years. Some of the workmen are winos from the nearest bus stop. Powledge finds that all are human like the rest of us, the essential difference being that they are looking out at us while we are looking in at them.

It is easy to see why military tacticians through the ages have studied circuses to learn about economies of space and effort. *Mud Show* reflects the incredible, but daily, arrangements that keep the show on the road. King Charles, the bandmaster, leaves after the last performance to mark the way with arrows to the lot in the next town. Asked if he got much sleep, he said about three hours a night. Told you couldn't live on that little, he said, "Circus people do." This is their story, and it is for children of all ages.

*Continued from Page 9*

quality of engineering that went into these steamships; the imagination of these two men who adapted to the unique challenges of this peninsula.

The remaining program promises to be equally stimulating. On April 6 Arva Moore Parks will describe "Fortifications in the Miami Area." Plan to attend as we continue our unique celebration of the bicentennial.





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singular purpose: bring the people to Florida. Cajole them, plead with them, promote them, but above all, bring them

Through good times and bad, through hurricanes and depression, through receivership and bankruptcy, the FEC and its associated companies promoted. The story, of course, is far from finished; the development, for better or for worse, has just begun.

"Miami has a perfect winter climate. Cold is almost unknown. Many people who came here to establish winter homes now live here the entire year. The lure of the tropics is not a misnomer. The drowsy sunlit days and the gorgeous, restful nights are like succeeding pages in the book of enchantment." Steve Clark didn't say that, nor did Maurice Ferre. The FEC the most part, it is still true in 1976.

*Continued from Page 5*

posed of the expensive furnishings and returned to North Carolina. Her departure from Miami ended a vivid and memorable chapter in Miami's history.

John Sewell had a deep feeling about the past. He wrote: "When I stand at the point where I started to make Miami a city 37 years ago and view all the means of transportation over land and

sea and air, I only wish Mrs. Tuttle and Mr. Flagler could see these wonderful changes and see the results of what they started. They built better than they knew and the result surpasses their fondest hopes!"

As a home, Halissee Hall was a place of life, vitality and social spirit. Today, Halissee Hall is a living link between Miami pioneer past and the present thriving business community.