

Update



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The Historical Association of Southern Florida is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to advancing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of South Florida history. The Association maintains a Museum, Archives, and Research Library for materials, publishes a journal and a bi-monthly magazine; sponsors a Historic Site Marker program; presents a Lecture Series; and carries on a broad educational program for all ages.

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A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

DEAR FELLOW MEMBER:

This past year has been very successful for your Association and we are grateful for your continued support and assistance.

The opening of our renovated museum gallery is an outstanding accomplishment of which we can all be justly proud. Through the dedicated efforts of our staff and Association volunteers, for the first time we are able to tell the chronological story of man's experience in South Florida.

The Museum's collection was substantially increased by the donation of the photographs of the late Commodore Ralph Monroe. This generous donation fills an earlier void not only in our collection but in the photographic archives of this area. Additionally, we received an early Miami street car which we will be restoring in the months to come.

The contribution of our volunteers, and in particular the Tequestans, continues to grow. The second annual "Harvest" was a substantial success, tripling previous attendance and income figures. We are grateful to those volunteers who work on that project, the Annual Benefit, the Attic Auction, the Docent Program and who staff our Gift Shop. Without their help we could not continue to progress.

On the financial scene, we received the first check of the Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This substantial assistance

along with a smaller planning grant and responsible support from the Commissioners of Metropolitan Dade County brought our budget within a few thousand dollars of being balanced. Our operational budget has grown over the past three years from approximately \$60,000 to \$163,000. This reflects a substantial increase in the services which we are able to offer to our members and to the community.

When our first small museum was opened on North Bayshore Drive, your Association made a decision to share with the community our historic heritage. This commitment was deepened upon our move to the present Vizcaya grounds and will, of course, become even more substantial when we move to the Downtown Cultural Center. Your Association will always be very special for its members but it will also continue to recognize its obligation to the community at large. To this end, we hope in the coming year to expand our services to our membership and to increase for the public an awareness of our community's heritage.

As a member of the Association you can be proud of that which has been done and we hope you will look forward with eagerness to that which remains to be done.

Cordially yours,

R. LAYTON MANK
 President

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The Miami News Tower overlooks Biscayne Boulevard and the statues erected for the May, 1928, national Shrine convention. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA'S LAST FRONTIER by Jeanne Bellamy

(Editor's note: This article first appeared in the 1952 edition of *Tequesta*. It was revised by the author and edited for *Update* by Alice Pittman-Wiley.)

Pistol in hand, the first newspaper editor of Florida's Gold Coast leaped toward the office of his rival. The editor of the second newspaper met him at the head of the stairs and hit him on the head with a printer's mallet.

Little more than half a century later, in 1950, the hamlet which was the scene of that encounter had become a bustling city—one of two dozen clustered together along the Florida shore of the Gulf Stream.

A motorist, journeying after sunset in the fall of 1950 from West Palm Beach to Homestead, could tell only by signposts where one town ended and the next began. Among cars, trucks and buses streaming along that highway, he would have passed through a few stretches with no buildings along the roadside, but nowhere in those 100 miles would he have been out of sight of an electric light gleaming somewhere in the darkness. Much of his way would have been neon-lighted.

Yet he would have seen only a fraction of the dwellings housing 700,000 men, women and children in that 100-mile strip, the only subtropical corner of continental United States.

Who could believe that all this came into being in half a century?

Scores of men and women living and working in this place in 1950 remembered how it looked in the year 1900, with only 5,000 inhabitants. These pioneers watched towns and cities spring up in the wilderness as people rushed to America's last frontier.

The story of its newspapers is the story of the frontier itself.

In the autumn of 1950, this region had seven year-round daily newspapers

of general circulation, an eighth published daily each winter, and more than two dozen other journals, mostly weeklies.

The combined circulation of the dailies in 1950 was more than 350,000. Heading them in circulation was *The Miami Herald*. Its 1950 circulation of 193,011 daily and 222,310 Sunday—more than half the total of the whole group—reached out into the entire region and far beyond. So did, to a lesser extent, *The Miami Daily News*, with a circulation of 94,031 daily and 88,228 Sunday.

Remember that Dade county in 1900 covered the whole region we are discussing, and more. Its north boundary was the St. Lucie River. It arched south along the coast nearly 150 miles to Card Sound, at the head of the Florida Keys, and reached about 50 miles inland to Lake Okeechobee.

Remember, too, that in 1890 the population of the vast territory called Dade county was 861 souls. Came Flagler with his railroad and by 1900 the population had leaped almost 500 percent to 4,955.

One month to the day after the first train chugged into Miami, *The Miami Metropolis* published its first edition on May 15, 1896. The six-column, full-size weekly was named by Flagler, and its two pioneer editors might be classed as Flagler partisans.

The owner and publisher was Dr. Walter S. Graham, who had left the practice of medicine for law and was a member of the law firm of Robbins, Graham & Chillingworth, with offices at Titusville, West Palm Beach and Miami. The editor was Wesley M. Featherly, who came from Michigan.

The first edition advertised bargains unbelievable to Miamians of 1950, such as "fine business lots" on the south bank of the river at \$300. The newspaper also called for immediate incorporation of Miami, predicting that "there will be 1,500 people before the first of July."

Work on the Royal Palm Hotel was being rushed for the formal opening on New Year's Day, 1897. People poured

in on the Florida East Coast Railway Company's new trains. "All kinds of eating places and sleeping places opened up, some in tents, some in shacks and some in cheap houses," wrote John Sewell, who arrived in Miami March 3, 1896. "Some of them would be built in a day."

Liquor was forbidden inside the town limits, so saloons mushroomed at the north edge of the settlement. "The night after payday there were great times, the workmen spending their money getting drunk, fighting, shooting and killing," Sewell recalled. "I have known as high as three or four dead men there after one night's jamboree. They had a number of dance halls, and you could hear the dancing and music for half a mile until the dead hours of night."

Miami was incorporated as a city on July 28, 1896, and in 1899 regained the courthouse from Juno. "The rough element was cleaned out and conditions bettered," Sewell reported.

In that year, the three-year-old *Metropolis* was bought by B.B. Tatum, former sawmill operator who had controlled a newspaper in Bartow, Florida, in 1887, then four newspapers successively in Rome, Ga.

The Metropolis flourished. By 1903 it had a circulation of 1,500, and Tatum changed it from a weekly to an eight-page daily.

It was also in 1903 that Frank B. Stoneman and A.L. LaSalle, Sr., carted machinery from their printing shop in Orlando to Miami and started *The Miami Evening Record*. A few years later it became *The Morning News-Record*.

Tatum's real estate interests demanded increasing quantities of his time, so he organized the Miami Printing Company to run *The Metropolis*. Secretary-treasurer of the company was S. Bobo Dean, who came from West Palm Beach and acquired a half-interest in 1905.

About that time, Miami's only bank had trouble. As its receiver, Washington officials selected an

Jeanne Bellamy, a member of HASF, is the president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA'S LAST FRONTIER

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Indiana attorney named Frank B. Shutts, who arrived about 1907. In carrying out his assignment, Shutts met Flagler, who hired him as his Miami attorney.

The Stoneman-LaSalle newspaper experienced financial difficulties, and Shutts bought it for \$29,000, borrowed from Flagler. The newspaper emerged Dec. 10, 1910, as *The Miami Herald*, a morning daily, with Stoneman as editor and Shutts as publisher.

Shutts had obtained the \$29,000 loan from Flagler by the argument that Miami needed a newspaper which would present Flagler's side of public questions as well as the anti-Flagler side.

This last was rip-snortingly represented by Editor Dean of *The Metropolis*, who had transformed that newspaper from pro-Flagler to anti-Flagler.

Miami merchants expressed disapproval of Dean's views in a petition intended for the eyes of the Flagler interests. Before delivering it, they showed it to Dean. He told them he wanted to have the signatures checked and would return the original. Next day, the petition appeared on Page One of *The Metropolis*.

This occurred at the height of a fight in which *The Metropolis* was championing the demands of growers for lower freight rates. The merchants were chagrined at seeing their pro-Flagler petition displayed to their customers. Some recanted. Those who didn't stopped advertising in *The Metropolis*.

It was shortly thereafter that *The Miami Herald* made its debut. The \$29,000 loan to Publisher Shutts did not remain outstanding long. An accountant, checking *The Herald's* records for Flagler, noted that a large automobile and the wages of a chauffeur were among the expenses of the business. Flagler remonstrated, and Shutts promptly paid off the balance of the loan, refusing to budge from his stand that a chauffeured car for the publisher was a proper expense of the newspaper.

In 1915, A.J. Bendle, who had bought Tatum's interest in *The Miami Metropolis*, sold out to Bobo Dean, already half-owner.

An afternoon daily, *The Miami Tribune*, was founded in 1924 with N.B.T. Roney as its first backer. The editor was scholarly Clayton Sedgwick Cooper.

On January 12, 1925, appeared the 40-page first edition of *The Illustrated Daily Tab*, a venture of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. At 26, he was publishing two tabloids in California. He breezed into Miami in October, 1924, lined up some backing and awarded \$1,000 to the winner of a contest to name his Miami tabloid.

The splashy *Tab* had its plant in the old home of *The Metropolis*, just east of the Central Fire Station on W. Flagler Street. The offices faced north toward the old three-story Dade county courthouse.

On the opposite side of the courthouse stood *The Tribune's* plant in a two-story building on N.W. First Street.

Between these two newspaper plants a lurid incident occurred. Clatter of air drills and riveters at work on skyscrapers nearly drowned the sound of gunshots which burst from the courthouse on the morning of September 27, 1925. The shooting foiled a jail break led by the notorious Heywood Register of the Ashley-Mobley gang of bandits and bank-robbers. Two prisoners were killed, but Register played possum and was not hurt.

You will gather from this that newspaper work in Miami in the 1925 boom—like the city itself—was far from dull.

Journalists poured into town along with men from all other walks of life. They found jobs quickly on Miami newspapers, bulging with more ads than they could print.

The real estate fever infected newsmen, too. Many would work a few days or weeks, then vanish into the maelstrom to buy and sell.

So fast was the turnover that managing editors didn't know the names or even the faces of all their

employees, or how many would be likely to show up for work on any given day.

At the peak of the confusion, *The Miami Herald* newsroom was on the second floor of its old building, approached by stairs from Miami Avenue.

One night, a chubby man wearing a derby appeared at the top of the stairway, facing the bustling rim of the copy desk. He singled out a copyreader and asked: "Can you direct me to Colonel Shutts?"

"Shutts?" asked the copyreader absently. Then he addressed his co-workers: "Anybody know a fellow named Shutts?"

None replied.

"Sorry we can't help you," the copyreader said.

With a look of wonder, the visitor asked permission to use a telephone, put in a call and beckoned one of the staff to speak to the party on the other end of the wire. Through the receiver, the staffer heard:

"This is Frank Shutts, publisher of *The Herald*. Can't someone in the office bring that man out to my house? He's Herbert Hoover."

The News Tower provided a vantage point for watching the 1926 hurricane. The story was told by Jessee O. Irvin, a *Herald* copyreader at the time of his death in 1950, who was working on *The News* in 1926:

"Wives of two *News* executives came to the office when the wind got bad. After a big chunk of concrete hurtled down from the tower, we put the women under the press. I wasn't scared until I happened to glance out a window and saw tank cars on the railroad siding topple and roll before the wind."

Irvin, staring in frightened fascination, saw a huge schooner bearing down on the building. It veered off and careened out into the bay, then back inland farther north, where it went hard aground.

"After the storm," Irvin recalled, "cars moved along Biscayne Boulevard right under its prow."

On June 16, 1926, Vanderbilt's *Tab* vanished with the announcement that E.A. Inglis had been appointed receiver.

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WHY WRITE FOR NEWSPAPERS?

by Jane Wood Reno

You hear such wonderful stories.

"I came to Miami from up around Cedar Key in 1923," a greying tugboat captain said. "I got me a fast little speed boat with a 30 horse motor. It wouldn't hold more than about 25, 30 cases of whiskey, but it would outrun anything the Coast Guard had. A bunch of us had boats like that, and we were running whiskey in from Bimini to Miami. We came through Bear Cut, and the Coast Guard knew what we were doing, and we knew they knew, but they couldn't catch us.

"So one nice afternoon there were maybe 20 of us over in Bimini, and we knew the Coast Guard was waiting. But we decided to run for it, they could only catch one, if any.

"We hit Bear Cut about dusk, and there was the Coast Guard cutter, and we tore past. Well—they had stretched a cable across the cut, a foot or so under water. You should have seen the scrambled boats. Wrecked, sunk. Nobody killed, and it was a wonder. But for some reason, I don't know why, I hit that cable and it lifted me up, and over, and I was on through. No damage at all. I got out of that business then. You don't have something like that happen twice."

You meet such wonderful people.

Amelia Earhart was something special. She was so beautiful, with green eyes, an open-hearted smile and a trim figure, in her jodphurs and white shirt. She had changed her plans as to her flight around the world suddenly, and had decided to fly east from Miami.

I was the only reporter on the city desk of the *Miami Herald* that Sunday afternoon late in May of 1937, so I was sent out to Opa Locka airport to interview her. I stood beside a tall, young blond fellow, an aging *Miami Tribune* photographer and the airport manager and watched her come in to land her flying laboratory.

"What's she like?" I asked.

The young fellow said, "Oh, she's awful! A hellion! You should hear the foul language she uses."

He and the airport manager grinned at each other, and then the young man said, "She's the most wonderful woman I ever met. She's my stepmother. I'm David Binney Putnam."

She sat, unhurried, on the edge of the

landings to thee, Amelia Earhart, Farewell, first lady of the air."

Writing for newspapers is educational, at least for the writer.

One of my stories that educated me most began like this, in the *Miami News*



Possibly the world's first underwater interview was conducted by Jane Reno in 1954. She donned a scuba tank and descended forty feet to cover Ed Fisher's twenty-four hour camp-out. (Photo courtesy of Jane Wood Reno.)

desk in the little office of the airport manager while the photographer took pictures and spent ten minutes telling her about his early adventures in airplanes. She listened attentively.

When he stopped talking and I could interview, I asked, "Why are you flying around the world, Miss Earhart?"

"What do you mean, why?" she said.

"I mean, are you doing it for any scientific reason, or something like that, or just for fun?"

"Just for fun," she said, with a bemused grin.

There was much more. I used the phrase in my lead and it followed her around the world on her equatorial flight, until she went down in the Pacific on the second of July.

I can't hear the song they made without tears welling up: "Happy

on Nov. 15, 1955:

"Driving a borrowed Cadillac, wearing a phony diamond ring, I went out to buy babies on the black market for the Kefauver Committee."

Ernest Mitler, special legal counsel of the Kefauver Committee, asked me to buy babies for him. Then I'd testify before the Committee and the *News* would get the scoop, he said.

"Take my Cadillac," he said. "You drive up in a Cadillac, people's thoughts fly out the window, they forget they might be investigated."

He gave me the names of two naturopaths. My story for them would be this, we decided: I would be Mrs. Frederick Zimmerman, the gentle wife of a Jew. Social workers wouldn't let us adopt a baby because we were of

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THE NEWS TOWER

by Nancy Hoffman



JUNE 1, 1924



JULY 1, 1924



AUGUST 1, 1924



SEPTEMBER 1, 1924

"Work begins on the Daily News Office Building - Million Dollar, 15 Story Structure To Be Done Before Winter" proclaimed the headline of the *Miami Daily News* and *Metropolis* on June 11, 1924. Thus was a city introduced to "The News Tower," later to be called "The Freedom Tower," and today one of the most important landmarks in the skyline as well as the history of Miami.

Pictured that Wednesday in the *Daily News* was a group of twelve men participating in the morning groundbreaking ceremony. Included were officials of the paper, Arthur G. Keene, managing editor, Charles F. Cushman, city editor, Ross A. Reeder, vice-president and business manager, Nelson I. Fowler, circulation manager, Morton M. Milford, editor, and Horace Loomis, advertising manager, along with representatives of the construction crew, A.C. Clark, Claude A. Haines, J.H. Sullivan, L.R. Crandall, and Adolph Freedlund. Also in the group was a G.L. Cox, assistant circulation manager of the *Dayton (Ohio) News*, whose interest in the occasion was undoubtedly related to James M. Cox, owner and publisher of the Miami paper as well as the one in Dayton.

The 283 foot high tower was designed in the Spanish Renaissance Revival Style popular in the 1920's. The architectural firm of Schultze and Weaver was employed for this project, in a boom of South Florida activity for the New Yorkers. Having been brought to the Miami area by Carl G. Fisher to design his luxurious Nautilus Hotel on Miami Beach, Schultze and Weaver then won the commissions for the News Tower, the Miami-Biltmore Hotel and Miami-Biltmore Country Club in Coral Gables, the Roney-Plaza on Miami Beach, and the "New" Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach to replace the Breakers burned during the winter of 1924-1925.

S. Fullerton Weaver and Leonard Schultze formed their partnership in 1921. Weaver brought to the team his experience as president and owner of the Fullerton Weaver Construction Company, active in the design and construction of apartment buildings in New York. Schultze had studied architecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and then went to work for the architectural firm



OCTOBER 1, 1924



NOVEMBER 1, 1924

of Warren and Wetmore. He spent 22 years with this New York group, during which time he supervised the construction of Grand Central Station and the Biltmore and the Commodore hotels in New York City. Before the News Tower project, Schultze and Weaver had done the Los Angeles-Biltmore, the Atlanta Biltmore, the Westchester-Biltmore Country Club in Rye, New York, the Seville Biltmore in Havana, Cuba, and numerous other structures.

Work on the News Tower had to begin with the clearing of pine trees at the corner of what was then North Bay Shore Drive and Sixth Street, today

Photo credit: All photos are courtesy of the Miami News.

Nancy Hoffman is assistant director of the Dade County Historic Survey.

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Biscayne Boulevard and N.E. Sixth Street. The construction contract was in the hands of the George A. Fuller Company of New York, builders of the First National Bank Building in downtown Miami and the Nautilus Hotel on Miami Beach.

A great number of artisans were needed to complete the numerous



JANUARY 1, 1925



FEBRUARY 1, 1925

artistic details that went into the building. John B. Orr handled this part of the contract, employing people such as Frank A. Albrecht, architectural painter.

Born in Czechoslovakia, Albrecht painted from the time he was fourteen years old, taking art courses in Czechoslovakia, Vienna, and Munich and traveling throughout Europe to

study interior and exterior painting of buildings. With his knowledge of Spanish buildings, Albrecht supervised the painting crew in the painstaking task of making fireproof concrete and plaster beams look like wooden timbers, and making new stone and other construction materials look antique.

The Fuller Company employed a total of seventeen different sub-contractors to complete the News Tower project. Breaking records is commonly associated with sports events, but to a construction company, breaking the record for concrete pouring is what counts. The Fuller Company broke that record during construction at the News Tower by pouring ninety-nine cubic yards of concrete in one nine hour day - one batch every fifty-five seconds - for the nine inch slab floor in the newspaper's composing room. Other proud construction facts included the fact that no serious accidents occurred during construction of the Tower, whereas one death per 100 feet was average for the times, making 2.8 expected deaths during the News Tower's erection.

At the time of its opening, the *Miami Daily News* and *Metropolis* claimed that its new home was "the highest habitable building in this latitude of the world," meaning that Torreón, Mexico, Murzuq, Libya, Gwalior, India, and even Taipei, Taiwan did not have buildings taller than 283 feet in height.

But the longest held record connected with the opening of the News Tower did not have anything to do with construction. On July 26, 1925, the first official day of occupation of its new quarters, the *Miami Daily News* and *Metropolis* printed a five-hundred and four (504!) page edition, the largest ever printed. This record was to stand for at least 25 years.

In August of 1948, the tower of the Miami News Building was the site of two significant events. One was the installation of radio antennas for broadcasting the FM station WIOD. The other was a fire a few weeks after the installation of the antennas began. The fire did not cause major damage to the building, however.

In September of 1957, the News

Tower was sold for \$1,250,000 to Irving Maidman, president of Maidmore Realty Corporation of New York, and the *Miami News* moved to its new eight-

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MARCH 1, 1925



JANUARY, 1935



AUGUST 8, 1962

NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA'S FRONTIER

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The next November, *The Miami Tribune* withered to tabloid size. In February, 1927, it shrank to a weekly, and ceased publication in August, 1927.

Eight lean years ensued. Banks failed along the Gold Coast and elsewhere in Florida. As late as Christmas of 1934, you could buy a full meal—meat, potatoes, a vegetable, dessert and coffee—at several downtown Miami cafeterias for the flat sum of 10 cents. A deluxe eatery charged 15 cents.

This was the era of the world-wide depression, yet new settlers continued to move into Southeast Florida's 100-mile Sunland. Its population climbed from 214,830 in 1930 to 257,234 in the state census of 1935 and 387,522 in 1940.

The tabloid *Tribune* resumed on November 15, 1934, as a year-round daily. It set Miamians agog with such scare headlines as: COSSACKS BEAT BOY, 500 DIE IN KEYS HURRICANE, GRAND JURY PROBES CITY GRAFT.

A three-cornered war, replete with name-calling, ensued among *The Miami Herald*, *The Miami Daily News* and *The Miami Tribune*. It was the first newspaper in the region to pass the 100,000 circulation mark.

The Tribune's guiding genius, Paul G. Jeans, gave Miami a movie-like version of a tabloid in action. He often wrote of "the city hall gang" and once quipped that the ideal tabloid headline would be: "Sex Fiend Slays Six In Penthouse Orgy."

Jeans's impish humor came out in such tales as the story of the time he sent investigators to track down rumors of jury tampering.

Criminal Court Judge E.C. Collins had been indicted January 17, 1935, on a charge of accepting a bribe. Six jurors deadlocked four to two, and *The Tribune* reported the outcome thus: "Four Fixed Jurors Save Collins From Chains."

Criminal libel charges were filed against Jeans and the reporter who wrote the story. Jeans sent two hirelings to Ojus to look for a man named by a tipster as the jury-fixer. Jeans' men

found him, got him drunk and heard him boast that he was "more evil in Broward than I am in Dade."

That was the phrase which delighted Jeans, who died in the spring of 1937 in a highway accident.

On December 1, 1937, *The Tribune* ceased publication. It had been bought by John S. Knight of Akron, Ohio, who had purchased *The Miami Herald* from Shutts on October 15, 1937.

Tribune support had helped elect three Miami city commissioners—a majority of the board—in the spring of 1937. *The Herald* and *The News* called attention to their faults loudly and often.

The News coined the title of "the termites" for the three, who were removed from office in a recall election 15 months after *The Tribune* folded.

For its role in the recall campaign, *The Miami Daily News* won the 1938 Pulitzer Prize for "distinguished and meritorious service to the community."

Disclosure in testimony before a United States Senate committee investigating interstate crime led to the suspension from office of the sheriffs of Dade and Broward counties. As the 1950-51 winter tourist season began, illegal gambling in both these counties was on a "sneak" basis.

This was a topic *The Herald* had been pursuing for more than 10 years. "For disinterested and meritorious public service in 1950," *The Herald* was awarded the Pulitzer prize for its "tireless campaign against crime and official corruption and in behalf of good government."

The big daily also was an early and persistent supporter of plans for building the Tamiami Trail, control of floods and droughts in the Everglades, and the Everglades National Park, which was created in 1947 after intensive efforts spearheaded by Associate Editor John D. Pennekamp.

Organized labor had two weeklies—*The Miami Labor Citizen* and *The Union Labor News* in West Palm Beach.

The growing volume of legal news and advertising gave rise in 1926 to *The Miami Review*. In 1950, it was being published five days a week.

During the racing season, a Miami printing plant published an edition of

The Daily Racing News, the "bible" of racing fans.

Miami also had a weekly named *Miami Life*, whose role is difficult to describe. A nightclub owner once boasted to me that, by judicious use of folding money, in the days when gambling casinos ran wide-open in Miami, he arranged to have hawkers for this publication stand in front of crowded Miami Beach hotels and bellow: "Gambling running wide open at Such-and-such club," using the name of his establishment. There was nothing about that in the papers they carried, but the stunt filled his gambling rooms, he said.

In 1978, with the exception of the lads at the stop lights during rush hours, the editorial comments of the newboy have gone. Today newspapers are dispensed from coin machines or retrieved in plastic containers from bushes and puddles. Miami, today is served by four major newspapers: *Diario Las Americas*, which serves the Latin community, *The Miami Times* serves the Black Sector, *The Miami Herald*, which also prints a daily Spanish-language edition and is circulated as a morning paper and *The Miami News* which is published for afternoon reading.

Today, the Fourth Estate combines with TV to cover the same events in perhaps more sophisticated detail as they reach today's New Frontier of 1,500,000 souls in Dade County.

THE NEWS TOWER

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million dollar office building, at 1001 N.W. 7th Street.

Most of the structure stood vacant for the next four-and-a-half years, until April of 1962. At that time the General Services Administration leased it to serve as the Cuban Refugee Center, renaming it the Freedom Tower, and processing and registering immigrants arriving by the thousands from politically torn Cuba.

Used in this capacity until the early 1970s, the building was vacated and once again was up for sale.

Subsequent owners, foreclosures, and litigation have continued to mark the recent history of Miami's landmark News Tower.

THE ORIGIN OF THE MIAMI TIMES

by Garth C. Reeves, Sr.
as told to Dorothy Jenkins Fields

Author's Note: The late Henry Ethelbert Sigismund Reeves was the founder of the Miami Times. One of nine children, he was born in Nassau, Bahamas. His father, Henry Louis Reeves, received his formal training in Jamaica, British West Indies, where he was born. Henry L. Reeves migrated to Nassau, in 1880, where he met and married Kezia Susan McDonald, daughter of a seafaring family at Arthur's Town in the Bahamas. Young H.E.S. Reeves served an apprenticeship in the office of the Nassau Guardian. In 1910, he married Rachel Cooper, daughter of Rev. J.W.H. Cooper Sr., the first Negro Anglican Priest in the Bahamas. Their four daughters were Hazel Reeves Grant, a HASF director, the late Clarice Reeves Littles, the late Doreen Reeves Young and Frances Reeves Jollivette Chambers. Their son, Garth C. Reeves, Sr. is the editor and publisher of the oldest black newspaper in Miami and Dade County. A trustee of Miami-Dade Community College, he was elected Publisher-of-the-Year by the National Black Publisher's Association. Editor Reeves was interviewed at the Miami Times' office, 6530 N.W. 15th Avenue, on October 14, 1977. This article was edited from the oral history tape recording made at that time.

My dad moved to Miami in the early part of 1919. I think that it was March or April. At the time he was employed as a printer (at the Nassau City Press). He did not work in the editorial part of the newspaper, he was in the mechanical part. One of his chief duties was to make up the front page. He always told me how he made it up at the elbow of the publisher, Mrs. Mosley. She was an elderly woman who was the editor and publisher of the paper. She stood over him and pointed out how she wanted it made up.

He also, at that time, held another job as a customs agent. He worked there at night. He had a small store, too, more or less a sundry store, which he operated near his home. He told me that he never desired to come to this country. He had

decided to make his home in Nassau until I was born. I was the first son. He thought that he wanted something bigger for me.

He left Nassau with the intention of going to New York where he had a brother, Fred. He was going to buy



GARTH C. REEVES, SR.

printing equipment and go back to Nassau and go into business for himself. When he arrived in Miami he met several friends whom he had known in Nassau. They told him that this was a good city with a lot of potential and they suggested he think about settling here. He did.

Rev. S.A. Sampson, Dr. Alonzo P. Holly, M.J. Bodie and my dad formed a printing company and started to put out a newspaper called, The Miami Sun. It started during the war and they couldn't get newsprint for the paper. After eight months the Miami Sun was terminated. I think that I have just about all of the copies of the Sun.

September 1, 1923, the Miami Times was launched. It has been going ever since. We have never missed an issue and we have managed to get out a paper every week during the past 54 years. From 1924-1934 the office was located in the Overtown area, now called

Culmer. The first address was 826 N.W. 3rd Avenue, then we rented a portion of Dr. T.L. Lowry's building, 1112 N.W. 3rd Avenue. In 1954, we relocated to the Liberty City area, 6470 N.W. 15th Avenue. We stayed there until 1966 and finally, in 1967, we moved to our present site.

During all of that time we have never missed an issue. The hurricane was the first thing to threaten the continuity of the paper. The hurricanes of both 1926 and 1934 were devastating. After the hurricanes the lights would go out and stay out for a long time. Usually they started repairing downtown and they didn't get to the black area until last. Anyhow, my dad paid men to actually turn the press by hand in order to get the paper out on time. That was hard work. The men were paid something like fifty cents an hour to turn the press.

There were always paper shortages to deal with. At times we just couldn't get paper. Sometimes we had to buy paper from the Miami News. This was newsprint which they didn't use. It was generally left on the rolls when their rolls got down low on the presses. They would stop the presses, cut the paper off and sell it to fish markets. That's the paper we would pay them for, after it was trimmed. We used it; paper is paper. We also looked all over the country for paper to use. We managed to get enough to keep us going.

The depression was another crisis. It was tough getting money to pay the help, but we hung in there. My dad was convinced that the newspaper was something that the community needed. A lot of sacrifices were made by the family to keep the newspaper going. There was a time when my parents had three kids in college at the same time. After World War II, he was finally able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Before that, for the first twenty years, the newspaper was subsidized by the printing business my dad owned. It was called the Magic Printery. This thriving commercial printery was a job

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BEN ARCHER AND THE HOMESTEAD LEADER by Jean Taylor

It didn't take Ben Archer long to decide what he wanted to do with his life. By the time he was eight years old he was working as a printer's devil, at age 13 he was a cub reporter, and he didn't stop until he owned and edited his own newspaper. Born in Key West, in 1898, he was the sixth Benjamin Archer in a family that had emigrated from the Bahamas three generations before. By 1917, he was news editor of the *Key West Morning Journal* and realized that he needed a good education in journalism to reach his goal.

Ben Archer attended the University of Florida for three years, where he was editor-in-chief of *The Florida Alligator* and then completed two years' work in one at the Columbia School of Journalism and received his degree. He also spent a year at the *Bridgeport Post-Telegram* learning to run a Linotype so that he could go into business for himself and know exactly what he was doing.

In 1921 Archer was married to Marjorie Leach, whose family had pioneered in Florida City in 1916. Marjorie was teaching English and industrial arts at Florida State College for Women and was head of the Industrial Arts Department.

The young Archers settled in Homestead where they felt there was a need for a good paper. Ben worked as a carpenter's helper on the new Homestead Junior High, which was under construction while they made their plans.

Mr. Archer organized his own corporation and sold stock to prominent Homestead citizens such as J.D. Redd, W.D. Horne and Sid Livingston. When he chose a site, he traded William Van Winkle stock for the land, and the same contractor for whom he had worked on the junior high constructed the building, while M.P. Walker, owner of a block factory,

provided the cement blocks for the newspaper building in return for shares in the corporation. An old printing press was purchased from the Key West paper where Archer worked as a boy and they were soon all set to go.

The first edition of the *Homestead Leader* was published in June 1923. Ben Archer was responsible for the front page news, Marjorie Archer did the society page and the advertising, while her sister, Ruby Leach Carson, contributed the Miami news. Ruby had worked as a reporter on the *Miami Metropolis* since 1911, so she was well qualified to join her sister and brother-

in-law in their new venture. (She is best known for co-authoring with Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau, "*Florida: From Indian Trail to Space Age*" and, with Dr. E.C. Nance, "*The East Coast of Florida.*")

At first the *Homestead Leader* was a weekly paper gotten out by the Archers with the help of a printer and a boy. Mrs. Archer did the make up of the whole paper and when a printer wasn't available they got it out alone.

In 1925-26, spurred on by the Florida boom, the *Homestead Leader* became a daily. The 1926 hurricane took the roof

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THE HOMESTEAD ENTERPRISE



Typesetting and production for the *Homestead Enterprise* took place in this room in 1912. Rev. Joseph H. Kahl was the original owner. Ben Archer acquired the paper in 1931. (Photo courtesy of Jean C. Taylor.)

When Rev. Joseph H. Kahl arrived in South Dade in 1912 to serve the Methodists in Florida City, there was no paper to provide a means of communication in the entire area. He immediately determined to correct the lack and without more ado started the **Homestead Enterprise**. Never were churches given more space on their social and clerical affairs and never were general conferences reported in more detail. Rev. Kahl was also partial to the Women's Christian Temperance Union,

which was active in the area and devoted columns to their meetings.

As ground was cleared and church buildings arose in Homestead, Redland, Florida City and the surrounding district, special emphasis was given to each denomination.

Rev. Kahl was also a leader in civic affairs and campaigned for wide streets as Homestead was laid out. It is because of his insistence that Krome Avenue is a wide thoroughfare today.

WHY WRITE FOR NEWSPAPERS?

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different religions.

"Jimmy can buy me anything I want, but we can't have a baby," I told the naturopaths.

My education was increased by the knowledge that Congressional investigating committees are simply out for publicity, and I learned how they get it. I also learned that naturopaths leave a trail of death, due primarily to inept abortions. I took off after naturopaths in print. The end result was that no new ones can be licensed to practice in Florida, one of the two states, that allowed them to practice.

You get to enjoy such wonderful scenery.

The best was in August, 1954, when, for the *Miami News*, I did the world's first underwater interview. At least, it was the first as far as I know.

Ed Fisher was camping out under 40 feet of water on French reef. The water was clear as the air above, very calm and warm as a nice bath. The elkhorn coral on French reef is stunning. There isn't anything ugly down there. Everything's quiet, every movement is smooth, every color is quite perfect. On down there is just one color, the perfect blue of evening.

Ed was going to stay down for 24 hours. I had the scoop on the story. He went over late in the morning. People swam around him through the night, there was a spotlight below, guards changed. I went down with an aqua-lung often.

The next morning, wearing a scuba tank, I went down for an interview.

"Think you can make it?" I wrote with a slate pencil on a slate.

"Yes, I can make it," he wrote back.

Some hours later Paul Arnold, who was sponsoring the camp-out, asked on slate, "How do you feel?"

"Don't think I can make it," Ed wrote back.

"The world is going mad waiting for news of you," Paul wrote.

"I can make it," Ed replied, and he did. He came up after decompression 24 hours after going down.

The story that broke my heart was also about the underwater world, and began:

"Hope Root dived into the most beautiful world he knew and died in the royal blue Gulf Stream yesterday.

"Somber reporters and photographers, seasick and heartsick, felt like buzzards while an awfully nice little guy went out of this world before our eyes and cameras."

He dived for a world's depth record in the Gulf Stream at noon on Dec. 3, 1953. He never came up. I knew him because of a previous interview about scuba diving, on which my kids and I were hooked.

That story, though, brought me the highest compliment I ever received as a writer. Two weeks after Hope died there came to me a letter in perfect Spencerian handwriting:

"Dear Jane Wood, I am Hope Root's mother. Please come to see me. You wrote as though you had known him always. Sincerely, Cynthia Hope Root."

From 1928 to 1958 I wrote, off and on, for the *Miami News*, with a brief stint on the *Miami Herald*, where I met the man I married in 1937, Henry Reno. He had been police reporter on the *Miami Herald* for 43 years when he retired in 1966. He wrote far more great and funny stories than I ever did. Stories about the big hurricanes of 1926, 1928, 1935, and stories like the one about the police bloodhound that was trailing a fugitive and was picked up and taken to the dog pound.



THE ORIGIN OF THE MIAMI TIMES

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component of the business. We did job printing for most of the businesses in town. At that time, the newspaper could not carry its own weight. Advertising was light. Blacks never did advertise that heavily. The only white advertisers we could get were for hair straighteners, skin cream and bleaches. You just couldn't get the quality advertising that you need in the life of a newspaper. About twelve years ago, the newspaper began to grow so rapidly that the Magic Printery had to be closed.

The newspaper has always been a family business from as far back as I can remember. Papers were always folded in the living room and the kitchen. My sister and I worked hard to prepare the paper for sale. Dad would print the paper himself. In those days we had a small hand press. Only one page could be printed at a time. Mama was special. She held everything together at home while dad kept the business going. She had a way of making us feel as though we were special, even though we were as poor as dirt. She supported dad in his efforts to provide the community with a newspaper.

BEN ARCHER AND THE HOMESTEAD LEADER

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off the building and left the machinery exposed to the weather. There was no electricity for power so they got out a little sheet on a job press. Mr. Archer pushed the back of the press up and down by hand while the printer fed in the paper.

Ben Archer acquired the *Enterprise* in 1931 and combined it with the *Homestead Leader*. In 1956 it merged with the *Perrine Post* and became the "*Homestead Leader Perrine Post*." The paper was operated by the Archers as a weekly coming out on Thursdays. After 39 years of publication the paper was sold in 1961 to the S.W. Colkins Enterprises who owned six papers in Pennsylvania. They also bought the *Redland District News* and combined them into the present *South-Dade News Leader*.



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