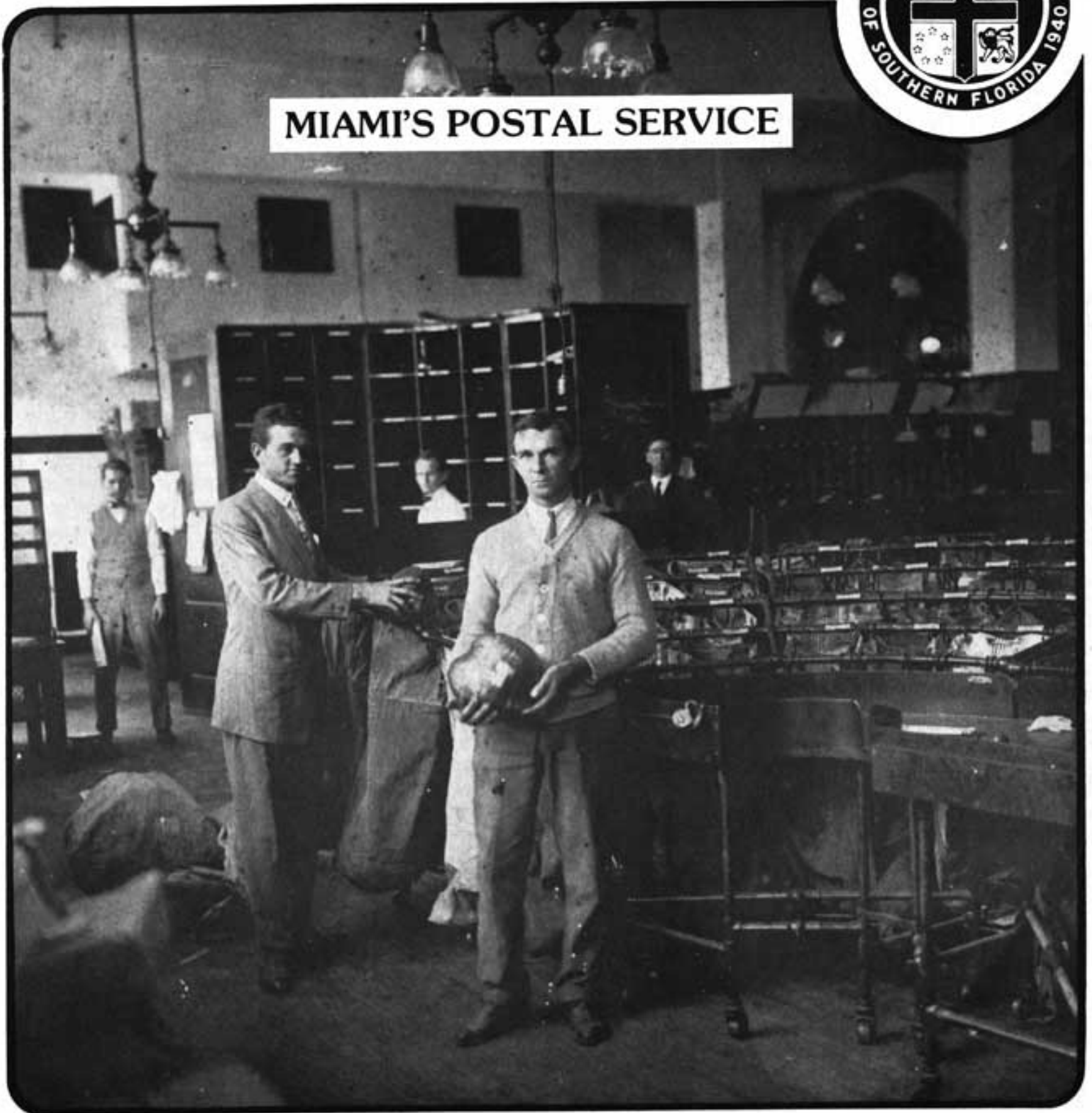


Update



MIAMI'S POSTAL SERVICE



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COVER

The interior of the Miami Post Office in 1921. Archie McLean, in charge of registered mail, holds a coconut ready for mailing. (Photo from the Collection of Leonore DesRochers McLean).

UPDATE

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FROM THE EDITORS

Over the past four years *Update* has matured into a fine popular level historical publication under the watchful eye and boundless energies of Leonard G. Pardue.

Jerry Pardue's service as *Update* editor was voluntary. The demands we made on his professional time were constant and numerous. Yet, every deadline was met with a smile, a few new writers and enough material and pictures to fill our pages.

Jerry helped *Update* evolve a philosophy of presenting Miami's history in an interesting, informative and entertaining way for the general public. His efforts aroused enthusiasm among many and won numerous converts to the belief that Miami's history has a message worth selling.

Despite his December resignation, the groundwork he laid and work he did will continue to guide and influence us all for many issues to come.

**ATTIC AUCTION
MARCH 26**

The Tequestans, HASF volunteers, are sponsoring their Second Annual Attic Auction on Saturday, March 26th on the grounds of the Museum.

Furniture, antiques, glassware, silver, china, books, handcrafts and plants will be for sale. Auction item preview begins at 10:30 a.m. and the actual auction will start at 11:00.

All donations are tax deductible and all funds raised go toward the operation and improvement of the Historical Association.

Pick-up of donated items and additional information are available by calling Auction Chairman Linda Greenan at 445-7567.

**ARTIST AWARDED
PRIZE AT HARVEST**

Mr. Hal Mordaunt, a noted South Florida artist, was awarded first place at The Harvest's South Florida Art Show in November.

Mr. Mordaunt is best known for his wilderness landscape paintings.

**PROGRAM SERIES
Making Local History
In Jefferson County**

Dr. Jerrell H. Shofner was the third speaker in HASF's program series. His topic, "Making Local History in Jefferson County," provided insight into the way a historian works. He related the methods he used and some of his experiences and findings in writing *The History of Jefferson County*, which was published in 1976.

A major source of information were County records. That they were intact was unusual and most helpful; many older counties have lost part of their records, often to fire.

For the early years, the correspondence between William Wirt and his children proved useful. Wirt, a distinguished Marylander, had six children who settled in Jefferson County. About 7000 letters in the Maryland Historical Society revealed much for the periods from about 1825 to 1860.

When the letters left off, newspapers picked up. From 1870 on, the County Commission records provided additional material.

As well as these agencies, private persons created sources of information. An 1829 letter, for example, provided documentation for the folktale that Murat once tried to eat a buzzard. Genealogy and oral history, while time consuming, were also used. The latter, being dependent on memory, required additional substantiating documentation. Despite the difficulties, people proved to be an indispensable source.

**PROGRAM SERIES:
Law Enforcement
In The 1920s**

Paul S. George presented the fourth lecture of the season on January 4, 1977. He spoke on law enforcement in Miami during the 1920s, using information derived from research done for his dissertation. He outlined the nature and condition of the police department during this booming period as background for discussion of the main problems confronting enforcers, how these troubles were approached, and how effectively they were or were not resolved.

One major problem area was traffic control. Miami was not prepared for the increase in automobile traffic. Another difficulty involved the enforcement of prohibition. Rumrunning, because of Miami's proximity to the Bahamas, assumed a major dimension of the liquor problem. Racial discrimination was a final conflict discussed.

SOUTH DADE POSTAL SERVICE

by Jean Taylor

In South Dade the traditional "through snow or sleet or dark of night" could scarcely compare to mosquitoes, sloughs and trackless wilderness, but regardless of the difficulties the mail did eventually get through. Until 1895 the South Dade settlers had to pick up their mail at Coconut Grove, but by that time enough families had joined John Addison and William Fuzzard on the Perrine Grant to apply for a post office. Fuzzard made the application and became the first postmaster. He chose the name Cutler in honor of his old friend and mentor, Dr. William C. Cutler of Chelsea, Massachusetts, who had introduced him to the wonders of Biscayne Bay. The post office was established in an old freight car on the Fuzzard property. (See inset) Two such cars had floated into Chicken Key in a storm sometime before and had been rescued by Mr. Fuzzard. One was made into a workshop while the other became the Cutler Post Office. The first few years both William and Antonia Fuzzard sent off for all kinds of pamphlets and advertisements in order to keep a proper flow of mail coming and going from the new post office.

On July 3, 1896, bids were advertised for by the United States Post Office to carry the mail from Miami to Cutler with a stopoff at Coconut Grove. The *Miami Metropolis* bid \$600 per year or \$4 per trip, but the bid did not get to Washington on time. The Postal authorities secured a temporary contract for the launch "Edith R." under Captain H. L. Denny to carry the mail tri-weekly or daily. The "Edith R." was to leave Miami at 7:00 a.m.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday and return from Cutler at noon on the same day. The mail contractor who actually received the final bid to carry the Cutler route regretted it as soon as his agent arrived in Miami. He had read the ad saying it covered a distance of ten and one half miles and supposing there were good roads available, bid less than \$2 per trip. After traversing the rocky, rough wagon track and footpath that led to Cutler in those days, the contractor was happy to forfeit

Murray hired to deliver the settlers' mail by horseback from Cutler. This Black Point is not to be confused with the present Black Point on the bay. The post office Black Point was a Negro settlement and store built by Charlie Graham for his field hands at what is now U. S. No. 1 and Silver Palm Drive. Gunny sacks hung on the wall containing mail for each district so that whoever was going that way could take it along.

In 1905, when W. D. Horne applied for a post office in

steads, went to Washington to plead the cause of a Rural Free Delivery route for the Redland post office. Florida Senator Duncan U. Fletcher helped him get an appointment with President William Howard Taft. The President listened with interest as Kosel explained the importance of the fast-growing South Florida frontier and gave his blessing to the request for a rural route. He sent Kosel to talk to top officials at the Post Office Department and in short order Kosel had won the promise that a postal inspector would be sent to Redland soon to survey the route.

Kosel returned home jubilant with success, but alas, he was to be defeated by skullduggery at home. When the postal inspectors got off the train at Homestead, they were surrounded by Homestead backers who thought the rural route should stem from their post office. The inspectors never did get to Redland and the rural route was set up from the Homestead Post Office.

A few years later the old post office at Black Point lost its contract to Goulds in another piece of trickery although both this time were on the railroad. When Goulds applied for its own post office, they were told it was too close to Black Point. The residents of Goulds asked that a postal inspector come and determine which place would be better suited. Their strategy was to have the inspector arrive during the winter when all the packing houses which had grown up around Goulds were humming with the seasonal work. As the inspec-

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Hugh L. Willoughby in his book, *Across the Everglades — A Canoe Journey of Exploration*, describes the Cutler Post Office he visited in 1896.

"At about eleven o'clock we were abreast an island inshore, near a little settlement called Cutler. It is situated on the Perrine Grant, which has been under litigation for many years, and has the most southerly post-office on the main land of the United States. The building itself is a very unique affair, and is a puzzle that the visitor is curious to solve. The weighty mail is being handled by the pretty postmistress in the body of an old freight-car. How did that freight-car get to its present resting-place? The more you look at it the more you wonder. The railroad has but just reached Miami, and this is fifteen miles away. When I visited the place later in the year, I asked the postmistress where she obtained her peculiar dwelling, and she told me that a few years ago a steamer loaded with the running equipment of a railroad had been wrecked on the beach beyond the bay, and that the box of a freight-car was floated to Cutler."

the performance bond he had posted and let the "Edith R." continue.

The early homesteaders who settled in the Silver Palm and Redland districts had to pick up their mail at Cutler so whoever had business there brought back everyone's mail, because getting to Cutler was an all-day or all-night trip. A mail box was set up at Gossman's Corner at Silver Palm and Newton Road for what couldn't be dropped off in passing. Before the railroad came, there were enough homesteaders that a post office was established at Black Point and John L.

Homestead, the Black Point postmaster handed him a locked leather bag and a key which constituted the entire Homestead post office for several months until he built an addition onto his store. The same year, J. M. Bauer became postmaster of Redland, with the post office located in his store at the corner of Redland and Bauer Drive. Quite a rivalry developed between the new town of Homestead and the older settlement of Redland. As usual, the location of the railroad was the deciding factor.

In 1909 George Kosel, one of the earlier Redland home-

Continued on page 5

IN THE DAYS OF THE TWO-CENT STAMP

by Thelma Peters

For a decade or more before 1913 the Miami post office occupied a nondescript building on South Miami Avenue where the busses now stop opposite Burdine's. The first bicycle mail delivery began from this post office in 1909 when Joseph M. Cheatham was hired at \$66 a month and allowed an extra \$2.50 for his bicycle. Many years later Mr. Cheatham became president of HASF.

In 1913 the post office moved to the handsome new federal building, today a branch of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association, 100 N.E. First Avenue. The post office was on the first floor, the second and third floors were for customs and other federal offices, and the instruments of the Weather Bureau perched on the roof. The new post office was spacious enough until the boom hit Miami, then it split at the seams.

Miss Josephine Daniels, who worked in the Miami post office from 1919 until her retirement in 1957, remembered how inundated they were with mail sacks when the boom hit — sacks piled to the ceiling, such a backlog of mail that some was not sorted for two weeks, meanwhile a frantic search for more employees.

Physical space was added by taking over a sports arena located across the street from present Richard's and by building a kiosk north of the post office in what had been an alley. The kiosk was a quadrangle of mail boxes unprotected from rain or sun and serviced from inside which at least was under roof but unprotected from the cold. On cold days they sorted mail weighted down with winter coats.

When Miss Daniels started to work in the Miami post of-



Post Office, Miami, Fla.
The Miami federal building from 1913 to 1933 was at 100 N.E. First Avenue. The post office occupied the first floor. Weather Bureau instruments were on the roof. (HASF post card.)

ice there were forty-five employees; in 1957 when she retired there were 2,500. It was more fun in the early days, she declared, when interviewed recently at her pleasant home in Coral Gables. "Everybody knew everybody in the early days," she said.

Miss Daniels first worked for Archie McLean, who was in charge of registered mail, but she soon moved into personnel, climbing the career ladder to the top position in the post office held by a woman, superintendent of personnel. Had she ever felt discriminated against because she was a woman? Never, she declared.

"I was young and just out of school when we moved to Miami from Okeechobee City and I started to work in the post office," she said. "I lived a mile and a half from work and I had a choice of walking, riding the streetcar or catching a ride. The letter carriers had to be at work at 6:30 in the morning (six o'clock on Mondays) and so did I. Often one or another of the carriers would stop by and give me a lift in the big wooden basket on his bicycle. I only weighed ninety pounds." She laughed as she remembered. "One day one of the mail sorters picked me up and dropped me into one of those

large mail bags they called Mother Hubbards. Then he had to have help getting the bag tipped over and me out of it.

"During the 1926 hurricane my family and hundreds of other people took refuge in the post office. We came with our blankets, pillows, food sacks, candles and Thermos bottles and staked out camping places on the floor, thankful to be in such a strong building. We were safe but our home was so damaged that it was six weeks before we could occupy it again."

Miss Daniels likes to recall the friendly atmosphere of the post office, the social events, state conventions and travel which they shared. "We girls loved to frock-up for a dinner or dance." She brought out a photo album. "Here is the trip we all took to Cuba. Those were the days!"

George E. Merrick, the founder of Coral Gables, became Miami postmaster in 1940. He had lost his dream city and was glad for a job that paid \$7000 a year. "Mr. Merrick didn't go for all the rules in the big post office manual so he used to bend them and some of the employees did not approve of that. Once when I was responsible for getting out invitations for an employees' party I drew a picture of Mr. Merrick tearing a big book in two, the manual. He didn't get along with all the employees but he seemed to like me, called me Princess sometimes and said he liked my yellow dress. He died less than two years after he became our postmaster."

One of the best-remembered letter carriers was J. H. Bradley who was the first to carry mail to outlying areas, "rural free delivery." In 1915 he used a motorcycle to cover



J. H. Bradley was the first to carry mail on the "rural free delivery" routes. He covered his 62-mile route daily by motorcycle before switching to this Plymouth car. (Photo from Collection of Hazel Bradley.)

Continued from page 3

the daily 62-mile route which included the area north of Miami as well as all of Miami Beach. He never missed a day, not even when it rained 7½ inches. A rural carrier travelled the main roads, not side roads. Many a farmer had to walk or drive a half mile or more to the mailbox on the highway. A row of these mail boxes is shown in the accompanying photo made in 1932 when Bradley had switched to a Plymouth car.



Edward J. Bryant, a thirty-year employee of the Miami post office, came to Miami about 1907, rising from janitor to mail handler. (Photo from the Collection of Josephine Daniels.)

One who started on the lowest rung of the Miami post office hierarchy, that of janitor, was a Georgia-born black man, Edward J. Bryant. He was a cook by profession and is said to have once been chef for Henry M. Flagler. For ten years after moving to Miami about 1907 Bryant continued to cook. Then the chance came to work in the post office.

"Everybody knew Bryant," Miss Daniels said. "We never had a party without him. You see, he could cook and he could play the piano and he was always good-natured. He was a dependable and capable employee, too, and

that is why he was promoted to mail handler. He and his wife, Annie, had no children but they used to make a fuss over some of the children of the other employees. The Bryants had a little frame house at 336 N.E. Eighth Street, lived there for about fifty years. When he died in 1961 I went to his funeral. I felt I had lost a good friend."

"We moved to today's post office in 1933. At first we all felt we had too much room and we missed the old post office which was so compact and efficient to work in. I remember how the marble floors in the new building used to kill our arches if we had to be on our feet a lot. But they were great days."

Today in retirement Miss Daniels and many of her fellow employees are active in the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, of which there are several chapters in South Florida. Miss Daniels is a member of Chapter 139 and has helped with the formation of other chapters.

ATTIC AUCTION March 26th

(SEE PAGE 2)

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tors rode the F.E.C. from Miami, literally dozens of migrant packers left the train at Goulds while only two or three descended at Black Point. This disparity in numbers so impressed the inspectors that they forthwith awarded the contract to Goulds. The first post office is now a dry cleaners on Miami Avenue in Goulds just west of the Old Dixie Highway.

I REMEMBER THE POST OFFICE WHEN . . .

as told to Robert C. Stafford.

Busy painting his house and working in his acre of fruit trees, A. V. Phillips, 78, retired Homestead postmaster, is proud and content with his years of service to the public.

"I enjoyed every minute of it. I wouldn't have done any other work if I'd had my choice. I wish I could have worked longer," he will tell you.

His postal service began in July, 1924, in old Station A of the Miami Post Office. This was at NW First Avenue and NW Fourth Street. Next door was the Electrical Equipment Company in which radio station WQAM started broadcasting from an office lined with heavy draperies to deaden extraneous sound.

One of his sharpest memories, one shared with many postal employees of that era, was the Christmas rush of 1924, when Frank Keene was superintendent of mails.

"We just didn't expect the kind of volume we had. We were not prepared for it," he said. "Frank Keene asked if any of us had any relatives we could bring in to help out with the rush. It was just incredible." That was at the beginning of the early boom time in South Florida.

Robert C. Stafford, a new member of the association, is a retired newspaperman from Cleveland, O. Reared from childhood in Central Florida, he has researched and written about the Seminole War. He discovered and donated to the Florida Historical Society a typescript of the diary which John K. Mahon edited and published as "Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War," by the Englishman, John Bemrose.

He recalls that the Miami Post Office had 35 carrier routes at that time and two parcel post deliverymen on motorcycles with sidecars. One was Roy Byrd and the other a man named Andrews.

In the 1926 hurricane so many trees were felled and buildings damaged the postal service had extreme difficulty delivering the mail. "But we made it without too much delay," he adds proudly.

In March, 1945, Phillips transferred to the Homestead office as assistant postmaster under the late Sidney E. Livingston, who was widely known in the community. When Livingston retired in 1949, Phillips became postmaster. He held that office until his own retirement in 1965.

"We had 13 employees when I went to the Homestead office. That included two rural carriers. When I retired we had 65 employees and 17 carrier routes. Homestead grew rapidly."

One of Walter Brown's memories of his years in the postal service here is stomach ulcers.

He acquired the ulcers when incoming mail in the early boom days arrived so fast and voluminously that the Post Office staff, working as hard as it could, sometimes fell two to three weeks behind in sorting it.

"I remember one man who came to the window and said his wife had been writing to him every day and he hadn't got a letter in more than a week. I knew his letters were somewhere in back but there just wasn't any way we could find them. That's when I began to get ulcers."

This, he explained, was in the old Post Office at NE First Avenue and NE First Street, where the First Federal

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NEW DEAL MURALS IN FLORIDA POST OFFICES by Fran Rowin

During the 1930s there were four programs enacted under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" to lend support to American artists. All of the programs provided for murals to be placed in public buildings. It was through the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture that commissions by means of open competitions were awarded to embellish "newly" designed Federal buildings.

In the state of Florida a total of fourteen murals were completed and commissioned between 1938 and 1942. Of these murals, only two of the artists, Denman Fink and George Snow Hill, were residents of the state of Florida.

The one thing most of the murals shared in common was the individual scrutiny and attention each mural had received from Section headquarters in Washington D.C., the local postmaster, and civic groups in each city.

Despite the Depression and a very tight economy, almost all of the artists involved in Florida mural commissions managed to make a trip to the city where the mural was to be installed, to collect data, ideas, make on the spot sketches, and view the area to be decorated. Being unfamiliar for the most part with local subject matter, customs, and history, it was also a necessary formality for

all artists to contact the postmaster and request iconographic suggestions.

The earliest mural competition to be announced was for the Miami Post Office and Court House building, July 17, 1936.

Prior to the Section programs, architects Phineas Paist and H. D. Steward had approved a sketch done by

his sketch had already been approved and a price agreed upon, and demanded the commission. The policy of the Treasury Department was only restated in a letter from Edward Rowan, Assistant Superintendent of the Section Staff. Rowan further wrote a letter to noted Art Historian Virgil Barker, disclosing his discontent with the

tant part in the lives of individuals in the community.

The amount of the contract was to be \$800, which was significantly less than the earlier bid of \$6000, under the old system. The competition was to be open to all artists attached to the Southeastern United States, which incorporated 14 states.

The chairman of the committee in charge of the competition was Eve Alsman Fuller, State Supervisor of the Federal Art Project. The jurists involved were H. D. Steward and Phineas Paist, architects, Miami, Florida; Beatrice Bayer Williams, artist, Art Department, State College for Women at Tallahassee; and S. Peter Wagner, artist, St. Petersburg.

The mural was to be one panel 25' 3" wide by 11' 2" high, and was to be placed over the judge's bench. Designs submitted were not to be signed and there was no limit to the numbers of sketches an artist could submit. A policy was adapted whereby any design of quality not chosen for this competition would be considered for a mural elsewhere. The competition would run from December 4, 1936 through March 10, 1937.

Reporting to Edward Rowan, Eve Fuller noted that despite the great enthusiasm generated for the competition, the work submitted failed to measure up to Section standards. A final count of sixty entries was made and twelve finalists were sent off to Section headquarters.

Throughout the judging of the competition, the two Miami architects Paist and Steward, familiar with the work of Denman Fink, voiced



The Miami Beach Post Office on Washington Avenue was chosen as the site for one of the murals commissioned by the Treasury Department. As part of Roosevelt's "New Deal", American artists were awarded projects by open competitions. (Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami Dade Public Library.)

Florida artist Denman Fink as early as 1935. However, this particular building and commission was under an old policy which delegated the supervising architects the right to choose the artist they desired to decorate the interiors of buildings they had designed. Fink's sketch was submitted and a bid of \$6000 was given. A contract, however, was never drawn up.

The Procurement Division informed the two architects and Denman Fink that as soon as funds were available they would commission a mural. Fink would have to submit his sketch and go through the new Treasury Department regulations.

Fink, however, argued that

sketch Fink had submitted.

The following year, July 1936, the competition announcements were printed up and mailed to artists who had written and asked to be notified.

The major stipulation to subject matter was that it deal with some phase of local history, contemporary justice, local industry, customs, or commerce. The element of communication should be expressed and "need not be represented by the more obvious symbols, but might take on more dramatic and human significance."

It was also stressed that Federal buildings were a concrete link between the individual and the government, and functioned as an impor-

Fran Rowin, an instructor in Art History at the University of Miami, will also soon be teaching at the Metropolitan Museum and Art Center. Her work represents the first documentation of the New Deal murals.

open enthusiasm for entry "#3". This was of course Fink's sketch, judged repeatedly as the work of a "mature" artist.

It was felt by the members of the Section, after reviewing the twelve entries, that none of the sketches submitted was entirely suitable. The Section then proceeded to close the competition without awarding any contract.

By the end of July 1937, Edward Rowan asked New York artist Charles Chapman to submit designs for a mural to be placed in Florida. This was not an open competition. When word of this new arrangement reached Miami, local citizens were outraged. Fred B. Harnett, Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee, urged citizens to write to their Senators demanding that a local artist be chosen to paint the mural. He wrote to Senators Claude Pepper and Andrews: "We do resent this blow to local pride."

The Senators took the matter up with Edward Rowan. In a letter Senator Andrews wrote:

I have the design submitted by the Honorable Denman Fink of Florida which was chosen as the best of those submitted . . . It is my understanding that no contract has been signed with Mr. Chapman as of this writing.

With that thought in mind and since Mr. Fink is recognized as one of the outstanding artists in the south . . . I request further consideration be given him before this contract is let.

The artist in question, Charles Chapman, was a close friend of Mr. Fink's and had at one time worked under him making posters. Chapman wrote to Fink to tell him that he would give up the commission if there were any

chance that Fink would be selected.

The following month Rowan informed Senator Pepper's executive secretary that the Section was recalling its invitation to Chapman due to the local pride expressed in many letters sent to his office. The office was going to reopen the competition so that Fink and other American artists of that region could compete.

Section head Edward

present at the proceedings. The member was to be none other than Edward Rowan. The jury was composed of many of the same members with the inclusion of Alexander Orr Jr., City Commissioner of Miami, replacing Phineas Paist.

Sixty-nine sketches were considered. It was the consensus of opinion that the work was far superior than the previous competition. The judging was done in two

aspects of the proposed design and sent what were standard "suggestions" to Fink after receiving his preliminary sketch:

. . . there was a tendency to overcrowding. Elimination of certain of these elements could certainly improve the design . . . Some of the fruit, certain of the Negro figures, etc. could be eliminated without loss of theme. It was also felt the trite symbols of justice in the central part of the composition could be eliminated and the figure of the judge approached by the mother and child could be raised in the composition to take place of these elements."

Fink agreed to the elimination of the symbols yet refused to remove the fruit because he wanted to leave the impression of a packing house. This was finally accepted in the end.

A further distasteful incident regarding the Miami competition arose when Harold Hilton of the Florida Federation of Art accused the entire competition of being an elaborate setup to secure the work of Denman Fink. This case carried on back and forth for months without much concern on the part of Section officials.

The mural was carried out at a brisk pace and was finally installed February 28, 1941. Fink presented an assembly of units representing the various phases in the development of the Miami Community. Included in the composition were portraits of local celebrities and officials, including one of Phineas Paist, the architect, juror, and enthusiastic supporter of Denman Fink.

As a result of impressive sketches submitted for the Miami Post Office and Court House competition, artist Charles Hardman was invited to submit sketches for the Miami Beach Post Office.



Florida artist Denman Fink's sketch was selected for the "New Deal" mural in the Miami Post Office and Court House. The preliminary sketch (above) and final mural (below) reflect suggestions made to Fink regarding the composition of "Law Guides Florida Progress".



Bruce dismissed the entire matter as being "not serious" and thought the entire affair was no more than a "disgruntled artist not getting his job."

For the second competition the Section still wanted Eve Fuller to take charge and supervise the affair. The one major change introduced was that a member of the Washington Section staff be

parts; aesthetic merit, and selection and presentation of subject matter.

Fourteen sketches were selected and submitted to Washington for final selection. Denman Fink's sketch was chosen.

The subject of the Miami mural was "Law Guides Florida Progress", which would be done in oil paint on canvas.

The Section reviewed all



Artist Charles Hardman presented this preliminary sketch for consideration by the Section. He was to be paid \$3000 for the three part mural. "Themes From Florida History" was the chosen title for the mural that now hangs in the Miami Beach Post Office.

Continued from page 7

This was to be non-competitive. The artist was a resident of Atlanta, Georgia and was commissioned in September 1938, to execute a three part mural for \$3000.

In a letter to Edward Rowan, Hardman disclosed that he had a lack of formal art education, and was a relative beginner at the age of twenty-six. His only formal education was six months at the Art Student's League in New York City where he was critical of the teachers and their methods. The artist had never before done any mural work.

For the duration of the commission Hardman was always very careful to check any major alterations with Edward Rowan before proceeding, and tended not to stray at all from the guidelines set down by the Section.

It was the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce that suggested subject matter that appealed to Hardman. Apologizing for not constructing a simple design the artist stressed its vitality.

Disclosing the subject matter within:

... the left Panel symbolized the truck industry which is S. Florida's largest. The sugar cane and vegetables will all be done with great faithfulness and can all be made quite beautiful.

The middle panel represents the adaptability of the climate to athletic activities. The Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce

was very insistent that sports play a major part of the decoration. The two key figures represent swimming, the others golf, bowling, tennis, and fishing.

The third panel represents the citrus fruit industry which of course is one of the largest.

This elaborate scheme was rejected by the Section who were all "disappointed" in the sketch. They rejected it on the grounds that there was too much repetition, and denounced Hardman's drawing as not appearing convincing. They further stated that they wanted an entirely different design submitted. Section officials specifically suggested the theme of the Conquistadors which was the subject Hardman had submitted in the Miami Post Office and Courthouse competition, and use his sports theme for the side panels.

When the proposed subject of sports reached the desk of the Supervising Architect, he denounced the idea completely. It was felt the depiction of golf was in no way



In response to a memo from the Section, certain changes in "the lower extremities of the two rearing horses" were made by artist Hardman. This finished center panel depicts an Indian attack on DeSoto and his scouts.

an activity particularly related to Miami Beach and that subject matter suitable for a Post Office, rather than a hotel, must be dignified.

Hardman's second idea centered upon a historical theme dealing with the Seminole Indians, the war, and their removal from Florida. This idea and preliminary sketch were deemed satisfactory.

The title chosen for the work was "Themes from Florida History". There were however some minor changes the Section demanded, one of which bordered on censorship. In a memo to Hardman:

... the lower extremities of the two rearing horses be turned in order to avoid the necessity of portraying their sexual organs in so prominent a way. In the first place it would be difficult to paint this area of the horse with conviction and secondly certain visitors to the Post Office might resent this.

Work on the mural continued with the Section occasionally requesting changes



The finished left panel of Hardman's Miami Beach Post Office mural depicts the discovery of Florida by Ponce de Leon. The mural was finally installed January 14, 1941.

in the composition that they felt were disturbing. The mural was finally installed January 14, 1941.

The first panel depicted the discovery of Florida by Ponce de Leon, the center portion was concerned with an Indian attack on DeSoto and his scouts, and the final panel showed the conference between Indian chiefs and the American soldiers regarding the removal of the Indians to the reservations.

Postmaster George E. Merrick sent in a personal evaluation of the mural to the Section chiefs in Washington commenting on how pleased he was with the work.

In 1943, the Section programs were abandoned by the Federal Government with all remaining Fine Arts patronage being shifted to the war effort in the designing of posters. When the Section finally ceased to function the embellishment of Federal buildings by means of open competitions ended as well.

At the latest inquiry to Postmasters of the fourteen cities which had received Section murals, all are reported to be hanging, yet have been neglected and not cared for in any way. There seems to be

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OFF THE BEATEN PATH: Travel in South Florida

by Mary C. Napier

PART ONE

In south Florida in the early 1900s when you drove your horse and wagon into Miami grocery shopping, if you got home after dark you were wise to have someone ride shotgun because a panther might smell the fresh meat you had bought and attack.

For the south Floridian, travel of whatever sort remained an adventure — hard, sometimes dangerous and sometimes comical long past the turn of the century.

Before Henry Flagler brought in the railroad in 1896 travel was largely confined to sailboat, rowboat, and foot. Early settlers of the Miami area had to bring all their supplies by sailboat from Key West. Even judges, county commissioners, and members of the school board with business in Miami had to follow the route of the famous Barefoot Mailman walking along the water's edge the 75 miles or so from Lake Worth because there were few roads and those little more than trails through dense hammock growth.

Mrs. Martha Fitz Metz recalls that her father, who founded Melrose Nursery and the old Fitz Hotel, came before the railroad and "he and a friend walked most of the way down from Palm Beach along the water's edge", while the rest of the family came later in 1898 by boat along the Inland Waterway.

Mary C. Napier and her husband, Harvey, are tape-recording interviews with early Florida settlers and their descendants for the Dade Heritage Trust. This article is based on some of their findings. Mrs. Napier, native of North Carolina, lived in New York before moving here in 1962. The Napiers live in Coral Gables.

John Scott Sherman, a third-generation Floridian, tells this anecdote about his grandfather, Ezra Styles Scott, who had an orange grove near Sanford until struck by three successive freezes culminating in the disastrous freeze of 1895.

"Old Ezra went out and looked at what was left of the groves. He came in and said to his wife, 'Lizzie, it's too cold to raise oranges here. I've got to go farther south'. And with that he went out and started packing the wagon. He kept on coming south until he got to Ft. Lauderdale and old Mr. Stranahan had a ferry that would take people across. It was just a little — maybe fifty yards across New River there, but it was awfully deep. I guess Grandfather Scott didn't want to spend \$5, or maybe he didn't have it, but anyhow he went further up stream and purty near lost his wagon, his horse and himself trying to get across to save five bucks. But he made it and then kept on south until he came to the Miami River. Remembering what happened at Ft. Lauderdale he turned the wagon around and went back to a little settlement he had passed earlier which turned out to be Lemon City and settled there."

Then the railroad came to Miami amid great fanfare and rejoicing. But Olive Chapman Lauther, the author, who rode the very first train into Miami as a small child remembers that she "rode the wood-burning train all the way from Delray with my head stuck out the window to see what I could see until my blond hair was black and I was so black from soot that my mother threatened to disown me."

Because the early trains

were wood burners, large piles of wood were stacked at intervals beside the track. Anyone wishing to take the train went to the nearest woodpile and waited. And since the train had no dining cars, enterprising natives also gathered at the woodpiles with sandwiches and coffee for sale.

Mr. and Mrs. Grover Bounds who came to Miami as late as 1917 still remember that trip. Mrs. Bounds describes it:

"We could get a Pullman out of Atlanta but when we got to Jacksonville we had to get out and get on one of Henry Flagler's coaches with wooden slat seats, and every once in a while they would stop and load up with wood. No diner. No water outside a little watering can like a family used to have — a little tank with a spigot at the bottom, one to a coach.

They'd stop at the wood piles and people would rush up to the train with ham sandwiches — real wonderful country ham, but just ham between two dry pieces of bread, and a tin cup of coffee. They couldn't give you the tin cup, so if you didn't have anything to put the coffee in and the train was fixing to leave, you either had to drink it down hot or pour it out so they could have the cup back. I guess people going from town to town in Florida carried a lunch but we were coming from a distance. We had travelled all night coming from Atlanta and got to Jacksonville in the morning. My mother-in-law wouldn't let me go in the restaurant in Jacksonville. She was scared to death. She had never travelled and was afraid I'd leave her or we'd get separated. We

left Jacksonville at 7 in the morning and got to Daytona at 4 in the afternoon. Then it took all night from Daytona to Miami. From Daytona on it was different; the coach had two seats facing each other."

Mr. Walter Thompson who made the trip to Miami in 1912 recalls "the train didn't have any screens at the windows and the mosquitoes ate you alive whenever the train stopped for wood."

About this time Withers Moving & Storage Co. got its start with a horse and wagon carrying baggage for tourists from the railroad station to the Royal Palm Hotel.

Part Two will appear in April Update.

HISTORY IS NO LONGER A MYSTERY

ACROSS

- 1) TV
- 3) HIALEAH
- 8) RD
- 10) AERO
- 12) NU
- 13) SALES
- 15) PRINS
- 17) MIAMIGO
- 19) PIPER
- 20) MLI
- 21) MA
- 22) IF
- 23) BULL
- 24) ILK
- 26) EYES
- 28) ASSIST
- 30) OR
- 31) NOSEY
- 33) REO
- 35) DREDGE
- 38) AL
- 39) EON
- 40) DOLT
- 41) VISA
- 43) AM
- 45) OK
- 46) FEVER
- 47) BOOM
- 49) FORE
- 50) TREAD
- 52) PAR
- 53) SRO
- 54) YE
- 55) REGATTA

DOWN

- 1) TAPPIE
- 2) VERIFY
- 3) HONEYS
- 4) AN
- 5) LUMMUS
- 6) ASAILING
- 7) HAM
- 8) REGAL
- 9) DSO
- 11) RIP
- 14) LIMITS
- 16) SR
- 18) ELS
- 23) BARROOM
- 25) KEY LARGO
- 27) ECON
- 29) SOEVER
- 30) ODD
- 32) EASE
- 33) REALTY
- 34) EOM
- 36) ELK
- 37) DT
- 42) IVES
- 44) SOAR
- 46) FORT
- 47) BE
- 48) ODE
- 49) FAT
- 51) RE
- 52) PA

THE LEMON CITY POST OFFICE



Lemon City's first postmistress, Louibelle Goode, stands in the door of the Lemon City post office, 1915. (Photo from the collection of John A. Cook.)

The first post office in the area which became known as Lemon City was opened in 1889 and called Motto post office. In 1893, however, the name was changed to Lemon City. During the 36 years of independent operation the Lemon City post office had eleven postpersons. These positions were filled by contract between the federal gov-

ernment and an individual who was willing to and capable of handling the mail. The bidder was required to supply a building or at least space for the post office. Some of Lemon City's ten post offices were in stores, others were small buildings like the one above, which was built on Lemon Avenue (present N.E. 61st Street) by Captain Mack Goode for his daughter, Louibelle Goode, when, scarcely out of her 'teens, she was appointed postmistress in 1914.

Louibelle was responsible for transporting the mail sacks to and from the railroad depot about 300 yards south of her post office. Romance developed over the mail sacks and she married the depot agent, Oscar Mathers.

Parts of the old Lemon City post office may be seen at the museum of HASF. When these were unveiled in 1973 the museum had as its guest of honor the only postperson who survives from the days of the independent Lemon City post office — Louibelle Goode Mathers. — T.P.



The above photo shows an early Miami hotel, the Roberts Hotel, located on the south side of Flagler Street just west of Miami Avenue, and its adjacent saloon, the famous Ye Wee Tappie Tavern. (See *History is a Mystery*). The saloon was owned by William B. Ogden, said to be a scion of the Armour family of meat packers, who had an estate in Lemon City. Ogden bitterly opposed the Eighteenth Amendment, which forced him to close his

saloon. He had the following verse put upon a bronze plaque and placed on the front of the Roberts Hotel, of which his saloon had been a part:

Here lies the restes of Ye Wee Tappie Tavern

Once an hotel, a gaudy gilt cavern,

Born in champagne in 1911,

Died in limeade before she was seven.

The plaque was supposed never to be removed but it disappeared, probably when the building was demolished. HASF would like to find what happened to the plaque. If any reader of *Update* knows its whereabouts please call the museum. (Photo from HASF post card.)

Continued from page 5

Savings and Loan now stands.

Brown, more formally Walter H. Brown, Sr., 82, of Hialeah, arrived here in 1924. He had had some experience in railway mail service out of New Orleans. After Navy service at sea in World War I, he worked on war bonuses in Washington and came here at the urging of a brother.

He was a supervisor, or foreman, when he retired in 1954.

He chuckles when he

remembers a new postal inspector who served as acting postmaster for a time. "He saw we had 10 windows for General Delivery," Brown said. "And he asked why we had so many. He ordered them all closed except for a couple.

"Soon there were long lines of people waiting at those two windows and they were getting madder and madder. Finally some went into his office and demanded something be done.

"He came out and bawled us out for not having enough windows open."

Brown retired to become manager of the Miami Postal Service Credit Union.

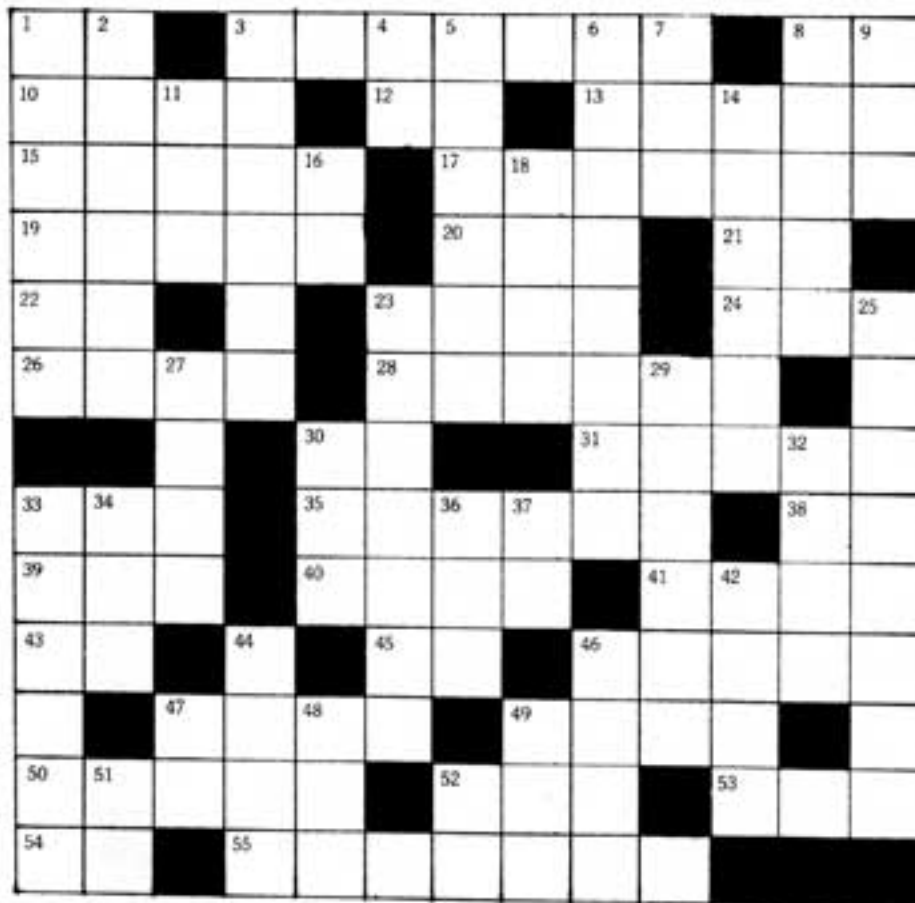
"In 1954, when I took over the credit union, we had about \$700,000 in assets," Brown said. "It now has about \$16 million and between 4000 and 5000 members. I'm proud of what I did. When I took over, I told the directors I would stay until I was 70. I did just that. I quit in 1964."

Continued from page 8

very little lasting impact from the murals (until recently), and they go unnoticed. One postmaster states: "The local comment about the work is bland. Some have lived here 50 years, in the office every day, and have never seen it."

HISTORY IS A MYSTERY

HISTORY IS A MYSTERY



DOWN

ACROSS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Part of name of Miami's famous saloon</p> <p>2. Confirm</p> <p>3. Sweethearts</p> <p>4. Article</p> <p>5. Developer of Miami Beach</p> <p>6. One way to go in a boat</p> <p>7. Amateur radio operator</p> <p>8. Beer once made in Miami</p> <p>9. Distinguished Service Order</p> <p>11. Kind of tide</p> <p>14. City _____, sign near Miami</p> <p>16. Mr. in Little Havana</p> <p>18. Evils</p> <p>23. Another word for 1 down</p> <p>25. Good place to buy lime pie</p> <p>27. Credit course at MDCC</p> <p>29. In any way</p> <p>30. Strange</p> <p>32. Lessen</p> <p>33. Boom-time business</p> <p>34. When the bills come</p> <p>36. Early club on East Flagler</p> <p>37. Double time</p> <p>42. Early Dade County dairy</p> <p>44. Park in Little River</p> <p>46. Dallas or Jefferson</p> <p>47. Exist</p> <p>48. Poem</p> <p>49. Weight Watchers' problem</p> <p>51. with reference to</p> <p>52. _____ Kettle</p> | <p>1. The "tube"</p> <p>3. Dade city with Indian name</p> <p>8. Lincoln or Alton</p> <p>10. Prefix for aircraft</p> <p>12. Greek letter</p> <p>13. they make the company happy (see 33 down)</p> <p>15. _____ Valdemar sank in ship channel</p> <p>17. New Park for Watson Island</p> <p>19. Pay him for overindulgence</p> <p>20. 1051</p> <p>21. _____ Kettle</p> <p>22. On condition that</p> <p>23. Original name of Belle Isle</p> <p>24. Type</p> <p>26. Looks at</p> <p>28. Help</p> <p>30. Used with either</p> <p>31. Prying</p> <p>33. Seen on Miami's early streets</p> <p>35. Changed Miami's shoreline</p> <p>38. _____ Capone</p> <p>39. An age</p> <p>40. Blockhead</p> <p>41. Appendix to a passport</p> <p>43. Morning hours</p> <p>45. All right</p> <p>46. Epidemic in Miami 1899</p> <p>47. Real estate or sonic</p> <p>49. Word used at Granada or Crooked Creek</p> <p>50. Trample</p> <p>52. See 49 across</p> <p>53. Sometimes happens at Grove Theater</p> <p>54. Part of name of Miami's famous saloon</p> <p>55. Popular boating event in the bay</p> |
|--|--|

Answers on page 9

PICTURING OUR PAST by Sam Boldrick



Trains once carried post offices on wheels (above). The metal arm on the door swung out to catch a mail bag from a trackside stand at small stations where the train did not stop. Inside the car (below) postal employees sorted the mail. The small slot left of the "U" in United was a letter drop. Letters mailed here received a special "RPO" postmark (bottom). In 1940, when this photo was taken, letters mailed on the RPO as far north as Richmond would be delivered to a Miami address the next day.

(Photos from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)



The left-hand postmark shows that this letter was cancelled on the Railway Post Office (RPO) of Train 10 between Wildwood and Miami. The right hand postmark is from the Railway Post Office car which operated on train 58 between Jacksonville, Wildwood and Miami.



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If the Ochopee Post Office on the Tamiami Trail looks a little small for a public building, it may be because it was originally a tool shed. Before the post office moved in, in 1953, it stored either tools and paint or insecticides. Although said to be the smallest post office in the United States, it still began its postal career while doubling as a Trailways Bus depot. (Photo from HASF collection)