

Update

Vol. 6, No. 2
February, 1979





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VOL. 6, NO. 2 FEBRUARY, 1979

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.

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A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Our members were saddened to learn of the untimely death of Gwendolyn Cherry, a long-time member of this Association and a former member of our Board. Gwen was the daughter of a pioneer physician and the first Black woman elected to the Florida Legislature. Not only was her family a part of this area's early development, but she as well made history for this area and the entire State.

Gwen recognized that history is not black or white or red or any other skin color, but is composed of all of these. To speak only in terms of one is to deny the basic truth that many races, cultures and backgrounds have combined to give South Florida a unique heritage. Appropriately, Gwen's legislative district was composed of Blacks, Anglos and Hispanics. She represented them all ably and fairly.

We can do no less than to dedicate our Association to this same spirit of community unity. Your Board is committed through its programs and planning to present a unified story of South Florida's history, taking into account the unique contributions of the diverse ethnic groups which have contributed to our heritage.

Gwen Cherry was a person widely respected and loved. The spirit of unity

which she represented has done much to make this State and community a better



GWEN CHERRY

place to live. Her funeral was attended by hundreds, from Governor to laborer. In a true sense, it symbolized the breadth of the people she so faithfully served.

We are grateful for having had Gwen's counsel and support and we shall miss her. We extend our prayers and heart-felt sympathy to her family.

R. Layton Mank
 President

COVER: Sarah Smith McLain and her team of oxen arrived in Dade County from Georgia in the early 1900s. This often published photo of one of Miami's most colorful pioneer characters was taken in the pinelands she frequented. (Photo from the HASF Collection)

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GEORGE MERRICK, POET

by Thelma Peters

Out of the dreams of George Merrick came Coral Gables, the City Beautiful, which might be called poetry in stone and tile. But Merrick was also a poet in the conventional sense. The Four Seas Company of Boston published a small volume of Merrick's poetry in 1920 titled "Songs of the Wind on a Southern Shore and Other Poems of Florida." The book was enhanced by six paintings of Florida scenes by Coral Gables Architect-artist, Denman Fink, Merrick's uncle. A second addition came out in 1926. Meantime Merrick's poems and short stories were appearing in the *Florida Review* the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Times*.

Merrick's poetry is strong with images of the land he loved, the call of a bob-white, the song of a mocker, the drama of a scarlet poinciana, the brooding cypress trees along a lazy river. From the title poem, "Songs of the Wind," come these lines:

I ripple the fronds of the coconut palms,
As I join with the voice of the sea,
The somnolent swell of the mystical psalms,
That I breathe from the quivering tree.
I hush to the cries of the wandering crane,
Out over the shimmering lee;
The murmuring moan of the faraway main,
And the hum of the hovering bee;
Then I leap to the crest of the towering pine,
And I sing of the life that I see.

There are several delicate love poems, three of them "To Eunice," his wife. Another poem reflects the early life of the Merrick family when they lived in what Merrick once called a "hole in the woods" on the homestead they had purchased from the original homesteader, Harry Gregory, in 1899.

Thelma Peters, a frequent contributor to Update, is a past president of the Florida Historical Association. She is the author of a book on Lemon City

His father, Solomon, had come south for his own health and that of Mrs. Merrick, and their first years of living in a cabin were lean, make-do years, an experience common among homesteaders. The Merricks, living then on

There's our parents talking slow;
And a hush of childish "gabbin,"
As we hear so grave and low:

"Yes-we-will"-my father's saying:-
"When the groves begin to bear."



GEORGE MERRICK

the site of today's historic Merrick Mansion, were sustained by their dreams of the future. Merrick reflects their spartan life in a long poem that is titled "When the Groves Begin to Bear" and begins:

There's a phrase we heard so often
In the days not long ago;
And the words-as always-soften:-
Bring the ache such mem'ries know;

I can hear-my father's saying:-
"When the groves begin to bear."

There's the rooms of our old cabin;

The poem ends on a poignant note:

And the pang to know that after
All these hopes-so long deferred:-
When came a **chance** for joy and
laughter:-
He never shared the boone conferred.

He was not here to **prove** his saying:-
When the grove begin to bear.

Our heritage is preserved in various forms. The Historical Museum has two copies of this charming little book. Ask Becky Smith to let you hold one in your hand.

THE OX WOMAN

By Jean C. Taylor

South Dade had its full complement of odd characters in the early days: Preacher Tems who lived in a tree and had no visible means of support answered questions and preached in rhyme; John Wingate who brought a huge hogshead to the area by wagon and lived in it while he proved up his claim. When a hurricane blew it off his land he calmly rolled it back after the storm; J.R. Walker, an unordained Methodist minister who preached at the Silver Palm School and always sang religious songs at the top of his voice as he walked the roads. He could be heard at least a quarter of a mile away.

But far and away the most celebrated character in the early 1900s was the Ox Woman. The Widow McLain or Aunt Sarah as she was known to the children arrived in Dade County around 1907 driving her team of oxen from Georgia alone with only her dogs and her shot gun for company. She camped for a while near the John Murray home with her two wheeled cart and would sit on their porch and sing "Barbara Allen" and other sad songs. Sometimes she read the Bible to them and propounded her theory that the Seminoles were one of the lost tribes of Israel.

The Ox Woman eventually settled at Long Key, now in the Everglades National Park, built herself a shack and farmed the prairie land and sold her surplus vegetables. She also occasionally bought a beef and cut it up for sale at the various depots. The news would spread and people would arrive from all over the neighborhood and line up to buy. The beef was covered with fresh pine branches which kept it from spoiling. Annie Mayhew Fitzpatrick who as a young girl was visiting her Aunt, Miss Lewis, was asked to take her aunt's place in line while she did an errand. As her turn came she spoke up politely for steak. The Widow McLain gave her a withering look and said, "It's

neck I'm cutting, honey." Annie knew by the tone of her voice it was neck or nothing so meekly accepted the proffered meat. The Ox Woman charged the same price for all cuts and since fresh meat was a great treat she had eager takers for every part.



The Widow Mc Lain often visited with local residents on her trips around South Dade. In 1909, she posed with (l to r) Henry Hunt, J.T. Frederich, Esther Burden, John Bauer, Sr. and Eleanor Bauer. Although not readily apparent in this photo, Mc Lain stood 6 feet 4 inches in height. (Photo courtesy of the author).

On her selling trips up and down South Dade, Sarah McLain usually chose someone to spend the night with who had animals of their own and would be able to feed her oxen or horse and dogs. She was very fond of George Kosel's mother, Bodil Kosel, and often stopped at her homestead at Redland and Plummer. She usually took a bath each place she stopped and seemed happy to spend the night in a good bed. One time Fred Kosel brought home a man from Long Island, N.Y., a soldier of fortune type, and took him hunting down near the widow's camp. The man looked around and thought it would be just the place to spend the winter. The Ox Woman thought she could use an extra pair of hands so he stayed. Twenty four hours later he turned up at the Kosel home with a tale of woe. He said when he got up in the morning he had to chop wood before he could have coffee. Before he could have lunch he had to

bring some sheet iron over to the camp which the widow had hauled and dumped on the other side of Taylor slough. He had to swim the slough with each sheet. On top of all that the mosquitos were bad so one day was too much.

On one occasion the Widow McLain stopped at the Brewer home on her way back to the Everglades and asked to stay to dinner. It was pouring and she was soaked to the skin and had no clothes to change to as she told Mrs. Brewer she had left her "other garment" soaking at home. Mrs. Brewer got out her biggest nightgown and gave it to the Ox Woman to put on while her clothing dried. Mrs. Brewer didn't dare laugh but the widow presented quite a picture with her arms hanging out at least a foot below the wrist bands and her 6 foot 4 inch height making the bottom of the gown hit her around the knee. The ribbon and lace trim made quite a contrast with her weather beaten face and arms.

A lot of the settlers seeing the feats of strength performed by the Ox Woman declared that she was a man. Not so answered Mrs. Clara Vihlen whose home was a favorite stopover for the

Jean C. Taylor is an historian with special interest in South Dade County. She is a member of the Update Board.

widow. Mrs. Vihlen always fixed a hot bath in the family wash tub in the kitchen for her friend and said that her skin was soft and white under the garment and her figure obviously that of a woman. The Ox Woman had blonde hair and blue eyes and wore her hair in a bun at the back of her neck as did many women at that time. She was always polite and well spoken, behaved as a lady and was grateful for anything that was done for her. There is no record at all of her ever having misused her great strength to injure anyone or do harm.

The Widow McLain was also willing to help the settlers when needed. One day a group of women gathered at the Booe home as the word was out that a new lady was moving in across the street and Mr. Brewer was bringing her furnishings in his wagon. As he drove up they were disappointed to see that the new neighbor was not aboard and that the Widow McLain was riding with Mr. Brewer. Before he could get the mules and wagon jockeyed into position for unloading she shouldered the cook stove and in jig time had it up and smoke coming out of the stove pipe. Next she tackled a roll of fencing wire. Looking about she spied a low sort of log pen not too far from the house and fastened one end of wire to that. Unrolling as she went she circled the trees as far as the trail. She must have known exactly how many feet were in the roll of wire because she stepped it off along the trail side westward and came back and took up the roll and proceeded as before. Going south again and back to the starting point she came out with just enough to fashion a gate. She had set up an area for a chicken run and it mattered not a whit to her that the original plan had been to fence in the dooryard as a protection against "varmints." When the new neighbor arrived with the second load it turned out to be Lily Lawrence Bow.

By 1908 when Flora Chandler Caldwell remembers the Ox Woman visiting her father's home the Indians had stolen her oxen and she was driving a poor old horse to a covered wagon with four hound dogs on chains in the back and a double barrelled shot gun on the seat beside her. She wore a blue denim dress with a petticoat and large hob nailed boots. The Widow McLain

usually arrived about dark and the Chandlers would feed the horse and dogs, the Ox Woman would eat supper with them, have a bath and sleep in a good bed. The Chandler children liked her because she was always willing to answer their questions and talk to them. On one visit she left in the morning and had only gotten about a mile down the road when her horse fell dead. Mr. Chandler helped her get rid of the horse and took care of the wagon. A few days later the Widow McLain returned with a new horse and reclaimed her wagon. There were only a few horses and mules in South Dade at that time so a new one was not easy to come by.

The Ox Woman continued to live in the Everglades until she heard that her sister Hannah Smith known as Big Six had been killed at the Ed Watson plantation in the Ten Thousand Islands where she had been hired to chop firewood for a syrup mill. The Ox Woman turned up at Chocoloskee several months after the shooting but did not stay as there was no farm land available. She then set out with her oxen for Immokolee thirty five miles to the north where she found an Indian mound of about ten acres. She built a palm thatched shack there and farmed for three or four years. About 1915 she moved to a farm near Fort Denaud on the Caloosahatchee River. In 1919 she suffered a stroke and her sister Lydia

Smith Crews came down from Georgia and tried to get Sarah to go home with her, but she refused to leave. The Ox Woman died shortly after that and was buried in Fort Denaud Cemetery where her grave is unmarked but its location is known.

Sarah Smith McLain was one of four giant sisters, Hannah Smith or Big Six, Mrs. Lydia Smith Crews and Nancy Smith or Big Nancy. Their father was said to have been the biggest man in South Georgia. None of the big sisters had any children but they had three normal sized sisters who did. The family home was in Racepoint, Georgia where the rest of the Smiths remained. Hannah and Sarah were the only ones to become part of a Florida legend. Sarah married David McLain who was hanged in Charlton County, Georgia after being convicted of killing a man. She showed no reluctance to relate the story of his death. Annie Mayhew Fitzpatrick wrote of her.

*"Yes, I be the Widow McLain.
My man by a posse was slain.
Neither witty nor pretty
I'm asking no pity
I'm off to my homestead again.
I'm off to my home on Long Key
My pigs and my cow await me.
In the open I cook
Wash my clothes in a brook
I'm the Widow McLain, yes I be."*

FLORIDA PLACE NAMES

CAN YOU PAIR THE OLD NAME AND THE PRESENT NAME?

Once

Cowford
Arch Creek
Thompson's Island
Modelo
Key Vaca
Larkins
Linton
Sand Point
Detroit
Fulford

Now

Florida City
Titusville
Delray
Key West
Jacksonville
North Miami
Florida City
North Miami Beach
Marathon
South Miami

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THE CHAILLE PLAN

by Peggy Newman Montague

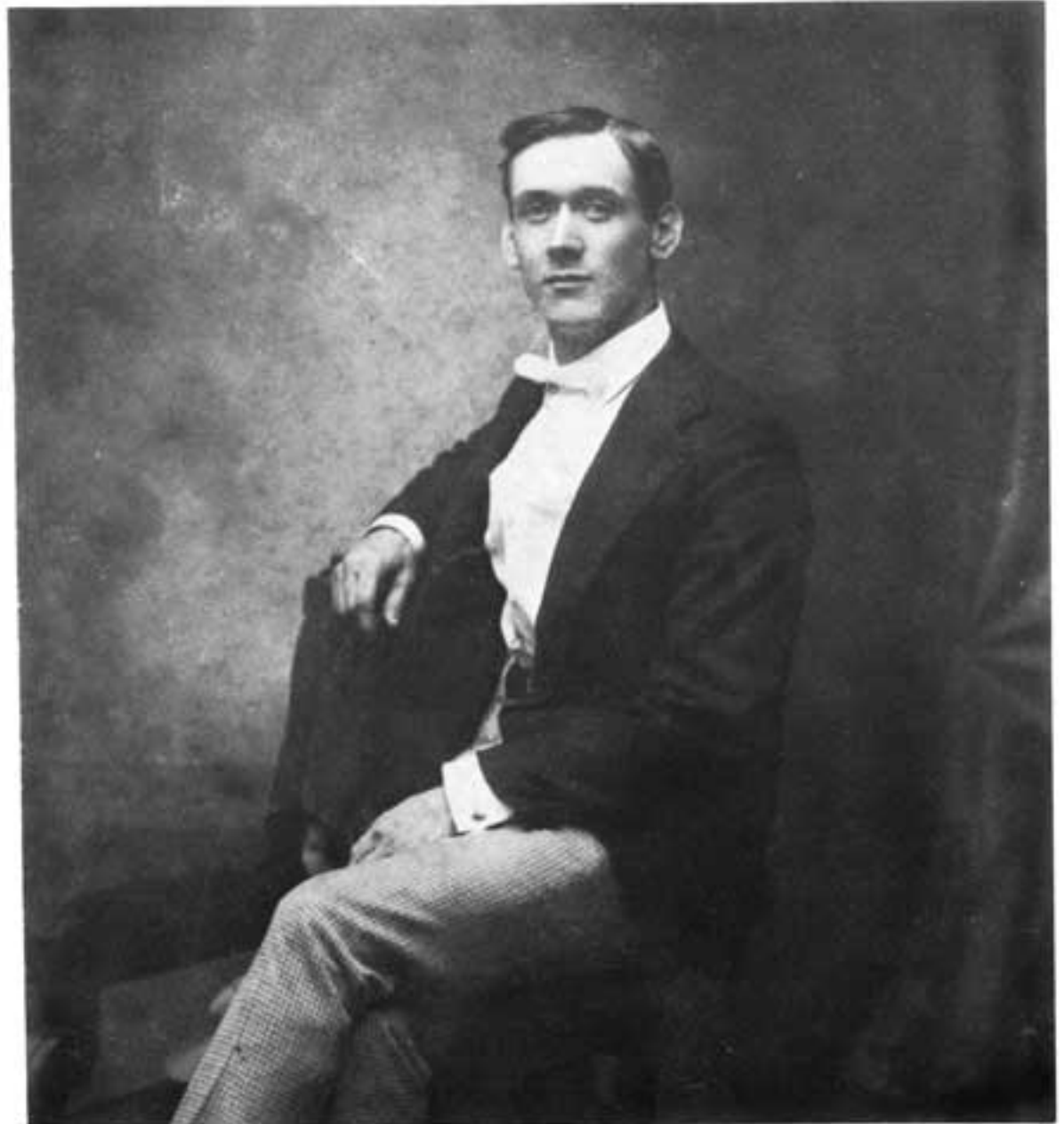
COLUMBUS DELAYED BY HEAVY SQUALL: WILL DISCOVER MIAMI THIS MORNING

Although the Palm Fete's Columbus had trouble "discovering" Miami in 1920, according to this headline in *The Miami Herald*, many another out-of-towner had already found the booming resort area by that year. In fact, 29,571 residents "called it home," an increase of 24,101 over the 1910 population. As the land boom fever started its sharpest incline toward the wild summer of 1925, thousands believed "that Miami (had) merely completed the first chapter in her progress toward future greatness," *The Herald* pointed out.

The boom really started even before Miami was a town. The "future greatness" began in 1892 when James E. Ingraham, then president of the South Florida Railroad, reported the wonders of Miami to H. B. Plant, the board of directors, and the stockholders of the railroad. Ingraham and his party had spent five wet, miserable weeks crossing the Everglades from Fort Myers to inspect a proposed extension of Plant's line from the West Coast to Miami. Miami did not get a railroad at that time, but Ingraham's report about the town did a great selling job to one of the South Florida Railroad directors—Henry M. Flagler. Flagler not only took an interest in the message but also in the messenger. He was so impressed that he invited Ingraham to join his staff as vice-president of Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway.

As Flagler's representative, Ingraham again visited Miami just after the famous freeze of 1895. On this visit, as on his previous trip, he stayed with Mrs. Julia Tuttle. Ingraham found that although the rest of the state was blighted by the freeze, orange, lime, and lemon trees were in full bloom in Miami. Ingraham shouted "Eureka!", or some appropriate phrase, and straightway conferred with Mrs. Tuttle

Peggy Newman Montague is the great-niece of Josiah Chaille. She is on the faculty of Miami-Dade Community College.



JOSIAH FREDERICH CHAILLE

and Mrs. Mary Brickell about locating a townsite at Miami. To convince Flagler that Miami was the "in" place of the future, Ingraham took back to St. Augustine several boxes of orange blossoms. This is the real story of the famous orange blossom legend of the founding of Miami, according to an interview with Ingraham in the June 17, 1915, *Herald*.

As a further inducement, Mrs. Tuttle gave Flagler one hundred acres on the north side of the mouth of the Miami River (now duPont Plaza) for the Royal Palm Hotel and every other section in the remainder of her property. This land was the townsite for Miami in Mrs. Tuttle's 1895 agreement with Flagler, which brought the railroad to the new town.

The new town had a cross hatch

pattern with the streets running east and west and the avenues north and south. Streets were numbered from the north edge of town, today's N.E. 11th Street being First Street and today's Flagler Street being Twelfth Street. Avenues were designated by letters of the alphabet with Avenue A one block west of Biscayne Drive and today's Miami Avenue known as Avenue D.

This street numbering system served well enough when Miami was bordered by hammocks, mangroves, prairies and piney woods. However, as early as 1904, the official city directory says Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel started Miami on its way to the title of "Boom City." Soon the "boomers" and "men of vision" were cutting up and selling lots, forming a ring around the original town. Miami was outgrowing its street designation

plan. It was time for a change.

The responsibility for this change - a new street plan - fell to Josiah Frederich Chaille, who moved to Miami in 1899 when the city was but three years old. In a 1957 WQAM radio

In 1915, hundreds of citizens gathered to discuss the city's most urgent growth problems. At this banquet, Toastmaster G. Duncan Brossier called on a citizen from Buena Vista who suggested that the street-

early real estate broker and president of the first city council; W.W. Prout (N.W. 7th Avenue), contractor and early member of the Miami Board of Trade; B. B. Tatum (N.E. 16th Street), real estate developer; Garibaldi Niles (N.E. 19th Street), Lemon City pioneer; R. C. Gardner (Biscayne Boulevard between 20th and 21st Streets), Tip Top Grocery owner and city commissioner; Joseph A. McDonald (N.E. 23rd Street), banker and builder of Flagler's hotels; Samuel Filer (N.E. 25th Street), pioneer owner of 76 acres of bayfront land.

As the city continued to expand, things got so bad that the postal authorities threatened to stop delivering mail. Along with others, Chaille became alarmed about the situation, and Stoneman credits him with arousing public interest in the proposal to change the street system: "He prepared a map, urged action by the city council and secured support from the citizenry . . . The Chaille plan, which was finally adopted, called for dividing the city into four sections, corresponding to the points of the compass . . . the plan proved a valuable improvement and has worked out admirably."

Chaille's widow, Frances, says, "Pops' was on the city council back then, and he was put in charge of coming up with a new plan."

In a tape-recorded letter to his son Halfred in 1957, Chaille says, "I got deeply involved in politics about nineteen and eighteen. At that time, I agreed through solicitation of the members of the council remaining that I would take over a seat vacated by Mr. Hickson. I took over Mr. Hickson's seat—he resigned—so I served then until the next election."

After serving out Hickson's term in 1918, Chaille was elected to the post and was put in charge of the committee on streets, sewers, the electric light company and the gas company. Of this committee, he says, "They put that in a department that I was chairman of, don't you see? . . . During my administration of three years, I didn't get very much rest, night or day. They'd call me up over the telephone for everything in the world that happened. If the lights went out, they'd want me to go see somebody about it."

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"The Racket Store was like a dime-store. They had a little bit of everything including books and stationery," remembered Joaddie Harper Newman. Mrs. Newman's grandfather, W.H. Chaille (left) and her uncle, Josiah Chaille operated The Racket Store on Miami Avenue for many years, eventually selling out to Burdines. The two women in the photo are unidentified. (Photo from the HASF Collection).

interview, Chaille described the town as it was when he first saw it: "The Miami city limits went up to Eleventh Street. It was Wood Street at the time. That was on the north side. On the west side, we went down just beyond the Miami River. We didn't go south of the river at that time. The Brickell estate refused to go into it, so we were halted for the time being. But that wasn't for long."

Indeed it wasn't. By 1913, the year that Flagler died, Mayor John W. Watson could see that the city was "busting its boundaries," so he started a movement to expand to north of Buena Vista, west to Lawrence Drive (now 12th Avenue), south to Coconut Grove, and east to include the future city of Miami Beach. Watson saw "the threat to Miami's growth in the possibility of a number of small communities incorporating and thus hemming in the real city," says Frank B. Stoneman in his "Miami Memories" column.

naming system was greatly in need of reform.

No action was taken on this suggestion then, although the 1914 Sanborn map shows that Miami, like Topsy, had "just growed." The bay front was filled in with subdivisions from the Miami River north to the city limits at Buena Vista (N.E. 36th Street) and west to Avenue L (N.W. 7th Avenue). The new streets and avenues were being named pretty much at the whims of the developers, as the existing plan made it impossible to incorporate new streets in the numbered system.

A directory of these early developers could be compiled from some of the original street names. Among them are: Col. Edwin A. Waddell (N.E./N.W. 14th Street), pioneer real estate developer; J. R. Parrott (N.W. 16th Street) and James E. Ingraham (N.W. 18th Street), Flagler's chief lieutenants; Frederick S. Morse (N.E. 17th Street),

THE CHAILLE PLAN

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Like the other sincere and energetic pioneers of the time, Chaille's great love of Miami made him feel great responsibility for its welfare. Just as he felt duty-bound to go see about somebody's electric lights, he felt duty-bound to carry out the task of designing a new street numbering system for the city. In order to come up with the best possible plan, Chaille and City Engineer C. W. Murray toured several cities to gather ideas.

According to Chaille's niece, Mrs. Joaddie Harper Newman, who came to Miami to live with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Chaille, in 1900, "Uncle Joe and Mr. Murray went to New York, Detroit and Washington on that trip. Then Uncle Joe came up with the plan of dividing the city into four sections—northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest—with Flagler Street, old Twelfth Street, as the north-south dividing line and Miami Avenue, Avenue D, as the east-west dividing line. The choice of Flagler Street and Miami Avenue was natural because that was the main downtown intersection and those two streets were already the main streets."

However, gaining permanent approval for the Chaille Plan, as it came to be known, was not as easy as Mrs. Newman makes it sound. Early in the summer of 1920, the city council had accepted the Chamber of Commerce, or Capt. G. Duncan Brossier, plan. Long active in civic affairs, Brossier was secretary of the Board of Trade, president of the first Real Estate Board, and was then President of the Chamber of Commerce. The Brossier Plan was a system which numbered streets from Biscayne Bay west, a plan that little changed the existing system. In July, "the fickle city fathers," as they were called by **The Herald**, rejected the previously-favored Brossier Plan and endorsed the Chaille Plan.

The newspaper account of the September 30, 1920, city council meeting reported that no action had yet been taken on the new street plan. At that meeting, Frank Keene,

superintendent of mails, urged "vigorously" that the Chaille Plan be the one adopted by city ordinance. Keene called the Brossier Plan "not logical or consistent," and even preferred the then current system if the Chaille Plan were not adopted.

Editor Singleton of the **Central News**, who also spoke at the meeting, claimed the public also preferred the Chaille Plan, but suggested that a questionnaire be circulated to allow for expression of public opinion. The council thought Singleton's suggestion "an excellent idea," but took no action on it.

On October 8th, the council voted down the Brossier Plan and unanimously adopted the "arrangement fathered by Councilman Joseph (sic) Chaille." The plan was to become operative on January 1, 1921. This vote was not the end of the matter, however.

On December 12th, **The Herald** carried this page one headline: "Meddlesome Keene Cause/ Of Rumpus Over Street Names/ Says Locke T. Highleyman, Opponent of New Street Naming System." In **The Herald's** version of the rhubarb, Highleyman tried to prevent the change in the system because the plan was passed by the council "surreptitiously" while he was on an out-of-town vacation.

In those days when reporters freely mingled opinion with fact, **The Herald** called Highleyman the "reputed 'Czar of Miami Politics,'" and declared that "under the whip of Mr. Highleyman and his co-workers" the Chaille Plan was rescinded on December 9th. In high dudgeon, Highleyman blamed not Chaille but Keene's "meddlesome, politics-playing" for the plan's passage, and gave his opinion that it would cost Miami businessmen thousands of dollars for new lettersheads. He also claimed it would negate thousands already spent for advertising business addresses. Staunchly opposed to change, Highleyman called the old part of the town's street numbering system "almost perfection as it stands today."

When **The Herald** reporter quoted Highleyman's remarks to Keene, the postal superintendent said he was "not greatly affected" by the remarks. As an argument against rescinding the Chaille Plan, he pointed out that Councilmen McLendon and Chase had studied the plan for a year without recommending any changes. He also pointed out that

Post Office Inspector F. G. J. Pulsipher had approved the plan.

Highleyman's heated objections came too late. Letter carriers had already learned the routes in the new postal directory. "Conditions in mail distribution will border on the chaotic if we are obliged to throw out the new directory . . . Some people are taking down their (old) numbers now," Keene added.

In opposition to Highleyman's move in getting the council to rescind the Chaille Plan, real estate man W. W. Hall joined in the fray and led a faction that started mandamus proceedings to enjoin the city from rescinding the ordinance.

Beseiged from all sides, the city council passed a motion to suspend work on changing the street sides, and City Engineer Murray stopped the order for 1,700 new street signs and 14,000 house numbers.

In a last-ditch stand, opponents of the Chaille Plan tried to get the decision on a street-naming system put to a referendum. This move was blocked by the city, and the Chaille Plan was not rescinded.

Even the month-long delay in receiving the new metal street signs caused by cancellation of the original order did not stop the change to the new system. By December 17th, "at the solicitation of the post office," temporary signs were being posted. **The Herald** on that date carried the headline "Chaile (sic) Has Wooden Street Signs Up In Northeast Section."

Miami did get its new street-naming plan in 1921, but conversion to the new system was done in a gradual manner, rather like the current conversion to the metric system. Newspaper advertisements in that year show that merchants did not uniformly change to the new system. Some still carried only the old addresses, while others carried both the old and the new, or only the new. For example, Oscar W. Maynard, Jeweler, gave his address as 312 Twelfth Street and 53 East Flagler Street. Turner Music Company compromised by listing its address as 413 East Flagler Street, which was the old number with the new street name.

The new system naturally caused a good bit of confusion. On January 6,

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IN THE COLLECTION, THE GALLERY AND THE LIBRARY

The Artifact Collection has branched out into a new area recently...neon signs. It began last year with Oscar Sklar's donation of the neon sign from the Miami Theater. Cornell Irick, a local expert, assisted us with procuring that donation and later gave us the sign from the Shepley Hotel. A third addition to our Collection is the Jephson's Pharmacy, Coca Cola sign which was donated by Coca Cola Bottling Company of Miami, thanks to David Zachry, Vice President. Our Curator of Exhibits, Bob Burke, is planning to use several of the neon signs in exhibits for the new Museum downtown.

Several other interesting items have been donated this year. Mrs. John T. (Jeanne Bellamy) Bills, Donald Bellamy, and Alice P. Willey added to our collection of World War II military items. Philip Saltalamacchia, on staff at the Museum as well as a professional jockey, donated more horse racing equipment. Mrs. Anita O'Meara gave us a water pitcher from the Royal Palm hotel and a FEC cup. Melvin Hackett brought in the track ribbons he won when he was a student at Andrew Jackson Junior High School in the 1920s. Mrs. Rosemary Hubbell Wirkus, an active volunteer at the Historical Museum and a frequent contributor to our Artifact Collection, donated a movie camera which her father had purchased over forty years ago.

We appreciate the many HASF members and friends who have contributed to our Artifact Collection. Remember...we need items which will help us preserve and interpret the history of South Florida, from the days of the Tequesta Indians right up to the present.

Most of us read the newspaper to learn about current events. Historians often use newspapers to learn about past events. Here at the museum we discovered that the newspaper can help make an exhibit more exciting, interesting and informative.

One of our more eye-catching items is the front page of the *East Florida Gazette*, which is enlarged to eight by ten feet. The newspaper, dated February 22 - March 1, 1783, was printed in St. Augustine during the British Period. Not only does it provide information about events of that time, but it also shows interesting variations of type styles. For example, the letter "s" was often printed (and handwritten) like an "f."

An 1843 article in the *St. Augustine News* describes Dade County. An 1859 advertisement offers Ferguson's comptie starch for sale. Each is a valuable clue to life in South Florida in the Nineteenth Century and are included in the gallery for our visitors to see.

A large silkscreen of the *Miami Tribune's* headlines on September 20, 1926 helps dramatize the impact of the destructive hurricane of that year. It also shows that newspapers sold for 2c in those days.

In our last three exhibits on the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, we included many newspaper headlines. Visitors are enjoying these reminders of some major events of those decades such as Churchill's Miami visit, space exploration, Dodge Island develop-

ment, Everglades National Park dedication, and more.

The number of recent additions to the Charlton W. Tebeau Library is too extensive to list in its entirety, as a result of the generosity of many people. Some outstanding donations include:

CATALOG OF THE P. K. YONGE LIBRARY OF FLORIDA HISTORY. Gift of Robert and Arva Parks.

MIAMI DAILY NEWS, 1960-1967, on microfilm. Gift of RAIN TREE MAGAZINE, through Jay Maeder.

382 1920s photographs of Dade County. Gift of Katheline Robinson and Elroy C. Cormack.

9 Gilpin family dairies, 1906-1921. Gift of Mrs. Eric Warner Johnson.

106 postcards of Miami and Florida. Gift of Richard Miles.

4 Congressional documents, including FLORIDA HURRICANE DISASTER, 1936. Gift of William A. Herin.

3 different panoramic photographs. Gifts, on separate occasions, of J. Alan Cross, Christopher Flick, and the St. Augustine Historical Society, through Elizabeth Peeler.

Miami telephone directory, 1926. Gift of Mary Sue Sudduth.

10 Kirk Munroe novels. Gift of Edwin Shaw.

THE CHAILLE PLAN

Continued from Page 8

1921, *The Herald* carried the story of "a citizen" who walked all over town trying to find an address. Some houses and businesses had the new numbers posted while others, often on the same street or even next door, still retained the old.

Mrs. Newman recalls this inevitable confusion. She says that when she was riding in a jitney shortly after the change over, the driver spent a fruitless fifteen minutes looking for a particular street. Then, in disgust, he said, "If I could get that Chaille by the nape of the neck and the seat of the pants, I'd give him what for!" On that occasion, Mrs. Newman did not dare identify herself as the niece of "that Chaille."

The 57 years since the city adopted the Chaille Plan have proven its

suitability for a constantly growing metropolis. As John Pennekamp wrote in 1971, "The Miami street naming system is generally regarded as among the country's best." And when Chaille died on May 9, 1970, Ralph Renick said in a televised tribute on WTVJ, "He split Miami into four sections with numbered avenues and streets—one of the most simple street designation systems in the country."

The Chaille Plan now extends from S. W. 432nd Street to N.E./N.W. 215th Street on the Broward County line and westward to 237th Avenue. It was a flexible plan for Miami's future at a time when that future was beyond even the most enthusiastic pioneer's imagination.

THE PEACOCK HOUSE

by Valerie Fisher Lassman

High on a coral ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay stands a stately colonial mansion which once belonged to one of Coconut Grove's foremost pioneers, John Thomas Peacock. John Thomas was born to Robert Peacock, a shoemaker, and Mary Ann Bradfield Peacock at Spalding, Lincolnshire, England, on November 18, 1843. Spalding, northeast of London, is an industrial city notable for its beautiful tulip bulbs and daffodils.

At age sixteen, with the advice and consent of his father, John Thomas became apprenticed to Stableforth and Dandy, Grocers and Tea Dealers of Spalding. His term of indenture was five years and it was only during the second year that he would be paid the lofty sum of two shillings per week, gradually increasing to a total of eight shillings in the fifth year. A shilling was worth fourteen cents in United States currency.

According to the terms of the contract of indenture, young John was to adhere strictly to the following "commandments": "He shall not commit fornication, nor contract matrimony, he shall not play at cards or dice tables or any other unlawful games, he shall neither buy nor sell, he shall not haunt taverns or playhouses, he shall behave himself towards said Masters and all there during the said term."

John Thomas may have chafed somewhat at this rigid system, and in his fourth year, at age 20, asked to be released from his obligations to Stableforth and Dandy. He then set his sights on America and booked passage to Key West.

Upon arrival in the then major port of the south where wrecking was at its zenith of prosperity, he found that Key West was rather over-populated and noisy for his temperament. He instead chose to move on to Texas where he planned to work as a cook. He'd once

been told that, "Out there they make pancakes as big as umbrellas."

As fate would have it, for some unknown reason, John Thomas missed the boat headed for the Texas coast and instead wound up docking at a little settlement on the Miami River. Miami was a little Indian Trading Post consisting of several dwellings, a store house and the small stone Fort Dallas constructed in 1836 during the Seminole Wars. While getting used to the way of life there he met and married Martha Jane Schneipes. They spent the early part of their marriage at The House of Refuge, a Coast Guard Station on Miami Beach, near what is now 79th Street. It was there that their first child was born.

John Thomas and Martha, being industrious and eager to settle down, began making a name for themselves. He was elected Sheriff of Dade County and Tax Assessor. An old book of his meticulous tax records is still kept by his descendants. Peacock decided to move his family down into Coconut Grove on Biscayne Bay, joining the Pent and Frow families, among others. He homesteaded 160 acres where Matheson and Douglas Road are today, for a short time. He came to feel that his property was too remote from the town so he once again moved, selling his land for \$50.00 and buying another 160 acre tract bounded by 22nd Avenue and 17th Avenue off Bayshore and Tigertail Avenue.

During these years of hard work and frontier life, eleven children were born to John Thomas and Martha. They were: Jackson (1872), Charles Ewan (1874), Tavernier (1875), Robert Henry (1877), Annie Malinda (1880), Beverly James (1882), Rafaela (1883), Richard (1886), Edward Linsey (1887), Frederick Malcolm (1890), George Lewis (1894).

John Thomas was an avid reader and frequently consumed volume after volume on such divergent subjects as horticulture and plant diseases to agriculture and mid-wifery, the latter of which was an admittedly unpopular notion to fellow pioneer husbands!

Because of his medical knowledge, he was occasionally called upon to attend a delivery in the vicinity. He did, in fact, deliver his own son Richard by lantern light on a barren stretch of sand on Miami Beach as there was no more time for he and Martha to reach help.

Another incident involving John Thomas' rudimentary surgical expertise was when with the aid of a block and tackle he re-aligned the dislocated hip of a fellow pioneer. The procedure was quite elementary; they secured the unfortunate fellow to a tree bound with ropes about his arms and upper torso, then braced the block and tackle line around his leg, and holding him still, pulled the leg in the opposite direction until the joint fell back into the socket. (It was an effective but undoubtedly painful remedy.)

John Thomas became actively involved in the chief industry of the Grove, growing and marketing coontie root starch and then shipping it north by schooner. The manufacture of starch from roots is generally done in the locality in which they are grown. It became a quite prodigious and lucrative business for the early pioneers. John Thomas prospered and eventually built a comfortable house fronting Bayshore Drive.

Seminole Indians still plied the waters of Biscayne Bay in their canoes, trading with the local people in exchange for goods and foodstuffs. On occasion, as was their custom, they would come up the Bay to observe the construction of houses and "borrow" tools, bricks and equipment as John Thomas quickly discovered.

The first house he built was a two-story brick structure, two rooms deep, with a wide, airy verandah and stone steps leading down to a wide expanse of lawn. Surrounding this house were large foyer and sash windows. His son Richard made each brick by hand with materials right on the property.

The second floor exterior had an attractive portico and a pointed Greek pediment roof. To the right of the rambling house was a small work shed where tools and sundry construction

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implements were stored.

In time, Beverley Peacock bought the adjoining property, west of the main house, known as Donovan's Boat Yard. Tavernier built a charming two-story home on what is now Emathla, and Henry Peacock built a house on 22nd Avenue to the rear of the main house on the original acreage of his father.

Life in the early days of the settlement of Coconut Grove was not as quaintly pastoral as is sometimes thought. Pioneer women, in particular, toiled daily at washboards and hot stoves. They had to get water for household and consumption from a hand pump, iron clothes with flat irons weighing several pounds, bathe their children in crude wooden tubs, and weave all they wore on spinning wheels.

Despite these hardships, John Thomas and Martha had a successful and fulfilling life and they encouraged brother Charles and his wife Isabella to sell his wholesale meat and grocery business in London and come to "Jack's Bight," as the Grove came to be called.

The Peacocks did come eventually and they built and ran the immensely successful Peacock Inn on property they bought from pioneer, John Frow. The Inn is long since destroyed and Peacock Park in Coconut Grove is named for its location.

John Thomas was widely known for his engaging personality and homespun good humour, hence the nickname, "Jolly Jack." Some cherished family quotations are how he enjoyed ribbing Martha by stating, "Women are not worthwhile as far as this earth is concerned;" to which she would admonish with mock severity to "hush up." Another favorite saying was, "This country, like England, is nice to women and dogs, because they live and work in a warm kitchen, but hell on men and horses because they have to work outside."

John Thomas always kept a diary in which he faithfully made his daily entries of family news, business transactions, etc. Unfortunately, this treasury of early Grove history was lost in the hurricane of 1926. He made his last entry on July 23, 1907, passing away at the age of 64. Three years after his death in 1910, the house became the property of the Harris family, the purchase being transacted by Beverly

Peacock.

Extensive renovation took place as the original house was stuccoed over and a Georgian style facade was added to the front with a four columned verandah. The rooms were enlarged and the windows became French doors. The imposing front door had wainscoting and a fine glass panelled fan light.

Throughout the interior are sturdy, wide-beamed, pegged wood floors of Dade County pine. The living room and dining, formal parlor and solarium were once divided by large double doors. In the living room is a large woodburning fireplace with a mantle of classic design.

The central feature of the foyer is the large oak balustrade with post square railings below a circular archway. This archway motif is repeated through the house, along the corridors leading to the five bedrooms on the second floor. At the end of the hall are French doors opening onto a small balcony overhanging the entrance portico below.

In the back of the house is a guest house resembling the main house in miniature, servants' quarters and a garage which has been converted into a private home. Succeeding owners have added a screened-in pool and bath house.

Dominating this view is a spectacular Live Oak tree with branches extending several feet across and touching the ground. It provides shade as well as an aura of ancient majestic tropical beauty.

Growing in abundance are lime, avocado, and banana trees from the time when John Thomas planted them along with varieties of flora which he enjoyed experimenting with.

The house was occupied for eight years by former Mayor of Miami, Robert King High, and family. After his death, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Jack Woodruff of Lexington, Kentucky. In the past year the Peacock house has been sold again and is now undergoing extensive renovation.

Although now devoid of Peacock Family artifacts and frontier atmosphere, the house stands today as an example of Southern Colonial charm and simplicity of line fully befitting its historical location on Biscayne Bay.

Coconut Grove owes much to the Peacocks for their many contributions

to its growth as a community distinguished by a strong sense of self-expression, yet perpetuating its village charm even as Miami encroaches it environs. In an age where adventure and seeking new frontiers took precedence over security and guarantees, "Jolly Jack" Peacock and family strove to create and foment Coconut Grove for us today in 1978.

CAPITOL RESTORATION

Recently, the State of Florida undertook restoration of our historic 1902 Capitol building in Tallahassee. Accurate restoration requires the most complete record available. Although the standard research sources contain considerable information, there remain certain gaps in the historical evidence. Therefore, the Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board requests the assistance of Florida citizens in restoring their Capitol. People who would permit us to copy old photographs of the interior or exterior of the building, who can describe the Capitol before 1923, who have diaries, letters, or other documents concerning the statehouse, or who have information regarding furniture from the 1902 Capitol should contact Christine Galbraith or Barbara Miller at the Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, 329 North Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301, telephone (904) 488-4063.

FLORIDA PLACE NAMES

Correct Pairing:
 Cowford - Jacksonville
 Arch Creek - North Miami
 Thompson's Island - Key West
 Modelo - Dania
 Key Vaca - Marathon
 Larkins - South Miami
 Linton - Delray
 Sand Point - Titusville
 Detroit - Florida City
 Fulford - North Miami Beach



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