

**Update**



VOL. 5, NO. 6  
AUGUST-OCTOBER, 1978





## Update

VOL. 5, NO. 6 AUGUST-OCTOBER 1978

*Update* is published bi-monthly by the Historical Association of Southern Florida, 3280 South Miami Avenue, Building B, Miami, Florida, 33129.

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.

Membership contributions are \$15.00 for patron (single), \$25.00 for Donor, \$50.00 for Contributor, \$100.00 for Sponsor, \$250.00 for Benefactor, \$1,000.00 for Life. Applications for membership should be addressed to the Association at 3280 South Miami Avenue, Building B, Miami, Florida, 33129.

### OFFICERS

R. Layton Mank, President  
 Marie W. Anderson, First Vice President  
 Charles P. Munroe, Second Vice President  
 Sherrill Kellner, Secretary  
 Stephen A. Lynch, III, Treasurer

*Update* is published bi-monthly by the Historical Association of Southern Florida. Entire contents is copyrighted © 1978 by the Historical Association of Southern Florida. All rights reserved. Reprint of materials is encouraged following the obtaining of written permission from the Association. Communications should be addressed to The Editor, *Update*, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 3280 South Miami Avenue, Building B, Miami, Florida, 33129. The Association disclaims responsibility for statements of fact or opinions expressed by contributors.

### UPDATE BOARD

Barbara E. Skigen, Editor  
 Dr. Ione S. Wright,  
 Chairperson, Publications Committee  
 Samuel F. Boldrick  
 Ellen Edelen  
 Arva Moore Parks  
 Elizabeth Peeler  
 Dr. Thelma Peters  
 Lee Shipley  
 Robert C. Stafford  
 Dr. William M. Stokes  
 Jean C. Taylor  
 Eudora Wooten

## A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Two events of special importance to your Association are scheduled for the near future. On Oct. 29, 1978 the Publications Committee will sponsor a reception for Marjory Stoneman Douglas, a long-time member of our Association, to honor the release of the updated edition of **The Everglades: River of Grass**. Mrs. Douglas has updated her highly acclaimed and popular book on the history of the Everglades region in light of recent developments. We are proud of Mrs. Douglas' contribution to our community and to the history of our area. We know you will want to honor her by attending the reception at the Museum. Individual invitations will be sent directly to all Association members.

On Nov. 18 and 19, 1978, the Tequestans, our volunteer organization, will present the third annual Harvest. This event has enjoyed tremendous success since its introduction and has become a significant part of our annual budget. It has been well received by the people of

South Florida who seem anxious to support an old-fashioned country fair which includes interesting crafts, exhibits, demonstrations and displays as well as delicious food representing the various groups that make up South Florida. We know you will want to support this very important project of the Association.

Your Board recently adopted a budget for the coming year of \$460,000 which represents a 500% increase over the past five years. While this rate of growth is fantastic, mere spending alone is no great accomplishment. What is impressive is the growing recognition of your Association as an important factor in our community and the widespread support which we receive from the government, business and private sectors of South Florida. This growing support permits us to continue to improve the programs which we offer to our members and to the community and to continue to plan for our move to the Downtown Cultural Center.

R. LAYTON MANK  
 President

**COMMENTS:** Occasionally authors submit a number of photographs to illustrate their manuscripts. When they do not, we enlist the resources of the HASF iconographic collection. The photo archives are an ever growing and vital part of our Association and those of us associated with *Update* know that a picture is not only worth a thousand words, but at least as many memories.

The marvelous photographs that accompany Erling Ayars' article on the 1926 hurricane in Coconut Grove are a story unto themselves. The cutlines under each photo are quotes from the unknown photographer, who painstakingly wrote the priceless descriptions. In 1977, the pictures were donated to the Historical Association by the City of Miami Fire Department. They had been found in a vacant house that the Department was preparing to burn. How pleased we were to receive them then and how thrilled we are to share them with you now.

### CONTENTS:

2	Presidential Message R. Layton Mank
3	The Harvest: A Country Fair Zee Shipley
4	And I Knew Hurricanes Mispah Otto de Boe
6	The 1926 Hurricane in the Grove Erling Ayars
8	Harvest Special Events
9	The 1926 Hurricane Meets the Jupiter Light Gordon L. Williams
	Try This One
10	Book Reviews
11	Harvest History Contests

**COVER:** The now familiar logo of HASF's annual country fair, The Harvest. This year's celebration will be November 18 and 19 at the Dade County Youth Fairgrounds at Tamiami Park.



# THE HARVEST: A Country Fair

by Zee Shipley

The Tequestans, volunteers of the Historical Association, are planning the third annual Harvest—A Country Fair, Saturday, Nov. 18, and Sunday, Nov. 19th, at the Dade County Youth Fairgrounds, 112th Avenue at Coral Way, from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Admission will be \$2.00 for adults, and \$1.00 for children under 12.

After last year's triple successes—our gross, our attendance, and our net tripled—we are bracing for expansion of every aspect of the fair.



Molly the Cow is a real scene-stealer with children of all ages—and an inexhaustible supply of milk.

Pat Molinari and Pat Graham are Co-chairmen of all of the Harvest Committees, and have added a new element to our volunteer activities with the formation of a night group composed of career women who meet as frequently as the daytime Harvest Chairmen. Sandy Beasley had this bright idea and it has worked out beautifully.

An exciting event at last year's Harvest was the fly-in of 13 antique, classic and custom-built aircraft each morning of the Harvest. Mr. Charles Lasher and Captain Ken Lifland of the Civil Air Patrol are again co-ordinating this activity and they hope to have 50 airplanes participating.

Sam La Roue is again serving as liaison among the four major South Florida auto clubs, arranging for exhibits and participation in the Gymkhana—field games for cars—on Sunday afternoon.

Col. Harry Buzhardt is again organizing the Kiwanis and Key Clubs of District 17 to provide the free games for children. There will be no mechanical rides, but there will be a cow to milk and some baby calves and other baby animals in the expanded petting zoo provided by Graham Dairies.

Crafts chairmen Mona Byrd and Minor Shaw are screening craftsmen for selection of participants who must



Key Club members helped the Kiwanis Clubs of District 17 with free games for children. This little boy is trying his hand at nail-driving, an old fashioned game where something useful becomes fun.

demonstrate some aspect of their craft on site. Crafts will be on sale just in time for the holidays. Historic crafts will include broom-making, chair caning, wood-carving, weaving, spinning and dyeing, and bee-keeping.

After last year's tremendous response, our food committees have expanded and with them the varieties of food available. New this year will be a salad bar, hot dogs, onion rings, and in keeping with our goal of presenting South Florida in an authentic way in every aspect of the Fair, the Provisionals of the Junior League are researching historic desserts and will sell samples and recipes to fair-goers.

Our History Contests for public and private secondary school students are in the charge of Marcia Kanner and

Barbara Skigen. They have worked in close co-operation with Mr. Paul Hansen, Social Studies Co-Ordinator of the Dade County Public Schools, and have written Headmasters at many private schools. Because of the tremendous response in previous years to the History Bee, we will have a preliminary contest at the Historical Museum Nov. 13, moderated by Helen Muir, author of *Miami, U.S.A.*, with the final contest at the Harvest, Sunday, Nov. 19, moderated by Janet Reno. Essay contest winners will be



Elsie Kronenfeld is one of the many craftsmen who demonstrated historic crafts at the 1977 Harvest.

announced at the History Bee and winners in all categories will receive prizes. The first place essay in both the junior and senior high division will be published in UPDATE.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Blaum will call Square Dancing on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and everyone will be invited to join in.

Another problem created by last year's success was the difficulty in recognizing HASF members. This year all workers will wear aprons for identification. The red aprons were made by Harvest committee members at a night cutting session.

We are fortunate to have Mr. John Haynes, an architect, doing site allocation. Mr. Haynes is thoroughly familiar with the Youth Fair Grounds

*Continued on Page 11*

# AND I KNEW HURRICANES

by Mispah Otto de Boe

I had come by my easy familiarity with hurricanes honestly. Born in Key West, Florida, I was brought up on several. "A big blow's ahead," was our watchword before government signals were hoisted. So that, until the '26 hurricane hit Miami, where I was present for the encounter, I was sure of two things in my life, I knew hurricanes, and had little regard for what people thought or said of me. Worth came from within.

Hurricanes were wonderful adventures in my childhood. With our home battened-up, we always took a phaeton, got provisions and drove up to grandma's to weather the blow. There, while the rains descended and the winds came, and the waves beat up under the house until it groaned and shook like an ague, we rode out the storms in grandma's ark. Old man Noah never had half as wonderful a time on his flood. Nothing ever daunted grandma. Mother and father were in high spirits. We watched the barometer and had no fear.

By September, 1926 Doctor de Boe and I were married and living in Coral Gables. We had as house guest, Major Bernard L. Smith, a hero of the Marine Corps.

About ten o'clock that evening of September seventeenth, we were in the Major's room scanning the latest newspaper map of the threatening hurricane's course. Its arrow pointed directly on Palm Beach eighty miles to the north of us. We had lashed all awnings, braced doors and windows, and despite high winds, with this advisory's assurance that it would miss us, we retired.

By midnight we were suddenly all but blown out of our beds by the instant howl and onrush of wind and water, striking like a bombardment of supernatural artillery. Door knobs snapped, windows smashed, our clothes were blown out of the closets, and ripped through the house under blown-up rugs. We worked frantically trying to push doors closed against the walls of water, bracing them with furniture. Doctor de Boe bored holes in the living-room floor to drain out the water which

was above our ankles. Instead, the horizontal sweep of water outside drove through the vents around the house, up from under the floor, and into jets through the holes. Instead of drainage, we had geysers. Everything was knocked upside down and askew.

We battled and battered about for



The author Mispah de Boe posed in her garden for this photo two years after her memorable hurricane experience. Mrs. de Boe lived in the Pizarro Street home in Coral Gables for over fifty years. (Photo courtesy of the author.)

more than four hours. And such is a hurricane's whim, it drove us out of our concern for our possessions into its topsy-turvy spirit, and we began pushing things around hilariously too. If you can't save 'em, join 'em. We began to take part, like a Keystone comedy.

Then the wind died down as suddenly as it had come. The rain ceased - a deathly calm, as if Heaven and earth had an instant stroke of paralysis. An aspen leaf would not have quivered. We were in the vacuum center, the motionless "eye of the storm."

Exhausted Major Smith retired to his room, Doctor de Boe and I to ours to

rest before the second half hit us. Doctor and I balanced ourselves uncertainly on a drenched overturned mattress so the water would drip off the lower side away instead of on us, soaked but fully clothed, I, in a white crepe de Chine dress. Fatigue overtook us.

Just before a breathless, gray dawn, a terrified whisper from the gaping doorway, where the French door to my room had been, awakened me.

"Mrs. de Boe, your trees, your trees. They're all down." It was my gardener, Walter Thrane. "I know a man we can get to help get them up." I hastened out to hush him, not to disturb Doctor who was so spent. "No," I said, "the hurricane is not over. This calm means we are in the dead center of the storm. It can hit again in the twinkling of an eye, in fifteen minutes." "But he's only six blocks from here. We can be there and back in less time than that. And we won't get any help, if we don't now." I looked at the sky, then down at our loved trees, glorious last night, now strewn and fallen around me. My discretion took wings.

By the time we had ridden fourteen blocks, he said the man lived just another ten blocks further. I ordered him to turn around and drive back home with all speed. But by the time we were back within six blocks of home going west, the hurricane hit again in full fury, counter clockwise out of the southwest. I ordered him to turn south, throw the car into low gear, then west again to keep it from drowning out. The car was careening and shuddering from one side of the street to the other under the force of the gusts. It gave a violent shudder, gasped and stopped, just as a huge Caribbean pine fell athwart it, across the front of the hood, missing us by inches. Between gusts I could see a two story house within thirty feet of us. Pushing out I crawled, grabbing rocks and stumps of earth until I reached the doorway. Thrane followed. The woman cracked the door, but would not let me in, afraid to open it.

I saw a partially enclosed outside stairway on the east wall of the house. I climbed it to an outside balcony with arched roof and an outer enclosure



masonry wall waist high. The second story was unfinished—walls wide open. The balcony faced north with the house wall behind us, giving us the only, if precarious, shelter in the lea of the hurricane's direction, now out of the

lapsed into gaps of nothingness. The rain bursting in my face revived me. The next gust would surely take us. This is death, death in a hurricane. Bracing myself unflinching, I felt I can go. The storm howled on. Having faced death

retribution, but I could not face being caught out, and identified among the hurricane dead with my gardener. I was powerless to muster my courage. Dear God, Dear God, if only the storm would abate in time.

Noon came. At last the wind's fury began to slacken. A young frigidaire salesman ventured up from downstairs. Discovering me, he presented me with one of his business cards as a future prospect. Then he kindly drove us home in his car. Doctor de Boe and Major Smith, heads under the hood of ours in our driveway, were trying to get it started to hunt for me. Earlier Doctor, waking and finding me gone, had pounded on the Major's bedroom door frantically, "Major, is Mispah in there?"

Together they had searched under every tree in the garden for me, and were starting out again, when the car stalled. What would have happened to distraught Doctor that terrifying morning without Major's steady assurance, I'll never know.

I stepped out of the young salesman's red sport roadster, more an apparition of a drowned white hen than anything human. Doctor de Boe lifting his frantic face from the hood, rushed to me, gathered me in his arms, trembling, pressing his head against mine, kissing me again, and again, "Darling, Darling."

Then this prince of Virginia gentlemen, suddenly held me at arms length, his hands gripping my shoulders, "Where in the Hell have you been?" And turning me over the hood spanked me soundly. Major Smith, husband of a prima donna, smiled benignly.

Chastened beyond recognition, I turned and walked into the kitchen to make coffee for them, the terror of that fate still upon me; the headlines, the scandal: NOTED DOCTOR'S WIFE FOUND AMONG HURRICANE DEAD WITH HER GARDENER.

My jaunty disregard of other people's opinion was blown clean out of me. No sureness was left in me. That was the big blow. And I knew hurricanes.



Dr. Michael P. de Boe is joined in his study by Elfina and Eve Annette, the two family deer. The animals had free run of the house and walled garden and were frequent guests at the dinner table. Neighborhood children were invited to pick hibiscus to feed the deer. When Elfina died she was buried in the Otto family plot in Key West and her headstone is a carved fawn sculpture. (Photo courtesy of the author.)

southwest. Thrane was behind me shaking and crying in stark terror.

There gripping the enclosure wall, I held, my teeth in the wind and head against the rain and gusts that hit like steel, beating the breath out of me and the warmth out of my body, chilling me to the marrow. Through shafts of light, I could see mighty pines ghoulish in the clouds writhing and falling. The roof of a house blew by like a kite. The howls and moans almost burst my ear drums. Three times during this violent vigil I had to grab Thrane's arm and throw him back to keep him from leaping over the enclosure wall. "Remember your wife and child!" I shouted. I could have choked out his obscene terror with my bare hands. By now the hurricane's majestic power had full possession of me.

But as the hours wore on my strength

clearly, at any moment, I began to feel Doctor de Boe's desperate anxiety over my whereabouts. I had simply vanished out into this mad death-dealing storm. His agony of suspense seized me. Then I could feel his frenzied, righteous anger over my foolhardiness, not even letting him know. I quaked. I could face death more readily. But bolstering my courage again, I stood chilled to my soul, but dauntless enough, prodigal that I was, to face him.

The hurricane increased. Part of the stairway broke off. A corner of the roof hurtled over me. Our balcony must be the next to go. It was at this moment of ordeal, that an awful realization struck me. I would not only be dead. But I would be found among the unidentified dead with my gardener. My blood ran to water. My knees gave way. I could face death. I could face my beloved's

We can sell all the home-baked goodies we can put our hands on. Bake your favorite cake or cookies and call Susan Heatley, 661-6511. We have access to freezer storage prior to the fair.

# THE 1926 HURRICANE IN THE GROVE by Erling Ayars

The year 1926 was on the tail-end of the "boom." The Miami area was still full of people in love with sunshine. Comparatively few had ever experienced a hurricane.

had been badly damaged by trees falling against them.

By 7 o'clock next morning the fury of the first half of the storm had passed and there was a dead calm. Our

storm to strike us soon. Before 8 o'clock the second half struck with raging winds coming from the southwest. Soon the front porch lost its screens. One side of an awning broke loose. It was necessary to go out and cut it down to prevent the window breaking.

Our house had a flat "built-up" roof, sloping toward the back. For ventilation, two sets of three 4-inch tiles had been built into the front parapet. The 120-mile winds soon built up air pressure under the roof. The winds were punctuated now and then by small tornados. When the tornados struck the front of the house you could hear the roof strain from the increased pressure. Soon the roofing paper began to lift, exposing the sheathing, and permitting water to come down through the ceiling. Before long we had four or five inches of water standing on our nice oaken parquet floors.

Finally by mid-afternoon the storm passed. People began to check to see if any neighbors had been hurt and needed help. All around were damaged homes, trees blocking streets which required a week or more to clear. Douglas Road, Poinciana Avenue and



"House where L.T. Lease and family lived during hurricane Sept. 18, 1926. Ruby and Geraldine in back door. Wreckage in foreground is the house that rolled over and over toward our place and finally went to pieces before it hit us. At left you can see part of the garage that hit our house. All our roofing paper went off and we got soaked. Small window is in bath room. Next one beyond ladder is middle bedroom where we built our shelter. Next window is front bedroom. Living room and dining room and kitchen on other side. Pine broken off near ladder. See small pine bent to the north. After the first wind they were all bent to the south. They all lean that way yet." (Photo HASF Collection. Courtesy of the City of Miami Fire Department)

It was Friday. The work-week was nearly over. The weekly issue of Coconut Grove Times was already in the hands of the subscribers. A belated warning from the Weather Bureau went unnoticed.

At home we had three small children. The oldest, a boy who had just celebrated his eighth birthday. Another son would be two years old in October. Our almost new daughter had been born in February. We had heard absolutely no warning about the storm which was to devastate our area. Luckily our house was strongly built. By late bedtime we noticed the wind was rising but it did not seem to be dangerous.

About 2 A.M. we were awakened by fierce gusts of northeast wind and pouring rain. Once in a while we heard a large pine tree fall, but it was our good fortune that those trees close around us fell away from the house. Next day we found that many houses in the vicinity



"L. Tillotson after the hurricane. Sept. 18, 1926 at Coconut Grove, Fla. Clothes, bedding, etc., drying. Yard is piled with limbs from the large pithecolobium tree. Washingtonian Palm broken off and laying against roof of porch which it broke. Pine tree broken off in front yard. No leaves on fruit trees. Roofing paper gone. House soaked. Window lights out, awnings damaged, copper screens gone. Center of large porch roof sags. Virginia and Day Ave. N.W. Corner." Editor's Note: The Tillotson home was located at 3009 Day Avenue. (Photo HSAF Collection. Courtesy of the City of Miami Fire Department)

neighbor, Charles Colby, told us that we could expect the other side of the

the Main Highway were blocked by giant pines and oaks.



When we were able to get into the center of Coconut Grove we found how great was the damage. Many buildings and homes were wrecked, poles and wires down, many people homeless. One fatal accident and numerous injuries were reported.

After the first half of the storm passed, many people felt that the storm was over, and were surprised when the second half, the more violent of the two, struck. Fine estates and small homes were left desolate. The beautiful trees, of which this community had been so proud, were down or stripped of all foliage. The business section of the Grove was almost a complete wreck, grocery stocks soaked with water were nearly a total loss, streets blocked, water, electricity cut off, and at first glance the damage seemed irreparable. But, people went right to work cleaning up and repairing the damage. The streets were nearly all opened by Tuesday night, and sanitary services had been partially restored.

There was a great deal of suffering among people whose homes were blown apart, many being bruised and cut. Several small frame homes were demolished, and some better homes suffered a similar fate. The losses from water-soaked furniture, bedding and clothing could not be estimated, for

to protect their furnishings. Roofing paper strewn the ground and water poured through the exposed roofs to add to the distress.

A special train from Chicago under the auspices of the American Red Cross brought doctors and nurses to Coconut Grove and a first aid station was established at the Coconut Grove Elementary School. Four Chicago

duty. A call went out for clothing and shoes, especially for the children. The local Red Cross distributed food to people in need. Among the local people who assisted, working long hours, were Mrs. Eleanor Schuck, Mrs. A.L. Buzzell, Mrs. Earl Harvey, Mrs. Kenneth Gardner, Ed. Osborne, Allen Williams, Dave Davis and Harry Fryar. Scouts from Troop 21 were on hand to



"This barge and boat are half way up the hill from the Bay at Coconut Grove. It is the main road from town down toward the Bay. There were 6 bungalows over behind that barge, nice ones. You can see the only one left beyond left end of barge. Beyond right end of barge you can see part of one standing. The barge battered it down. You can see the main highway between the barge and the fishing boat. No tidal wave. Water rose gradually, blown in by wind. Wind drove the boats on shore while water was high. See nice little date palm growing in yard just this side of right end of barge." (Photo HASF Collection. Courtesy of the City of Miami Fire Department)



"Side view of home of F.L. Tillotson after hurricane Sept. 18, 1926 at Coconut Grove, Fla. Wind had highest velocity and barometer fell six-tenths of an inch lower than in any storm that has occurred in history of United States. Wind between 142 and 150 miles per hour. The car was in the garage during storm and was not damaged." (Photo HASF Collection. Courtesy of the City of Miami Fire Department)

almost no home escaped a thorough drenching. Windows, screens and awnings were torn away by the wind or flying debris, and people were powerless

doctors were on hand to render aid for sick or injured. There were eight Chicago nurses on duty. Dr. E.W. Ayars of Coconut Grove was also on

help, as were many adults, whose names were not recorded. Anti-tetanus and anti-typhoid sera were administered, and because of possible breaks in water lines residents were urged to boil water to avoid possible infection.

The Coconut Grove water works was disabled by the storm because of water-soaked electrical equipment. Crews working around the clock finally got water into the lines by 8 A.M. Monday. The pumps were first actuated by using gasoline motors. Electric power was restored to the plant sometime Tuesday.

The hearts of Coconut Grove people were warmed and full of gratitude for the immediate response of the Chicago medical team that came to our aid at their first knowledge of disaster.

Experiences of some people who lived just at the edge of the Bay, were harrowing in the extreme. One of the weirdest tales was told by "Dad"

*Continued on Page 8*

## THE 1926 HURRICANE IN THE GROVE

*Continued from Page 7*

Traphagen. He was caretaker of a bayside home in Entrada. The second half of the storm brought high tides, and the changes those tides wrought in the homes and yards were almost unbelievable. The 7-foot tide that Traphagen faced invaded the house. In the music room a grand piano seemed a good refuge to him, but he was finally forced to cling to the electrolier as swirling waters overturned the piano.

Another weird experience was reported by the William Catlow family whose home at the foot of Bayhomes Road was invaded by a barge and utterly demolished. The family took refuge in another house nearby, but water drove them to the second floor and finally, cutting through the ceiling they rode out the balance of the storm in the attic. (The young son, Bill Catlow was out of town at the time.)

In Ye Little Wood the Thomas Wyatt home lost its roof. The family and some friends took refuge under their automobiles, lying in pools of water. A huge light pole, bearing an electric transformer, crashed down between two of the cars. No one was injured, and in the calm they took possession of a neighbor's house for the duration.

Dinner Key was swept clean of boats and dwellings and when the waters receded the splintered remains were left 100 feet west of South Bayshore Drive amongst the seaweed. To add to this bizarre doings, there is one more strange incident. Damond Archer had a small houseboat at Dinner Key. He and his friends were accustomed to meet there and play cards and tell tall tales. He decided he wanted to sell, and had talked this writer into a deal which needed only \$600 cash on the barrelhead to close the sale. Getting that \$600 together was taking a little time, and the hurricane got the houseboat first. When the storm passed that houseboat was in a water-filled rockpit at the head of Biscayne Bay.

Few trees except scrub pine, royal palms and an occasional high pine remained in Coconut Grove Park. Poinciana Avenue, between the Main Highway and Plaza Road, was blocked by 47 trees fallen across it. The two extra large banyans planted by Doctor John Gifford on St. Gaudens Road near the

Sunshine Inn, long a magnet for tourist cameras, were utterly demolished. The Arthur Curtiss James estate was left treeless. The boat house and Herreshoff cottage at the water's edge of the Commodore Munroe place were carried away. With them went ship plans that represented a life work of experts. A few tools only were salvaged.

One thing recalled is that when the storm passed there were more boats of all sizes and shapes up on land than were afloat. Another thing remembered is that the Coconut Grove City Hall was demolished. This made a good excuse to build a new one - badly needed anyway.

The 1926 Hurricane Issue of Coconut Grove Times, published one week after the storm hit, was a four-page mimeograph edition, full of people and devastation. It recorded the immediate response and ability of people all over Dade County to claw their way out of the debris and restore community services. One thing we noted was the fact that countless people, who had not put down roots in South Florida, headed back north as soon as they could get transportation. Months or years later some of these people were back perhaps to get another "stake." They had "sand in their shoes", but the storm damage was more than they could take, until they had time to think it over.

One lesson taught by the hurricane was that altogether too many structures were not built to withstand high winds. On Northeast First Street in Miami, the 17-story Meyer-Kizer Building had just been completed. The effect of the hurricane could be described as a monstrous wrench firmly fixed to the top of the building, that twisted the structure out of shape. Openings in the outer walls appeared as the interlocking tile popped out and fell to the ground.

The steel-work was sprung so that there was no possible way to restore the entire building to a usable condition. It was finally cut down to 7 stories, and stands today at 139 N.E. First Street, as the Dade Commonwealth Building.

At the Miami Steam Plant of the Florida Power and Light Company, one of the two smoke stacks proved so tall that several feet of the top was twisted off. The company refinished the stack at the reduced height. It has never since been affected.

The powerful twisting effect of the storm was demonstrated on a large pine tree in front of our home. At a point about 12-feet from the ground, where the tree was 15-inches in diameter, it was twisted clean off. It fell away from the house, blocking the street.

So many homes and business structures were demolished or badly damaged, that steps were taken to establish codes of minimum strengths of both materials and design. These codes were followed for many years. However, some people feel that the codes have not been as strictly enforced as they should be. It has been some years since such a destructive storm has hit this area. When we get another "killer" hurricane we will find out if our codes and their enforcement are equal to the challenge.

In 1926 lives were lost and property destroyed, because few people had any idea how to protect either. However, today, because of the constant surveillance of storm patterns, a more sophisticated Weather Bureau is able to predict hurricane movements, relative wind velocities and time of probable landfall. This information makes it possible for the public to take precautions.

## HARVEST SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday, Nov. 18, 1978 Square Dancing open to all 12:00-5:00 p.m.  
 Sunday, Nov. 19, 1978 Antique Car Gymkhana 1:00 p.m.  
 Square Dancing 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
 History Bee Finals 2:00 p.m.



# THE 1928 HURRICANE MEETS THE JUPITER LIGHT by Gordon L. Williams

In 1918, when we first moved to West Palm Beach, electricity was served to that town by the Southern Utilities Company which also provided its ice. It was located on the west side of the Florida East Coast tracks, just north of Datura Street. This was a convenient location for shipping in coal and

utilities included pre-dial telephones, untreated water from Clear Lake, manufactured gas and a sewer system that discharged directly into Lake Worth.

At that time, some other towns had electric plants and some rural dwellers had farm-type electric light plants. As I

hanging down by the circular stairs inside the tower. The winding-up of those weights and the carrying of kerosene to the top of the lighthouse was a daily chore of the light-keeper. It had been operated in that manner, with time out for the Civil War, since its construction in 1860.

About 1927 or 28, the newly formed Florida Power and Light Company came through South Florida consolidating the existing generating plants and systems with a 66,000 volt transmission line on wooden poles. Each pole displayed a plaque warning of its potential and we boys laughingly referred to it as 66,000 jolts. When the line reached Jupiter, the lighthouse was converted to an electric light and an electric motor. (I wonder if that entailed a pay cut for the keeper). This conversion took place just prior to the 1928 hurricane - perhaps about the time of the first, but lesser, hurricane of that year.

At the time of the big blow, when a lighthouse is most sorely needed, a power failure blacked out the Jupiter Light.

Franklin Seabrook, the lighthouse keeper's son, who was about my age of 18, rose to the occasion. There was no time to reactivate the clock-work that turned the light, but he did manage to get the old kerosene lamp back into operation and carry up the fuel with which to light it. then, throughout that storm-tossed night, around and around at its assigned frequency, he hand turned the lighthouse head. As far as any sailor knew, the light had not failed.

For his heroic performance, Franklin Seabrook was given a trip to Washington and duly honored. Franklin's life and mine coursed different paths. His ended many years ago. I do not have this account directly from his lips, but his act of a half century ago was common knowledge in Jupiter at that time and I believe it was essentially as recounted above. On that hurricane night most of Jupiter's citizens, including his family and mine, sought shelter in the county school house. He was pretty much alone. He was a brave lad!



THE JUPITER LIGHTHOUSE

shipping out ice. It was also a central location for the distribution of electricity and a center for ice wagons that had to make their rounds ahead of their ice-melt. In fact, it was only a block from the principal corner of West Palm Beach - Clematis and Poinsettia Streets (the Dixie Highway.) Our other

recall, Bowers Brothers Store and Post Office in the heart of Old Jupiter, had an acetylene gas light plant.

The powerful beacon of the Jupiter Lighthouse originated in a mantle-type kerosene light. The head, with its four French-made lenses, was turned by clock-work activated by weights

## TRY THIS ONE

Match famous estates with their owners  
Score 10 for each correct match

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Villa Serena         | A. William Matheson       |
| 2. The Shadows          | B. Ralph M. Munroe        |
| 3. Tee House Plantation | C. John Sewell            |
| 4. Barnacle             | D. David Fairchild        |
| 5. Vizcaya              | E. William J. Bryan       |
| 6. Mashta               | F. James Deering          |
| 7. Sentinels            | G. Solomon Merrick        |
| 8. Halissee Hall        | H. Carl Fisher            |
| 9. Kampong              | I. William B. Ogden       |
| 10. Coral Gables        | J. Charles Torrey Simpson |

Score of 50 - Excellent

Score of 70 or more - TOP OF THE CLASS

# BOOK REVIEWS

**LEMON CITY: Pioneering on Biscayne Bay 1850-1925.** By Thelma Peters. Banyan Books, Inc., Miami, Florida. 1976. 302

*Reviewed by Laura Conrad Patton (with editorial assistance by Ione S. Wright)*

The scope, substance, and style of this book about one of Dade County's oldest communities are best expressed by the author, herself, in its opening paragraph:

*This is the story of Lemon City, a pioneer community on the shores of Biscayne Bay. It is not the story of a ghost town, for descendants of early families still live in Lemon City, though the name has vanished from the map and even the post office, after eighty-five years, is closed. Gone are the wagon trails through the pines and palmettos, the lemon groves and pineapple fields. Today no sailor coming up from the bay proclaims his approach by blowing upon a conch shell. Gone is the city dock where the schooners unloaded freight and where, on a placid Sunday afternoon, a sinner might have his sins washed away in a public baptizing. Old landmarks have been assaulted by concrete and asphalt but some remain—a dozen or so old houses, old walled gardens, and spreading oaks—to whisper of events and people of another century. And the record is there, in old documents and newspapers, in photographs, and in the memories of people still living. This story has evolved from that record and those memories. Much of it has never been told before.*

The Lemon City of which Dr. Peters writes was a community of settlers located on Biscayne Bay about five miles north of Miami River. It existed for several decades before it was swallowed up by the city of Miami in 1925. It called itself a city but had no local government, was never incorporated, and had no formal boundaries. It did, however, have a name ("Lemon City" first appeared in public documents - a land record - in December, 1889) and a strong sense of community identity that included those living more or less between Biscayne Bay on the east and what is now N.E.

Second Avenue on the west, from 54th Street on the south to 72nd Street on the north. Its axis ran from the docking area on the bay westward along N.E. 61st Street to its intersection with N.E. Second Avenue where the business center that serviced the nearby residents and those of outlying homestead was located.

Thelma Peters brought unusually thorough qualifications to the writing of this book: professional credentials in the form of a Ph.D degree in history from University of Florida, her long period of residence in the area just north of Lemon City, extensive teaching career at Miami Edison Senior High School and Miami Dade Community College (North Campus) where she taught many members of the second and third generations of the pioneer families of which she writes. These contacts opened doors into homes from which she received all kinds of family documents, newspaper clippings, unpublished manuscripts and a total of 250 photographs (130 used in the book), most of them previously unpublished. It is primarily this material, combined with more conventional sources such as public records, newspapers, and early books, that fleshes out the factual skeleton into a full-bodied, fascinating historical account.

For me, reviewing this book on early Lemon City, means to become freshly aware of my own roots. My maternal grandfather, Edward J. Douthit, homesteaded here in 1892 with his five children after his wife died. One of these children, Mary (Mamie), was my mother, who married and lived here.\* My father, Alex E. Conrad, came a few years after the Douthits but knew the family in North Carolina years before that. Alex farmed in Dade County almost thirty years. This is my native ground. In my home, as I grew up, talk in the family and with friends usually turned to life and events past and present in this pioneer area. It was, therefore, with real joy (and something akin to relief, I confess) that I found here the facts and pictures that transformed my childhood memories

into a dynamic, vivid account of the history in which my family had played its own role.

Most of the early settlers came for land. The author describes the homestead process by which most of this was acquired. She also identifies those who came from diverse places to use the land.

Among these were: Michael and George Sears from France; Charles Schmidt and Frederick Matthaus from Germany; Dennis Stafford from Ireland; Juan J. Ramirez, from Spain, Steve Andrews and Edward Barnott from England; a number of families, among them Sands, Saunders, Albury, Pent, Knowles, Curry, and Russell, from the Bahamas. There were midwesterners, upstaters (from northern Florida), Tarheels, and New Yorkers. Captain Henry Filer had run the Federal blockade during the Civil War. Solomon Peters was a veteran of the Confederate army and William Freeman had served in the Union ranks. David L. Hartman came from Pennsylvania to become known as the "strawberry king" because of his success in truck farming. Charles Torrey Simpson, most distinguished member of the community, brought the name of Lemon City into international renown through his studies and writings on tropical horticulture made from his home base there. And Floridian Dr. John Gordon Dupuis "like a faithful watchdog—guarded the health of the community and—proved one of the most potential factors in its progress."

The importance of agriculture in the development of Lemon City is reflected in the fact that its senior high school was named the Dade County Agricultural School (changed in 1931 to Miami Edison High School) and strongly oriented toward training better farmers.

The first commercial agricultural product shipped from here was coontie starch made from native *Zamia* or coontie root that grew in the pine woods in apparently inexhaustible supply. Much of this high-quality, almost fiber-free starch was sold to national baking companies. It was used for making



cookies, crackers, ice cream compound and as a thickening agent. Some was even shipped to Italy for spaghetti making.

This book has already become a classic and may well serve as a model for future writers of local history because of its rare combination of painstaking scholarship and warm-hearted understanding, its clear and sprightly writing, and the generous use made of original illustrations and such supplementary materials as detailed index, bibliography, and appendices. Banyan Books and designer Bernard Lipsky are to be commended for its attractive presentation and production.

Already the fallout from this book is shown in: 1. A tourguide of the Lemon City area, prepared by Dade Heritage Trust, Inc.; 2. Restoration of the name of Lemon City to the Miami scene. Handsome green and white official signs, reading "Lemon City. Pioneer Settlement," have been placed by the City of Miami near 61st Street on both Biscayne Boulevard and N.E. Second Avenue, at the instigation of Jim Anderson, a new resident in that old area; 3. The murals on the walls of public housing project at 150 N.E. 69th Street, all of them based by the artist William Tuttle on photographs from the Peters collection; 4. Requests from national and international genealogical societies for copies of the book because of its value in their work.

It is good to learn that the author is now working on similar historical studies of Lemon City's early neighbors to the north: Biscayne (now Miami Shores), Arch Creek (North Miami), and Fulford (North Miami Beach).

*\*(Ed. note): See Mary Douthit Conrad, "Homesteading in Florida during the 1890s," Tequesta 17 (1957); considered to have been the first significant account of nineteenth century Lemon City to be published.*

## ANSWERS FOR PAGE NINE

Villa Serena - William J. Bryan  
The Shadows - Carl Fisher  
Tee House Plantation - Wm. B. Ogden  
Barnacle - Ralph M. Munroe  
Vizcaya - James Deering  
Mashta - William Matheson  
Sentinels - Charles Torrey Simpson  
Halissee Hall - John Sewell  
Kampong - David Fairchild  
Coral Gables - Solomon Merrick

**A History of Juno Beach & Juno, Florida. By Bessie Wilson DuBois. 1978. 21pp. \$2.00.**

*Reviewed by Thelma Peters*

This slim but significant book records the historic 1890's when, for a decade, the Dade County courthouse was located at Juno, a community which suddenly bloomed in the wilderness at the north end of Lake Worth when it became a terminus of a short narrow-gauge railroad. This railroad, called Celestial because it connected Jupiter with Juno via Mars and Venus, was an important transportation link between steamship service on the Indian River and steamship service on Lake Worth. In 1892 another link was added along the east coast when a stage coach connected Lantana at the south of Lake Worth with Lemon City on upper Biscayne Bay.

The little train had a locomotive and one coach, an engineer, Blus Rice, who could play Dixie on the whistle, and ran forward southbound and backward northbound for there was no turntable. A one-way ticket was 75¢ or ten cents a mile. By 1889 the almost-finished railroad had already brought enough new residents to the Lake so that in an election to determine the county seat Juno won over Miami 107 to 80 to the dismay of the Biscayne Bay settlers.

A description of the two-story frame courthouse built in Juno - this was Dade's first very own building - accounts of early Juno homesteaders and county officials, and the dramatic lynching of murderer Sam Lewis, seized from the Juno jail, are some of the historic highlights of this book. About a dozen early photos of the Celestial locomotive and Juno buildings and environs increase the interest of the book.

Juno, at the turn of the century, went back to wilderness, because the Florida East Coast Railway by-passed the Celestial and put it out of business, and because the voters of the Biscayne Bay area brought the courthouse back to Miami. A fire which swept through the ghost town in 1907 obliterated the last building. Collectors still dig for and find spikes from the old roadbed.

Modern Juno Beach along A1A north of Palm Beach is a pleasant

seaside community of cottages and condominiums where today a new shopping center stands on the site of the old courthouse.

Bessie DuBois, a pioneer resident of Jupiter and an active member of the Palm Beach County Historical Society, lectures and writes on Jupiter history and on South Florida wrecks and lighthouses, and generously shares her large collection of books and manuscripts with other writers of history. Several of her articles have appeared in *Tequesta*, the most recent being "Two South Florida Lighthouse Keepers" in 1973.

## THE HARVEST A Country Fair

*Continued from Page 3*

and Buildings and can resolve the bottle-necks that occurred last year when we were not prepared for such crowds.

Please circle your calendar for the weekend of Nov. 18 and 19, and plan to come to the fair. Better still, donate some time on fair days and help us with our major fund-raising event. Mary Dodd Russell, Volunteer Co-ordinator, will love to hear from you: 854-3289 at the Museum.

## HARVEST HISTORY CONTESTS

The questions for the History Bee will be drawn from Helen Muir's *Miami, U.S.A.*, and *The Florida Handbook, 1977-78*, by Allen Morris.

Topics for the Essay Contest will include:

Architecture in South Florida  
Going to School in South Florida  
The Railroad  
Hurricanes  
Growing Up in Miami in the 1940s  
Being Black in Miami  
Being Hispanic in Miami

Prizes for both contests will be awarded at the History Bee, 2:00 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, 1978, at the Youth Fair Auditorium.



HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA  
INCORPORATED  
3280 SOUTH MIAMI AVENUE - BUILDING B  
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33129

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MIAMI, FLORIDA  
PERMIT No. 608



*November 18 and 19, 1978*  
*10 a.m. - 6 p.m.*

*Dade County Youth Fairground*  
*at Tamiami Park*